

Minute of Meeting Scotland Excel Executive Sub-committee

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 22 April 2022	09:30	Remotely by MS Teams,

Present

Councillor Charles Buchan (substitute for Provost Bill Howatson) (Aberdeenshire Council); Councillor Stephen Thompson (Dumfries & Galloway Council); Councillor Altany Craik (Fife Council); Councillor Ruairi Kelly (Glasgow City Council); Councillor Paul Di Mascio (North Lanarkshire Council) and Councillor John Shaw (Renfrewshire Council).

Chair

Councillor Shaw, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

J Welsh, Chief Executive, S Brannagan, Head of Strategic Procurement, L Campbell, Corporate Services Manager, M Mitchell, Strategic Programme Manager, L Richard, Strategic Procurement Manager, E MacLuskie, Senior Procurement Specialist, S Ferracuti, Procurement Coordinator, L Muir, Category Manager, S Morrison, Project and Account Manager, J Kenney, Senior Procurement Specialist, M Boyle, Senior Business Specialist, L Mooney, Senior Communications Specialist, E Campbell, Procurement Specialist, N French, Corporate Services Assistant and K Forrest, Office Manager, (all Scotland Excel); L Mitchell, Managing Solicitor (Contracts and Conveyancing), C McCourt, Corporate Business Manager, and E Currie and R Devine, both Senior Committee Services Officer (all Renfrewshire Council) and K Graham and A MacDonald, Senior Auditors, Audit Scotland.

Apologies

Provost Bill Howatson (Aberdeenshire Council); Councillor Angus Macmillan Douglas (Angus Council); Councillor Andrew Johnston (City of Edinburgh Council); Provost Norman Macdonald (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar); Councillor Jimmy Gray (Highland Council) and Councillor Joe Cullinane (North Ayrshire Council).

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Craik declared an interest in item 5(f) of the agenda for the reason that it related to Fife Council. Councillor Craik indicated that as he had declared an interest, he would leave the online meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.

Order of Business

In terms of Standing Order 12, the Convener intimated that he proposed to alter the order of business to facilitate the conduct of the meeting by considering item 6 of the agenda prior to item 5(a) of the agenda.

1 Minute

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Executive Sub-committee held on 18 March 2022.

It was noted that in relation to item 5(b) of the Minute, there was a typographical error in Appendix 3 to the report, which affected the score for one supplier in lot 7 and that this did not change the suppliers recommended for award. The score detailed for AMK Plant and Tipper Hire Limited should have been 74.33 and not 66.25 as detailed in the appendix. This change in score would move the supplier to position 4 in the table, reordering the positions of each of the subsequent suppliers.

DECIDED:

(a) That the typographical error referred to above noted; and

(b) That the Minute be approved.

2 Annual Audit Plan 2021/22

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to Audit Scotland's annual audit plan 2021/22 for Scotland Excel which outlined Audit Scotland's planned activities in their audit for the 2021/22 financial year, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report intimated that, based on analysis of the risks facing Scotland Excel, Audit Scotland had submitted an audit plan which outlined its approach to the audit of the 2021/22 annual accounts to assess whether the accounts provided a true and fair view of the organisation's financial position and also whether the accounts had been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice, the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2021/22.

The annual audit plan outlined the responsibilities of the Joint Committee, Treasurer and Audit Scotland; provided an assessment of key challenges and risks; the approach and timetable for completion of the audit; and included a section on Audit Risks which had been included in the audit plans of many bodies which Audit Scotland worked with. The inclusion of this section was not a reflection of any specific risk within Scotland Excel.

It was noted that the audit of financial year 2021/22 was the last year of the current audit appointment.

K Graham, Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland, presented the annual audit plan to members. In relation to the audit timetable, members were advised that due to pressures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, an audit timetable had been agreed which was consistent with the prior year, but which did not meet the Audit Planning Guidance deadline of 31 October 2022.

DECIDED: That Audit Scotland's annual audit plan 2021/22, as appended to the report, be noted.

3 **Operating Plan Update 2021/22**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel providing an update on the progress made in the final quarter of the operating plan 2021/22.

