

# BUSINESS GATEWAY MORAY QUARTERLY ACTIVITY & PERFORMANCE REPORT

1 July – 30 Sept 2022



UHI Moray 10.00am - 4:00pm

### **Cost of Doing Business Crisis**

*We're seeing a toxic cocktail of rampant inflation, high taxes, soaring energy costs and shrinking economic growth –with many Moray businesses really struggling to keep their doors open. Interventions at a national level are now needed to prevent the loss of even more businesses.*

*The cost of living crisis can't be solved without addressing the cost of doing business crisis. Feedback from Moray businesses included the following ways of addressing some of the barriers to survival and potential growth which could help them:*

- *The increase in NI reversed*
- *VAT cut (especially for hospitality sector)*
- *Fuel duty reduced*
- *Financial support on energy bills to match that being given to households.*
- *NDR relief*

### **Feedback & Overview**

- *Hospitality businesses continue to be hit hard – e.g. Many bars and restaurants have seen prices for mixers and soft drinks spiral and are having to absorb this increase or put up their prices which in turn reduces individual buying power*
- *Moray businesses are doing their absolute best to offer good value to customers, but their margins are being squeezed just as consumers' disposable falls.*
- *Businesses are reporting that as they come off their utility fixed term tariffs their energy bills are soaring and so relief on this front is urgent. These bills are huge, unmanageable sums for businesses whose margins have been battered and their reserves have been depleted by the disruption to trading caused by the pandemic and the cost of goods rising.*
- *We are not seeing micros grow in Moray so as a result we don't have the numbers of SME's growing and employing people or investing in their businesses. In order to grow the Moray economy we need to fill the increasing gap between micro and larger businesses which is growing fast. Solutions on how this are likely to be addressed will be developed in a 'refresh' of the Moray Economic Strategy which is being discussed by the Moray Economic Partnership.*

## Q2 - Performance Statistics

BG MORAY STATS 2022/23	Jul '22	Aug '22	Sep '22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Y to D	Yearly Target
Business Start-Ups	9	13	7	46	29			75	130
Placed-Based Growth Support (BG/HIE)	4	1	1	7	6			13	20
Total No. of Enquiries	81	87	57	188	225			413	800
START UP Webinars									
No. of National S/U Webinars	3	5	4	7	12			19	50
No. of Moray delegates attending	3	8	9	19	20			39	200
Growth Webinars and Investor Ready sessions									
Days 1-2-1 Specialist Growth Support	4	0	0	0	4			4	20
No. of National Growth Webinars	1	2	2	6	5			11	30
No. of (Moray) Delegates	1	2	3	8	6			14	60
No. of Local Workshops	0	0	0	0	0			0	5
No. of Delegates attending	0	0	0	0	0			0	40
1-2-1 Investor Ready Financial Sessions	4	1	1	7	6			13	20
Digital Boost									
No. of National Webinars	9	13	12	19	34			53	100
No. of (Moray)Delegates	13	18	20	36	51			87	220
Local 1-2-1 Projects (18 hrs)	1	1	0	1	1			2	4
Local 1-2-1 Digital Surgeries (1 hour)	1	0	4	1	5			6	12
Additional Moray Events									
No. of Additional BG/Partner Events	0	0	1	1	1			2	10
No. of attendees	0	0	693	15	693			708	500
Moray Economic Recovery Plan Support									
Brexit 1-2-1 Specialist Support sessions	1	0	0.5	3	1.5			4.5	N/A
Procurement 1-2-1 Specialist Support sessions	0	0	0	0	0			0	N/A

## BUSINESS START UPS

Q2 saw a good number of enquiries many of which have converted into new business start-ups in Moray despite the quieter summer holiday period. A total of 29 have started and registered with HMRC and / or Companies House with 32 FTE jobs being created.

Business type varies across the key sectors including Food & Drink, Manufacturing, Media and Tourism. Although retail is still struggling overall, vacant town and village centre properties are being taken by new tenants.

The recently launched Covid Economic Recovery Fund being delivered by Economic Development Team and includes:

### **Town Centre Capital Business Start-up grants**

A good uptake of the council Capital Business Start-up grants have been received from individuals looking to set up new businesses in many Moray wide town and village centres.

Although this fund is due to run until March 2023 given the current uptake in applications the funds are likely now to be exhausted before that date.

