

SLAED EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE CALL

Tuesday 22nd February 2022

Attendance

Ishabel Bremner (Chair), Argyll & Bute Council (IB)
Pamela Stevenson (Vice Chair), Fife Council (PSt)
Graham Smith, Glasgow City Council (GS)
Pamela Smith, Improvement Service (PSm)
Malcolm Leitch, Glasgow City Council (ML)
Juliette Cooke, Dumfries & Galloway Council (JC)
Calum Lindsay, COSLA (CL)
Judi Kilgallon, Improvement Service (JK)
Miriam McKenna, Improvement Service (MM)
Hannah Young, Improvement Service (HY)

Apologies

Robert Nicol, COSLA
Gary Hughes, Aberdeenshire Council
Rory Young (Vice Chair), Dundee City Council
Allan Conry, North Lanarkshire Council
Tracey Martin, Falkirk Council
Hugh Lightbody, COSLA

Action

1. Welcome and Introductions

IB welcomed members to the meeting. It was agreed that an update on the Business Support Partnership will be circulated to members after this meeting.

PSt/HY

2. IS Economic Development Review

MM gave an overview of a presentation that she delivered to the Improvement Service Senior Leadership Team, considering the current role of the IS in terms of economic development, and whether this should be expanded on. She noted the co-benefits of SLAED and the Improvement Service working together through the existing Service Level Agreement. She also highlighted recent additional pieces of work that have been undertaken, including around community wealth building and wellbeing economies, and ad-hoc work with individual local authorities, such as Argyll & Bute Council.

Members agreed that, rather than expanding on the individual role of the IS in economic development, the most effective use of resources would be to strengthen the existing secretariat service to SLAED through the Service Level Agreement. This would also ensure that the work of SLAED was reinforced, rather than duplicated. It was agreed that the agreement may need to be updated and

extended to ensure best use of the available resources. Focus should be on driving forward the new SLAED Strategic Plan and related priorities within the context of significant changes in the Scottish economic development landscape. It was also agreed that some scope should be built in for bespoke pieces of work, for example support with the transition from EU Funding to the Shared Prosperity Fund, and around the Green Economy / Wellbeing Economy agendas.

It was agreed that the existing Service Level Agreement will be reviewed and updated over the course of Summer 2022.

HY

3. Council Action on Green Jobs and Skills

JK at the Improvement Service gave an overview of the recent 'Road to zero carbon: council action on green jobs and skills' report by Friends of the Earth and Ashden. She noted the previous Green Recovery event with SLAED and the emerging dialogue, which was mainly focused on statutory targets.

Members agreed that it would be useful to have a clearer definition of green jobs and skills to enhance understanding of reports like this. An overarching recognition is needed with common terminology that everyone understands. Members discussed how using the word 'green' in the definition of new jobs is not enough, and the upskilling and capacity building of existing workforces is required to be truly green. There also needs to be a coordinated update to school curriculums which link in with an understanding of the skills required for future, greener job markets.

HY will circulate the slides and members are asked to feed back with any comments.

HY / ALL

4. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Workshop

ML gave an update, and members discussed how SLAED can fully engage in the process of getting the best deal for Scotland, which is fair and proportionate. It was agreed that SLAED Executive members should compile a list of questions to be submitted to the Scottish and UK Governments, seeking clarification on key issues. The purpose of this is to ensure that the prospectus addresses key practicalities once it is published.

Members agreed that IB and ML, as well as PSt and RY if they are available, would arrange an initial meeting with Lauren Bruce, Area Director at CLGU Scotland, as well as the UK Government team drafting the prospectus. The purpose of this will be to discuss the practicalities of the UKSPF and how to ensure that the prospectus provides the clarity needed to enable local authorities to submit robust investment plans within challenging timeframes. This will be followed by a wider SLAED workshop, once the key issues have been addressed and the next steps are clearer.

All members were asked to submit key asks in advance of the proposed meeting, and a request will be issued by HY with a deadline of 7th March. These should focus on the practicalities as much as possible, and Lauren Bruce's previous email will be included for context. In the meantime, IB will contact Lauren Bruce to request a meeting and seek to coordinate this with Exec members' availability.

HY/ALL

IB

5. Update on Business Gateway Review

IB noted that there have been a number of food and drink supply chain issues arising as a result of Brexit, and heightened by Covid-19 related pressures, the rising cost of living etc. New regulations are also coming into force around import controls. The SLAED Executive previously asked COSLA to focus resources on this, and IB has had follow-up discussions with Judith McGregor and Calum Lindsay on the back of this. IB will continue to update on progress with this.

6. AOB

No further items were raised.