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A Word from the Chair...

This newsletter comes at a very challenging time for the economy, Scottish Government published their responses to both the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery (AGER) Report and the Enterprise and Skills Board (ESSB) Report on 5th August - You can view the AGER response [here](#) and the ESSB response [here](#). Local Government responded to the advisory groups and provided submissions and contributions to Scottish Government to help inform an effective response. As Local Authorities start to implement our individual and collective economic recovery plans much remains to be done and this continues to be the main focus of SLAED members and the Strategic and Thematic Groups.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank colleagues for their sterling work, commitment and ongoing contributions to ensure that we build back better striving for a more inclusive and sustainable economy with the well-being of our communities at the core.

I also thank our partners who have worked alongside us in a new spirit of collaboration as we collectively seek to deal with the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves as we look to take place based approach to our combined efforts.

Pamela Smith
SLAED Chair



Business Gateway Helps Businesses Start-up, Restart and Rebuild Post COVID-19

As lockdown measures ease and businesses across the country open up after months of ceased or altered trading, Business Gateway has been focused on helping business owners navigate the challenges posed by their new, post COVID-19 environment. This follows the network's swift adaptation to continue delivery of the service in a new virtual environment over the past four months.

While some are restructuring or diversifying their business model, other individuals who have found themselves redundant or starting again are seeking support with starting up despite the challenging economic environment.

A recent agenda piece in the [Herald](#) with Chief Officer Hugh Lightbody, highlights some of the areas where local advisers have been consulting with these individuals to set them out on the strongest footing. Redevelopment of the Planning to Start tool is also in planning, to ensure thorough and efficient signposting of new clients seeking support with their business journey.

Meanwhile, the national unit is also preparing for a campaign, scheduled to run from early September until November, to raise awareness of the support available to those restarting and building back better, as well as those starting up. This will encompass radio, TV, out of home, print and digital media advertising and will be bolstered with PR and the ongoing production of video tutorials and online resources which can be accessed 24/7 via the Coronavirus business support hub on Bgateway.com.

Business Gateway's Connections podcast series has also been a popular resource for business owners over the past month, addressing issues including furlough, redundancies and Test and Protect, with the forthcoming episode focused on supporting the emotional and physical wellbeing of employees at this time. Episodes can be accessed [here](#).

Furthermore, planning is underway for further development of the DigitalBoost programme, following a funding lifeline, announced in August by Economy Secretary, Fiona Hyslop. The additional £1.5million of funds attributed to Business Gateway's DigitalBoost programme, offers a critical lifeline to businesses looking to upskill in digital in order to keep their business buoyant following the pandemic.

SLAED People Group Update



During that past months there has been exceptional and unprecedented change within the employability landscape as we deal with the health, wellbeing and economic shocks of Covid 19 on those who both provide and access employability services across Scotland. Local Authority employability leads have been working with key stakeholders to continue to design and deliver services as we start to emerge from this crisis and try to build back better.

The role of employability services is pivotal in supporting those

ensure that the right support is put into place at the right time for those who need it most. In addition, we have been responding to the emerging recommendations from the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery and the Enterprise and Skills Board focusing on the Youth Guarantee and Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) at the same time as delivering on [No One Left Behind](#) and the Parental Employment Support Fund.

Working with Scottish Government we are taking forward our shared ambitions through the [Partnership Agreement](#) and working with public, third and private sector partners further details can be found via the Employability in Scotland website www.employabilityinscotland.com and the Employability Resource Hub for COVID-19 [Covid 19 Employability Resource Hub](#).

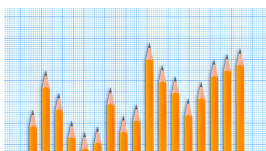
SLAED Business Group Update

The SLAED Business Group has been progressing a number of key work streams throughout the last few months.

The group has been working with Scottish Enterprise to scope out which elements of business support would be best delivered in partnership, and where it would be beneficial to co-invest to avoid duplication. This includes developing a Target Operating Model (TOM) which will be piloted in a number of areas. SE is keen to understand how local authorities see this working going forward, and the Business Gateway Officers Network will work with the SLAED Business Group to highlight areas that should feed into the TOM discussions. It is acknowledged that learning from the Covid-19 crisis will lead to better understanding of how local authorities and agencies need to work together differently. SE is seeking to simplify its offer with an enhanced focus on outcomes rather than products, and this will have implications on how it works with local authorities.

