

**Moray Economic Strategy
Tourism and Culture Group Meeting
Thursday 8th of August, HIE Moray Board Room (Forres)**

MEETING NOTE

ATTENDEES	Margery McLennan (MM) – Moray Chamber of Commerce; Andrew Anderson (AA) and Nicole Green (NG) – Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Cllr Gary Coull (GC), David Duncan (DD) and Reni Milburn (RM) – Moray Council; Anna McPherson (AM) – Creative Moray; Tina McGeever (TM) – Out of the Darkness Theatre Company.
APOLOGIES	Gordon Paul (GP) – Wm Grant.

AA began the meeting by announcing MM as the new MEP Link and Chair of the Tourism and Culture Group. This is due to Mike Devenney stepping down as he moves into his new job with UHI.

1) Review of previous meeting note.

- Accepted as written.

2) Feedback on actions from previous meeting.

- **Speak to Kim Paterson regarding sports project group – GC.**

Kim Paterson is currently developing a sports strategy.

Sport Scotland are still keen to help but as discussed previously, this would be on a hub basis as opposed to one facility. This hub approach was favoured by the group.

The next step would be to establish a steering group for this. The steering group should be community based as the outcome is for use by the community.

The use of local halls etc will need to be considered.

The group agreed to wait until a timescale for Kim Paterson's strategy was known before moving further with this.

Action taken by GC to invite Kim Patterson to next meeting.

- **Follow up on Grant Lodge – MD.**

RM gave an update on the current status of Grant Lodge. A funding application has been submitted for the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. Results from this application should be available in late August.

- **Talk to Alistair Campbell (Elgin Library) about who the responsibility of visitor information points belongs to – AA.**

AA met with Alistair Campbell and found that there is no statutory responsibility for the Moray Council to provide visitor information. The Visitor Information point in Dufftown is

provided under partnership between Visit Scotland and Moray Council. Moray Council also provide the service in the Elgin Library and Falconer Museum in Forres. Elgin BID are also working in partnership with Moray Council to provide information points in retail outlets on a trial basis. The Cullen visitor centre is ran by the community and this was regarded as a great approach. The local people have an enthusiasm and great knowledge of their area.

- **Revisit priorities document and complete for next meeting – AA.**

A report was circulated by AA which had been submitted to the Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) earlier this week. The report details the approach the group has taken so far and an update on priorities and crossover projects. AA has asked to meet with Jim Grant (Development Group) with regards to attracting hotel developers to the area.

- **Find out current status of the Buckie Drifter – GC.**

ESF funding is in place with plans to use the Buckie Drifter as a training facility for the renewable energy sector. There have been some delays with this project and if it is no longer feasible, the funding can be used elsewhere in the harbour. This should be known in three months time.

The potential for the Buckie Drifter as an arts, culture, heritage centre was again recognised by the group but refurbishment will be required. Potential uses could be very flexible also including tourist information.

There is also potential funding for the first floor of Grant Lodge to be used by the creative industries and RM advised the location could be changed to Buckie if the location became available.

3) Reni Milburn – European funding.

- RM gave an overview of the new programme of European funding which looks to have a more strategic approach as opposed to challenge funding.
- Strategic Delivery Bodies will be designated funding to be spent over a number of years for specific priorities. These priorities fit neatly with the structure of the Moray Economic Strategy (MES).
- Social Inclusion – This could include town regeneration for example Forres – Grant Park through high profile events such as the European Pipe Band Championships.
- RM tasked the group with looking at the projects within the MES which fit with these themes and deciding which may be eligible for funding. If they are and they will be easy to implement they should definitely be taken forward.
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – capital projects; European Social Fund (ESF) – revenue, training, marketing projects; European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) – Agricultural, 5% LEADER; European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) – Community.
- In the new programme all of Moray is covered in the Highlands and Islands.

- Moray Council are currently undertaking a project – Technical Assistance Lessons Learned. This is looking at what has worked and what has not in the previous programme, delivery bodies, engagement with the Government etc.
- There is the potential for numerous local authorities to work together which is the preferred approach from Government.
- RM would like feedback by the end of August which may lead to a larger workshop later in the year. There should be a clearer picture of European funding by October.
- The World Host project could potentially be eligible for European funding.
- Action taken by NG to schedule a meeting for discussion.

4) David Duncan – Work with Development Group.

