

SLAED EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE CALL

Tuesday 18th April 2023

Attendance

Pamela Stevenson (Vice Chair), Fife Council (PS)
Rory Young (Vice Chair), Dundee City Council (RY)
Allan Conry, North Lanarkshire Council (AC)
Malcolm Leitch, Glasgow City Council (ML)
Andrew McKean, Renfrewshire Council (AM)
Kenny Lean, South Lanarkshire Council (KL)
Sharon Thomson, Glasgow City Council (ST)
Robert Nicol, COSLA (RN)
Hugh Lightbody, COSLA (HL)
Hannah Brown, Improvement Service (HB)
Miriam McKenna, Improvement Service (MM)
Phil Smith, CPT (PSm)
Sara Collier, CPT (SC)

Apologies

Ishabel Bremner (Chair), Argyll & Bute Council
Ruth Cooper, Renfrewshire Council
Gary Hughes, Aberdeenshire Council

Action

1. Welcome and Introductions

PS welcomed members to the meeting and noted that she will be chairing as Ishabel Bremner has submitted apologies. She highlighted that colleagues from the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) are attending to discuss areas for collaborative working.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

Members agreed this was an accurate record of discussions at the previous meeting, and that all actions are either complete or ongoing. AC confirmed that he is in the process of arranging for Rueben Aitken at SDI to attend a Business Group meeting to progress discussions at the previous Executive meeting.

PS highlighted the importance of continuing communications with SELAG. AC confirmed he is awaiting a response from an email to Duncan Thorp re next steps.

3. Coach Friendly Scheme

Phil Smith, UK Coach manager, and Sara Collier Public Affairs Manager, at CPT gave a presentation on the aim to expand the number of Coach Friendly locations in Scotland. Coach Friendly accreditation is a tool for destination management, to develop propositions that benefit locations as well as passengers, drivers,

operators etc. There are currently only two places in Scotland that have the accreditation: Inverness and Perth.

The coach sector in Scotland received more support during Covid-19 than the rest of the UK due to SG recognition of this as an important tourism activity. CPT's focus is primarily on destination coach travel rather than economic development, but PSm noted that coach travel brings economic benefits through increased spend, and a reduction in car numbers and parking. CPT is encouraging applications from smaller and less well-known towns across Scotland, and members suggested working with Scotland's Towns Partnership.

It was agreed that this should be taken to the Tourism Group for further discussion with focus on ensuring additionality, avoiding duplication and increasing economic impact. Further discussions should include sharing of experiences from Inverness and Perth. Additional conversations are also likely to be needed with planning and other colleagues around things like signage that can be challenging and time consuming. RN noted that COSLA has had similar discussions with CPT and there is a need for awareness raising with local authorities.

AM

A copy of the presentation will be circulated to Executive members and it was agreed that a mapping exercise and 'Team Scotland' approach would be useful, highlighting areas of best practice.

HB

4. UK Funding

ML gave an update and noted the minimal developments since the last meeting. All local authorities are preparing six-monthly reports to UKG on UKSPF, which is an extensive exercise. Councils have not spent anything near their allocations for 2022/23 and are looking to carry forward a significant amount of underspend. This is common across the UK, and it is suggested that this will be approved quickly.

The Scotland Team at UKG held a session on 24th March to showcase approaches to the three principle investment priorities for UKSPF. They are seeking ideas for further engagement and networking sessions, and SLAED has suggested a session on Multiply would be useful. The next session will be on 31st May and the topic is to be confirmed. The team is also looking to hold a session with the SLAED Executive around Levelling Up Funding round 2, to address some of the challenges and better prepare for round 3. Members agreed that it would be more useful for the Scotland Team to speak to the Funding Group as this has the relevant expertise.

RN noted that COSLA has been invited to give evidence to a committee in the Welsh Senate which is conducting an inquiry into post-Brexit funding. SLAED's recent response to the Scottish Parliamentary Inquiry is being used as the basis for this.

PS highlighted that Business Loans Scotland's bid for British Business Bank funding was not successful and feedback suggested that the bank was not satisfied with the

'Team Scotland' approach and would rather work with smaller lots. ML noted that a PMC meeting for EU Funding was being held in early May focusing on closure of the programmes. A large proportion of ERDF allocated to the SME holding fund had been decommitted which, given the fact that such funds worked on a recycling basis, would have longer term implications beyond the closure of the programmes. ML had emailed SG to ask for an more information on this to be provided at the meeting.

ML

5. Business Support Partnership

AC noted that BSP will provide a report to the next Business Group meeting on gaps and duplication across the landscape, and an update on the business case for data and analytics. At the last meeting it was agreed that all councils will contribute between £500 - £1k to developing the Master Customer Record via SLAED. Further consideration is needed on how to cost this for each council. SE has requested that payment is made via one body, suggesting this should be SLAED. HB highlighted the importance of ensuring all councils have agreed to this and are expecting the invoice. There also needs to be clarity on who the contact is for invoicing and understanding that this is not a SLAED or IS ask for funding. Members also agreed the importance of getting confirmation that this is a one-off request.

PS and HL recently attended a meeting with SG colleagues looking at where NSET is currently and the direction of travel. Colin Cook's team are producing recommendations to Ministers based on this meeting, and it was agreed that contributors should see these in advance to validate them. This meeting was the start of a process and will be followed-up. SG is clear that national agencies should deliver national programmes, and flexibilities should be at the local level.

6. AOB

Members agreed not to submit a formal response to the Scottish Government's consultation on a CWB Bill, due to the extensive input that SLAED has already made via a number of discussions and workshops.

MM noted a recent discussion with SG colleagues around a Practitioners Network for CWB and proposal that it might sit within the SLAED structure, as a subgroup or working group. This would require additional resource as it does not fall within the scope of the existing SLA. MM has suggested to SG colleagues that the National Coordinator model might be useful. SG colleagues are writing up a number of potential recommendations for the Minister and these will be shared with IS and SLAED. Members agreed that this should not sit within the SLAED structure, as there is a risk of it being narrowed down too much into just economic development, whereas it needs a whole-council approach. This should be a standalone network with input across a range of council services. MM will report this back to SG.

MM

PS noted that the next Executive meeting will be in-person and ML confirmed that a room has been booked in Glasgow City Chambers.