

Scotland Excel

To: Joint Committee

On: 8 December 2023

**Report by:
Chief Executive of Scotland Excel**

Procurement Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP) Update

1. Introduction

This report provides an update on the status of the work undertaken by Scotland Excel to support councils with the Procurement Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP).

2. Background

The Procurement and Commercial Improvement Programme was introduced in 2015 and is a maturity model designed to assess Scottish public sector procurement performance in a common format.

The annual assessments set out to build foundations of good public sector procurement and to signpost good practice. The assessments were demonstrably at the heart of procurement improvements across Scotland.

The PCIP is a continuation of the work undertaken by the Procurement Capability Assessment (PCA) carried out on an annual basis since 2008 until introduction of the PCIP. PCIP focuses on the policies and procedures driving procurement performance and the results they deliver.

The PCIP Pulse Check assessment programme commenced in August this year, with the offer of a new approach to further support the sector. This PCIP Pulse Check focuses on the policies and procedures driving procurement performance and, more importantly, the results they deliver. These pulse checks are undertaken with the assumption that the foundation elements identified and implemented since The McClelland report remain in place within organisations.

For PCIP Pulse Check, an assessment model has been developed which offers a reduced question set and streamlined process for organisations whilst still assessing and supporting current procurement priorities. This hybrid model allows for greater flexibility and consists of a blended question set that can be tailored by the assessing CoE to the organisation and the sectoral context.

The model consists of eleven mandatory questions and nine discretionary questions. A number of these questions are from the previous assessment however some questions have additional elements included within the evidence criteria.

Each question has four levels that an organisation may indicate it has achieved and will be assessed on the day. The levels are:

1. Developing
2. Improving
3. Good Practice
4. Advanced

Further information on the PCIP can be obtained at the Scottish Government website: <https://www.procurementjourney.scot/pcip/pcip-overview>

3. PCIP Assessments 2023/24

Scotland Excel worked with colleagues within Scottish Government and in conjunction with other public sector centres of expertise to consider the assessment route for 2023/24.

Assessments have now commenced with a number of councils and the programme will continue until the end of March 2024.

Of the thirty-two councils, nine have opted not to participate in the next tranche of assessments. Generally, these councils have made a strategic decision to focus their limited resources on more pressing matters. Irrespective of participation, all good practice and learning gathered as a result of the assessments will be shared with all members.

- 3.1 During August, September and October Scotland Excel undertook a series of workshops across the sector during which typical evidence was reviewed and each of the mandatory questions were discussed as a group to achieve a common understanding. These workshops were well attended and well received.
- 3.2 A number of councils volunteered to undertake pilot assessments and these took place during October and November. A further two councils requested to undertake their assessments before the end of the year and these have also now been completed. Learnings from all of these assessments are being shared with the wider community.
- 3.3 Most councils asked for their assessments to be conducted at the end of the assessment period. To support this, Scotland Excel will assess using multiple teams and aim to undertake most assessments in February and March 2024. All councils have now been allocated an assessment date.
- 3.4 Scotland Excel will continue to explore the use and support of the additional voluntary/discretionary questions.

- 3.5 The sector has agreed to proceed with assessments on the understanding that council level results will not be shared beyond individual councils. Sector reporting, where possible, will be shared beyond individual councils.
- 3.6 Suitable output will be provided by Scotland Excel at a council level. Unlike previous PCIPs, there is no score for each question and therefore no overall score that an organisation can compare with previous assessments or other organisations, or sectors. Any comparisons will have to be undertaken based on the four levels indicated in section 2 above.

4. Sharing Best Practice

- 4.1 One of the main benefits of sectoral assessment is the collection, sharing, and signposting of best practice. This is a key aim of this assessment cycle and Scotland Excel will continue to meet with its Procurement Improvement Programme Steering Group, made up of local government procurement managers, to discuss this.
- 4.2 Scotland Excel also plans to run a series of workshops after the assessments encouraging those councils to discuss and share their best practice.

5. Recommendation

The members of the Joint Committee are invited to note Scotland Excel's progress in supporting sectoral procurement assessments and that a subsequent report on findings will be presented to the Executive Sub and Joint Committee in June 2024.