



MINUTE OF MEETING OF WEALTHIER & FAIRER STRATEGIC GROUP

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2009

COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillor J Russell (Chair)
 Councillor G McDonald
 Councillor P Paul
 Councillor A Wright
 Edna Cameron (representing Mike Devenney)
 Ian Fraser

The Moray Council
 The Moray Council
 The Moray Council
 The Moray Council
 Moray College
 HIE Moray

APOLOGIES

The meeting noted apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor S Cree (The Moray Council), Mike Devenney (Moray College), Jim Johnstone (Chamber of Commerce), Alan Bodman (Federation of Small Businesses), Gordon Holland (The Moray Council), Stewart Halkett (The Moray Council) Alastair Keddie (The Moray Council), Roy Anderson (The Moray Council) and John Ferguson (The Moray Council)

IN ATTENDANCE

Susan Chalmers (Careers Scotland), Kathleen Ryan (HIE Moray), Donald Lunan, Planning & Development Manager, Andy Jamieson Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Adrian Moar Local Authority Liaison Officer, Carol Sheridan Senior Employee Development Advisor, Bridget Mustard Corporate Policy Unit Manager, Alexander Ritchie Head of Direct Services and S Flett, Project Officer as Clerk to the meeting.

1. MINUTE OF MEETING DATED 21 MAY 2009

The Minute of the Meeting of the Wealthier and Fairer Strategic Group dated 21 May 2009 was submitted and approved as an accurate record, subject to Gordon Holland, HITRANS representative, being added onto the Sederunt.

In relation to item 7(i) 'Economic Recovery Response Form' Mr I Fraser, HIE Moray, updated the group that HIE's Economic Recovery Plan has been revised and will be circulated to the Group for information.

Under item 8(i) 'Strategic Transport Projects Review' Councillor Russell advised that a final meeting will take place with the Minister at Holyrood on 7 October 2009.

In response to a concern raised by Councillor Russell in regard to the absence of a report on the Community Planning Website, Mrs Mustard, Corporate Policy Unit Manager, apologised and explained that this was due to long term sick leave and that a report will be submitted to the next meeting.

It was agreed that Gordon Holland, as HITRANS representative and Susan Chalmers, Skills Development Scotland representative, should be added to the Sederunt.

2. LOCAL DELIVERY ACTION PLANS

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Policy Unit Manager asking that the Group note the current Local Delivery Action Plans and changes sought by the Community Planning Board.

Mrs Mustard explained that the Local Delivery Action Plans arose from the special meetings of each strategic theme group and were approved at the Community Planning Board on 27 August 2009 with the amendments stated in the report. It was also noted that there would be no need for these to go back for further approval provided the amendments were accepted.

A report detailing the progress in Quarters 1 & 2 would be submitted to the next meeting and that a full suite of the Local Delivery Action Plans would be available on the Community Planning Website.

At the conclusion of the formal agenda, the Group discussed the progress against the milestones in the Local Delivery Action Plans.

During discussion it was noted that progress is being made against all of the milestones with most of them having already met or are exceeding their expectations and targets with the exception of the Moray Towns Partnership action for which the funding was unsuccessful.

Furthermore, it was noted that:

- (i) a report along with a presentation from the Local Authority Liaison Officer on Road Safety would be submitted to the next meeting of this group.
- (ii) a report would be submitted to the Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee on the funded Leader Programme to establish where match funding is taking place and by whom.

3. REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL GROUPS

In response to an instruction from the Community Planning Board there was submitted a report by the Corporate Policy Unit Manager asking that the Group review membership of the operational groups, list the remit of each operational group and report back to the Community Planning Board on 19 November on the progress.

During discussion Mrs Mustard referred to the meeting of the Safer & Stronger Strategic Group which recommended that a full suite of operational groups be submitted to the Group in order to enable all partners to see the full resource commitment to Community Planning Structure and alignment to Single Outcome Agreement.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Paul in regard to the work of the Community Engagement Group, Councillor Wright explained that this was an important group within the Community Planning Partnership Structure but needs to re-focus. Mrs Mustard also advised that this group is the only group which has not reviewed its membership and remit as part of the development of the Single Outcome Agreement. This has now been approved by the Community Planning Board and should take place in the near future.

Thereafter, the group agreed to:

- (i) note that this was a work in progress;
- (ii) a report being submitted to the next meeting on operational groups and to include all 5 Strategic Theme Groups; and
- (iii) amend the organogram to place Destination Marketing organisation from Community Engagement Group and Wealthier and Fairer.

