

Scotland Excel

To: Chief Executive Officers Management Group

On: 10 November 2021

Chief Executive's Update Report

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the group with an update on key developments within Scotland Excel since the last meeting of the Chief Executive Officers Management Group on 18 August 2021.

2. Summary

Since the group last met there have been a number of developments:

3. Framework Portfolio

3.1 Corporate Services(Including Digital)

Supply Teacher Booking System (Seemis)

Councils have been contacted to provide information regarding call offs. Glasgow City Council, the significant user of the SEEMiS retired module has contracted with Teacher Booker for a period of 4 years. North Ayrshire Council has entered into a call off with a Cloud Cover, a local SME. Inverclyde Council has entered into a contract with Teacher Booker. Two other councils are in the final stages of evaluation.

Technology Enabled Care Framework

Issues with the supply chain have affected local authority services. Suppliers have been contacted to determine a realistic lead time for key products as it is now taking 12 -16 weeks to fulfil most orders. The supply chain disruption is due to shipping costs and a severe shortage of microchips. Indications from suppliers are that this problem will continue into late 2022, and this will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis

Other ICT development activity

Scotland Excel will be assisting South Lanarkshire with a call off from its framework in the next quarter.

Three work packages will be delivered in this quarter for SEEMiS to support the Early Learning Years project.

Scotland Excel attended an project initiation meeting with CCS regarding a national project for Big Data and analytics. This project is likely to grow in speed in the next year

Scotland Excel is supporting the Improvement Service with its data subset and data standards project. An initiation meeting has been held and Scotland Excel is facilitating access to the STAMP project

Corporate Developments

There have been a number of developments within the Corporate portfolio. Contracts in development include PPE, frozen foods, milk, educational materials, musical Instruments and pest control.

The strategy for PPE ,which is in development, is almost ready to release to council colleagues. The focus on this framework has changed to include specific Pandemic specific items and a view to supporting more Scottish manufacturing, where appropriate. It is also the intention to include a supported business lot as per Article 20 within the Public Procurement Regulations.

3.2 Care Services

3.2.1 Adult and Older Peoples Care

National Care Home Contract (NCHC)

Initial talks in respect of the annual fee negotiation process for the NCHC have been delayed due to resource availability. This is as result of ongoing discussions in relation to Scottish Government proposals for an annual adult social care workforce increase, winter planning proposals as well as the consultation on the proposed National Care Service. Several external representatives previously involved in this work have moved onto new roles and identifying replacements has been difficult given current pressures.

Further clarity is required in relation to ongoing policy discussions, particularly in relation to the workforce, and the expected scope and impact on the NCHC before discussions on the impact on rates can take place.

The NCHC redesign has received interest from the Care Inspectorate, Health Improvement Scotland, independent advocacy and carers groups. Coupled with local government, sector representatives, unions and the Scottish Government this should provide a full range of views and experience to help address current and future need for the sector and more importantly for those who benefit from support in the sector. The first meeting of this group is scheduled to take place in November.

Care & Support

A re-opening exercise is underway to enable more providers to sign up to the national flexible framework for care & support. New services are expected to be available on the framework from April 2022 ensuring steady growth and additional capacity, by adding to the 119 providers and 460 services currently available.

The care & support framework will be amended as necessary to reflect any change in national policy, particularly in respect of ongoing workforce discussions.

Social Care Agency Workers

Work is underway to review the current social care agency workers framework and agree a strategy for the next generation framework. Stakeholder events are expected to take place with purchasers and providers in December and will include a review the framework terms and service specification as well as consider the overall strategy. Purchasers will be notified of meeting dates shortly.

3.2.2 Children's Services

Children's Residential

Scotland Excel has been engaging with councils through User Intelligence Group (UIG) meetings to discuss current themes and trends within the children's residential sector, including developments as a result of the implementation of The Promise. Two meetings were held in September with attendance from 15 councils, with a further six councils arranging individual meetings or providing feedback in writing.

The team has also surveyed providers of services to seek views and input. A range of themes have been included within the survey, including occupancy, staffing, service changes and future engagement. It is anticipated that this survey will help inform the foundations and basis for redevelopment work and future engagement planning.

The team also continue to liaise with colleagues in COSLA, Scottish Government, Care Inspectorate and The Promise to consider the impact of the Promise and related policy on national contracts and Scotland Excel's work.

Scotland Excel is planning to produce a briefing note in the coming month to summarise the engagement and information gathered to date, key themes and information along with proposed next steps.

