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A Message from the Chair...

Now that we are well into the first quarter of a new financial year, 2023/24, this edition of the newsletter focuses on some of the key achievements of Economic Development Services and partners across Scotland in recent months.

The SLAED Executive would like to build on all the recent work undertaken by the People and Business strategic groups and the thematic agendas facilitated by the EU/UK Funding, Rural, Tourism and Performance groups. However, aligned to all of these groups, a particular focus for SLAED going forward is to ensure local government economic development interventions are integral to the development and delivery of the six programmes, 18 projects and 77 actions outlined in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation. This will require strong collaborative and partnership working with Scottish Government civil servants and key strategy partners, such as COSLA, enterprise agencies, businesses and third sector organisations. Furthermore, it is imperative that SLAED maintains an ongoing dialogue with UK Government officials to influence the opportunities from funding streams and allocations associated with the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda.

When interpreting the nuances and idiosyncrasies of previous programmes and interventions funded by the EU, and now replacement UK funding, for many SLAED members our first port of call has been Malcolm Leitch, Economic Development Manager, Glasgow City Council. After many years of working in the public sector, Malcolm will be retiring at the end of June 2023. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Malcolm on behalf of the SLAED Executive and all members for his professionalism, invaluable advice and support to SLAED over the years and his dedication to the role as the chair of the EU/UK Funding group. Wishing Malcolm a long and happy retirement – he will be missed.

- Isabel Bremner, SLAED Chair

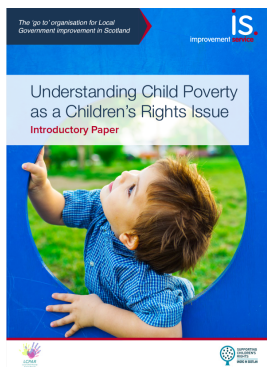
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The Performance Group approved the indicators to be collected in the 2022/23 Framework, and work on this is currently underway. After 11 years of evolution, no major changes have been made to the indicators for 2022/23, although some issues remain on what individual councils are able to collect. The group were able to see a preview of the new Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) website which offers enhanced functionality and allows for easier comparisons of data.



The Guidance Document and Data Return Template for the 2022/23 Framework are available to download from the [Improvement Service website](#).

For any queries please contact hannah.brown@improvementservice.org.uk.



Understanding Child Poverty as a Children's Rights Issue

The Improvement Service published a [briefing paper](#) in March exploring the links between child poverty and children's rights, with some practical examples of taking a children's rights-based approach to tackling child poverty at the local level. The paper was launched at the latest Children's Rights Conversations event where child poverty was discussed from a children's rights perspective with the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, the Chair of Poverty and Inequality Commission and the Poverty Alliance. The recording of the event can be accessed [here](#), and a summary blog is available is [here](#).

Meet the Buyer 2023: Scotland is Open for Business

Now in its 14th year, [Meet the Buyer](#) is Scotland's flagship free procurement event of the year. Organised by the Supplier Development Programme and officially supported by the Scottish Government, with headline partners Scotland Excel and the UK Department for Transport, and headline sponsor Elcom, Meet the Buyer took place on Wednesday, 17th May at the EICC.



This event supports businesses to speak face-to-face with buyers about what they can offer, before, during or after a bidding process. It also provides assistance to businesses new to public sector tendering.

There are opportunities to engage with big private sector contractors about upcoming local projects, and talk with them about their requirements within their supply chains in construction, green energy, and transport.

More than 60 buyers from the public sector stood shoulder-to-shoulder with larger private sector businesses, with



Falkirk Town Centre Regeneration - Improvement Works

Improvements works are now well underway in Newmarket Street and lower Lint Riggs to improve attractiveness and pedestrian safety, and reduce anti-social behaviour. The ambitious 30 week project, supported by the Scottish Government's Town Centre Capital Fund, combines three separate projects to share good practice and resources and reduce impact on town centre users, with one period of engagement and one period of project disturbance in the historic town. This joined up approach will bring a number of environmental improvements including:-

- Surfaces replaced with high-quality natural stone in keeping with the character and heritage of the town;
- Consistent quality street furniture, ironwork and street lighting columns;
- Kerbs lowered to provide an open accessible space for all;
- Design mitigation of the known anti-social behaviour issues;
- Improved visibility for pedestrians at crossing points
- New street lighting;
- Introduction of new planter seating areas with six new trees;
- Bus stop relocation and roads upgrade works.