[http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_141550.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_141550.html)

### **Types/location of start-ups this quarter:**

Type of Business	Location
Environmental services	Elgin
Media Production	Lhanbryde
Embroidery designs	Elgin
Beauty Services	Lossiemouth
Barber	Elgin
Knife sharpening	Kinloss
Online Gift Shop	Buckie
Protein Cakes & Bakes	Elgin
Upcycled Lights	Portknockie
Bar/ Restaurant	Forres
Online Specialist Auction House	Portgordon
Consultant	Archiestown
Street Food Van	Craigellachie
Painting Workshops(& Prosecco)	Lossiemouth
Asian Groceries	Elgin
Cakes & Bakes	Garmouth
Painter & Decorator	Lossiemouth
Café and Child play	Elgin
Carpenter	Elgin
Electrician	Mosstodloch
Affordable Vintage Audio	Burghead
Pot Natal/Yoga classes	Buckie
Art Therapy	Forres
Toddler Group	Buckie

Business Gateway also delivered a number of start-up business skills webinars in Q2

### ***These included topics such as:***

The Essentials of Bookkeeping
How to Start a Business – the basics
Writing a business plan
Successfully starting a business
Protect and manage your Intellectual Property

## BUSINESS GROWTH SUPPORT

Several established businesses sought support from BG to grow innovate or diversify and a number of business purchases have taken place during this quarter. 6 received Investor Readiness intensive support to help them develop and realise their ambitious plans whilst creating /retaining jobs. These included those in key sectors.

### **Town Centre Capital Business Improvements grants**

These grants continue to be available to Moray wide town centre businesses for internal and external capital works to their premises to create a COVID safe environment and improve the attractiveness of the business to encourage people to shop local and to create greater footfall.

A high number of applications are currently being processed with external and internal works being carried out to help improve overall appearance and health and safety aspects of businesses. Due to the high level of demand, funds may be exhausted before the closing date of March 2023.

A number of business growth webinars were also delivered

***These include topics such as:***

HR – Recruiting, managing, and retaining staff
The business benefits of running a sustainable business
Build your brand and promotional graphics
Learning zone: Managing risk – How to prepare for the unexpected
How to generate and increase sales

## BG LOCAL MARKETING/PR

BG Moray's Facebook and Twitter Pages remain important marketing platforms for our business skills webinars, BG events and sharing information from our stakeholder partners about support available to Moray businesses. Posted or shared on our social platforms during Q2:

- BG core Start-up and growth business skills webinars
- Launch of HIE Young Business Capital investment Grant
- A96 dualling Survey Moray Chamber of Commerce
- Moray Pathways Market Place Events
- Meet The Buyer North Event 7 Sept 2022 @ UHI Moray
- Launch of the Town Centre Capital Business Improvements grants & Town Centre Capital Business Start-up grants
- Help Shaping the future Event UHI Moray
- Notice to local suppliers to tender for their upcoming fresh meat catering
- SDP - Completing the Single Procurement Document webinar
- SDP - Helping you Bid Better webinar
- Findhorn Bay Festival

BG Moray has taken digital advertising space in the Elgin Youth Development Group Café (EYDC) which is now open to the public. This was done using National marketing budget allocated to regional offices. Footfall has increased substantially as their cafe has opened to the public and Moray Pathways are also now using this facility as a regular hub for their events and 121 client meetings.

## **National Marketing Activity Q2**

### ***Helping you access the right support – whatever your business needs***

Scotland's business support network is responding to the multitude of challenges facing businesses right now with their new awareness campaign 'Whatever Your Business Needs'

Business Gateway, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise, all 32 local authorities and Skills Development Scotland are working together to signpost companies to [FindBusinessSupport.gov.scot](https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot) – a single online source where they can find information on all the business support services available across Scotland regardless of location, sector, size or stage of development. Find Business Support is a streamlined, user-centric platform that Scotland's business owners can use to access targeted support to help them realise their goals – whether they're looking to start-up, develop or transform. The platform was initially designed to help Scottish businesses more easily navigate the busy COVID support landscape from a single online entry point and to find the support they need quickly.

The FBS platform has been developed further to give everyone an overview of **all** the support offered by public sector organisations across Scotland. Since its launch in late 2019, the website has been used over 1.35m times by those looking for COVID support in particular, and we envisage that this campaign will encourage anyone looking to start up or grow their business to visit the site to access the right support at the right time.

### **National Marketing Campaigns:**

The Planning to Start campaign launched on the 15th August and ran for 4 weeks across social and display. The Scottish Business Week campaign runs from the start of September until the week commencing the 3rd October. National marketing activity will also be dependent on the evolving Cost Crisis situation and may have to be adapted as we move forward.

We are exploring new ways to reach different audiences and are going to try some new channels with the October campaign and are likely to include more out of home advertising and possible new social channels such as Pinterest.