- DD explained that he joined the Development Group quite recently and will be meeting with the other groups in an attempt to avoid duplication of work on projects which may crossover into various strands of the Strategy. This should improve linkage and communication between groups.
- The main project which they are working on is the Redevelopment of Lossie Green from the Elgin High Street First Platform. This project looks at the areas of Lossie Green, Alexandra Road, the Town Hall, Cooper Park and Tesco.
- This project should link to the Tourism and Culture Group's Arts School/Centre project. A feasibility study into the use of Elgin Town Hall is to be undertaken and will be completed as soon as possible as this is the pre cursor for a masterplan.. DD advised the group that the Town Hall is an B-Listed building. Moray Council's current funding is for essential maintenance. Redevelopment or relocation are options to be considered in the long term. It is understood that a long-term aspiration of UHI is to relocate the facility as the building is no longer fit for purpose. This would either be into a new building or a masterplanned area of buildings. DD will be meeting with UHI to discuss this and student accommodation. An arts centre would need a significant private funding contribution to be sustained and would look to be multi-purpose with activities am and pm.
- DD also stated that the future of the High Street should not be retail focussed, with the idea to create a nightlife with footfall from Lossie Green moving to the High Street. However there is still a severance created by Alexandra Road. A previous idea of a bridge over Alexandra Road requires to be re examined DD will be meeting with the Transport group to discuss Alexandra Road.
- Nightlife ambience and student accommodation were noted as linked due to the footfall created. DD advised he will have discussions with developers to find out the reasons why they have not pursued this. UHI are looking into conversion of the flats above the retail outlets into student accommodation. This would attract students from outwith the area.
- The Community Centre can be included for examination in the master plan, to establish if the provision of facilities can be delivered in a different and more cost effective manner.

- The relocation of the bus station will also be integral to the masterplan. There is a current planning application for the St Giles Centre to extend over the bus station.
 - The implementation of the masterplan is a long term objective. It is therefore important to think strategically beyond the short term.
 - A hotel development in the High Street would be a great benefit to the town centre. The Northport area has already been identified as a possible site. There is a great shortage of larger accommodation space and conference facilities within the hotels in Elgin. It was agreed by the group that there are two different ideas here – a 3 star development for the High Street to attract footfall and a 5 star hotel to attract specific clientele.
 - With regards to the MEP Communications, Nasdaq have been procured to implement the website, which will also be used as an Inward Investment tool.
 - DD will be invited to all group meetings and attend as appropriate.
- 5) Tourism Strategy – Development and implementation, assign responsibilities.
- Moray Chamber of Commerce are currently working on their new business plan and cashflows etc which will be submitted to HIE early September.
 - There will be a Tourism Conference held at the Alexander Graham Bell Centre on the 6th of November. This will be hosted by Moray Council, HIE and Moray Chamber of Commerce. This has been arranged to present the discoveries found through the consultation process. Malcolm Roughhead (Visit Scotland) may be in attendance. The day will also incorporate visits to various tourist attractions including Knockando Woollen Mill and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society Dolphin Centre at Spey Bay. A boxed lunch will be provided by the UHI students. This event could potentially be the launch date for the Tourism Strategy, World Host, Moray Chamber of Commerce in new format and possibly the Arts and Culture Strategy.
- 6) Update on World Host work.
- The decision has been made to take forward this ambition for Moray. The project will be implemented on a geographical basis using the school catchment areas.
 - An invitation to various local representatives has been sent to no response so far and will be resent today.
 - Cameron Taylor (FACT) has already begun arranging training for this month in Forres.
 - AA and NG have made a first attempt at collating numbers of relevant businesses from these areas. The spreadsheet was circulated amongst the group who were all happy with these figures. The figures will be sent to the World Host steering group and the local representatives for approval. Two methods were used which arrived at very similar numbers which make the pass rate look very achievable.

7) Arts & Culture Strategy: Steering Group update.

- AM gave an overview on the work to date. While developing the Tourism Strategy it was recognised that a separate strategy was required for Arts and Culture. An engagement meeting was arranged which took place on the 30th of July in the format of a Culture Café. The event involved breakout sessions in which delegates were asked to identify the barriers and opportunities to the sector in Moray. Notes from this have been collated along with responses to a Survey Monkey. The aim is to build on the work of the Culture Café and notes from their previous meetings have been kept for reference. The event has led to seven expressions of interest to populate the steering group and a meeting will be arranged with this grouping. HIE has put out the tender for a consultant to be appointed to develop the Strategy which will be community based. The event did however show that there is still a divide between the East and West sides of Moray. Involving users and stakeholders from the start will be very beneficial towards the process and the consultancy brief.

8) AOB.

- Moray Guide – GC has been involved in discussions on whether the Moray Guide's format should be changed into a newspaper which the Northern Scot would produce and distribute. The group suggested that if it was updated regularly this would be a good idea but if only annually a glossy version would be better suited. The document should also be complemented electronically. This then led to a discussion on the need for an app for Moray.

9) Date of next meeting.

- TBC – After European Funding discussion.

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ACTIONS FROM MEETING

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APOLOGIES	Gordon Paul (GP) – Wm Grant.

AGENDA ITEM	DECISION	ACTION BY
2	Invite Kim Patterson to the next group meeting.	GC
3	Schedule a meeting for discussion of European funding.	NG

Key:

INITIALS	NAME OF PERSON
GC	Cllr Gary Coull
NG	Nicole Green