

MINUTE OF MORAY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

TUESDAY 20 MAY 2014

GORDON AND MACPHAIL

PRESENT

Councillor John Cowe	Chair	The Moray Council
James Johnston	Vice Chair	Moray Strategic Business Forum
Jacqui Taylor		Skills Development Scotland
David Oxley		HIE
Margery McLennan		Moray Chamber of Commerce
Tom McGarry		Moray College UHI
George McLean		NHS
Murray Ferguson		Cairngorm National Park Authority
Jim Grant		The Moray Council
Fabio Villani		tsiMoray
Gordon Sutherland		Executive Support
Shelley Lawson		Clerk to the Meeting

APOLOGIES

Frances Webster, Skills Development Scotland
Judith Proctor, NHS
Ranald Robertson, Hitrans
Jill Stewart, The Moray Council

IN ATTENDANCE

Lieutenant Colonel Tom Marsden and Regimental Sergeant Major Joe Aldridge of 39 Engineer Regiment Kinloss; Jane Cumming and Dawn McNiven both Platform PR; Councillor Allan Wright, Moray Council

1. WELCOME FROM MICHAEL URQUHART, GORDON AND MACPHAIL

Mr Michael Urquhart welcomed the Moray Economic Partnership to George House explaining that Gordon and Macphail would be 119 years old on Saturday 24 May. Michael further elaborated that the company employs 139 staff and currently has 19,000 casks of whisky in stock. There is a bottling facility on site at George House and the company has over 300 expressions of whisky ranging from 8 to 50 years old. Michael advised the MEP that the biggest problem they have is in customer expectation, in particular in relation to timelines of deliveries.

Each year, Gordon and Macphail gift 0.7% of their previous year's profit to charity and as far as possible use local contractors for any work they are undertaking. Michael went on to further explain that the company is currently transitioning from its 3rd to 4th generation of family members with members from the 5th generation also working within the company.

Following Michael's presentation, John Cowe thanked him for his presentation and his hospitality while remarking that the company was iconic in Moray.

James Johnston echoed the comments of John Cowe and added that Michael was an active member of the Moray Strategic Business Forum.

2. ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERESTED PARTIES

A presentation was delivered by Lieutenant Colonel Tom Marsden who welcomed the opportunity to discuss both what 39 Engineer Regiment can do for the Moray Economic Partnership and also what the Moray Economic Partnership can do for 39 Engineer Regiment.

Tom started his presentation by explaining that the station has 766 soldiers and this equates to around 1,000 people when families are taken into account. He then went on to explain some of the main differences between the RAF and the Army explaining that when the army deploy it will be en masse rather than in small numbers and be for approximately 3 or 4 months at a time. Due to this reason, whilst he would like to support any community events, he is mindful of the core business and highlighted that their main job will always take precedence. Tom further highlighted that the majority of soldiers will only serve in the regiment at Kinloss Barracks for 2 or 3 years. Due to this constant change in staff, there is a continual outflow of highly skilled highly trained workforce, who would be potentially looking to settle in the area, looking for jobs. In addition to the personnel leaving the army, there are around 200 spouses who also have a wide range of skillsets.

The army reserves are now based at Kinloss and this could provide an opportunity for businesses with employees in the reserves to gain valuable skills and training.

In terms of what the MEP can do for 39 Engineer Regiment, Tom explained that the continued support that all the personnel and families have already received is invaluable. He further explained that they are always looking for sponsorship for sports teams and events.

Following discussions, David Oxley advised that he would like to have a more in depth conversation regarding the outflow of workers while Fabio Villani would like to have a further chat regarding Osprey Trust.

James Johnston then thanked Tom for giving a fantastic context in order to note the change in service personnel power and gave his assurance that the MEP would continue to engage and that he would ensure that the Partnership stays alive to the change in baseline and realistic in its notion of what 39 Engineer Regiment can do for the community. But the bottom line is if in doubt, ask!

3. JAMES JONES & SONS LTD

John Cowe advised the MEP that following the fire at James Jones & Sons Ltd, all staff are now back to work with the exception of Brian Robertson who is in great spirits.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Frances Webster, Skills Development Scotland; Judith Proctor, NHS; Ranald Robertson, Hitrans and Jill Stewart, The Moray Council.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTE

In respect of item 3, David Oxley advised that he had not yet circulated the matrix used by Accunostics when it chose to set up business in Moray but he would do this.

In respect of item 9, it was agreed that the presentation by tsiMoray would be held off until a future meeting.

The Minutes for the previous Meeting were approved.

6. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

A paper was circulated to the MEP giving all the latest public relations activities. John Cowe advised that there had been good coverage for the launch of the tourist strategy. Jane Cumming went to explain that there may be an opportunity with the launch of the new MacBeth film and that she would discuss with Visit Scotland.

There followed a discussion on whether it should be Moray or the MEP that is being promoted. James Johnston explained that the MEP is the vehicle for taking Moray forward; therefore, the MEP should be mentioned in all publicity. Jane reassured the MEP that they always submit stories with the MEP however; journalists choose to not always print this.

Following discussion, Jane agreed to provide a report to the next meeting of the MEP estimating the value of the media coverage received.

7. WORK SESSION TO VERIFY ACTIONS AND TARGETS FOR MEP FROM MORAY 2023

James Johnston introduced this item by explaining that along with Gordon Sutherland, Jim Grant and David Oxley they had made a start on looking at the charts and was now looking for comments and views from the Group. James went on to explain that the idea of the Moray 2023 is to take Moray forward and the MEP will carry out some of the actions within the Moray 2023 while being accountable to the Community Planning Board for the delivery. Moray 2023 will remain a 'living' document and will be reviewed on an annual basis. Once the MEP is happy with its elements of responsibility within the Moray 2023 document, there will then be a need to review the Moray Economic Strategy (MES) It is important that the MES provides relevant and necessary direction for the 5 MEP theme groups.

