

SLAED EXECUTIVE MEETING

MS Teams

Tuesday 19th November 2024

Attendance

Ishabel Bremner, Argyll & Bute Council (CHAIR)
Rory Young, Dundee City Council (VICE CHAIR)
Ruth Cooper, Renfrewshire Council
Diane Milne, Dundee City Council
Andrew McKean, Renfrewshire Council
Lesley Walker, Angus Council
Robert Nicol, COSLA
Hannah Brown, Improvement Service
Mia Duncan, Improvement Service

Apologies

Pamela Stevenson, Fife Council
David Boyle, Glasgow City Region
Kenny Lean, South Lanarkshire Council
Hugh Lightbody, COSLA
Miriam McKenna, Improvement Service

Action

1. Welcome and Introductions

IB welcomed members to the meeting. HB noted Mia Duncan has recently joined IS in the role of Community Wealth Building Project Officer and is attending this meeting to meet SLAED colleagues and get an idea of how the network functions.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

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

IB noted ongoing efforts to reinvigorate SLAED's role in the public sector forum, enhance engagement and continue to raise awareness of the importance of the network. It was agreed that the employability agenda is often most prominent due to significant funding allocated by SG. Members agreed the importance of ensuring SLAED is included in relevant discussions around all key policy topics.

It was noted that engagement with COSLA and PHS around the Population Health Framework is ongoing but invites to round table discussions are issued at short notice and don't contain much information. HB will contact Harriet Purbrick again to find out if there is still scope for SLAED to engage and whether this work links in with Pamela Smith's agenda in relation to upcoming engagement with the People Group.

HB

AM gave an update on ongoing work around the Visitor Levy and the need for consistent terminology across the sector. It was agreed that councils should focus on opportunities rather than unhelpful rumours, and that it will take time to see the benefits of the levy. Sharing information will be important, as well clarity around what net proceeds can be spent on. IB will share any information from HIREP that might be useful to the Tourism Group.

3. People Group Update

RC gave an update and noted that employability delivery is business as usual and very busy due to increased numbers across programmes and particular pressure points around strategic planning. SG has an all-age review group looking at wider offers of support as part of the NSET review.

The Partnership Assurance Group is overseeing strategic action plans and has required the creation of additional working groups. The People Group now has 12 subgroups, six led by SLAED and another six led by SG, and Susie Donkin at IS is coordinating these. There are short-, medium-, and long-term actions, and national communications is the biggest challenge in terms of getting messages out to the relevant people. RC is leading on this and feels a national approach would be helpful, as local communications can be patchy. A new group for LEP Chairs is being Chaired by RC looking at how LEPs tie up, consistency, agendas etc.

Similar levels of funding are anticipated for next year and the People Group continues to push for multi-annual funding. There is a proposal to combine child poverty funding at the local level and RC will keep an eye on this. A joint workshop focused on child poverty is taking place in partnership with the Business Group on 21st November.

4. Funding Group Update

DM gave an update and noted the recent budget announced a £600m cut in UKSPF for 2025/26. It is hoped the spring budget will announce a replacement approach with multi-year funding. Members are querying what 60% means, and whether this will be allocated in the same capital/revenue split as last year. There will not be a ringfenced pot for Multiply, and members are unclear on what this means. It was agreed that the 40% cut should not be the new normal and there is a need to keep pushing for funding. The original purpose of UKSPF was to replace EU Structural Funds and any cuts will result in significant scaling back of economic development activity. These cuts could not have been implemented under the EU Funding structure. RC noted that SG is often not involved in these discussions and get a lot of information via the SLAED network.

IB and DM had a meeting scheduled with Lauren Bruce at the Scotland Office, but she was unable to attend. There is no carry forward of year three underspend, and Ministers are asking questions about deprivation data with no clarity on what this is for. It is hoped the meeting with Lauren can be rescheduled to provide clarity. Members agreed that local authorities don't necessarily want the same revenue/capital split as last year but there is no clarity on whether this will be automatically allocated on the same basis. It has been suggested there may be a regional allocation but no methodology for this has

been suggested. Members agreed there should be engagement with local authorities, with clear messages cascaded.

DM noted an approach from the Competition and Markets Authority querying what is happening with SLAED's subsidy control schemes, and a working group is looking at this. A survey has been drafted to go out to all local authorities querying whether they are aware of the schemes, whether they have used them and if not, why. It will also query whether the schemes are still needed, or if councils are doing this individually.

IB noted the importance of looking at some of the funding issues via a rural lens, and DM will remind group members. This is also a key area for collaboration with the Rural Group going forward.

5. Chairing Arrangements

IB noted that Allan Conry has now taken up his new role at Stirling Council and has therefore stepped down from the role of Chair of the Business Group. HB will contact Business Group members to seek nominations for a new Chair. LW noted interest in taking on the role and will consult with her line manager to explore this possibility. There is also an option to use a Co-Chairing approach, like the Funding Group.

HB

HB has contacted the Chairs of all other subgroups, except Rural, who have confirmed their intention to remain as Chairs for 2025/26. It was noted that Chairing a SLAED Group is a great opportunity to get involved in key workstreams and discussions at the national level, and to be invited to participate in forums with wider partners. This is particularly useful when responding to consultations and using national insights to help inform local responses.

6. AGM Arrangements

IB noted EDAS has moved their celebration event to the 4th quarter of 2024/25 and SLAED will be involved in this. Opportunities to collaborate around other events are also being explored. There will be a particular focus around the Community Wealth Building agenda, and this will be supported by the CWB Officer, Mia Duncan, now in place at Improvement Service and involve the wider membership.

Members agreed that, due to timescales for the UK and Scottish budgets, the SLAED AGM should be pushed back to March 2025. It was agreed that this will replace the Executive meeting scheduled for 11th March and all members were asked to put forward ideas for a theme and speaker.

ALL

7. AOB

It was agreed the December Executive meeting will be cancelled to avoid clashes with the holiday period.

HB

Actions

#	Action	Lead
1.	Contact Harriet Purbrick re scope for SLAED engagement	Hannah Brown
2.	Contact Business Group members to seek Chair nominations	Hannah Brown
3.	Put forward ideas for AGM theme and speaker	ALL
4.	Cancel December Executive meeting	Hannah Brown