

Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) Group CONSTITUTION

Name

“Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group”

Informally known and publicised as “SLAED”.

Purpose

Mission Statement

SLAED exists to provide an effective forum for collaboration and communication and representing, supporting, promoting, and further developing the vital role played by local authorities in contributing to the development of Scotland’s sustainable, inclusive and wellbeing economy. It does this by reflecting the work of the 32 councils and providing a national voice for local economic development, influencing national discussions and policy.

Objectives:

- Promote sustainable economic development that supports a more inclusive, greener, wellbeing economy that positively contributes to recovery and renewal.
- Develop and promote the key role of local authorities, as the lead partners for local economic development.
- Provide a dynamic forum for local government economic development colleagues to work together.
- Represent local authority economic development interests at national level.
- Work in close partnership with other local government groupings.
- Analyse and report on the contribution made by local authorities to economic development.
- Inform, influence, and support the ongoing development of professional standards and continuous improvement in economic development practice.

SLAED is a service-based organisation that focuses on excellence in operational delivery of local economic development services across Scotland, while recognising and respecting the political context within member authorities and other public sector bodies. It offers a non-political collective economic development officers’ voice.

Powers

In progressing its objectives, SLAED can:

- Consult and debate on any matters relevant to local authority economic development.
- Appoint members to represent the group on external forums.
- Adopt policy positions and seek to influence policy at the national level.
- Work in partnership with government, agencies, and other public sector organisations.
- Lobby government and other organisations.
- Engage and collaborate with other organisations, including their participation in SLAED meetings and events.
- Host meetings, events, and conferences.
- Share and encourage innovation and good practice with members and other organisations.
- Inform and influence the setting of professional standards and related professional development programmes.
- Raise funds to meet operational needs.
- Purchase goods, equipment, and services.
- Employ staff where appropriate.
- Appoint and pay consultants.
- Commission research, including on theme-based or geographical interests, and disseminate results.

Equity

Scotland is a socially, demographically, economically, and geographically diverse country, with differing issues and challenges that can require distinct actions and solutions to fit particular needs in different parts of the country; for example, to cover specific rural interests. SLAED activity and policy will respect and embrace this diversity and the democratic right of each member authority to take actions and decisions it deems appropriate.

Each member of SLAED carries equal voting rights. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure inclusive discussion and debate and to employ solutions to logistical difficulties; for example, through use of technology to engage those who would otherwise be unable to participate in meetings.

Membership

Membership of SLAED is on a corporate basis and is open to all Scottish local authorities. There is a general expectation that senior managers from member authorities will represent their organisations within SLAED, with sufficient authority and mandate to speak and make decisions on their employers' behalf.

A member authority may resign from SLAED at any time by giving written notice to the Chairperson and Secretariat. In doing so, it will remain liable for any subscription due (whether or not this had been paid by the date of resignation) for the year the resignation takes effect, unless the Executive decides otherwise.

Officers

The SLAED Chairperson, two Deputy Chairpersons and a Treasurer will be elected, or have their appointments continued, at SLAED's Annual General Meeting: or on exception at another meeting of the General Group. Any representatives of member authorities can nominate themselves for one of these positions. As a general convention, the Chairperson will normally serve a two-year term and can be elected for a second term if prepared to do so, but not normally a third term. A Chair-elect may also be appointed to ensure an effective transition from the existing Chairperson to the successor.

Members appointed as office bearers will recognise the importance of SLAED and their role within it, committing time as appropriate to their service on behalf of the membership.

Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting will be held during the first quarter of each calendar year. This will normally be the forum for any debate and decision-making over SLAED's structure, constitution, and future direction. It will include:

- Election of Chairperson, Deputy Chairpersons, Treasurer, and Chair-elect if relevant.
- Election of Chairs of Strategic and Thematic groups. Group Chairs automatically become Executive Group members.
- Presentation and approval of accounts by the Treasurer.
- Setting subscription fee levels for coming year(s).
- Considering any proposals from members to amend this Constitution.

Where more than one candidate is nominated for an office bearer position or place on the Executive, the candidate with the highest number of votes will be elected at the meeting. In the event of a tie, further discussion and a second ballot may be necessary and any candidate with fewer votes than those which tied for highest number will be removed from the ballot

prior to the next vote. Unopposed candidates will be deemed to have been elected at the meeting.

SLAED Group Structure

Executive Group

The Executive is a decision-making body, setting and approving SLAED's policy position on most issues in line with the Mission Statement and Objectives set out above, and giving direction to Strategic and Thematic groups in respect of SLAED business and operations.

The composition of the Executive is:

- Chairperson
- 2 x Deputy Chairpersons
- Immediate past Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Strategic group and Thematic Group Chairpersons (one seat per group)
- Up to 2 x elected executive members without portfolio.

The Executive may co-opt other persons, whether SLAED members or not, to join meetings of the Executive on either a regular or occasional basis if appropriate for taking forward SLAED business. Co-opted persons do not hold voting rights. Officers representing COSLA and Business Gateway regularly attend Executive Group meetings to ensure timely sharing of information and discussion of common issues.

The Executive will meet on a minimum of six occasions each year: normally monthly. Additional meetings will be held where circumstances dictate. Dates for meetings for each year will normally be set into the calendar during the previous year. Members who represent Strategic or Thematic Groups on the Executive may nominate substitutes, drawn from their Strategic or Thematic Group membership, to attend individual meetings in their absence.