Secure Care Transport

Secure Care Transport has been an ongoing and complex area for local authorities for a number of years. COSLA, Scottish Government and the Children & Young Persons Centre for Justice (CYCJ) set up a sub-group of the Secure Care Group to review the current landscape and discuss possible solutions to this long-standing issue.

Scotland Excel engaged in the initial meeting of this sub-group to provide procurement and commissioning knowledge. The group had attendance from a wide variety of organisations, generating discussion on a number of different topics. There were several actions from the meeting, the most relevant for Scotland Excel being a meeting to discuss the potential for development of a standard specification that may be used for services of this type, along with other actions assigned to Scottish Government, COSLA, CYCJ and other attendees. Scotland Excel will continue to engage with this work and provide support.

3.3 Construction Transport and Environment

3.3.1 New Build

This framework provides an effective procurement route for the construction of new built residential properties. Activity under this framework has continued to grow as members have renewed their activity on new build housing projects.

Given the well documented supply constraints the construction industry is currently Experiencing, Scotland Excel has been engaging regularly with framework contractors to review the pipeline. Call offs from the framework can be used as a mechanism for reduced cost uncertainty and improve risk management in a challenging marketplace.

The framework is structured to support the building of sustainable homes as we move towards a net zero society. Homes are currently being built to Passivhaus, Net Zero and Gold standards. The framework is also being used to deliver other environmentally sustainable measures such as solar panels and heat pumps.

To date, the framework has 14 confirmed projects which together are delivering over 550 homes and also a care facility. The value of awarded projects has risen to £109m, from £95m reported in the previous update.

In addition, there are 33 further projects due to be tendered which will in turn deliver around 1800 homes valued at approximately £293m.

The team is also working with member organisations to identify the next tranche of projects with discussions centring on around 700 more units, which are anticipated for award in 2022/2023.

3.3.2 Energy Efficiency

The work to establish our second-generation framework for Energy Efficiency Contractors is currently underway with a multidisciplinary team engaged in evaluating the bids received. This framework was developed with significant collaboration across the public sector and the supply chain.

Set to commence early in 2022, this framework will be a fundamental enabler for our members to attain net-zero by 2045 and has social and environmental objectives at its core; to tackle fuel poverty, reduce carbon emissions and support a green recovery.

The framework is structured to provide an efficient route to market and accommodates a wide range of energy efficiency measures, having expanded the scope of services compared to the first generation. This will enable full house retro-fit of existing housing stock and for the first time includes a professional services lot in support of a one-stop shop.

3.3.3 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The tender for this framework is one of the most recently released to the market. This is a first generation framework, responding to the growing demand for public bodies to increase charging points as part of their estate.

The framework will be operational in the first quarter of 2022 and will include the supply, installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charging equipment. The framework can be used for developing the infrastructure for depots, fleets, workplaces as well as on-street and off-street units.

3.3.4 Other

In addition to the frameworks featured above the Construction, Transport and Environment team are actively working on six further frameworks which will be awarded in coming months. These are:

Tyres for Vehicles and Plant (tender issued mid-October),
Heavy and Municipal Vehicles (tender issued late October)
and Vehicle and Plant Hire which will be issued in early 2022

Recycling and Reuse Containers - currently being evaluated
Outdoor Play and Sport and Building Construction Consultancy, tenders for which will both be issued before the end of 2021.

The team are also working on the management of contracts affected by the disruption to markets. One of the planned measures to enhance the resilience of the construction portfolio is to reshape the frameworks for the sourcing of construction materials. Development work for this will begin in early 2022.

3.4 Contract Delivery Plan Update

There are 74 current frameworks in the Scotland Excel contract portfolio, with twenty-nine of these frameworks to be renewed before 31 December 2022, as well as a number of new service areas being considered for collaborative contract development.

A total of 15 of the frameworks on the current portfolio have extension options that are likely to be exercised in 2021/2022 with six of these extensions already approved.

The overall efficiencies across the whole portfolio year to date is 3.1% compared to the 2.5 % forecast range. This efficiency figure will continue to be monitored throughout 2021/2022.

