

Scotland Excel

To: Scotland Excel Executive Sub Committee

On: Friday 18 November 2016

Report
by
Director Scotland Excel

Update on the Learning & Development Provision

1. Introduction

This report provides members with an update on Scotland Excel's Learning and Development (L&D) provision and direction. It is intended as a pre-cursor to Scotland Excel's formal L&D strategy which will be presented to members at the December Joint Committee.

2. Background

Providing L&D leadership to our members has been at the heart of Scotland Excel's strategic direction since inception. The organisation has delivered a national and award winning service throughout this period. Increasingly however, the local government community has highlighted the challenges of educating their workforce in a sustainable manner, supporting their continuous professional development through a mode which delivers practical results in the workplace.

One of the main delivery mechanisms provided by Scotland Excel was provision of one day standalone course delivered through an external training provider. With this contract coming to an end on the 30 November 2016 and our community asking for a more progressive L&D solution, a new strategy was required. Structured interviews were conducted across the local authority community capturing the communities' current and future needs nationally.

Scotland Excel Learning & Development Pilot

In order to explore this new strategic direction, Scotland Excel worked with our Procurement Improvement Programme steering group to agree a 3 month L&D pilot. The pilot was implemented with 30 learners across 15 councils partnering with three professional bodies and six Scottish university business schools. The Phase#1 pilot supported a blend of self-directed study accessing professional body licensed content supported by Scotland Excel resources.

These were supplemented with routine online discussions and five face-face workshops, resourced by Scotland Excel and the business school partners. Regional workshops were delivered in Paisley, Aberdeen, Stirling and Edinburgh.

The Phase#1 pilot participants, partners and structure are illustrated in image 1.

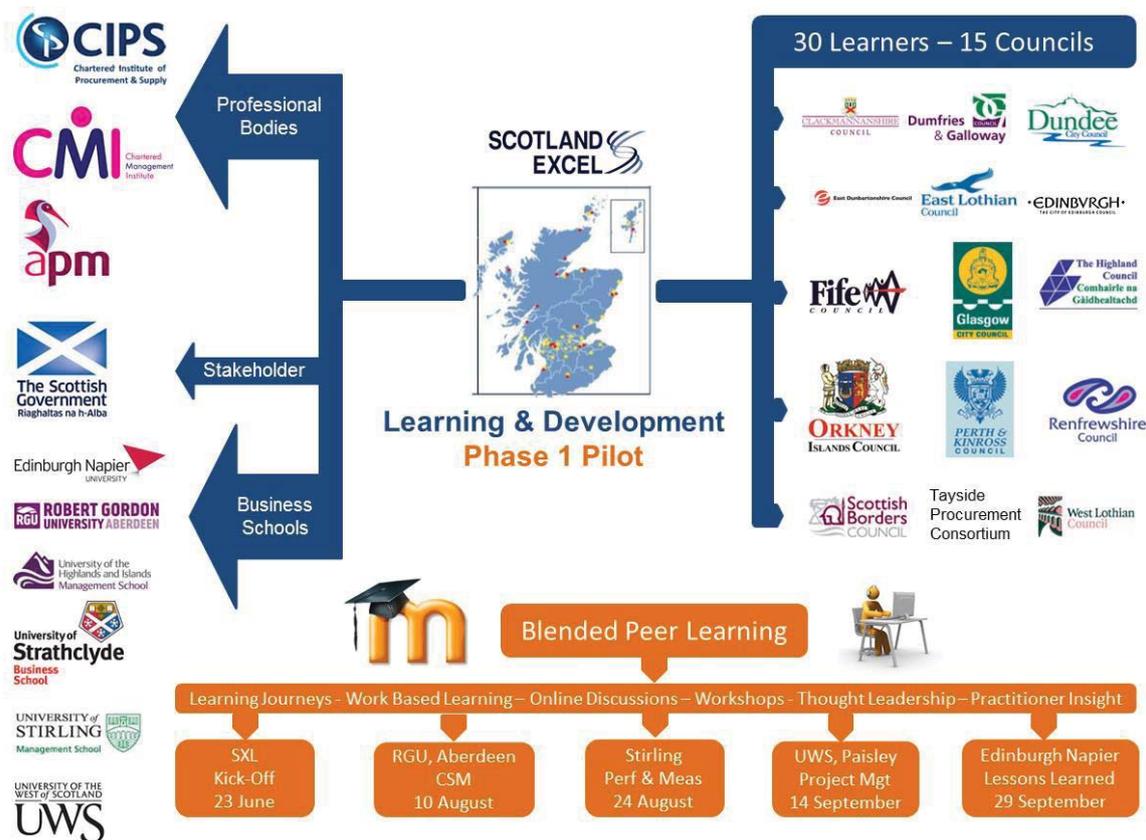


Image 1: Phase#1 Pilot Structure and Partners

Pilot outcomes

The outcomes of the Phase#1 pilot and the Phase#2 recommendations will be shared with the PIP Steering Group and the L&D Focus Group, prior to being distributed across the community and then presented to members.