Upgrading this major transport and retail site within the historic town will improve the lived experience for businesses, residents, and town centre visitors.

For further information, contact Jacquie.mcarthur@falkirk.gov.uk.

Improvement Service Responds to Draft Energy and Just Transition Consultation

The Improvement Service has submitted a response to the Scottish Government's draft Energy and Just Transition Strategy consultation.

The response from the IS highlighted the crucial role that local government has to play in a Just Transition to Net Zero, and how any action to drive the necessary transformation will be more effective and impactful if councils are able to bring local communities on board.



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as the need for better co-ordination between all levels of government, skills shortages, adaptation of existing services and difficulties in sharing data.

The IS is already working to address some of these challenges through research with the Scottish Government into the training resources used by councils, supporting public leadership with the development with SOLACE and SSN of a [Climate Emergency Leaders Checklist](#) and developing new resources to promote and improve data sharing between councils and organisations.

The consultation provided an opportunity to engage in the process of designing Scotland's energy transition and the Scottish Government will review responses to the consultation to inform development of the final version of the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan.

You can read the full consultation response [here](#).



Businesses and Industry Experts Back Progress Made by Community Wealth Building in Ayrshire

Business stakeholders and senior figures from further education, the public and third sector came together in March for a special conference to share their experiences of Community Wealth Building (CWB).

Supported and adopted by the three Ayrshire councils, CWB is moving forward and shaping the economic landscape in this region and beyond.

At the event at Ayrshire College in Kilmarnock, the message was overwhelmingly clear that this new economic model – where wealth is redirected back into the local economy to support communities and build them from within – is working and heading in the right direction.

This new approach is also a key strand of the £251million Ayrshire Growth Deal and is supported by £3m of Scottish Government funding dedicated to Community Wealth Building across the region.

At the gathering, speakers told of their experiences and how this alternative approach to traditional economic development – which seeks to develop resilient, inclusive local economies, with more local employment and a larger and more diverse business base – is working for them.

The first set of speakers – **Katie Kelly**, East Ayrshire Council Depute Chief Executive, **Martin Avila**, Chief Executive CEIS, **Angela Cox** Principal and Chief Executive Ayrshire College, **Claire Baird**, Chief Executive Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, and **Gillian Cameron**, Programme Manager Supplier Development Scotland explained how key stakeholders and institutions can play their part in supporting CWB.

South Ayrshire Council's David Alexander outlined the work being carried out in the procurement process to try and match local employers with public sector contracts.

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Utopia Computers and Ann Berry, Founder of Biosphere Bikes also shared their own experiences and explained how CWB practices are at the heart of what they do.

Overall, the event was a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness around the positive impact of Community Wealth Building in Ayrshire to date, and to build on the work of this bold economic approach for better local futures across the region and beyond.

Net Zero Accelerator Programme

Twenty five businesses in East Ayrshire are set to benefit from 12 months of Net Zero support thanks to a new Net Zero Accelerator Programme delivered by Net Zero Nation within the Halo Enterprise & Innovation Hub. This programme is fully funded by East Ayrshire Council and Scottish Enterprise.



The new Net Zero Accelerator Programme will give focused support to the chosen businesses in East Ayrshire to create and deliver their credible Net Zero plan gaining a competitive advantage from their Net Zero leadership.

The hybrid online/place based programme, will be delivered by Net Zero Nation a Social Enterprise, via a programme that has been designed by SMEs for SMEs. The programme will also help East Ayrshire Council and Scottish Enterprise to shape the existing and future support they offer to all businesses, social enterprises, and community organisations across the region to achieve their Net Zero ambitions.

For further information, contact Business@east-ayrshire.gov.uk.