The following contracts have been approved at Executive Sub Committee since August 2021:

Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Digital Telecare Goods

Scotland Excel provides a third-generation framework, Technology Enabled Care (31/17), that provides stakeholders a route to market for most products needed to support care at home. This framework is highly valued by stakeholders, and there is a strong support for this to be renewed in 2022. The Dynamic Purchasing System ("DPS") is intended as a complimentary agreement for Digital only Technologies to be procured and will align itself to a turbulent market more easily than a framework. The turbulence in the market is largely due to the impending analogue telephone network switch off, which is due to be completed by 2025. Over the last 10 years the Technology Enabled Care framework has provided analogue equipment to all 32 councils, with a total spend to date of c. £36 million. The majority of this has been on personal alarm units that will become redundant when the analogue telephone system is discontinued. It is the intention to utilise the features of a DPS to allow new entrants to engage more easily with contracting bodies, but also ensure price stability for key products sourced through a renewed technology enabled care framework. The DPS will also provide an insight into the changing market, supporting the development of the framework within a landscape of policy change and market uncertainty.

Supply and Provision of Online School Payments, Cashless Catering and Kitchen Management & Nutritional Systems

This renewal is a second-generation framework for the Supply and Provision of Online School Payments, Cashless Catering and Kitchen Management & Nutritional Systems. This framework will provide local authorities and other participating bodies with a mechanism to procure a complete solution for Online School Payments, Cashless Catering, Kitchen Management and Nutritional Analysis Systems permitting the award of Call-offs under the framework by way of a mini-competition. A total of 5 suppliers have been awarded a place on the framework. These 5 recommended suppliers offer best value and represent a mix of small, medium, and large organisations. Four suppliers are classed as SME's, and one is a Scottish supplier.

3.5 Supply Chain Disruption

Economic growth is accelerating as countries ease coronavirus restrictions. Increase in demand is coinciding with a global shortage of many key raw materials including construction materials, packaging, shipping containers and food, amongst others.

Energy and fuel are also experiencing rapid inflation. In the last 12 months the price of crude oil has increased 50% while the average cost of packaging is up 70%. The UK is partially insulated from this commodity pressure by the year on year strengthening of Sterling, but this protects mainly imported goods. As a result, overall UK inflation increased from 2.1% to 2.5% in June, and the consensus among economists and the Bank of England is that prices will continue to rise further as the year progresses.

Shortages of materials have been cited as a key driver of the slowing economic recovery according to the latest Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI), which fell to 55.0 in August down from 59.6 in July from a record high of 62.9 in May (with 50 representing neither contraction nor expansion).

Currently markets are experiencing the second-fastest rate of inflation seen in the last 25 years. To date the most impacted product groupings are OSB (oriented strand board), MDF, fencing, tile battens, roof tiles, concrete blocks, cement, slabs, plasterboard and copper. Therefore, of all the goods-based frameworks, building and timber materials is experiencing the greatest degree of disruption. Working groups have been set up with local authority members and discussion ongoing with key suppliers to try to mitigate the risks to capital projects.

4. The Academy

The Academy is supporting the people development and organisational development of our local authorities and 30 public / third-sector organisations, with 1,014 registered learners accessing content on our Moodle platform and 202 learners engaged in accredited programmes across 16 cohorts - comprising six in procurement, four in leadership & management, three in project management, one in business analysis & innovation, decision making & innovation and two combined procurement and leadership & management development programme cohorts.

A further 8 accredited programmes are planned to launch in fiscal year 2021/22 - comprising three in leadership & management, three in project management and two in business analysis & innovation, decision making and innovation.

The Academy has awarded 242 qualifications and 11 Chartered Managers to date, whilst engaging a total of 1,619 learners in development activities across the whole portfolio. 381 learners have participated in accredited programmes, 769 learners in one-hour online Stay Connected workshops and 469 learners in one-day development workshops.

The Academy team is working on a new schedule for 17 Stay Connected workshops and the launch of the four-hour online Evolve workshop, with phase 1 comprising 13 workshops. The Scotland Excel marketing team will launch a campaign communicating the Evolve workshops.

The Academy is also -

- Developing a programme to counter Serious Organised Crime in procurement for the Scottish Government.
- Developing and delivering a delegated procurement programme for Dumfries and Galloway council.
- Creating eLearning content for Stirling Council.
- Developing and delivering a combined procurement development and leadership & management development programme for NHS Lothian, Tayside, Fife, Grampian and Highland health boards.

In response to the Proxima report, the Academy is pursuing the opportunity to become the National Skills Academy with the Scottish Government Property and Procurement Directorate (SPPD).

5. Projects Update

5.1 East Lothian

The Scotland Excel two-year Improvement Programme with East Lothian Council has now concluded with savings of £1.3m delivered (the original forecast savings target was in the region of £1.4m).