The Group is also engaging with Skills Development Scotland in light of the Scottish Government responses to the AGER and E&S Board Reports, to ensure alignment locally for workforce development from the business perspective.

Data is now available at local authority level which shows businesses in each area that received grant funding, and which businesses were declined. Local Authorities were able to support many of these businesses separately, and the Business Group continues to be key to sharing information and best practice. Work is ongoing with the Scottish Government to determine what secondary local or regional lockdowns would mean for businesses and funding.



SLAED Performance Group Update

The SLAED Performance Group met on 24th June. The Group reviewed progress with gathering of the 2019/2020 performance data which is largely going well despite the diversion of staff resources to deal with COVID-19 response

reporting in some instances. Final returns were due in by July and the Improvement Service are currently chasing up outstanding submissions. The Group also considered the content for a special COVID-19 impact supplement which will use quantitative and qualitative information to assess the role of Economic Development services in responding to the economic emergency that COVID-19 has generated and will also review the steps being put in place to support the recovery phase.

SLAED Tourism Group Update

THE SLAED Tourism Sub-group is a proactive group who have been meeting fortnightly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group have been working collectively throughout the pandemic to share knowledge, encourage best practice and feed in at national level to discussions on rebuilding Scotland's tourism industry.

Scottish tourism is facing up to its biggest challenge ever with Coronavirus impacting the entire industry. It's expected that the recovery will take some time and many businesses will require significant support to restart their operations. The recovery of this crucial £11 billion industry requires a multi-agency approach, working with the tourism industry to help those affected today, tomorrow and in the future.

The group are represented on the [STERG](#) Working Group, which is a sub group of the Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group chaired by Riddell Graham, VisitScotland and have been contributing to the [STERG National Action Plan](#). This is a single, joined-up, phased plan to not just combat the current issues but also look at how the industry could effectively recover once the lockdown is eased. Scotland Outlook 2030, the new national tourism strategy and the supporting action plan is temporarily on hold, as the entire focus has been shifted to supporting STERG develop a National Action Plan. Officers are aligning their tourism strategies with the national direction.

The group are also represented on the [Scottish Government Tourism Taskforce](#) chaired by Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing created to drive forward the recovery of Scotland's vital tourism sector.



SLAED EU Funding Group Update

The SLAED EU Funding Group continues to take forward a number of issues in relation to the delivery of the 2014-20 Scottish ERDF and ESF programmes. The Scottish Government ESF Lead Partner Group is scheduled to meet on 26th August 2020 and a number of representatives from SLAED will participate. The key items to be discussed will include:

- The current situation of the ESF programme in relation to commitments, claims and payments;
- The results of the recent financial forecasting exercise initiated by the Scottish Government at the end of June; and
- Flexibilities in the ESF programme to take account of the COVID 19 pandemic.”



As EU Funding Comes to an End - A Time to Reflect on the Highs and Lows

As the current EU budget period for 2014-20 comes to an end, and our future participation in key programmes remains in doubt, it's time to reflect on highs and lows.

The UK Government has said it will participate in “some elements” of the Erasmus+ programme. Erasmus is most well-known for student exchanges, but it is of key value to our schools and youth groups too. Since 2014, schools across the seven ESEC council areas have been awarded roughly £16m, allowing teachers to hone their skills in other countries.

Interreg is not as well-known as Erasmus+, but it is of equal importance to local authorities. Since 2014, almost £70m in funding has been awarded to Scottish organisations, mostly to academic institutions, but more than £5m was secured by local authorities. The UK Government has confirmed it won't be pursuing participate in Interreg from 2021, and so the Scottish Government has said it will investigate a solution for Scotland's involvement.

We still don't know much about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the financial framework that will replace EU Structural Funds. EU funding has been notoriously bureaucratic, so we welcome the commitment from the UK Government that the SPF will “cut out” this bureaucracy. Local authorities are the best placed bodies for delivering local activity specific to local needs, either independently or within partnerships, and the SPF must have this at its core.