Chart 01 - % rate as Good Place to Live

Following discussion around this, the MEP agreed that no particular Partnership can achieve this on their own and it should be a whole system target.

Chart 02 – Population Growth

Jim Grant pointed out that a growth in population would require more houses, so this is not a standalone item. James Johnston agreed and recommended that it would be useful to recognize the key dependencies across the Partnership.

David Oxley advised that due to a number of external factors he didn't think a confidence rating of 4 was appropriate and further pointed out that the only way to accurately measure this was by the Census which is only carried out every 10 years.

The MEP then agreed a confidence rating of 3 for this measure.

Chart 03 – Average Wage

David Oxley explained that there are some issues with measuring average wage and pointed out that those who are self employed and military staff are not included in the statistics. David went on to say that they are looking to spend some money in order to look at the 'real' average wage if offshore and military were to be included.

In order to raise the average wage, Moray will need to create higher value jobs not just a larger number of jobs.

In response to a question from James Johnston, Tom McGarry advised that we have the ability to shape the curriculum in Moray and request that life science courses are included within the curriculum in Moray.

Jim Grant agreed that there are difficulties in measuring this particular metric but it is nonetheless an important one for Moray.

The MEP then agreed a confidence rating of 2/3 for this measure.

Chart 04 - % Workforce in private sector

David Oxley advised that this chart can swing between 68% and 79% but on the whole this is about diversifying the economy. Jacqui Taylor advised that the 3rd sector can help with this and queried whether they are counted in the figures. James Johnston advised that with these statistics there is only 2 categories, one being is the tax payer paying for what you do – public or are you funding your own way – private. Jim Grant further advised that when looking at this measure, consideration should be given to other employment statistics.

The MEP then agreed a confidence rating of 4 for this measure.

Chart 05 – How long it takes to process planning applications

Jim Grant advised the MEP that the timescale has already reduced and that the target is now being met, the problem however is in maintaining it. He further cautioned that in this case, aiming to be the best in Scotland wouldn't necessarily be the best for business.

During discussions it was agreed that the MEP would periodically be given statistics on how many planning applications are being received.

James Johnston suggested that the changes developed within the Planning Process should be both publically acknowledged and celebrated; it was worthy of a Press Article.

The MEP then agreed a confidence rating of 4 for this measure.

Chart 06 - % of those in employment aged 25-64yrs who are graduates

James Johnston raised the question of whether we need this measure, is it more important to have graduates or people with the correct skills?

Following discussion the MEP agreed that at a future date they should look further at whether this is the correct measure, in the meantime the MEP agreed a confidence rating of 4 for this measure.

Chart 07 – Progress in dualling A9 and A96

David Oxley advised that the MEP can't influence this directly.

The Group agreed that a footnote be put with this measure explaining that they have no control over the measure. No confidence rating was given.

Chart 08 – Business Start Ups & Chart 09 – Business 5 year survival rate

David Oxley explained that this is measured by how many businesses open a new bank account and further explained that if Business Gateway is supported then this will be achieved. David advised the Group that the Moray Business Gateway is highly regarded. The MEP then discussed the opportunity for a young enterprise scheme in Moray with mentoring for the young people and further discussed the need to ensure that business are supported not only to start up but throughout the lifetime of the business.

The MEP then agreed a confidence rating of 4 for both of these charts.

Chart 35 – Percentage of households who have access to Next Generation Broadband

David Oxley explained that Moray is well positioned to achieve this quickly although highlighted that there will always be areas in Moray where there are problems and that the 5% without next generation should be kept under scrutiny. Jim Grant advised that he would like to see this as a priority in the Leader Local Development Strategy.

The MEP then agreed a confidence rating of 4 for this measure.

James Johnston went on to confirm that the Moray Economic Strategy would be reviewed with the intention of harmonising the two documents.

In response to a question from Gordon Sutherland, James Johnston confirmed that the table the Group were looking at would also remain a live document. Allan Wright reassured the Group that Moray 2023 would be reviewed on an annual basis.

James then thanked Jim Grant, Gordon Sutherland and David Oxley for the work they had put in.

8. PARTNER UPDATES

Murray Ferguson explained the background to the report and explained that they are trying to position the programme in order to meet the 9 outcomes. Proposed timescales are to submit in May 2014 with the intention of starting in May 2016.

Gordon Sutherland proposed that if approved, this could form part of the umbrella partnership under the MEP.

The meeting then approved the report.

9. AOCB

Margery McLennan advised that Moray Tourism Development function of the Chamber of Commerce is now up and running, a web site is coming soon

Tom McGarry advised that the Board of Management has now met and appointed a new principle to the Moray College UHI; Frank Hughes will start in August.

Gordon Sutherland advised he has been invited to speak at a Community Planning conference in June as Moray has been identified as an example of good practice with partnership working.

James Johnston advised that he felt it had been a really good morning and thanked everyone for their input. James further advised that the Moray Strategic Business Forum have met with ministers from both Westminster and Holyrood regarding what the whole notion of Independence meant for the Nation, and specifically Moray. There would be further engagements running up to the 18th September 2014 and the next scheduled event was a Review of the Economic Landscape by leading Scottish economists. James would keep the Partnership informed on the outcome of said engagement.