One of the key project elements was the review, development, and implementation of a strategic procurement service across the Council. The structure of the procurement team was reviewed along with the skills of the team and training such as negotiation and contract and supplier management were subsequently delivered. A proposal for a new procurement team structure was accepted and this put in place more senior level procurement officer roles to build capacity for procurement interventions.

Other elements included Category A, B and C contract optimisation (including collaborative working) to maximise contract efficiency savings through streamlining the contract portfolio and standardising products available. Significant benefits were identified and delivered, including major projects in collaboration with other councils in the areas of Care and Education.

Scotland Excel will continue to engage with East Lothian Council in their longer-term transformation programme.

5.2 Dumfries and Galloway Council

The programme of work within Dumfries and Galloway Council aims to improve control and visibility of procurement spend by restricting delegations to services for a period to give time for a full improvement programme to be delivered. Training sessions on developing procurement skills within the wider organisation have been held with a number of the Council's Senior Management Team members and further sessions are being planned with Elected Members, Service Managers, Heads of Service and Directors. Thereafter training sessions will be held with staff who have Delegated Procurement Authority.

A dedicated Community Wealth Building project is in progress as part of the programme and focus is currently on the Council's use of the Scottish Government Grow Local tool and review and analysis of Quick Quotes. Initial analysis for these two areas is complete and with the Council for review. Discussions have taken place to gather information on key internal and external stakeholders to engage with further and date options for an elected member workshop are being considered

5.3 South Lanarkshire Council

Scotland Excel has commenced a two-year programme with South Lanarkshire Council which supports the organisation's strategic procurement aims as part of the Council's wider transformation programme. Savings and efficiencies are core to the programme and will be of particular focus during the first six months. Recruitment is in progress for a Programme Manager and Commercial Lead and further recruitment will be reviewed as the programme develops.

5.4 Stirling Council

Scotland Excel has been providing Stirling Council with a Head of Procurement since December 2020. Since the last update the development plan is progressing well with a number of achievements recently including a recruitment drive to fill long standing vacancies successfully completed, a new revised set of Contract Standing Orders, a new Procurement Strategy covering the next four years, refreshed Service Delivery Plan with revised measurable KPI's and the Community Wealth Building project which is progressing towards completion.

Focus has been placed on community wealth building with Stirling Council now working with Scotland Excel on a dedicated project in this area. The project is progressing well, and the approach has recently been endorsed by elected members during a dedicated session to set out the work to date and the future plan . A draft Community Wealth Building Charter was created and submitted for approval and this will form part of the Council's wider Economic Development Strategy.

In the coming months the development plan will move towards developing the Procurement Team where the Scottish Government Competency self-assessment framework will be undertaken by all team members enabling the creation of a team training plan, and also individual targeted personal development plans

5.5 Tayside

In June 2021 Scotland Excel concluded a two year programme of work with three councils in Tayside. The councils involved in the programme were Angus, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross. The three councils are looking at the most effective and innovative ways of taking fleet management, facilities management and roads maintenance into the future. These tests of change will reshape the specifications for future procurement work, taking account of economic recovery, net zero and shortening supply chains to support greater local resilience. Scotland Excel is continuing to engage, share information and support delivery.

5.6 East Renfrewshire

Year 3 of the East Renfrewshire Programme continues to deliver strategic benefits in what is a challenging operating environment for many council services. We are currently undertaking intensive work with Housing and Property and Technical Services to ensure a joined-up approach which will lead to improvements and efficiencies. 200 Council staff have attended our "Procurement Bitesize" training courses to date and a new council wide bespoke Online Contracts Register system is due to go live which will improve data reporting capabilities and make key contract information accessible to staff across the Council.

5.7 Flexible Procurement Services

There continues to be a growth in demand for Flexible Procurement services (previously referred to as Hosted Procurement Services) where Scotland Excel undertakes; a full procurement exercise on behalf of the customer; offers short term procurement resource under an agency model; provides procurement advice and guidance.

Scotland Excel is providing these services to a number of organisations including councils, Arm's Length Organisations (ALEOs) and other public bodies. Due to the success and growing customer demand for these services, recruitment is underway for senior procurement specialists within the team to support the recently appointed Category Manager (team leader) in delivering the pipeline of projects.

5.8 City Property Glasgow (Investments) LLP

City Property Glasgow (Investments) LLP continues to engage with Scotland Excel as their 'Procurement Partner' with a number of tenders being prepared covering the waste streams from the Blochairn Food Market in the City. The publishing of a tender for a General Waste recycling partner has been delayed with focus being on the Terms & Conditions of the contract with the intention that the tender will be published by the end of the year.