General Group

The General Group is the full membership of SLAED.

The overall role and expectation of the General Group includes to provide constructive, challenging debate for the Executive and the Strategic and Thematic Groups on their activities and work programmes, and to be a key reference point for matters on which the Executive or groups may want to canvas wider opinion within SLAED.

The General Group is responsible for electing SLAED's office bearers, normally at the Annual General Meeting.

The General Group will normally meet on a minimum of two occasions each year, one of

which will coincide with the Annual General Meeting, in addition to the SLAED Annual Conference. Meetings will

be chaired by the SLAED Chairperson (or by a Deputy in their absence).

Attendance at General Group meetings will consist of a senior manager from member local authorities; additional officers are welcome to attend, although any vote will be limited to one per member authority.

Groups

Strategic Groups

SLAED has two standing Strategic Groups, responsible for leading work programmes on behalf of SLAED. Each of these groups holds a permanent seat on the SLAED Executive.

The Strategic Groups are:

- People
- Business

The Strategic Group structure previously included a 'Place Group' which has been inactive for several years. This could be reinstated through the Executive if there is agreement that this is needed. Each Strategic Group will develop and review its own terms of reference, remit, and work programme, and will report its activity and progress to the SLAED Executive and General Group.

Thematic Groups

There can also be any number of thematic groups constituted under the SLAED banner, with the approval of the Executive. These may be regular, occasional, or short-term groups with remits to take forward work programmes on specific themes, issues, or policies, including cross-cutting matters of interest to more than one SLAED group. A specific role of these thematic groups is to support SLAED and the Strategic Groups, providing thematic and practical expertise.

Representatives on each Strategic or Thematic Group will be appointed or nominated by their member authorities and will be the contacts for their authorities in relation to all matters relevant to those groups.

Meetings

Notice of meetings for all SLAED groups will be given, and relevant papers provided, not less than one week before the meeting takes place. The notice will include the time and location of the meeting, along with a clear agenda or explanation of the core business to be discussed and, where appropriate, decided upon at the meeting.

The default for all SLAED Executive, Strategic and Thematic group meetings will be via MS Teams to maximise opportunities for participation from all member local authorities. Occasional in-person meetings can be scheduled where required, and to enhance networking opportunities.

Spokespersons

Any member sitting on external groups or speaking on behalf of SLAED in any other capacity will, to the best of their knowledge, represent the collective views across membership, with a mandate to do so based on known SLAED policy positions established through group discussions and debate. It is not a member's role to represent the interests of their own individual local authority while acting on behalf of SLAED.

In normal circumstances, spokespersons will be drawn from elected SLAED officers, i.e. Chair, Deputy Chair, Past Chair, Thematic Group Chair or Deputy, or separately elected executive member. Where necessary or more appropriate, another regularly active officer from a SLAED member authority may be asked to provide cover or to represent SLAED as an expert in a specific field.

Finance

The financial year of SLAED shall run from 1 April to 31 March each year.

The Treasurer, working with the secretariat, will oversee all aspects of the group's finances, setting budgets and overseeing records of income and expenditure in conjunction with the secretariat. The Treasurer will present a financial report and annual statement of accounts for verification and approval at the AGM.

All funds will be used to support SLAED's operations, in line with the Mission Statement and Objectives set out above.

Subscription Fees

Members will pay an annual subscription fee for their membership of SLAED. Fee levels will normally be set by vote at the Annual General Meeting, taking account of the financial report and any anticipated forward work programme. Over 50% positive vote is required to affect any change in subscription fee levels.

Secretariat

A secretariat will be appointed by the Executive to conduct the administration of SLAED.

The secretariat function will ordinarily include:

- Administrative support for meetings of the Executive and General Groups.
- Additional support for meetings of Strategic and Thematic Groups as required.
- Performance management and reporting, including publication of annual SLAED Indicators Report.
- Assisting with implementation of the Communications Plan, including co-ordination of internal and external communications, and support with publications.
- Compiling and distributing quarterly newsletters to the membership.
- Support in ongoing management / delivery / update / progress reporting of the Strategic Plan.
- Knowledge Management support in relation to online repositories / communication platforms.
- Maintenance of website.
- Mapping and management of membership and representation.
- Management of membership fees, invoices, and overall finances.
- Arrangement of AGM, including agenda, papers, accommodation, and liaising with speakers.
- Organisation, delivery and facilitation of webinars and events.
- Facilitation of discussions between Executive and SOLACE, Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, and other relevant bodies.
- Research and report writing around key topical issues.
- Collation of responses to national consultations on key topical issues.
- Bespoke and thematic support, as required.
- Other occasional ad-hoc administrative tasks, as required.

Alteration to Constitution

Any alteration to this constitution must be agreed by more than 50% positive vote (one vote per member authority) at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting following discussion at that meeting.

Dissolution

SLAED may be dissolved if decided by more than 50% of the total membership (one vote per member authority) at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting. Any assets or remaining funds, once outstanding debts have been settled, will be returned to members on a pro rata basis relative to the scale of membership fees paid in the final year; any uncertainty to be resolved by the Executive.



This constitution was adopted at the SLAED Annual General Meeting held via MS Teams on 22nd January 2024.