

**MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF WEALTHIER & FAIRER STRATEGIC GROUP
FRIDAY 27 AUGUST 2010
COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN**

PRESENT

Councillor J Russell (Chair)	The Moray Council
Councillor S Cree	The Moray Council
Councillor G McDonald	The Moray Council
Councillor P Paul	The Moray Council
Mike Devenney	Moray College
Calum MacPherson	HIE Moray
Lesley Ann Parker	Moray Chamber of Commerce
Casey Mainland	Youth Council
Susan Chalmers	Skills Development Scotland
Jean Grimshaw	Federation of Small Businesses
Helen Milnes	Voluntary Sector Partnership/Volunteer Centre

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor A Wright, Moray Council; Sandy Ritchie, Moray Council; Gordon Holland, HISTRANS; Alastair Kennedy, Joint Community Councils; Wing Commander Simon Carter, RAF Lossiemouth; and Wing Commander Anthony McCord, RAF Kinloss.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Planning and Economic Development Officer, Moray Council; Head of Development Services, Moray Council; The Corporate Policy Unit Manager, Moray Council; A Walker, Project Officer, Moray Council.

1. HIE PRESENTATION

Mr C. MacPherson gave a presentation on the current economic development issues and opportunities in Moray. This provided a summary of the main employment sectors within the region, i.e. the Royal Air Force, the public sector, and manufacturing. The presentation also highlighted possible key sectors for growth:-

- Tourism
- Food and drink
- Life sciences
- Creative industries
- Financial sector
- Renewable energy

2. STRATEGIC DEFENCE AND SECURITY REVIEW

The Group noted that, at present, there are approximately 5711 full time equivalent jobs provided by the two RAF bases in Moray which equates to 16% of the full time working population. The Group were asked to consider the implications if the Strategic Defence and Security Review reduces the size of RAF Kinloss and/or RAF Lossiemouth. These include:-

- House prices
- School rolls
- Indirectly affected businesses e.g. car sales

The Group were also asked to consider that a percentage of RAF personnel may wish to remain in the area due to the quality of life.

3. S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

The Group divided into two subgroups to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the local economy. It is intended that the information gathered at this stage be used to inform the forthcoming consultant study which is due for completion in January 2011. The Scottish Government, Community Planning Partnership, local businesses and the local community will be consulted in the information gathering stage of the consultant study.

The following areas were identified as requiring priority focus in the coming months:-

- Renewable energy
- A build up of school leavers at a time of reduced job opportunities
- A95, A96 improvements
- Marketing of Moray
- Using political advantage and influence for Moray's future

The discussions emphasised the need for the momentum to diversify Moray's economy be maintained, regardless of the outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, as the reliance on public sector employment and manufacturing may also have implications in light of the current economic climate. Information gathered during the S.W.O.T. analysis exercise is included in **Appendix 1**.

4. CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that the information gathered during the S.W.O.T. analysis activity be handed over to the consultant, and that it would also be used to shape the brief provided for the consultant by the end of September. The Scottish Government, Community Planning Partnership, local businesses and the local community will be consulted in the information gathering stage of the consultant study which is due for completion in early 2011.

It was further agreed that a report summarising the outcome of this meeting go to the next meeting of the Community Planning Board.

STRENGTHS (Group 1)

- Council and others committed to supporting the Economy
- Food Produced – Well Known
- Malt Whisky Capital (Manufacturing)
- Geographical location
- Tourism
- Environment – Desirable
- Social infrastructure – Swimming Pools, halls etc
- Major brands
- Low wage economy (also a weakness)
- Rail/Air/Harbour connections
- Desirable environment to locate to and live in
- Quality of Life
- Skilled work force (including traditional skills)
- Work ethic in Moray
- 5 'F's', fishing, flying, food, fermentation, farming
- College/UHI (also opportunity)
- Reasonable access/distance to further education in Moray
- Scottish culture
- Community culture & infrastructure

WEAKNESSES (Group 1)

- Environment of Elgin & other town centres
- Road conditions & road network
- Dispersed population
- High infrastructure costs
- Poor public transport
- Remote from UK Government, viewed as peripheral
- Young people outflow
- Low wage – use of immigrant labour
- Dependency on public sector
- Age structure – e.g. older groups
- Moray 2020 – too broad not a shared vision
- Moray – where's that? – lack of information about Moray's attractions
- Quality of support service

OPPORTUNITIES (Group 1)

- Elgin is the Capital of Moray
- Sell the benefits of Moray
- Green energy
- Life Sciences
- Creative industries (untapped skills & potential)
- Help bring ideas together
- Support, advice, training for businesses, employees
- Third Sector (voluntary)
- Elgin City of Future
- Review economic Sectors – what they should be doing to improve the economy
- Higher quality facilities & services
- More hotel, conference facilities (high quality)
- Joint rather than separate hospitality, eg single high quality hotel, not several separate projects
- College courses could support growth industries
- Moray brand
- Virgin-galactica
- Gaming businesses
- Closure of RAF bases – skills, sites could be available
- Support growth businesses
- Low cost of start up, eg wages, sites, premises

THREATS (Group 1)

- RAF Closure/Reduction
- Public Sector cuts
- Ageing population
- Climate change
- Competition – Inverness, Aberdeen (Moray marginalised) (Not benefiting enough from economy of adjoining areas). Competition within public bodies & centralisation of services and resources e.g. NHS Budgets may disadvantage Moray = Fight Our Corner
- Shared Services – Loss of jobs & influence
- Lack of accommodation for inward investment

STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES (Group2)

- Natural environment, Safe, Pace of Life, Cheap Housing = Quality of Life
- Employment incentives
- Renewables – supply Chain

- Iconic businesses
- Tourism – environment
- UHI/College
- High retention of people
- Character
- Forestry
- Forests – Tourism/environment, Energy, Construction
- Market opportunities
- Community spirit/involvement
- Social enterprise growth
- Central, not remote – Moray Firth
- Ancestral – whisky tourism – hotel/hospitality
- Food – The Best
- Labour Pool – affordable
- Engineering strong
- Community Planning – Co-terminous

THREATS/WEAKNESSES (Group 2)

- Public transport – transport infrastructure
- Public sector cuts – Education/Schools
- Inverness versus Aberdeen - Peripherality of Moray
- Population – Demographic – low numbers of returners in economically active ages
- Skills base – fewer graduates
- Decline in Oil & Gas / Fishing / Textiles
- Fuel prices
- Centralisation
- Build up of School/College leavers 18-25 group, reduced job opportunities
- Perceived affluence (no social deprivation)
- Housing prices
- Infrastructure – MB connectivity/POWER/Mobile
- Size of Local Authority, NHS in the local economy
- Arts/Culture infrastructure
- European Cash

PRIORITIES (Groups 1&2)

- A96/A95
- Marketing of Moray (help business to thrive)

- Education & training (to stem out flow of young people, more higher education would have positive impact on Elgin)
- Offshore wind/energy servicing etc.
- Quality accommodation
- Infrastructure – roads/broadband
- Political influence – over next 6 months on NHS, Defence infrastructure
- Market/promote Moray
- Renewable opportunity

AREAS FOR RAISING THE PROFILE OF MORAY, OR POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF MORAY'S MP, MSPs

Events – Speyfest – Whisky Festival
Highland – What's on?

Emergency Funding for issues

Urban development

Stars – Characters

Sports Facilities – Races, Marathons

Moray as the “Scot” in Scotland based on
Food, Culture, Tartan, Shortbread, History

MOD Infrastructure
Young People Needs

Findhorn – CIFAL

Visitors of Resource