The report intimated that a new operating plan, covering the fifteen-month period from January 2021 to March 2022, had been approved at the meeting of the Scotland Excel Joint Committee held on 11 December 2020. To simplify reporting, the number of commitments in the plan had reduced from 68 detailed commitments to 30 broader commitments and these aligned to more than 120 specific actions cascaded to staff as part of Scotland Excel's Performance Review and Development Programme.

The report highlighted that 27 of the operating plan commitments were progressing in line with plans and were indicated as green; two commitments were progressing at a slower pace than anticipated and were indicated as amber; and one commitment had been completed and was indicated as black.

It was noted that progress reports were produced quarterly to track Scotland Excel's activity against operating plan commitments and at the end of each quarter reports were submitted to the Executive Sub-committee with half-yearly and annual reports submitted to the Joint Committee. Due to the continuing uncertainty in relation to COVID-19 and Brexit, reporting against key performance indicators was currently on hold pending a review of appropriate measures.

The report advised that at the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 10 December 2021, a new one-year operating plan had been approved effective from 1 April 2022 and that the operating plan 2022/23 would form the basis of future committee reports updating on the organisation's progress.

DECIDED: That Scotland Excel's progress in delivering the commitments contained within the operating plan 2021/22 be noted.

4(a) **Contract for Approval: Supply of Digital Publications and Services**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel relative to the award of a second-generation renewal framework for the supply of digital publications and services for the period 1 August 2022 until 31 July 2025, with the option to extend for up to 12 months until 31 July 2026.

The framework would provide councils with a mechanism to procure a range of services including, but not limited to, e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, e-comics and e-newsletters.

The report summarised the outcome of the procurement process for the framework which had been divided into five lots, as detailed in table 1 of the report.

The report advised that the forecast annual spend for participating councils and associate members, with contingency, was £1 million per annum, which equated to an estimated spend of £4 million over the maximum four-year term of the framework and Appendix 1 to the report detailed the participation, spend and savings summary of those councils and associate members participating in the framework.

Tender responses had been received from six suppliers and Appendix 2 to the report provided a summary of the offers received.

Based on the criteria and scoring methodology set out in the tender document, a full evaluation of the compliant offers had been carried out and Appendix 3 to the report confirmed the scoring achieved by each bidder.

Based on the evaluation undertaken, and in line with the advertised criteria and weightings set out in the report, it was recommended that a multi-supplier framework arrangement be awarded to six suppliers across the five lots, as outlined in Appendix 3 to the report.

Appendix 4 to the report detailed the approach taken by suppliers in relation to fair work practices and their position on the payment of the Real Living Wage.

The report intimated that, in accordance with Scotland Excel's established contract and supplier management programme, the framework had been classified as class D in terms of risk and spend, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.

DECIDED: That the award of the multi-supplier framework for the supply of digital publications and services, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

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Councillor Kelly joined the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business.

4(b) Contract for Approval: Supply and Delivery of Library Books and Textbooks

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel relative to the award of a third-generation framework for the supply and delivery of library books and textbooks for the period 1 August 22 to 31 July 2025, with the option to extend for up to 12 months until 31 July 2026.

The framework would provide councils with a mechanism to procure a range of library books including, but not limited to, adult and children fiction and non-fiction books, reference books, foreign language books, audio books and large print books. Councils would also be able to procure a wide range of educational textbooks from various publishers.

The report summarised the outcome of the procurement process for the framework which had been divided into 19 lots, as detailed in table 1 of the report.

The report advised that the forecast annual spend for participating councils and associate members, with contingency, was £14 million per annum, which equated to an estimated spend of £56 million over the maximum four-year term of the framework and Appendix 1 to the report detailed the participation, spend and savings summary of those councils and associate members participating in the framework.

Tender responses had been received from 15 suppliers and Appendix 2 to the report provided a summary of the offers received.

Based on the criteria and scoring methodology set out in the tender document, a full evaluation of the compliant offers had been carried out and Appendix 3 to the report confirmed the scoring achieved by each bidder.

Based on the evaluation undertaken, and in line with the advertised criteria and weightings set out in the report, it was recommended that a multi-supplier framework arrangement be awarded to 15 suppliers across the 19 lots, as outlined in Appendix 3 to the report.

