

Moray Economic Partnership

Teams Meeting

Wednesday 25 August 2021 @ 14:00

Graham Leadbitter (Chair)	Moray Council
David Patterson	Moray College UHI
Jim Grant	Moray Council
Kara Stewart	Moray Chamber of Commerce
Laurie Piper	Visit Moray Speyside
Stephen Sheridan	SDS
Stuart Black	HIE
Tim Eagle	Councillor, Moray Council
Raj Singhal	White Label Creative
Bonnie Stephensmith	White Label Creative
Kerry Williams (Minutes)	HIE

Apologies

Andrew Anderson	tsiMoray
Ewen Mackintosh	Gordon & MacPhail
Dr Jamie Hogg	NHS Grampian
John Cowe	Councillor, Moray Council
Katherine Mackintosh	Robertson
Pearl Hamilton	FSB
Rhona Gunn	Moray Council

1.	Welcome by Chair Welcome from Chair and apologies given. Introduction to Raj and Bonnie from White Label Creative who have taken over the MEP media contract. Item 7 refers.	
2.	Minutes from last meeting and matters arising Amendment to be made to previous draft minutes to “potentially 200,000 jobs lost in oil and gas in <u>Scotland</u> as a whole”.	KW
3.	Growth Deal Update JG commented the aim is for the Growth Deals to be signed off in November. Two of the Outline Business Cases (OBCs) are still being worked on: MAATIC has to overcome issues on the access roads and the provision of cycles paths as well as the final route being agreed by DIO; and the Cultural Quarter is still waiting on the final design for Grant Lodge and the Town Hall. Final comments to be returned by November in order to achieve the drawdown. The OBC for the Housing Mix Delivery has now been signed off and looking for drawdown early 2022. Digital Health Institute Full Business Case has been signed off.	

	Awaiting all OBCs to be signed off before communications put out.	
3a	<p>Moray Chamber of Commerce Update Report</p> <p>KS introduced the MCC report and said it had been challenging for this period. Nobody knows what the next six months will look like and there may be different asks in a few months' time. We will have a better insight at the next MEP in November.</p> <p>There has been positivity from businesses with levels opening up although there remains uncertainty and nervousness. Each sector has its own challenges and need to drill down separately to identify their needs and see what is achievable. All require long term support and short term asks that continue to update and change with grants that are released and the potential support that can be offered.</p> <p>MCC continue to work on the 'Keep Mum' campaign for Dr Gray's hospital to enable maternity services to be restored there. This aligns with the live/work strategy in Moray.</p> <p>GL announced there will be a New Business Start-up grant of up to £1,500 which is jointly funded by Moray Council and HIE in response to requests from businesses. He added that it is encouraging to see lots of entrepreneurialism or businesses moving in a new direction despite COVID.</p> <p>Free pre-application advice is now available from the planning department at Moray Council. Planning and building consents are taking an average of 6.7 weeks to turn around (quicker than the rest of Scotland). However, building warrants may cause delays.</p> <p>SB said there has been huge demand for the recent Digital grants from SG and applications have been paused. It is important to feedback digital needs as there will be a Report on R100 at the next meeting.</p> <p>The Strategic Business Forum has now disbanded so there needs to be a review of private sector engagement with future MEP. GL suggested that as a more mature organisation, Moray Chamber of Commerce can make adequate representation for the private sector and has the ability to substitute a representative at last minute.</p> <p>There continues to be an ongoing issue with logistics, haulage and the supply chain. KS will continue to keep MEP updated.</p>	
3b	<p>FSB Update Report</p> <p>The FSB report was previously circulated to members. TE stressed the difficulty with recruitment at the moment and asked whether partners are working together to find a solution and get people into work? There is an element of confusion as to which agencies do what, when and how. SS said the skills shortage is a complex issue but perception has been made worse through COVID with the likes of visas etc. Accommodation and service</p>	