A mini-competition from the Estate Management Services Crown Commercial Services framework has been published. The tender, which closes 29th October, is to appoint an agent for the sale of land in the Charing Cross area of Glasgow, formerly the site of Nye Bevan House which is currently owned by City Property Glasgow (Investments) LLP.

5.9 Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme

Work during September and October is focused on undertaking a review of existing evidence which has previously been commissioned/produced/used as a reference point, on the subject of the Scottish LGPS Scheme Review, on behalf of the Scheme Advisory Board.

A small, short-life focus group is undertaking this review, with membership from a small number of the Pension Funds and employers. In addition, we have commissioned two external specialists to work with the group: an investment specialist with a breadth of LGPS experience and a senior academic, from the University of Amsterdam, with an extensive track record in pension research on an international level.

This exercise will not only establish an agreed evidence baseline, it will also enable a more informed gap analysis to be produced of the work that still needs to be undertaken to complete the business cases, on each of the options under consideration, as well as identifying the resources and expertise required. This, in turn will enable a work and resource plan to be developed, as well as an outline budget, for the Scheme Advisory Board to consider.

5.10 Climate Change

There is a strong focus on Scotland, as the world's most prominent environmental figures come together to discuss and plan how to tackle the climate emergency. Scotland Excel continue to Support Scotland's Green Recovery, by focusing on all the sustainable elements within our contract portfolio to support the Scottish Government's target to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2045.

Scotland Excel has a significant influence on how sustainable the local government supply chain is and continues to work with key strategic partners to ensure that all frameworks placed continue to deliver sustainable benefits.

Scotland Excel is also in the process of developing the first national framework that will help councils source the supply, installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charging points and a new generation of the energy efficiency contractors framework is under evaluation which aims to help councils and social landlords source the goods and services they need to tackle fuel poverty, reduce emissions and create warmer homes

Scotland Excel is involved in several events surrounding COP26, including running a webinar on October 28, 2021 featuring Ivan McKee MSP, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise and other industry leaders to discuss how ‘through innovation and collaboration, the public, third and private sectors can accelerate action to tackle the climate emergency’.

In addition to this, Scotland Excel has had three articles published in “The Herald”, each article with a focus on climate change and the impact our frameworks play within the local Government arena.

6. Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) provision of 1140 hours – setting the sustainable rate

Scotland Excel continues to support a number of councils to engage with their local early learning and childcare (ELC) providers as part of the national policy to expand childcare provision. Work is progressing with East Lothian Council to help them determine a sustainable hourly rate.

6.1 Improvement Service – Employability Services

Scotland Excel is providing support to the Improvement Service and Scottish Government for the development of a procurement process for employability services. A refreshed approach to employability provision, with greater focus on the needs of the individual, has been structured under ‘No One Left Behind’. This continues to drive greater collaboration to deliver the aspirations of the programme, with a shared commitment from both Scottish and Local Governments. To reinforce this, funding will transfer to local Government from April 2022, as will ownership for the appropriate governance arrangements through Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs). Initial discussions with the project team concluded that the implementation of a robust strategic sourcing model will be a key enabler in the delivery of a solution that will support this new model. To date, two meetings have been held with the User Intelligence Group and work will continue over the following months to advance this project.

6.2 Community Wealth Building

Scotland Excel continues to work with Scottish Government and Local Authority partners, focussing on the 'Progressive Procurement' Community Wealth Building pillar. Data-led analysis has formed the foundation of the programme, contextualising Local Authority areas and the wider Scottish Public Sector landscapes to highlight and inform understanding of the opportunities to increase local procurement within a council's area.

Current activity includes the development of a Community Wealth Building Procurement Charter, local supplier communications, linking with external organisations to improve support for suppliers, and promotion of the Scottish Sustainable Procurement Tools. As we work through activities with each council, we are building a suite of templates to support the replicability of the different project elements.

7. Associate Membership including new Members

There have been nine new associate members since the last CEOMG:

Berwickshire Housing Association
West Granton Housing Co-Operative
Caledonian Maritime Assets
SEPA (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency)
Heriot Watt University
University of Stirling
University of St Andrews
Zero Waste Scotland
Live Active Leisure

The total number of associate members of Scotland Excel currently stands at 120 for this reporting period. This number can change depending on new members or any resignations. However, the number of members has been steadily growing over the last three years with nearly all the members satisfied that Scotland Excel provides value for money.

This financial year, Scotland Excel has engaged more with the charity sector to promote associate membership and continues to promote the new build framework and growing construction portfolio to the housing sector.