Business Support Partnership Progress & Next Steps Bulletin

The Business Support Partnership is a commitment from Local Government, Scottish Government, Scotland's Enterprise and Skills Agencies, Business Gateway, Creative Scotland & Visit Scotland to develop a streamlined, efficient, and effective business support system that drives collaboration at a local, regional, and national level. In the last three months alone, the BSP has undertaken significant projects to continue work in creating a Master Customer Record (MCR) for Scotland which will bring organisations a 360-degree view of customers and help inform and target support better. The BSP has also validated its Target Operating Model, which aims to create efficiencies across the support landscape, mapped out support provision across Scotland and much more.

The full update can be accessed [here](#). Click through for a snapshot of key projects and activities completed over the last three months and what's happening next. Further

Opportunities Fife Success Stories

Alex is a 5th year pupil at Inverkeithing high school who is currently attending the Foundation Apprenticeship in Childcare. She is also studying Highers in English, Biology, Business and Drama, and attends placement at Inzievar Primary School one half day a week. Last year, she was appointed sports ambassador through her school and has agreed to become an ambassador for the Foundation Apprenticeship team.



Quote from Alex: "I feel the foundation apprenticeship program is a great entry into the teaching profession. I would encourage anyone who wishes to in the future work with children to choose this qualification".

19-year-old Lian had experience as a young carer, but lacked the qualifications required to move into a career as a fulltime carer. When an advert for the AIMS Healthcare course went live on the Opportunities Fife Facebook page, Lian decided to apply and was offered a place. She fully committed to the course, applying theory work to real life situations while on placement, and quickly made herself a valued member of the staffing team.

Quote from Lian: 'I have learned lots of different skills and taken on many new responsibilities during my placement, including managing finances according to work setting procedures. I am very grateful for the opportunities I've been given as a result of this course.'

Heather is an Apprentice Early Years Officer with Fife Council. She chose the modern apprenticeship as opposed to attending college as she felt that she learned better on the job. At the start she shadowed a mentor but quite quickly was able to work independently, calling on support if needed.

Quote from Heather: "The qualifications I get from the apprenticeship mean that when I apply for my first job, I have up to two years' worth of high quality experience and knowledge to support me. I recommend the apprentice scheme, not only do you get paid to learn but you have the opportunity to observe great practitioners working".

Dylan lives in Glenrothes and was part of the 2022 Rising Stars programme. When he discussed opportunities for his future, it was very clear he wanted to become a joiner. In the summer of 2022 Dylan singed Up to PEP and went out on a full-time work placement with a local Joiner, which inspired him to enrol at Fife college and do a furniture making course. He applied to The Princess Trust for additional funding and managed to secure £500 to enable him to get tools and additional resources for placement and college.

Further information can be found at [Opportunities Fife](#).



'Discover Work' Delivers Free Training Opportunity for Dundee's Employability Staff

Skills Development Scotland (SDS), on behalf of Dundee's local employability partnership, Discover Work, prepared and delivered an event for employability staff in Dundee in March 2023. With insightful presentations from SDS, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and All in Dundee, the event was focussed on analysing data from the Regional Skills Assessment so key workers and other staff can help participants understand the local labour market and plan for their future. View a recording of the event [here](#).

Ronnie Palin (Regional Skills Planning Lead at SDS) delivered an excellent presentation on the latest Tayside Regional Skills Assessment - [download the slides here](#).

Megan McLeod (Apprentice Ambassador at DYW) gave an insight into the DYW Apprentice Ambassadors programme - [download info here](#).

Robbie Timmons (Contracts Manager at ENABLE Works) showcased the All in Dundee consortium's approach and how to refer - [View All in Dundee info](#).

For further information contact_partnership@discoverworkdundee.co.uk.

Explore Perth & Kinross with New Interactive Map

A new interactive Explore Outdoor [map](#) and tourist guide will ensure visitors to Perthshire make the most of their trip.

Launched in April 2023, the map highlights Perthshire's many points of interest, as well as providing practical information for visitors such as the location of public toilets; car parks and campsites. Users can select their own interests and the map will advise of the best spots to visit. Sensors provide real-time information on whether car parks and roads are at capacity, helping visitors plan ahead.

The map has been developed by [Whereverly](#), a Scottish company that uses digital technology to promote tourism. It forms part of a [CivTech challenge](#), which was created in response to issues experienced when lockdown easing saw thousands of visitors flocking to the countryside. Although most visitors behaved responsibly, the huge influx of visitors created issues with traffic, litter and fires in some areas.