CIr Will Dawson, Chair, East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC)

Aberdeen City Council launches Socio-Economic Rescue Plan 2020/21

Aberdeen City Council has launched a Socio-Economic Rescue Plan to help minimise the harm and impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Plan, which was approved by the Urgent Business Committee on June 30, aims to provide a coordinated response not only to the pandemic, but also the oil and gas downturn.

Detailing a broad range of actions under the themes of Business, People, and Place, the Plan will be taken forward through a short-life Implementation Group, consisting of public, private, and voluntary sector representatives. A partnership approach is key to the success of the Plan, which cannot be delivered by the Council alone. Partner organisations will lead delivery of each action.

The Plan includes a Business Charter which sets out key



Regional Economic Strategy. It aligns to priorities in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the work of Community Planning Aberdeen.

At the same time, the Council also approved a Net Zero Vision for the city and a Strategic Infrastructure Plan – Energy Transition which sets out the projects which will support the drive to net zero and support green recovery in the medium term.

Further information can be found [HERE](#).



East Renfrewshire's new Town Centre Covid Recovery Groups

The easing of lockdown comes with new restrictions, fears and concerns, not only for local businesses and traders, but also town centre users and residents. In response to this East Renfrewshire Council's Economic Development Team has taken the opportunity to create new Town Centre Covid Recovery Groups to ensure Town & Village Centres are able to re-open safely for the benefit of everyone.

These are multi-agency groups with representatives from BIDs, Council, Chamber of Commerce, local resident, community & third sector groups, Police, Traders, Community Development Trusts, and Federation of Small Businesses etc. Regular online meetings take place to discuss a variety of issues including available funding and support, alerting Council to business & user needs, signposting information, raising awareness of new legislation, local campaigns, etc. The meetings ensure the right people are being alerted to any changes, issues and information. It has also helped support a number of joint initiatives and funding applications to ensure those most in need of support and assistance get it.

Although these groups have been created to help deal with the fallout of the Coronavirus, the Council's ambition is that they will evolve over time and continue in one form or another to bring the necessary people together for the long term benefit, growth and sustainability of town and village centres.

New Manufacturing Innovation Hub for North Lanarkshire

A new £900,000 centre of excellence for manufacturing innovation and robotics will be created in North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire Council, in partnership with New College Lanarkshire and the University of Strathclyde, successfully bid for £290,475 from the Scottish Government's Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund (AMCF) to invest in the new facility.

The Manufacturing Innovation Hub will be based at the Motherwell Campus of New College Lanarkshire and include:



- 'Go to' dedicated Hub space for Manufacturing SME's to meet, learn, access industry-specific business support and academic / partner agency expertise.

The project has been designed to help SMEs modernise, digitise and automate to improve efficiency, boost productivity and grow their exports. It will also provide learning opportunities for school pupils to encourage an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as potential career options.

The Hub will complement the new National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS) and contribute to AMCF objectives to create a national network of regionally-based initiatives to stimulate and improve the innovation performance of SMEs.

The Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund (AMCF) is a competitive challenge fund. This is being delivered in partnership with the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Programme 2014-2020, specifically, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), together with the Scottish Government, as part of the Scottish Programme for Research, Innovation & Technology Eco-System (SPRITE).

The North Lanarkshire Manufacturing Innovation Hub is one of 12 Scottish projects that has secured funding from the £15.8m Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund.

For more information, contact [Caroline Brown](#), Enterprise Development Officer.



Recovery in Fife Council

Fife Council Economic Development are working actively to ensure they are able to remain agile throughout these challenging times. The team has been providing a wide range of flexible support and advice to businesses to ensure they remain resilient and sustainable – by adapting Business Gateway Services, assisting business property tenants throughout COVID, providing access to businesses through digital solutions and ensuring they continue to seek advice from business advisers and specialists.

The team has been supporting businesses by repurposing local flexible financial programmes. Fife Council Grant funding can help support and encourage small companies in Fife to invest and grow their business, however over the last 4 months, the team has been actively assisting businesses access grant funding to support the development of their online trading capabilities and development of new processes to ensure sustainability of their business and workforce.