Proposed future campaign dates are:

- Aug – Sept: Planning to Start September
- Scottish Business Week October
- New national campaign Jan – March

All stakeholder partners are working together on the Cost Crisis to make sure businesses can get access to the support they need as they navigate these exceptionally challenging times. There may be a joint campaign on the Cost Crisis in the coming months –although this is still to be confirmed.

**National Webinars:** We are trialling a new format with some sessions being run with a short (15 min presentation) followed by a detailed 45 min Q&A session. Initial feedback has been positive and we will continue to monitor for a period of 3 months. The frequency of national webinars will be reduced to allow more space in the schedule for locally slanted webinars with each one now running once a month. Webinar numbers are slightly down on previous quarter and this is no doubt due to holidays but also 'webinar fatigue.' We are looking to address this by promoting them as part of the October campaign messaging and in different formats to try and interest new audiences.

**Panel webinars:** We are starting to organise a panel webinar exploring how businesses can operate more efficiently in response to rising energy costs. Suggested panellists are: Business Energy Scotland, Eyebright Utilities, Visit Scotland, and Zero Waste Scotland. More details as soon as we get the date confirmed.

## DIGITAL BOOST / BG LEARNING ZONE

### **Digital Boost Programme Phase 7 – Q2:**

At end Q2 - 2 DB projects had already commenced helping business to develop their digital presence and 5 x 1- hr. surgeries have also been delivered to Moray businesses who had specific digital problems seeking to be resolved.

Digital Boost webinars have been refreshed on our webpages and topics available in Q2 are:

- How to build a digital marketing plan – DigitalBoost
- Video production for social media – DigitalBoost
- LinkedIn for business – DigitalBoost
- Website analytics to improve your business and sales - DigitalBoost
- Cloud for business – DigitalBoost
- Facebook for business – DigitalBoost
- Instagram for business – DigitalBoost
- Paid for advertising – DigitalBoost
- Learning zone: Managing risk – How to prepare for the unexpected

These new 'Learning Zone's' will take a different format to the regular national webinars. They will be 1 hour in length, starting with a 15-minute talk from the trainer, followed by 45 minutes of discussion/Q&A.

## ADDITIONAL LOCAL ACTIVITIES / EVENTS

**Food & Drink Procurement Event - Food for Moray.** This event which took place in Elgin Town Hall on 7 June was aimed at butchers, bakeries and fruit & veg vendors to encourage their engagement in the Councils up and coming tenders for these areas. BG Team was there to support any businesses seeking to find out more about how the tendering process (PCS/PCST) works and also offering business advice in general. 18 business attended.

**POP-UP Shop Scheme:** This scheme has been running successfully in Buckie over the past 3 months. 2 buildings in Elgin have now been identified as suitable to enable potential new venture to test their business viability and test the market locally – this is started in Q2 and will continue until Dec 2022. These 'residencies' will be for 6 weeks at a time on a revolving basis through until Dec 2022 as approved by Council. BG office has now been set up for a pop up business to take space and will return to its offices in Jan 2023. It is hoped that this will help transform empty buildings on many High streets in Moray and also increase footfall to help keep existing businesses trading successfully.

### **SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - Meet the Buyer North Event 7 Sept 2022 @ UHI Moray**

Moray was delighted to host the above event in 2022. The Supplier Development Programme held the 5th Annual Meet the Buyer North as an in-person, face-to-face event with headline partner: Scottish Government.

Focusing on one-to-one in-person networking, Meet the Buyer North 2022 allowed businesses to connect with "real" buyers from right across the public sector, as well as private contractors with supply chain opportunities and business support providers, all under one roof. This free event enabled suppliers in Moray and across the North of Scotland unprecedented access to buyers and decision makers from across the public and private sectors, with the opportunity to raise their profile and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities. Businesses were able to meet procurement teams from local councils, alongside other public and private sector buying organisations. There was a hybrid option for remote suppliers to participate in the main agenda, speakers and presentations at the in-person event were broadcast on Microsoft Teams by UHI Moray. 693 businesses registered for this event and it certainly was a lively and busy day for the 30+ Buyers who attended. Feedback from meeting with this businesses attending was that it was a very useful event and that many of the myths around supplying the public sector had been addressed in a positive way. Business Gateway joined colleagues from Moray Council Procurement Team stand along with the Moray Growth Deal Team. Business Gateway offered general advice to Moray businesses as well as information about SDP (Moray is a full member) and 121 support available through the Moray Recovery fund Procurement Consultancy Programme.

**Scottish Business Week:** 3-7 October 2022. Speakeasy were the successful winners of the tender and they will be our event partner, looking after the technical aspects including the platform and sessions on the day. A draft programme has been agreed by all stakeholder partners and we have a sponsor this year in the British Business Bank - promotion began in early September.