The challenge – which involves the Council working with [Whereverly](#) and Stirling Council; Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park; CENSIS; Scottish Government and the Digital Office for Local Government – has been installing sensors to monitor vehicle and people movements at various sites and generating better visitor information.



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to help promote responsible tourism.

For further information contact scumiskey@pkc.gov.uk.



Celebrating Achievements of Aspiring Parking Attendants

Discover Work recently celebrated the achievements of participants on its [latest sector-based skills academy](#), this time run in partnership with Dundee City Council's Parking Attendants.

The group completed a two week training course at The Shore, delivered by [Adult Employability Service](#) and Parking Attendant staff. The Academy has also benefitted from support by [All in Dundee](#) and [Youth Employability Service](#).

This unique opportunity has given participants an insight into the skills and attributes needed to gain and sustain employment as a Parking Attendant at Dundee City Council. For some of the Academy participants, the two weeks were helpful in overcoming potential barriers to employment, and the Roads & Transportation department at Dundee City Council has guaranteed interviews for all course completers.

Principal Parking Officer at Dundee City Council, Mandy Sivewright thanked the group and reflected on the Academy:

"This is the first time we have approached recruitment in this way and I have to say, it's been a real eye-opener. [...] Normally I would only be able to meet people for 30 minutes in an interview before hiring. Over the past two weeks though, I've been able to get to know candidates more and I'm blown away by the time and effort that they've all put in [...] Thank you!"

For further information contact partnership@discoverworkdundee.co.uk.

First Step in Multi-Million Pound Investment by International Whisky Business

Scotch Whisky Investments (SWI) has purchased 7.7 hectares of land at Crompton Road, Southfield Industrial Estate, Glenrothes, as part of the company's multi-million-pound investment plans for Fife. This sale is one of the largest industrial land deals in Fife in recent years and will aid the regeneration of Glenrothes, boosting the local economy and creating jobs in the area.

Sourcing the perfect site for developing a large-scale whisky storage facility, bottling, cooperage, and office facility was crucial in Scotch Whisky Investment's (SWI) 's investment planning. Following Fife Council's Economic Development team, SWI quickly identified Crompton Road East in Southfield Industrial Estate, Glenrothes, as the ideal location.



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Scotland approach to support investment. Following a successful public consultation in August 2022, Fife Council's planning department approved the project's first development phase in October 2022.

SWI seeks to showcase the history of and educate people about single-malt Scotch whisky and promote investment in the commodity. Now that the sale of Crompton Road has concluded, the company can start to transform its vision into reality.

For more information, visit [Invest Fife](#) or contact fifemeansbusiness@fife.gov.uk.



North Lanarkshire Robotics Hub Reaches Manufacturing SMEs

Smart Hub Lanarkshire – a robotics demonstration facility that was awarded £290k of grant funding from the Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund (AMCF) - has gone from strength to strength.

The facility, a partnership between North Lanarkshire Council, New College Lanarkshire and University of Strathclyde, launched digitally in April 2021, opening its doors to manufacturing businesses six months later. In the two-year period, the Hub has worked actively with manufacturing SMEs and stakeholders from the Lanarkshire and wider region. Support has included:

- Engaging with 2000+ businesses, school pupils and intermediary organisations
- Supporting over 300 manufacturing SMEs and their 608 employees
- Delivering 90 Robotic Training sessions on an open group and Company 121 basis
- Delivering 40, 121 (7 Hr) Business Supports
- Supporting 24 manufacturing SME Projects
- Enabling the introduction of 24 New To The Firm Processes
- Delivering 62 School visits / Cobot demonstrations
- Delivering 18 Industry focused events on subjects such as 5G, Offshore Wind Supply Chain, Additive Manufacturing, Artificial Intelligence, Industry 4, Harnessing Academia and more
- Enabling 12 Company Cobot Trials for 2 weeks (including Tech support) at their premises

The Hub reach has extended to national coverage, securing an additional £90k of project-based grant funding from the Scottish Enterprise High Value Manufacturing Team and Highlands & Islands Enterprise. Further funding to continue and develop the project has been secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Further information can be found [here](#), or by contacting browncar@northlan.gov.uk.

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