Through the Town Centre Team, a Small Business Safety Grant has been set up to assist small business in Fife's Town Centres apply for a £100 grant to help with the cost of Covid-19 public health measures, such as PPE, Sanitisers, Protective Screens and Internal Signage. This is being administered by Business Gateway Fife services.

The inward investment proposition is currently being refreshed, as well as the Invest Fife website, to ensure up to date guidance and information to support indigenous development is provided, as well as attracting new investment opportunities into Fife.

Colleagues have been remarkable in supporting wider council services to deliver Scottish Government COVID Funding across Fife – in a true collaboration and partnership approach.



Meet the Buyer North 2020: Live Virtual Event Announced

The Supplier Development Programme has announced that it will organise an online [Meet the Buyer North 2020: Live Virtual Event](#) on 2 September 2020.

Meet the Buyer North 2020 will allow suppliers to engage with virtual exhibitors from the public sector, private contractors and business support providers.

SDP's [recent survey on Supplier Relief](#) found that whether they are a current supplier or not, 79% of respondents (222) said that they currently have the capacity to bid for public sector contracts. SDP hopes to turn this encouraging statistic to the public sector's advantage during this virtual event, and support first steps towards economic recovery and transition from the COVID-19 crisis whilst complying with on-going restrictions on face-to-face gatherings in Scotland.

Meet the Buyer North 2019, as a face-to-face event, attracted more than 560 suppliers and SDP hopes to build upon this success at the virtual event on 2 September 2020. Public sector organisations will be able to connect with potential suppliers, gather easy-to-download contact details, schedule 1-to-1 virtual meetings, and more!

Virtual exhibition stands must be booked in advance by [registering an account with SDP](#).

SDP also offers a myriad of [membership opportunities](#) to buying organisations that provide access to the SDP network, event management and marketing services, which help to raise awareness of contract and supply chain opportunities to Scotland's SME and third sector supply base, supported by tender training and support.

After the virtual Meet the Buyer North event, SDP plans to announce further innovation in the delivery of virtual events to support local authorities and SDP membership organisations to engage with the supply base.

Click [HERE](#) for further information!

£90M of Growth Deal grant support from the UK and Scottish Government towards delivery of Falkirk-Grangemouth Investment Zone

Falkirk Council, working with the Falkirk Economic Partnership has developed a package of proposals for an Investment Zone for the Falkirk and Grangemouth area which aims to fulfil the economic potential of the area and manage its transition to a net zero economic future. These proposals are underpinned by measures to promote sustainable and inclusive growth, consistent



- **Industrial innovation:** particularly in industrial biotechnology, carbon capture and autobus innovation to enable the transition to more sustainable industries whilst preserving the manufacturing base.
- **Infrastructure** including roads, rail and ports projects to support industries such as construction, logistics, manufacturing, tourism and their supply chains.
- **Place :** to enhance town centres and the tourism sector.

On 21 July, announcements were made by Scottish and UK governments pledging £90m of Growth Deal funding towards its delivery. The current Covid-19 situation reinforces that the Investment Zone initiative is ever more pertinent to ensure an effective economic recovery and will play a key role in creating economic vitality, supporting and energising industry and driving renewed investment. Moreover, it will enable investing in innovative technology to transform industry in Grangemouth, respond to climate change and work toward a greener more sustainable future and will improve productivity through technology and skills, promoting community well-being. This investment will form the cornerstone of post Covid-19 economic recovery efforts locally and nationally.

More information can be found [HERE](#).



Locate In Midlothian: new website provides one-stop shop for businesses, locals and tourists to support economic recovery

Those looking to start a new business venture, grow their existing company, relocate with family or simply visit Midlothian can now find all the tools, support and information they need on the newly launched Locate in Midlothian website.

Focused on Scotland's fastest growing region, Locate in Midlothian showcases all that the area has to offer. Its aim is to put Midlothian on the map, harnessing inward investment and promoting the area as a "great, green place to grow".

The website provides a one-stop-shop for information and advice on starting up or growing a business, moving to Midlothian, and bringing up a family there. It also has a focus on tourism, with visitors being encouraged to enjoy the area's numerous attractions, stunning landscape, fascinating history and heritage, and quality food and drink.

