

Minute of Meeting Scotland Excel Executive Sub-committee

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 15 September 2023	09:30	Remotely by MS Teams,

Present

Councillor David Keating (Aberdeenshire Council); Councillor Brenda Durno (Angus Council); Councillor Carolyne Wilson (Dumfries & Galloway Council); Councillor Ian Cameron (substitute for Councillor Altany Craik) (Fife Council); Councillor Derek Loudon (Highland Council); Councillor Christina Larsen (North Ayrshire Council); Councillor Michael McPake (North Lanarkshire Council); Councillor John Shaw (Renfrewshire Council); Councillor Dennis Leask (Shetland Islands Council) and Councillor Walter Brogan (South Lanarkshire Council).

Chair

Councillor Shaw, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

J Welsh, Chief Executive, H Carr, Director of Strategic Procurement, S Brannagan, Director of Customer & Business Services, L Muir and L Richard, both Strategic Procurement Manager, K Forrest, Office Manager, L Mooney, Senior Communications Specialist, S Martin, Principal Project & Customer Account Manager, M Boyle and L Jones, both Senior Business Services Specialists and R Baird, Graduate Trainee (all Scotland Excel); C McCourt, Head of Finance & Procurement, A Burns, Corporate Finance Manager, L Mitchell, Managing Solicitor (Contracts & Conveyancing), E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer, K O'Neill, Democratic Services Officer and T McGowan, Senior Accountancy Assistant (all Renfrewshire Council) and G Devlin, Audit Partner (Azets) (for items 1 and 2 only).

Apologies

Councillor Kenny Macleod (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar); Councillor Altany Craik (Fife Council) and Councillor Ruairi Kelly (Glasgow City Council).

Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 **Minute**

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Executive Sub-committee held on 18 August 2023.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 **Annual Audit Report on the Annual Accounts 2022/23**

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 16 June 2023, there was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to Azet's findings from the audit of Scotland Excel's financial statements for 2022/23.

The report intimated that The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 required the audited accounts to be approved for signature no later than 30 September each year. Section 10 of the Regulations required the relevant committee to consider any report made by the appointed auditor before deciding whether to sign the audited accounts.

Azet's annual audit report formed Appendix 1 to the report and included their anticipated opinion that the annual accounts were free from material misstatement and presented a true and fair view of Scotland Excel's financial position at 31 March 2023 as well as details of adjustments made to the accounts during the course of the audit.

A copy of the audited annual accounts 2022/23 was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. Following approval, the audited accounts would be submitted to the Convener, Treasurer and Chief Executive of Scotland Excel for secure digital signature.

It was noted that there was no total detailed in the remuneration table in page 15 of the accounts and that this would be amended prior to sign-off. A copy of the amended annual audited accounts would be made available on both Renfrewshire Council's and Scotland Excel's website. The total should have stated 27 for 2022/23 and 13 for 2021/22.

Gary Devlin, Audit Partner (Azets) then presented the Annual Audit Report to members.

DECIDED:

(a) That the findings of the 2022/23 audit as contained in the external auditor's annual audit report, which formed Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;

(b) That the Scotland Excel 2022/23 audited annual accounts, which formed Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for signature; and

(c) That it be noted that there was no total detailed in the remuneration table in page 15 of the accounts and that this would be amended prior to sign-off. A copy of the amended annual audited accounts would be made available on both Renfrewshire Council's and Scotland Excel's website.

3(a) **Contract for Approval: Supply and Delivery of Fresh Bread, Rolls and Bakery Products**

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 and delivery of fresh bread, rolls and bakery products for a period of 48 months from the commencement date. It was noted that subject to approval and completion of a standstill period, it was intended that the framework would commence on or around October 2023.

The report intimated that the framework would provide a mechanism for councils to procure a range of fresh bread, rolls and bakery products and that users of the framework were likely to include schools, nurseries, care homes, leisure centres, cafes and office units.

