



REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 10 MARCH 2020

SUBJECT: MEDIA SERVICES FOR THE MORAY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval of funding for the provision of media services for the Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) from the Economic Development Budget.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (A) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to regulate and manage the finances of the Council in accordance with the policies determined by the Council and to prepare and review from time to time such rules as may be necessary for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that this Committee agree to allocate £15,000 from the Economic Development Budget each financial year from 2020/21 to 2022/23 for the provision of media services for the Moray Economic Partnership (MEP), with the caveat that funds will only be expended if each year funds are also contributed from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Moray College UHI.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 18 December 2012 (para 6 of the Minute refers), the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee agreed to allocate £25,000 per annum from the Economic Development Budget 2012/13 and 2013/14, as a partner contribution, to the provision of marketing, communications and engagement support to the implementation of the Moray Economic Strategy. This Committee endorsed this expenditure and subsequent allocations in 2015/16 and 2016/17.
- 3.2 On 21 March 2017 (para 11 of the Minute refers) this Committee agreed to allocate £25,000 for the financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19 with the option to extend for a further year, 2019/20, which was exercised. This was again done on a partnership basis with HIE and Moray College UHI to contribute to the provision of marketing, communications and engagement support to the

implementation of the Moray Economic Strategy. This contract will expire on 16 May 2020.

- 3.3 As agreed by the MEP, the Council has been asked to procure a media services contract for the partnership until the end of March 2023. Experience shows that to attract a suitable provider and minimise the work involved both to tender the contract and to develop a working relationship with the service provider, the contract should be for 2 years with provision to extend for a third year. The contract will be offered subject to the availability of funding from partners; that is, if there are no funds remaining during the contract, no work will be undertaken. Work is invoiced monthly in arrears so the budget is easily monitored. The existing contract was for 2 years with a provision to extend one year. The provision was exercised. The contract includes a provision that if the Moray Community Planning Partnership requires services, these may be commissioned separately.
- 3.4 In prior years HIE have contributed £17,500 per annum and Moray College UHI £20,000 total towards the contract. It was requested of partners that for this contract all partners contribute an equal share of £15,000 per annum. This was agreed by HIE however Moray College UHI can only commit to £5,000 per annum for the contract. Formal approvals in writing from both HIE and Moray College UHI are pending.
- 3.5 The purpose of the service will be to:
- Promote Moray as a place to live, work, invest and visit. Ways to tackle the lack of understanding of where and what Moray is as a region are needed.
 - Develop and deliver some eye-catching and engaging ideas which will have an impact on the region's ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce. Critical to this is the future workforce of the region and the 16 – 29 age group.
 - Promote the Moray Growth Deal projects and provide some innovative, digitally agile ways to keep the Moray community informed and engaged with the progress of these exciting developments. Recognition should be demonstrated over the lack of visibility of projects on the ground as the plans come to fruition.
 - Consider ways to promote the website 'My Moray' as a valuable resource as a shop window for the region. Contractors will be expected to suggest and provide content for it, as well as managing and populating the associated social media channels for 'My Moray'. All content should be produced in a way that allows multiple use of the material. This will include filmed material on occasions.
 - To provide an integrated measurable media relations service as required and liaise with partner press teams. Please note, partner press teams will be responsible for any news releases in relation to the Moray Growth Deal.
- 3.6 Over the past 3 years a main outcome of the contract has been the launch of the My Moray website, available at <https://www.mymoray.co.uk/>. In addition

to this the contract has supported the preparation of the growth deal with press releases, photography and the preparation of material for events at Downing Street and Dover House. Campaigns around promoting Moray as a place such as Moray Great Places and representation at the Culture Symposium have also been part of the contract. The provider has also been responsible for monitoring and managing social media across a range of themes.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Moray 2026 “The Ten Year Plan” identifies Sustainable Economic Development as its top priority. The Plan includes, but is not limited to, outcomes to increase the population, regional average wage, employment by the private sector, employability, the number of business start-ups, the number of start-up businesses that survive beyond three years and the percentage of premises that have access to Next Generation Broadband. Sustainable Economic Development is also the Council’s top priority in terms of the Corporate Plan and this report relates to ongoing activity and actions identified in the Corporate Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council considers support for economic development issues on their merits, against the objective to facilitate sustainable economic growth and the desired outcomes of the Ten Year Plan and Corporate Plan. The Council is currently working with partners to develop a Moray Growth Bid and marketing of Moray is seen as adding significant value to those potential investments.

(c) Financial implications

£15,000 per annum to be allocated for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 with the option to extend to 2022/23.

This this requires the standard paragraph –

When the council approved the budget for 2019/20 on 27 February 2019 (para 4 of the Minute refers), the three year indicative budget before the council showed savings required in 2020/21 of £12.2 million and £6.7 in 2021/22. Although the final figures will vary, it is clear that the council will have to reduce its costs significantly across all services in future years. All financial decisions must be made in this context and only essential additional expenditure should be agreed. In making this determination the committee should consider:

- Is there a statutory requirement to incur the expenditure?
- Are there any alternative actions available to avoid or reduce the cost?
- Are there alternative ways in which the service could be provided?

- What are the risks and consequences of not allocating the funding?
- Does the expenditure contribute to long term financial stability?

If in light of these factors the spend is considered essential, Committees should consider how it could be accommodated within the service budget, including what other activity would have to cease or diminish with what impact and risk. Only following these considerations should request be made to the Council for additional budget allocation.

This expenditure is considered necessary in the context of the Moray Economic Partnership and Moray Growth Deal and can be met from within existing Economic Development budget.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications

(e) Staffing Implications

Oversight will be done with existing staff resource

(f) Property

There are no property implications

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no Equalities implications

(h) Consultations

The Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Head of Financial Services, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer), Nicola Moss (Transportation Manager) and the Equalities Officer. Any comments received have been considered in writing the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 This committee is being asked to approve £15,000 per annum for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 with the option to extend for a third year, 2022/23.

5.2 The Council is engaged in securing a Moray Growth Deal which will act as a catalyst for growth in Moray. To capitalise on this there must be an effective way of marketing the region that is properly resourced.

5.2 This is being jointly funded by Moray Council, HIE and Moray College UHI.

Author of Report: Michael O'Donnell, Senior Officer Economic Strategy and Growth

Background Papers: None

Ref: <https://www.mymoray.co.uk/>