Appendix 4 to the report detailed the approach taken by suppliers in relation to fair work practices and their position on the payment of the Real Living Wage.

The report intimated that, in accordance with Scotland Excel's established contract and supplier management programme, the framework had been classified as class D in terms of risk and spend, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.

DECIDED: That the award of the multi-supplier framework for the supply and delivery of library books and textbooks, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

4(c) **Contract for Approval: Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel relative to the award of a first-generation framework for electric vehicle charging infrastructure for a period of two years from the commencement date with an option to extend for up to two 12-month periods. It was noted that subject to approval and completion of a standstill period, the framework was intended to commence on 12 May 2022.

The framework would provide councils, participating members and other bodies with a mechanism to procure a range of works, products and services, including the supply, installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charging equipment and associated items for depots, fleets, on-street and off-street requirements. Also, it would provide a mechanism to develop and enhance electric vehicle charging infrastructure which was required across Scotland to facilitate the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles. It would support the Scottish Government Climate Change Plans and would contribute to the 2045 net-zero emissions target.

The report summarised the outcome of the procurement process for the framework which had been divided into four lots, as detailed in table 1 of the report. It was noted that lots 1, 3 and 4 had been evaluated on a region-by-region basis and would be awarded on a regional basis and that six regions had been established, as detailed in the report.

The report advised that the forecast annual spend for participating councils and associate members, with contingency for any unprojected spend, was £20 million per annum, which equated to an estimated spend of £80 million over the maximum four-year term of the framework and Appendix 1 to the report detailed the participation, spend and savings summary of those councils and associate members participating in the framework.

Tender responses had been received from 42 suppliers and Appendix 2 to the report provided a summary of the offers received.

Based on the criteria and scoring methodology set out in the tender document, a full evaluation of the compliant offers had been carried out and Appendix 3 to the report confirmed the scoring achieved by each bidder in each lot and region.

Based on the evaluation undertaken, and in line with the advertised criteria and weightings set out in the report, it was recommended that a multi-supplier framework arrangement be awarded to 33 suppliers across the four lots, as outlined in Appendix 3 to the report. It was noted that this would be subject to confirmation, to Scotland Excel's satisfaction, that the recommended suppliers held insurance in accordance with the published tender requirements.

Appendix 4 to the report detailed the approach taken by suppliers in relation to fair work practices and their position on the payment of the Real Living Wage.

The report intimated that, in accordance with Scotland Excel's established contract and supplier management programme, the framework had been classified as class B in terms of risk and spend, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report.

DECIDED: That the award of the multi-supplier framework for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

4(d) **Contract for Approval: Supply and Delivery of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including Pandemic Recovery Items and Workwear**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel relative to the award of a renewal framework for the supply and delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) including pandemic recover items and workwear for the period 1 June 22 to 31 May 2025, with the option to extend for up to 12 months until 31 May 2026.

The framework would provide councils with a mechanism to procure a wide range of personal protective equipment (PPE), workwear and pandemic recovery items.

The report summarised the outcome of the procurement process for the framework which had been divided into nine lots, as detailed in table 1 of the report. It was noted that lots 1 to 7 had been evaluated on a basket of goods approach with each bidder required to meet a minimum threshold of items in order to return a compliant tender bid; lot 8 had a particular focus on pandemic recovery items and had been evaluated on a line-by-line basis; and lot 9 was intended to be a one-stop-shop for councils who wished to consolidate their spend.

The report advised that historic spend data suggested a forecast framework spend of £10 million per annum and that the framework had been advertised with a value of up to £15 million per annum.

Tender responses had been received from 46 suppliers and Appendix 1 to the report provided a summary of the offers received.

Based on the criteria and scoring methodology set out in the tender document, a full evaluation of the compliant offers had been carried out and Appendix 2 to the report confirmed the scoring achieved by each bidder. In the case of lot 9, this appendix detailed the placing achieved.

Based on the evaluation undertaken, and in line with the advertised criteria and weightings set out in the report, it was recommended that a multi-supplier framework arrangement be awarded to 44 suppliers across the nine lots, as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.

