

MINUTE OF MEETING OF WEALTHIER & FAIRER STRATEGIC GROUP

THURSDAY 18 MARCH 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
Councillor A Wright	The Moray Council
Gordon Holland	HITRANS
Mike Devenney	Moray College
Calum McPherson	HIE Moray
Lesley Ann Parker	Moray Chamber of Commerce

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Susan Chalmers, Skills Development Scotland and the Head of Direct Services, Moray Council.

The meeting also noted that as the 3-day Federation of Small Businesses Annual conference was taking place in Aberdeen it would be unlikely for their representative, Alan Bodman, to be present at the meeting.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Corporate Policy Unit Manager, Moray Council, the Planning & Development Manager, Moray Council, the Anti Social Behaviour Co-Ordinator, Moray Council, A Walker, Project Officer, Moray Council, D Westmacott, Apprentice Committee Officer, Moray Council and the Senior Committee Services Officer, Moray Council, Clerk to the meeting.

1. MINUTE OF MEETING DATED 21 JANUARY 2010

The Minute of the Meeting of the Wealthier and Fairer Strategic Group dated 21 January 2010 was submitted and approved as an accurate record.

2. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2009/10

(i) QUARTER 3 MONITORING STATEMENT

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Policy Unit Manager, Moray Council, providing the Group with an update against the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) milestones relating to the Wealthier & Fairer theme as at the end of December 2009 and inviting the Group to note the exception comments made against milestones between 0% and 49%, details of which were summarised in Section 4.5 of the report. A copy of the Quarter 3 Milestone update was appended to the report.

The meeting noted that 90% of specific milestones due to be completed by December 2009, for which the Wealthier and Fairer Group are responsible for, are either complete or show good progress being made and that separate exception reports had been provided for the Elgin Traffic Management Plan, Investment Cost of A96 & A95 and the Moray Life Science Centre.

Following consideration the Group:

- (i) note the update of performance regarding the milestones due to be completed by December 2009, relating to the Wealthier and Fairer theme;
- (ii) note exception comments made against the milestones between 0 and 49% complete, at the end of the third quarter, within section 4.5 of the report;
- (iii) note the progress of each Key Action and the overall progress made against each Local Outcome at the end of the third quarter; and
- (iv) note that comments are made within section 4.8 against Key Actions identified as being at risk of not achieving 2009/10 target.

(ii) EXCEPTION REPORTS

(a) Elgin Traffic Management Plan

There was submitted an exception report by the Head of Direct Services, Moray Council, in regard to the preparation of an Elgin Traffic Management Plan which was augmented by a brief oral update by Gordon Holland, HITRANS, in the absence of the Head of Direct Services.

The meeting noted that the parameters of the plan have changed and that revised priorities and budget constraints mean that the development of a car parking strategy for Elgin has been deferred. It was also noted that an update to the traffic model is underway however due to other priorities within the overall plan this element will not be completed until the summer.

The meeting agreed to note the exception report on the Elgin Traffic Management Plan.

(b) Developing an Evidence Base to Support the case for Investment in the A96 & A95.

There was submitted an exception report by the Head of Direct Services, Moray Council, in regard to developing an evidence base to support the case for investment in the A96 & A95 which, it was noted is developing as it is being progressed. This information is being gathered to provide evidence as to how important the A96 & A95 roads are to the economy of Moray. The report was augmented by an oral update by Gordon Holland, HITRANS, in the absence of the Head of Direct Services, during which it was noted that a survey on freight movement on the A95 had been completed.

Following discussion the meeting agreed:-

- (i) to note the exception report; and
- (ii) that the information gathered in regard to freight movement on the A95 be circulated to members of the Group for information.

(c) Update on Moray Life Sciences Centre

There was submitted an exception report by Mike Devenney, Moray College, providing an update on the Moray Life Sciences Centre project and the reasons for the project not being on target. The report was augmented by an oral update by Mike Devenney, Moray College.

The meeting noted that whilst the delay in making the expected progress in gaining the go ahead for, and then development of, the Moray Life Sciences Centre is related to the unpredicted timescales involved in obtaining final financial commitment from all of the potential funding partners it is understood that all the partners have indicated that they will come to a decision before the May 2010 deadline for confirmation of partners backing for the project.

Following discussion the meeting agreed to note the exception report on the Moray Life Sciences Centre project.

3. POSSIBLE RAF/MOD RATIONALISATION IN MORAY

Under reference to Paragraph 4 (iv) of the Minute of the Group dated 21 January 2010 there was submitted a report by Calum McPherson, Moray Area Manager, Highlands & Islands Enterprise [HIE] updating the Group on some of

the activity and actions taken to by HIE and its partners in light of the potential impact the downscaling of RAF Bases in Moray, will have on the economy of Moray and the need to diversify given that the bases are only one of the many components which can impact on the economy of Moray.

Following consideration the Group agreed :

- (i) that the appropriate location for this issue is the Community Planning Task Group with regular update reports to the Wealthier & Fairer Strategic Group;
- (ii) that there is a need for a revised economic strategy for Moray;
- (iii) note the activity undertaken to date; and
- (iv) that the Community Planning Partnership should adopt a two line approach, one to retain the maximum MOD presence in Moray, and second to mitigate the impact on the area.

4. MORAY 2020

There was submitted a report by the Planning & Development Manager, Moray Council, providing the Group with a focussed report on the Moray 2020 strategy which links to the Single Outcome Agreement.

The meeting noted that the Moray 2020 strategy and action plan provides an important vision for the diversification of Moray's economy and is still relevant in 2010. It has provided a clear rationale and evidence of demand for proposals and has been an essential back-up document for a number of successful funding applications. It was also noted however that the data and strategies Moray 2020 has drawn from relies heavily on 2004 documents and research and as the national economy has changed dramatically since then, as has organisational priorities, resources and initiatives, it its considered vital the action plan is updated so as to ensure that it remains a working document, capable of achieving its vision.

Following consideration the Group agreed that there is a need to refresh and update the Moray 2020 strategy and, as a first step, it be remitted to the Planning and Development Manager, in consultation with Calum MacPherson, HIE Moray, to provide baseline information and report thereon to the next meeting of the Group.

On the conclusion of this item Calum MacPherson, HIE Moray, left the meeting.

5. EAST OF SCOTLAND LOAN FUND

There was submitted a report by the Planning & Development Manager advising the Group of the principles of the Constitution of the "East of Scotland Loan Fund Ltd". The report also confirmed Moray Council's participation in the

loan fund and advised on the proposed mechanisms for delivering loans in Moray.

During discussion clarification was sought in regard to the current position relating to the funds held by the Grampian Venture Capital Fund and it was agreed that the Planning and Development Manager would investigate the matter advise the Group.

Following consideration the Group agreed to note:

- (i) Moray Council's participation in the East of Scotland Investment Fund Company, subject to agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee to the forward commitment of £80,000 for 2011/12 and 2012/13;
- (ii) that councillor Russell had been nominated as the Council Member to represent the Council's interest on board of ESIF Ltd; and
- (iii) that the Chairman of the Moray Council's Economic Development & Infrastructure Services Committee and the Convener of the Council, in consultation with Councillors Divers and Leadbitter, in their capacity of their respective Group's spokesperson on this issue, were granted authority to form the panel of four members plus the member representing the Council on the Board of the Investment Fund company, when the ERDF grant has been awarded.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Group will be held on Thursday 10 June 2010.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Group noted the terms of the Action Sheet from the meeting of the Community Planning Board dated 4 March 2010.