The new site has been launched as part of Midlothian's Economic Growth Strategy, which incorporates ambitious plans to support economic renewal by protecting jobs, preserving business and tackling the adverse economic impact of COVID-19. Support from a team of skilled business consultants is also available, with expert advice on how to invest, develop and locate a business in Midlothian.

More information can be found [HERE](#).

Clackmannanshire Early Years Academy

Clackmannanshire Works is the Council's employability service. It helps local people who are looking to get into work and assists local businesses to develop and support local people with jobs and training.



In anticipation of the statutory duty for local authorities to provide Early Learning and Childcare expansion to 1140 hours by August 2020, we started working with the Council's Early Years Education service in 2017 to help them grow their own staff using our Modern Apprenticeship programme. Clackmannanshire Works was already an approved SQA centre for the SVQ level 3 in Social Services Children & Young People (SCQF level 7) and had experience of delivering Childcare Modern Apprentices in the private sector.

We used a member of the Clackmannanshire Works team, who was an experienced Social Services Children & Young People (SSCYP) Assessor and Internal Verifier, to support Early Years staff to train up some of their nursery staff as Assessors and, more recently, as Internal Verifiers.

Over the past 3 years, the Early Years team has employed 28 Modern Apprentices of all ages to work in their nurseries while studying towards their SVQ level 3 in SSCYP and another 12 Modern Apprentices are due to start later this month. The Modern Apprentices are mentored and supported in the nursery to develop their practice in early years. To further support practice and knowledge, they also attend on-line classes half day a fortnight which are delivered by current Early Learning and Childcare Educators who have specific areas of interest and skill.

On completion of their course, the Modern Apprentices are assisted to apply for a job in the Council nurseries; a job offer is not guaranteed but so far all who applied have got jobs – one went to Stirling Council instead.

Further information can be found [HERE](#).



Resilience and Sustainability Scheme to Benefit Aberdeenshire Businesses

A new grant scheme has been launched by Aberdeenshire Council to support the region's most innovative and capable businesses and social enterprises.

The Business Resilience and Sustainability Scheme (BRASS) offers discretionary grant funding with an aim of enabling viable

The grant funding, of which successful applicants will be expected to match fund a minimum of 50%, is designed to support businesses with climate change and net zero expectations, build digital resilience and secure accreditations to improve their market competitiveness.

The scheme offers Aberdeenshire businesses a potential new avenue of financial support following the closure of a number of the national Coronavirus Business Support Grants.

The criteria is relatively flexible and encourages businesses to think creatively about building their resilience and in turn supporting the local economy.

Infrastructure Service Committee chair, Councillor Peter Argyle, commented: "Aberdeenshire Council is absolutely committed to creating the conditions for a thriving local economy. Be it through infrastructure and connectivity investment, the Developing our Northern Towns programme or our recently established Town Centres Phoenix Fund, we aim to come up with innovative initiatives to support our businesses. The BRASS Scheme is no exception to this and we are eager to see what this fund can deliver."

More information can be found [HERE](#).

Moray Pathways Launches Summer Programme

Moray Pathways launched its six-week summer programme offering young people the opportunity to try out bush craft skills, a community project, creative arts and have local employers visit the young people on site.

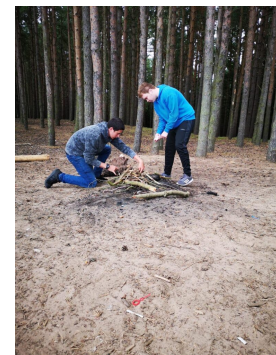
The partnership organisation supports young people in training, learning and work and is one of the first in the area to re-start face-to-face provision since lockdown.

The need for school leavers in Moray to be supported during the summer was identified by a survey of senior phase secondary pupils. The survey was designed by the schools and Skills Development Scotland.

In order to be covid-19 compliant and keep young people and staff safe, the outdoor learning programme is ideal to help those taking part to learn crucial employability skills, such as communication skills and resilience."

A number of partners from Moray Pathways offered support including; the Moray Council Youth Engagement Team; employability keyworkers; support staff from Moray College UHI and Moray Arts Development Engagement.

Many of the young people taking part have secured a college place in August, and the summer programme will give them the opportunity to build up a relationship with staff before their course begins.



