

Appendix 1 – Summary of Engagement Event Feedback

This points below summarise the feedback received from consultation and engagement events held to inform the recovery plan with the private sector and communities.

1. Importance of digital and connectivity both in terms of hardware and provision but also skills and knowledge to be able to create online retail and systems with sufficient selling power.
2. Potential for Community to provide support through Hubs (energy hub example) to assist community groups and build capacity and the need to support communities to provide for themselves.
3. Concern that small to medium business have not received the levels of support through grant funding to be sufficient for their needs, a general feeling that micro business and large business were better positioned in terms of the grants and support available and recognising that in areas such as Moray, a handful of job losses in each company spread across a number of our local businesses will not attract the headlines or support of a larger company but will have a significant local impact in terms of number of jobs lost.
4. Concern expressed about the end of the furlough scheme and it will likely be a time when hard decisions have to be made on the retention of staff.
5. Suggestion that the eat out to help out scheme although welcome would be better if it was available later in the year when to encourage an extended season for eating out.
6. Concern from the hospitality industry over levels of occupation available with social distancing and the likely impact on winter and Christmas functions which will hit income hard and slow recovery.
7. Uncertainty expressed over the ability to pay Corona Virus Business Interruption loans that have been secured when interest becomes payable next year, caused partly by the uncertainty of trading conditions between now and June next year.
8. Impact on small business in terms of capacity to complete loan and grant applications, identified the need for support to provide expertise and capacity to take advantage of opportunities.
9. Recognition that community issues around food provision addressed during lock down may need longer term support to meet demand, together with increased benefits and financial advice for individuals.
10. Recognition on the importance and the challenges of town centres, the strength of independent retailers to adapt but the need for investment in town centres to help the transition to better day and evening economies.

11. The need for strong relationships with support agencies and better coordination and accessibility to of partners in delivering that support.
12. Recognition that young people tend to be disproportionately impacted by recession but also the need to assist everyone facing redundancy through PACE.
13. Acknowledgment that equity funding is usually the least attractive funding for business unless the funding partner brings with additional skillsets or value to the company.
14. The need to invest in the local economy by maximising local participation in procurement contracts by and supporting business in the tendering processes and supplier development and by creating contracts that have wider local benefits in relation to skills, training, employment and carbon benefits.
15. Recognition of the potential around a green recovery particularly with energy generation and potential for Hydrogen in the North East.
16. Infrastructure investment to support and boost the economy is seen as an important aspect of accelerating recovery. There are local signs of healthy order books in the short term but concern and uncertainty of the availability of public sector infrastructure works beyond the next 12 months.
17. Concern remains regarding the Housing market and impacts on construction jobs.
18. Need for support for start up business to help them become sustainable.
19. Recognition that Local Authority funding has been impacted significantly through loss of income and increased demand and that interventions will need to be targeted at areas of greatest need.
20. Concern over the potential loss of young people and skills from the area following redundancy and how we can retain critical skills in the area.
21. Demand that the growth deal funding needs to be provided over a shorter timeframe than 10-15 years to provide an economic boost from COVID 19.
22. Opportunity to promote the area as being a safe low infection risk area with good quality of life.
23. Warning of a rapid situation of rising unemployment and redundancy when the furlough scheme ends that will need a fast response in terms of assistance, training opportunities and retention of skills in Moray.
24. Needs to be clear links to match skills and training with areas of demand provided this autumn.

25. Impact on global tourism will impact high value brands from Moray and the area needs to be aware and lobby to support trading arrangements.
26. There needs to be increased provision of affordable housing, Planning and building standards systems needs to be fast and responsive and barriers removed.
27. There should be strong positive messaging about the area to counteract the negative scenarios and grasp opportunities for relocation to Moray.
28. A willingness from Business to assist in planning and helping to inform interventions and identify suitable options for improving town centres.