

## **SLAED EXECUTIVE MEETING**

MS Teams

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

### **Attendance**

Ishabel Bremner, Argyll & Bute Council (CHAIR)  
Rory Young, Dundee City Council (VICE CHAIR)  
Pamela Stevenson, Fife Council (VICE CHAIR)  
Allan Conry, North Lanarkshire Council  
David Boyle, Glasgow City Region  
Diane Milne, Dundee City Council  
Andrew McKean, Renfrewshire Council  
Stuart Allison, Orkney Islands Council  
Lesley Walker, Angus Council  
Calum Lindsay, COSLA  
Robert Nicol, COSLA  
Hugh Lightbody, COSLA  
Hannah Brown, Improvement Service

### **Apologies**

Ruth Cooper, Renfrewshire Council  
Miriam McKenna, Improvement Service

### **Action**

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

IB welcomed members to the meeting and noted SA is attending in place of Kenny Lean to represent the Rural Group.

#### **2. Minute of Previous Meeting**

Members agreed this was an accurate record of discussions at the previous meeting.

#### **3. Enterprise Agencies Engagement**

IB asked members for their thoughts on the discussion with the Enterprise Agencies at the previous meeting, including proposals for next steps. HL confirmed there will not be an updated NSET due to the FM's focus on delivery rather than new strategies. There are no communications coming from SG around the NSET priorities and what the next steps are, and no sense of direction or urgency. Members agreed it would be useful to have correspondence from SG around this.

There is still a call to streamline business support and, at a recent session with BSP around public service reform, it was agreed there would be a joint letter to Gregor Irwin seeking clarity on this and emphasising that local government wants to be involved in discussions.

Members decided it is not necessary to schedule regular updates from the Enterprise Agencies, but rather request engagement as required. HIE and SOSE appear to be more prominent in engaging with local authorities, but this is less evident with SE and more efforts might be needed. It is challenging for SLAED to develop relationships with the agencies as a collective, as individual local authorities have their own varied relationships. Members noted that SE has stepped back from working with regional partnerships and has limited engagement at this level. The intention of inviting the agencies to the previous meeting was to stimulate discussion, but this was limited by the Teams format, and it was suggested that face to face might be more effective.

It was noted that some BSP partners have more influence than others and the partnership would benefit from more collaborative working. Members discussed the need to address BSP and NSET to ensure these are taking SLAED and local authority views into account as an equal partner. IB will share a link to the recent EDAS podcast featuring an interview with Gregor Irwin who mentioned the importance of the agencies but made minimal reference to local authorities. Members agreed that local government tends to be consulted at the last minute when it is realised that they will be the delivery mechanism for products and services. PS noted a recent conversation with James at COSLA around some of these concerns, and RN will follow up for more information.

IB

RN

It was agreed this discussion will be put on hold and can be picked up again after the Autumn Budget. Individual agencies will be invited to future meetings if useful.

#### **4. Population Health Framework**

IB was invited to a roundtable event in September but was unable to attend. The attached engagement paper was circulated, and it was agreed the SLAED Executive would discuss this and feedback. However, members agreed the paper is more complex than anticipated and requires in-depth discussion, and it might be more appropriate for the People Group to discuss due to the prevalence of employability elements. Due to the detailed nature of the questions, it might require someone to facilitate and steer discussions, and it will need wider consideration than just the Executive.

HB will check final timescales with Harriet Purbrick at COSLA to determine whether there is still time for SLAED to respond once this has been considered further. Members agreed it might be more useful for SLAED to hold a workshop session once something has been published.

HB

#### **5. People Group Update**

This item was not discussed as Ruth Cooper was unable to attend the meeting.

#### **6. Business Group Update**

AC noted he will be standing down as Chair of the Business Group due to accepting a new position with Stirling Council. The next meeting of the Business Group will be on 24<sup>th</sup> October and members will be informed that a nomination process will be upcoming. The November meeting of the group will be a joint workshop with the People Group around

child poverty, and the December meeting is likely to be cancelled due to proximity to Christmas, allowing sufficient time to get a new Chair in place.

#### **7. Funding Group Update**

DM gave an update and noted the group has been asked to look at legacy schemes for subsidy control and what will be needed going forward. A working group has been set up to look at this and has approached the Subsidy Control team at SG to determine whether they have historic records of spend against each scheme. An update will be provided when this information becomes available.

Members hope to hear more about the future of UKSPF in the Autumn Statement. The Funding Group has written to the Scotland Office team outlining the challenges if budgets are cut, as this is the only source of funding some local authorities have to deliver certain activity, including employability. If funding is going to be based on amounts received last year, members would like to be consulted on whether they want this in the same capital/revenue split, as requirements will have changed.

It was noted that colleagues in the People Group received feedback from a TSI meeting where a letter was discussed from SG stating that any UKSPF and Multiply underspend must be repaid regardless of the outcome of the budget, and there will not be a mechanism in place to carry forward underspend. There is a concern that people are having different conversations around this, and Ruth Cooper may be able to provide further insight.

SG has confirmed there will be no Place Based Investment Fund this year, but no indication has been provided for whether this will be available in 2025/26, so local authorities can't forward plan. All local authorities have been asked to complete a survey from the SG Regeneration Team to help make the case for future funding, based on funding received over the last 10 years. It was agreed that contingency planning is needed from March onwards, particularly around staffing. Members agreed there is little insight on who is involved in discussing what happens next in terms of funding, and local authorities are not being engaged. It would be useful to have a conversation around this at the Scottish level, and this could be discussed at the AGM. This will be kept on the agenda going forward.

#### **8. EDAS / Events**

There has been no update from EDAS since the last meeting, and this will be picked up at the next meeting in November.

#### **9. AOB**

Members discussed the upcoming AGM in January and the need to decide on a theme and speaker, and all members were asked to put forward ideas. IB noted she has almost completed two terms as Chair and succession planning is needed. It was agreed that the timing of the AGM is likely to be impacted by the UK and Scottish budgets and it is difficult to agree a theme when there is no clarity on what changes and priorities will be. The AGM must take place within the financial year but could be pushed back to February or

**ALL**

March if needed. It was agreed that attempting to replace all Chair and Vice Chair positions, as well as the Business Group Chair is very challenging and could result in significant gaps. There is enough flexibility in the Constitution to allow Chairs to continue in their roles for another year and HB will contact all members to get their position on this.

**HB**

PS requested one-page updates from Chairs of each group going forward. AM confirmed that the Visitor and Cruise Ship Levys are the main points of focus for the Tourism Group currently. The Cruise Ship Levy is likely to be contentious and the group is engaging with Visit Scotland to support the forecasting element of the Visitor Levy. There may be a need to look at developing a national process for forecasting, as STEAM data is not robust enough for these purposes, and results of SG forecasting have been very different to local authority figures.

There has been a request from private sector destination management organisations to look at ways to build better relationships with local authority partners. The Digital Office and COSLA are producing a joint paper to set out what a potential advisory group could look like, and AM will share the draft.

**AM**

Members discussed whether there should be a standing slot for COSLA on the agenda, and RN noted that it might be useful for other COSLA colleagues to attend meetings depending on the topics being discussed.

### **Actions**

#	Action	Lead
1.	Share link to EDAS podcast featuring interview with Gregor Irwin	Ishabel Bremner
2.	Follow up with James re concerns around lack of local authority consultation	Robert Nicol
3.	Check timescales for Population Health Framework consultation	Hannah Brown
4.	Put forward ideas for AGM theme and speakers	All
5.	Contact all Chairs for position on carrying on for another year	Hannah Brown
6.	Share draft paper from DO and COSLA on potential advisory group	Andrew McKean