

Item: 12

Policy and Resources Committee: 22 June 2021.

Economic Recovery Steering Group.

ASPIRE Orkney – Progress Update.

Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an update in relation to ASPIRE Orkney's activity during May 2021.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, on 25 November 2020, the Council resolved that the detail of the ASPIRE Orkney programme be subject to further consideration, in the context of the Council's corporate plan, by the Policy and Resources Committee, with effect from January 2021, and thereafter as a standing item for the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.2.

That progress updates in relation to ASPIRE Orkney's activity were presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 23 February and 20 April 2021.

2.3.

That the main activity undertaken during April and May 2021 has been the recruitment process associated with the programme management resources, with interviews having taken place on 21 April 2021, and an offer of employment made thereafter.

3. Background

3.1.

On 25 November 2020, when considering the proposed allocation of funding towards establishment of dedicated programme management resources to support the ongoing work of the Economic Recovery Group, the Council resolved inter alia that the detail of the ASPIRE Orkney programme be subject to further consideration, in the context of the Council's corporate plan, by the Policy and Resources Committee, with effect from January 2021, and thereafter as a standing item for the Policy and Resources Committee.

3.2.

An update on the activity associated with the Economic Recovery Steering Group was presented to the Policy and Resources Committee, at its special meeting held on 23 February 2021. The Committee subsequently recommended that a Members' Seminar be arranged, as soon as practicable after establishment of the dedicated programme management resources, to review the ASPIRE programme with a particular focus on any activity which might have a direct bearing on Council policies and programmes.

3.3.

A further update was presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 20 April 2021, where it was noted that the main activity undertaken during March and April 2021 has been the recruitment process associated with the programme management resources, with interviews due to take place on 21 April 2021.

4. Progress to date

4.1.

Since 20 April 2021, an interview process has been conducted with an offer made to appoint a Programme Officer, pending work to establish a mechanism to receive the grant award being concluded.

4.2.

The business representatives have established a limited company, ASPIRE Orkney Limited, to act as the mechanism to support the work of the Economic Recovery Steering Group. This model has been agreed by Council officials as an appropriate mechanism to direct Council approved funding for the work of the Economic Recovery Steering Group. ASPIRE Orkney Limited was formally incorporated on 26 April 2021. It is anticipated that a grant award to cover the costs of the programme manager can shortly be made which will allow the recruitment of a programme officer to be concluded.

4.3.

It remains very important to ensure full and detailed appraisal and understanding of the appropriate interaction between the emerging Economic Recovery Steering Group Vision and Action Plan and approved Council plans, policies and programmes, in order to avoid duplication, but also to avoid risk of any conflict or confusion in relation to approved Council policy.

4.4.

To support the appraisal and understanding referred to above, the Committee previously agreed that a Members' Seminar be organised to review the Economic Recovery Steering Group's ASPIRE Vision and Action Plan, with a particular focus on any activity which may have a direct bearing on Council policies and programmes. The timing of the Members' Seminar will be as soon as possible, pending conclusion of the recruitment process.

5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council's response to the economic challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts to support the Orkney Economy through the pandemic are considered in line with the Council Plan priorities.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Aspects

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Contact Officer

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