	<p>providers have varying views and the skills shortage and lack of suitable housing stock are linked although we are in a better position in Moray than some other areas.</p> <p>VMS is carrying out a survey of hospitality providers to ascertain the particular problems pertinent to the region and present positive solutions or opportunities. LP said that transport provision seems to be the biggest issue in rural locations. The Bus Revolution will help address this and KS will feedback recent data to Moray Council.</p> <p>ACTION: KS to feedback data on transport use for Bus Revolution.</p> <p>LP said the reputation of the hospitality sector is also a stumbling block and education may need addressing to encourage more young people into the industry, although hospitality require staff immediately.</p> <p>SB commented that Moray College UHI has good hospitality courses and asked if these could be fast-tracked. SS provided details of a rapid training course for chefs.</p> <p>DP said that more interaction is required at high school level and not enough courses are being taught on the syllabus. Hospitality businesses could visit secondary schools to introduce the sector in a coordinated way to address the situation. Flexible Workforce funding could be utilised and sectoral jobs fairs organised to perhaps to draw out interest.</p> <p>GL commented that working in the hospitality industry comes with a certain reputation but local franchisees are good ethical employers with excellent investment in staff training and career progression.</p> <p>Brexit has played a large part in dwindling employment numbers but there are some larger hotels that are employing immigration lawyers to get overseas employees back.</p>	KS
4.	<p>Economic Recovery Plan</p> <p>JG summarised the items on the Economic Recovery Plan; Brexit and procurement advice is available through Business Gateway; Business grants are substantially complete; Town Centre Fund work has been slow to progress due to COVID restrictions and the issues in construction industry; Masterplanning ongoing for Elgin town centre consultation; Procurement into a Community Wealth Building Officer programme with employability funding coming into the programme in March 2022; Good uptake on the MERI partnership scheme.</p>	
5.	<p>Economic Strategy Refresh</p> <p>JG recommended forming a steering group for strategy and look to appoint consultants. LP suggested that a light touch revision of the strategy is all that is required – not a complete refresh. Need to understand scope of</p>	

	<p>consultancy and if the works are fit for purpose. SB said we can use the measurement framework to measure progress.</p> <p>Within the tourism sector, LP mentioned that a quarterly business barometer is to be commissioned. This will give an indicator as live data rather than annual tourism results.</p> <p>Self-catering bookings are doing well comparatively to pre-COVID. There are issues of banks not offering loans to new business though.</p> <p>GL said the recovery will depend on issues such as tackling unemployment, women and younger workers moving away from the area.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Population Trends in Moray</p> <p>The report circulated shows pockets of rural area population where small numbers can make a big percentage difference. Rapid population growth, for example in Elgin and Lossiemouth puts a strain on infrastructure although there are increases in public sector finance distribution when the population rises. It was noted that birth rates and life expectancy are reliable facts to enable population projections, however, migration estimates are the biggest challenge. Estimates suggest that MOD personal are to decline over the next five years on previous five years' performance but this doesn't reflect recent experience. Sudden changes in MOD decisions remain the biggest risk.</p> <p>A population analysis of 16 to 29 year olds is to be addressed and will feed into the employability strategy. There will be a requirement to monitor progress linked to population targets.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Moray Communications</p> <p>Moray Council have appointed White Label Creative for the new media and communications contract on behalf of MEP. Raj and Bonnie from White Label Creative introduced themselves. They are a specialist placed-based marketing agency working closely with Scottish Govt especially on the Net Zero agenda. They have a strong ethos on building communities with a sense of place which will be the basis of the Moray relationship. They hope to invest in the work, live, play strategy of Moray and address the skills challenge.</p> <p>They have a breadth of experience from across the country to feed further material to work with internal and external partners through a variety of planning and investment resources.</p> <p>There is a defined trend of people moving away from big cities and Moray has a competitive advantage with airport proximity and its cultural offering. The planning period for the growth deal is reassuring and allows for the housing shortage to be addressed.</p> <p>Outside perception of region varies from NHS to MOD personnel who have different outlooks eg, a military family versus single personnel and their</p>	

	<p>respective requirements. Raj suggested it would be useful to have MOD personnel as advocates for the region in promotional material.</p> <p>WLC are looking forward to working closely with the MEP going forward.</p>	
8.	<p>Moray Social Enterprise Strategy</p> <p>This was launched on 24th of June. tsiMoray will be undertaking mid and endpoint reviews of the actions in the plan. Community wealth building action plan to continue between stakeholders. SG keen to see strategy in each regional area. Moray leading way with completed strategy and good relationships with stakeholders.</p>	
9.	<p>SNP/Green Party Agreement</p> <p>GL confirmed that the SNP and Green Party agreement includes a commitment to infrastructure in the north east. The £500m Just Transition fund offers an opportunity for Moray.</p> <p>There will be a review of the A96 dualling project by end of 2022 with commitments to bypasses noted.</p> <p>Future connectivity will use less carbon and current diesel engines need to be replaced on the railway. There are opportunities for investment in hydrogen. The need to working together to secure funds for the economy was key.</p>	
10.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The legal challenge against the Space Hub Sutherland launch site was rejected which was good news for Moray. Orbex, Boeing and the MAATIC aerospace hub in Moray will bring highly skilled well paid jobs. We are in the direct line of sight for school children in Moray to progress into these jobs. The Space Cluster Development Group will draft a strategy and steering group for supply chains.</p> <p>LP announced a £50k award from Visit Scotland to promote the region in a 6 month campaign pre and post Christmas.</p>	
11.	<p>Date and Time of next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 24 November 2021</p> <p>Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm</p>	