The report summarised the outcome of the procurement process which contained one lot, as detailed in table 1 of the report. The framework had been advertised at £2 million per annum, totalling an estimated spend of £8 million over the four-year period of the framework. This advertised spend allowed for increased participation from councils and associate members not currently utilising the framework. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the participation, spend and savings summary for those participating in the framework.

Tender responses had been received from four suppliers and, based on the criteria and scoring methodology set out in the tender documents, a full evaluation of all compliant offers had been carried out with the confirmed overall scoring achieved by each supplier detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

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 all four suppliers, as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.

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 together with the other benefits that would be achieved through the framework. The report intimated that, in accordance with Scotland Excel's established contract segmentation tool, the framework had been classified as class D.

It was noted that the reference to 'D. McGee and Sons Ltd' in Appendix 2 to the report should read 'D. McGee & Sons Ltd'.

DECIDED:

(a) That the award of the framework agreement for the supply and delivery of fresh bread, rolls and bakery products, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved; and

(b) That it be noted that the reference to 'D. McGee and Sons Ltd' in Appendix 2 to the report should read 'D. McGee & Sons Ltd'.

3(b) **Contract for Approval: Supply, Delivery, Servicing and Maintenance of Fire Safety Products**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel relative to the award of a framework for the supply, delivery, servicing and maintenance of fire safety products for an initial period of 24 months from the commencement date with an option to extend for up to a further two 12-month periods subject to satisfactory operation and performance. It was noted that subject to approval and completion of a standstill period, it was intended that the framework would commence on 1 October 2023.

The report intimated that the framework would provide a range of fire safety products and services.

The report summarised the outcome of the procurement process which had been divided into two lots, as detailed in table 1 of the report. The framework had been advertised at a total value of £1 million per annum, totalling an estimated spend of £4 million over the maximum four-year period of the framework, if the extension options were exercised. This advertised spend allowed for increased participation from councils and associate members not currently utilising the framework. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the participation, spend and savings summary for those participating in the framework.

Tender responses had been received from 15 suppliers and, based on the criteria and scoring methodology set out in the tender documents, a full evaluation of all compliant offers had been carried out with the confirmed the overall scoring achieved by each supplier detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

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 eight suppliers, in whole or in part, as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report.

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 together with the other benefits that would be achieved through the framework. The report intimated that, in accordance with Scotland Excel's established contract segmentation tool, the framework had been classified as class D.

DECIDED: That the award of the framework agreement for the supply, delivery, servicing and maintenance of fire safety products, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

4(a) **Request for Associate Membership: Accountant in Bankruptcy**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that Accountant in Bankruptcy 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 Accountant in Bankruptcy to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with no annual membership fee, be approved, subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

4(b) **Request for Associate Membership: Knowes Housing Association Limited**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that Knowes 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 Knowes Housing Association Limited to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with an annual membership fee of £1,625, be approved, subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

4(c) **Request for Associate Membership: University of Dundee**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive of Scotland Excel advising that the University of Dundee 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 University of Dundee to become an associate member of Scotland Excel, with no annual membership fee, be approved, subject to completion and signing of the agreement documentation.

5 **Employee Supporting Attendance Report**

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

The report intimated that the Joint Committee had agreed that Scotland Excel should work to an absence rate of below 4% which aligned Scotland Excel with partner organisations, supported good practice in this area and demonstrated the ongoing commitment to absence management as a key efficiency target.

The report advised of the absence levels for the 12-month period to 31 July 2023 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 been maintained at below the 4% target, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

It was noted that, in addition to actively 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 services, physio-therapy sessions 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, in addition to actively promoting good mental health practices and initiatives, had 15 staff from across all operational areas and grades who had trained as accredited Mental Health First Aiders. In providing this confidential opportunity to staff members, it was hoped that any personal difficulties experienced could be addressed at an early stage with appropriate signposting to professional support. Further training for those staff members wishing to become accredited Mental Health First Aiders had been arranged for November 2023 with The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH).

DECIDED: That the contents of the report be noted.

6 **Date of Next Meeting**

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Executive Sub-committee would be held remotely on MS teams at 9.30 am on 20 October 2023.