

HIGHLAND ECONOMIC FORUM

14.00 25th November 2013

The Chamber, HQ, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness

In attendance: Marie MacIntosh , Highland Opportunity
Carol Langston, Create, Inverness College UHI
Fraser Grieve, SCDI
Maria Peter, Highland Council
Alex Johnson, visit Scotland
Kate MacLean, NHS
Melanie Newdick, Fusion
David Richardson, FSB
Pauline Dingwall, IOD
Gary I Campbell, UHI
Diane Rawlinson, Inverness College UHI
Michael Koetsier, HIE
George Hamilton, Highland Council
Andrew Taylor, Highland Council
Marena Jordan, Jobcentre+
Seonag Capbell, SDS
Derek Cairns, Skills Development Scotland
Lesley Benfield, Fort William Chamber of Commerce

Apologies: Dorothy Low, Highland Council Ranald Robertson, HiTrans
Martin Johnston, HIE Alastair Nicholson, HIE
Charlotte Wright, HIE Robert Muir, HIE
Neil MacRae, HiTrans Stephen Boyd, STUC
Fiona Ambrose, UHI

NOTE OF MEETING

TP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Note of Last Meeting

Agreed

Actions arising: Gary I Campbell (GC), UHI, provided an update on the energy sector skills agenda which has been taken over by the SDS regional skills investment plan. He reported that some developments within Fergus Ewing's taskforce were to be in the Highland Area. Seonag Campbell (SC) reported that the National Energy Skills Plan is currently being updated and will be available in March 2014.

2. Single Outcome Agreement (Martin Johnston, HIE)

Item to be moved to next meeting as Martin Johnston unable to attend at short notice

3. Highland Economic Forum Update (Steve Westbrook)

Steve Westbrook (SW) provided an update on the website (presentation attached) which is almost ready for use. He explained the use of the different areas of the site, including public and private areas, as well as the inward and outward facing information.

SW discussed the different roles of the Enterprising Highland Website, and explained how each section works for businesses. He demonstrated the positive measures which would be available for businesses publishing on the website. It is expected that the website will be available for general use by March, and further information on how to log in to the site will be forwarded by Kenny MacInnes and Andrew Taylor (AT) nearer the time.

Discussion was had on the general use of the site, the marketing which will be required and how the site will add value to current initiatives. There was general agreement on the aims of the website, AT provided further explanation as to how the two faces of the site would work.

SW continued with information regarding the employment areas which are most likely to bring jobs into the Highlands, these included food and drink, energy, life sciences, tourism, and ICT broadband rollout opportunities, as well as current initiatives in these areas.

Melanie Newdick provided a brief update on Fusion's incubator services, and open events.

Gary I Campbell discussed the current situation regarding the tourism skills academy which may be part of the new UHI campus; broadband, he explained that there are some case studies already available, including "dotrural" which looks at broadband rollout in Aberdeenshire; and the food & drink initiative which is to be centred around the A96 corridor. He also requested that anyone who would be interested in putting a building on the new campus site with regards to these areas should contact him. Contact details are available from Viccie Masson.

4. CREATE/Business Gateway (Marie MacKintosh/Carol Langston/Maria Peters)

TP introduced Marie MacIntosh, Carol Langston and Maria Peter. MM gave a presentation providing a brief update on the current state of Highland Opportunity, including some information on the 'Business Growth Programme' which will be running until January 2015, and various events/master classes. She also provided an update on Youth Business Scotland, describing the large number of businesses created in the area, and the increased uptake within schools for Young Enterprise Scotland.

CL provided some background to CREATE, giving examples of the type of support for young people they provide, the services they offer, and support for teachers to encourage

students, including the annual Highland Innovation Week. CL explained that they are there to foster and stimulate young people/businesses.

A request was made for a piece of work explaining how to ensure young people have the right attitude towards work to be brought to future meeting.

5. Scottish Cities Alliance (Stuart Black/PriceWaterhouseCoopers)

SB introduced the workshop run by PriceWaterhouseCoopers which took up the remainder of the meeting.