Appendix 3 to the report detailed the approach taken by suppliers in relation to fair work practices and their position on the payment of the Real Living Wage.

The report intimated that, in accordance with Scotland Excel's established contract and supplier management programme, the framework had been classified as class A in terms of risk and spend, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report.

DECIDED: That the award of the multi-supplier framework for the supply and delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) including pandemic recovery items and workwear, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

5 **Employee Supporting Attendance Report**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel highlighting the absence rate in the organisation and the support mechanisms implemented to support staff members.

The report advised of the absence levels for the period ending 31 March 2022 and provided a breakdown of the current month, the last six months and 12 months absence figures, together with an illustration of 12 months in days and the last 12 months in percentages.

The report noted that the rate of absence across the organisation had generally been maintained at or below the 4% target, with the exception of April 2021, where the absence rate rose to 4.2% due to long-term absences. The absence rate reduced steadily throughout 2021/22 to a low of 0.4% in February 2022. The rise in COVID-19 infections throughout the general population had been reflected in the organisation, which, together with some longer-term absences, resulted in a spike in the percentage rate to 3.1%. The rolling six months and 12 months average absence rates had been maintained at or below 3.1%.

It was noted that, in addition to supporting members of staff absent through ill health, Scotland Excel continued to implement positive early intervention practices including working with occupational health and other support services to maintain employee attendance and to support members of staff who might be experiencing difficulties whilst remaining at work. Scotland Excel continued to support a range of interventions for staff including occupational health referral, confidential counselling services and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and issued wellbeing emails with further information on health initiatives which could be accessed independently by all staff.

The report intimated that Scotland Excel recognised that positive mental health amongst staff members was an area that should be actively supported and encouraged and had 15 staff from across all operational areas and grades who had trained as accredited Mental Health First Aiders. A Mental Health at Work Commitment Action Plan had also been implemented and this was recognised as a comprehensive tool for adopting best practice in promoting and maintaining positive mental health within the organisation.

DECIDED: That the content of the report be noted.

6(a) **Request for Associate Membership: Scottish Enterprise**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that Scottish Enterprise had submitted an application to become an associate member of Scotland Excel.

The report provided details of the organisation and the legislative position in relation to the application.

DECIDED: That the application by Scottish Enterprise to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with no annual membership fee, be approved subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

6(b) **Request for Associate Membership: Scottish Natural Heritage**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that Scottish Natural Heritage had submitted an application to become an associate member of Scotland Excel.

The report provided details of the organisation and the legislative position in relation to the application.

DECIDED: That the application by Scottish Natural Heritage to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with no annual membership fee, be approved subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

6(c) **Request for Associate Membership: Shire Housing Association Limited**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that Shire Housing Association Limited had submitted an application to become an associate member of Scotland Excel.

The report provided details of the organisation and the legislative position in relation to the application.

DECIDED: That the application by Shire Housing Association Limited to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with an annual membership fee of £1,440, be approved subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

6(d) **Request for Associate Membership: The Skills Development Scotland Company Limited**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that The Skills Development Scotland Company Limited had submitted an application to become an associate member of Scotland Excel.

The report provided details of the organisation and the legislative position in relation to the application.

DECIDED: That the application by The Skills Development Scotland Company Limited to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with no annual membership fee, be approved subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

6(e) **Request for Associate Membership: MYtown MYcommunity Limited**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that MYtown MYcommunity Limited had submitted an application to become an associate member of Scotland Excel.

The report provided details of the organisation and the legislative position in relation to the application.

DECIDED: That the application by MYtown MYcommunity Limited to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with an annual membership fee of £500, be approved subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Craik having previously declared an interest in the following item of business left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

6(f) **Request for Associate Membership: Fife Resource Solutions LLP**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that Fife Resource Solutions LLP had submitted an application to become an associate member of Scotland Excel.

The report provided details of the organisation and the legislative position in relation to the application.

DECIDED: That the application by Fife Resource Solutions LLP to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with no annual membership fee, be approved subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

7 **Date of Next Meeting**

DECIDED: That the next meeting of the Executive Sub-committee be held immediately following the meeting of the Joint Committee on 17 June 2022.