Angus Job Search

- Apply for a new job in Angus
- Access support to help you find your next job

Jobs.investinangus.com



Angus Job Search - A COVID response supported by Angus Council

A new online jobs portal has been launched by Angus Council to link people who are unemployed or under threat of redundancy as a result of COVID-19 to jobs, placement or volunteering opportunities.

The portal is free of charge for both employers and clients and will remain in place whilst employment support is being provided to people impacted by the current situation.

“This is a welcome addition to the council’s support for businesses as we emerge from lockdown. This means we can match business labour needs with available people and hopefully help people back into employment.

These are difficult times for our businesses but our recent COVID survey responses highlighted that in some sectors there are recruitment opportunities and significant interest in using a service like this” said Councillor Braden Davy, Angus Council Economic Development spokesperson.

Employers in Angus are invited to register any vacancies within their business on to the Angus Job Search portal to be viewed by clients who may wish to apply.

The portal is available to view [HERE](#), where businesses can easily upload any current vacancies.

Bags of Opportunity!

Kirkcaldy-based Smith Anderson, a manufacturer of sustainable paper packaging, dispensing and carrier bags, overcame numerous challenges to remain open throughout COVID-19 as a key supplier to multiple pharmacy supply chains, including the NHS. That, combined with charitable support for numerous Fife foodbanks and voluntary groups, meant there wasn’t a single day off from lockdown.

Chief Executive of Smith Anderson, Michael Longstaffe, commented:

“Our production process is naturally ‘distant’, but we needed a lot of innovative thought, screens, directional chutes, and numerous other ideas to come to fruition. A combination of all of these, viable PPE and social distancing, powered by an engaged workforce both eager to help and also mindful of the risks, resulted in a fantastic performance.”

Approximately 60 per cent of the workforce was furloughed, which allowed the management team, supported by Unite the Union, to clarify its plan to remain operational.

Michael added:



time went on, that foundation allowed us to expand operations and we were able to build much needed stock for customers to return to in June... the resulting positive effect on cashflow ensured that we were able to offer all our employees their jobs back after furlough.”

Fife Council Economic Development -
fifemeansbusiness@fife.gov.uk



Moving Forward - The Purvis Group Celebrates 40th Anniversary with Investment

Having a positive attitude and being flexible are vital attributes for businesses recovering from the COVID-19 downturn. That is the message from Bob Purvis, Chairman of The Purvis Group.

Bob, with his wife Ella, set up Robert Purvis Plant Hire Ltd 40 years ago - the foundation stone of what was to become The Purvis Group. From what was the original 'man with a van' and with only a small rented site in Lochgelly, this highly successful, multi-million pound business was born. With a focus on growing organically, The Purvis Group supplies an array of construction services, ranging from plant hire and transport (its original offering) to recycling plants and container and cabin supply, via Thistle Site Accommodation.

Like most businesses, The Purvis Group has had its share of ups and downs over the years, and it has dealt with, and responded successfully to, a whole range of challenges, both internal and external. Lately, it's been building up its resilience and a renewed confidence to come through COVID-19 lockdown as unscathed as it can.

Despite the downturn, The Purvis Group is investing significantly in the business, including new premises, designed to bring most of its business entities under one roof in Lochgelly. Also, two new lorries in a striking 40th anniversary livery have been delivered, adding to Robert Purvis Plant Hire's extensive transport fleet.

The Purvis Group will move to its new premises on the Avenue in Lochgelly once works are complete, displaying a commitment to basing his business in his home town, a commitment from which Bob Purvis has never wavered in his 40 years in business!

Fife Council Economic Development -
fifemeansbusiness@fife.gov.uk

Charities Together.

Using only smartphones, the Safari allows you to learn each of the MonsterHero's names, stories, and superpowers. Once all 10 MonsterHeroes are found, a free e-book, that tells the story of their first team-up, is unlocked.

The Safari works by using contactless NFC technology and QR codes, without the need for players to download or sign up to anything - they simply need to tap or scan to play.

Sponsored by Wild in Art, the safari is a safe and fun way of getting families back into the City Centre supporting local businesses.

Click [HERE](#) for more information!



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