4. EUROPEAN FUNDING APPLICATIONS

There was submitted a report by the Planning & Development Manager, Moray Council, providing the Group with an update on European Funding applications. Mr Lunan informed the group that the report had been approved at the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee on 18 August 2009.

Mr Lunan stated that the Council is re-entering Loan Funding for Business Support, which has been made possible through using Business Gateway.

In response to a question from Councillor Russell about the Moray Assisted Recruitment Scheme (MARS), Mr Lunan explained that this is a different scheme to the Council's current apprentice scheme in that it is supporting a different client group. MARS will be looking at assisting vulnerable young people into employment.

Mr Fraser, explained that the Fairer Scotland Fund Manager has been putting together a European Funding bid for this project. Mr Fraser also explained that if successful, there will be funding available for 30 places on the MARS programme. Mrs Taylor was already speaking to local businesses to take on some of the apprentices.

Councillor Russell expressed his disappointment that the report submitted to the Community Planning Board on 27 August had not reached the Wealthier & Fairer Strategic Group. The Corporate Policy Unit Manager advised that she will keep the group up to date on the apprentice scheme.

After discussion the group then agreed that if the EU grant application was unsuccessful, then a report should be submitted for further consideration on whether the £400,000 available could then be used to fund a reduced number of places.

5. ELGIN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

There was submitted a report by the Planning & Development Manager, Moray Council, providing the Group with an update on The Elgin Business Improvement District (BID).

Mr Lunan also stated that the Elgin Business Improvement District (BID) will be the subject of a vote by local businesses in October/November. In response to a question, Mr Lunan explained that even if Elgin's BID is not successful other towns BIDs can still be progressed.

Mr Lunan explained to the Group that this was work in progress and that BID requires a 'yes' vote from the Elgin Community, the vote will take place in October/November. It was further explained that this is currently being led by The Moray Council but the ownership will be passed over.

6. GREEN BUSINESS SEMINAR

Mr Lunan, Planning & Development Manager, Moray Council, introduced an invitation from the Greener Strategic Group for the Group to be represented at the Green Business Seminar due to be held in the Elgin Library Gallery on 15 September 2009. It was explained that the objective of the seminar is to promote Green Business. Councillor G McDonald expressed that it was perhaps too short notice for people to attend and it was agreed that no action be taken.

5. MORAY BUSINESS PANEL FUTURE ROLE

Mr Fraser, HIE Moray, gave an oral update on the position of the Moray Business Panel. He explained to the Group that HIE will now take on the secretariat role for these meetings.

During discussion, Mr Fraser explained that in view of the lapse of time since the last meeting, he proposed to have a meeting as soon as possible,

probably towards the end of October. Mr Fraser to liaise with Councillor Russell in setting the agenda for the initial meeting but that the Business Panel themselves should take on the role of setting their own future agenda items.

Mr Fraser assured the Group that the Business Panel would work with the Wealthier & Fairer Group in terms of discussing Business Panel membership to include geographic, sectoral and company scale representation across Moray. In response to questions raised Mr Fraser confirmed that the Business Panel do not see membership being exclusive to HIE growth businesses.

It was noted that Mr Fraser would liaise with the Head of Development Services, Moray Council, to confirm any outstanding issues arising from the last meeting of the Business Panel before reconvening the group.

6. LIFE SCIENCE CENTRE UPDATE

Prior to discussing this item Councillor G McDonald raised a question regarding the Elected Members rights to discuss this report given their representation on the Planning and Regulatory Committee who have yet to consider the planning aspects of this project. After some discussion it was agreed to continue with this item but the Elected Members would not pass comment on it.

Thereafter the meeting considered the report submitted by Mr M Devenney, Moray College, which was presented by Mrs Cameron, on the progress of the proposed Moray Life Sciences Centre. Mrs Cameron explained to the Group that the starting point for this project was a request by NHS Grampian for designated accommodation for education and training.

During discussion, Mrs Cameron explained to the Group that within the new Life Sciences Centre, Moray College would hope to have the economic development of incubation pods along with rooms suitable for conferences, meetings and training. Mrs Cameron further explained that expenditure would need to be looked at and the cost of fees and extra costs would need to be taken into consideration but at the moment projects are coming in under budget and costs are currently being reviewed.

The meeting noted that there had been a large response during the tender process for the design of the new centre and that the contenders had been sifted to 6 in each category. It was also noted that the contract cannot be awarded until there is confirmation of funding.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Group will be held on Thursday 3 December 2009.

8. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

The Group noted the action sheet from the meeting of the Community Planning Board, dated 27 August 2009.