Further work will be undertaken on potential commercial models that support expansion of the delivery model across the professional body disciplines; and with regional business school partners. This approach minimises any impact of council member's travel expenses and time out of the office.

Appendix 1 provides more data on the initial results of the pilot programme.

3. National L&D Strategy

Scotland Excel Co-Chairs the Professional Practice and Development Strategic Forum (PPDSF) as a component of the Scottish Government Commercial and Procurement Directorate.

It is through this group that Scotland Excel will both ensure the benefits of wider collaboration and learning are achieved and that our member requirements are best served. One of the key areas is ensuring that our programmes are fully aligned to the government's procurement competency framework.

This competency framework illustrates the multi-disciplinary skills required for an individual to effectively fulfil their job description and provide a pathway to progress

through the levels of Awareness; Practitioner; Leader and Expert throughout their public procurement career, from new hire to expert.

4. Developing our future workforce.

In addition to leading our sector in learning and development, Scotland Excel has developed our future workforce through a number of mechanisms:

Modern Apprentices

Scotland Excel has hired and developed 4 Modern Apprentices to date, with 3 completing their apprenticeship and now in full time employment; 1 is currently progressing through their apprenticeship.

Graduates

Scotland Excel has hired and developed 7 graduates, with 5 actively employed within Scotland Excel – 1 category manager; 2 senior procurement specialists and 2 progressing through their 3rd year Post Graduate studies whilst employed as graduate trainees.

Interns

Scotland Excel has hired and developed 7 interns employed on 6-11 month contracts. This approach develops inexperienced graduates, boosting their employability, whilst increasing Scotland Excel's resources over a short-term finite period. Several of these interns have moved on to full time roles both internally and externally. Scotland Excel currently has 2 interns working within the organisation.

This success is echoed across many of our member organisations with many examples of good practice in developing procurement people of tomorrow. Examples of working with schools, colleges, universities and other groups are found throughout the community.

5. The Scotland Excel Academy

Responding to the community's feedback on a more sustainable approach to L&D, Scotland Excel has developed an online training platform based on a standard used in higher and further education.

The Academy learning platform supports additional functionality including online discussions; forums and blogs. This is illustrated in image 2.

