



**REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING "WEALTHIER STRATEGIC GROUP"
ON 21 AUGUST 2008**

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LOCAL BUSINESS
COMMUNITY**

BY: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To present proposals to the Strategic Group to develop opportunities for engagement with the local business community.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Group agrees to:-

- 1. the proposals for a Dinner and Seminar with representatives of the business community and**
- 2. proposals for further engagement with the local business community, arising from that meeting, be developed in consultation with members of the Group, prior to the next meeting of the Steering Group.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On 5th June 2008 the Strategic Group agreed in principle to the formation of a Local Business Panel, a proposed seminar for "growth businesses", and proposals to establish an annual conference for discussion of the local economy. These actions would assist engagement between the local business community and the Community Planning Partnership, in order to discuss matters relating to the economy and to achieve improvements to the local economy.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 An evening meeting to include a dinner and subsequent discussions about the local economy and joint working between the business community and Community Planning Partnership, would be arranged. At that event there could be invitations extended to one representative of each of the main economic sectors in Moray, to include:-

- Financial and business services
- Tourism, hotels and catering
- Retail and wholesale
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture and rural industries
- Tourism
- Public administration (The Moray Council)
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Royal Air Force
- The whisky industry
- Food and drink
- Textiles
- Business organisations (Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Commerce)
- Educational establishments (Moray College)

4.2 The number of attendees could be approximately 15 to 20, based on the above list of representatives from business sectors.

4.3 The event would be based on the following agenda:-

1. Welcome and dinner (to be hosted by HIE and The Moray Council)
2. Short presentation by HIE and The Moray Council on the reasons for and aims of the evening event.
3. Discussion about the role and membership of a Local Business Panel, its links with HIE and the Community Planning Partnership "Wealthier" Steering Group.
4. Opportunities for regular communications between the local business community and the Community Planning Partnership.
5. Other matters which could be developed alongside the Local Business Panel and methods of engagement.

The intended outcome of the evening would be proposals and support for the establishment of a Local Business Panel, which would be arranged initially by HIE and The Moray Council. Further information on the role and membership of the Panel will be provided at the meeting on 21st August 2008. Arrangements for future events such as business seminars could be left to be the responsibility of the Panel, or could be developed in advance of that Panel, depending on the outcome of the initial seminar.

4.4 It would be intended to hold this seminar in early to mid September 2008. Initial investigations have been undertaken with hotels in Elgin for such an event and other information will be made available at the meeting of the Strategic Group.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposals for a dinner and seminar will involve costs which will be met by HIE and The Moray Council.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed dinner and seminar will bring together key representatives of the local business community to help establish a Local Business Panel, and other methods of engagement between the local business community and Community Planning Partnership.

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Background Papers:

Ref: SH/BDH