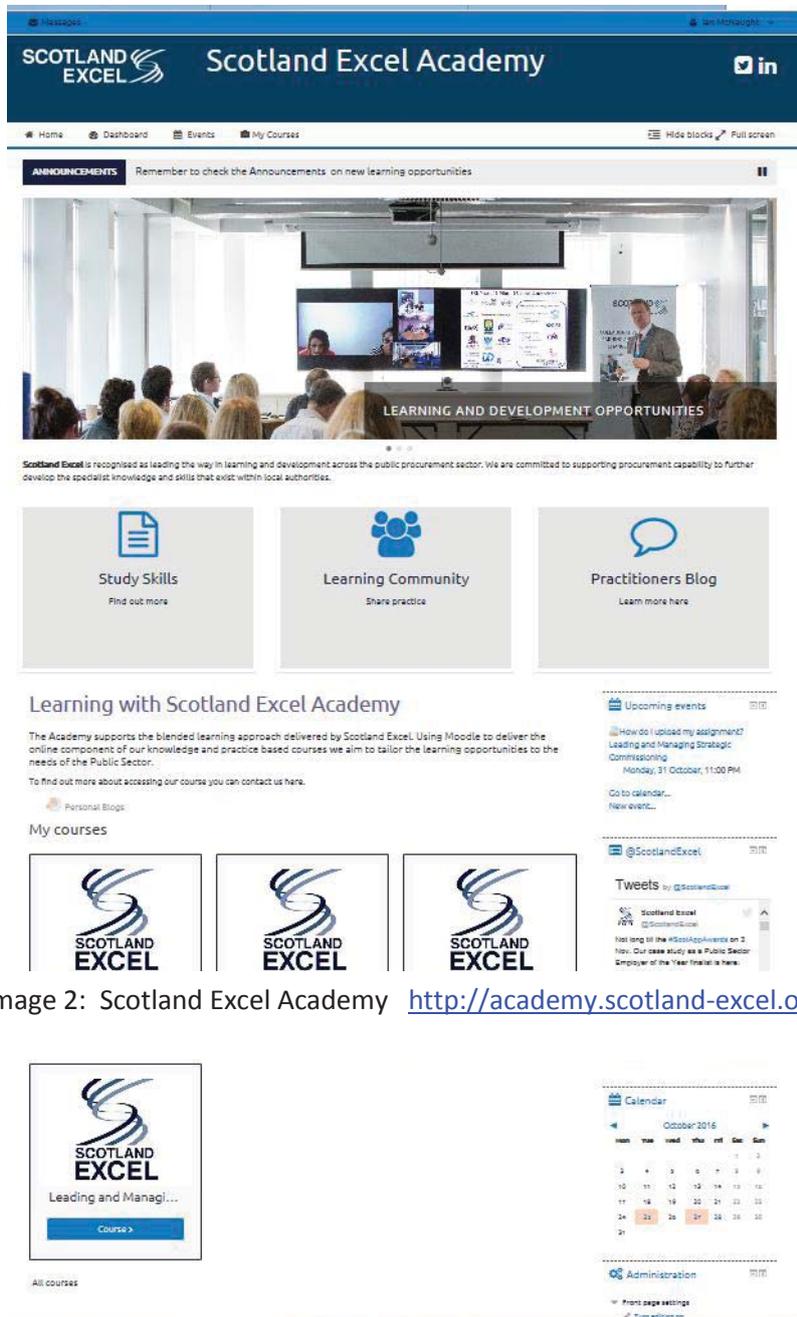


Image 2: Scotland Excel Academy <http://academy.scotland-excel.org.uk>

Accredited Programmes

Responding to the community’s input and initial pilot feedback, Scotland Excel is exploring the delivery of its own programmes, accredited with the three established professional body partners – namely the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS); the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) and the Association of Project Management (APM)

CIPS Accredited Programmes

Scotland Excel has started to explore a commercial and delivery model with CIPS to deliver procurement knowledge supporting positive outcomes through blended learning and work based practice.

Much of the community already engages with CIPS through self-study, although this is reported as being tediously time consuming and expensive.

Other modes of study are available from CIPS although they are cost prohibitive.

Scotland Excel will engage with CIPS to determine if synergy can be established between the organisations leading to a commercially viable model of accredited blended learning.

CMI Accredited Programmes

Scotland Excel is progressing through the process striving to become a CMI Approved Centre. As a CMI Approved Centre, Scotland Excel will deliver leadership & management knowledge supporting positive outcomes through blended learning and work based practice.

Learners who successfully pass the work based project assessments will earn a Professional Certificate or Diploma in Leadership & Management; at level SCQF8.

APM Accredited Programmes

Scotland Excel will explore expanding the licensed content agreement with APM striving to deliver project management knowledge supporting positive outcomes through blended learning and work based practice. These discussions have not yet commenced.

10. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of this report and provide any input to the formal L&D strategy prior to the December Joint Committee.

Appendix 1

Of the 36 people who participated across the 5 regional workshops, 24 were learners from 15 of the councils. 88% of these learners progressed through their personal learning journey supported by Scotland Excel.

71% of the learners engaged in face-face regional workshops at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen; the University of Stirling in Stirling and the University of the West of Scotland in Paisley.

The outcomes of a 'lessons learned' workshop at Edinburgh Napier University, combined with further customer consultation with Scotland Excel's account managers informs the Phase#2 strategy.



Image 3: Phase#1 Pilot Summary

Image 4 illustrates the major positive outcomes of the Phase#1 pilot.

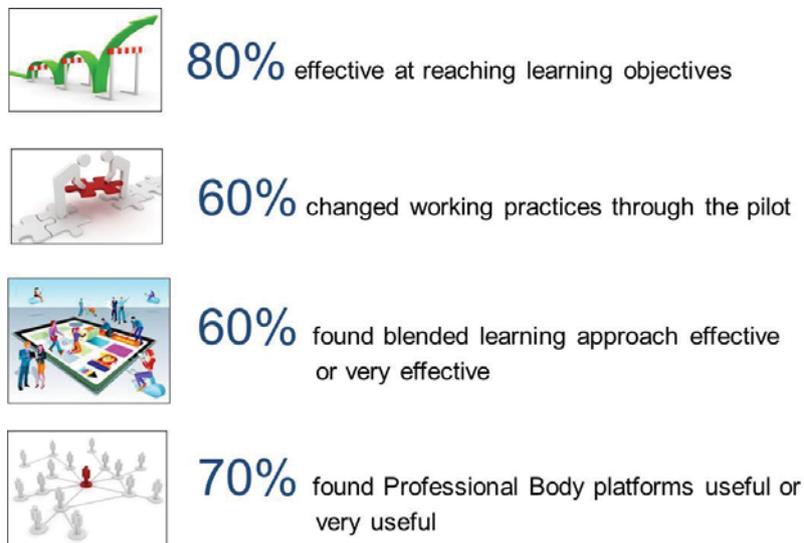


Image 4: Phase#1 Major Outcomes