

Review of the

Supplier Development Programme

Final Report for Scottish Enterprise

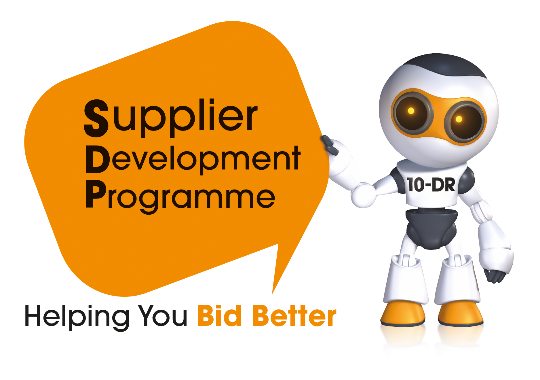
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# Introduction

This report presents the findings of a Review of the Supplier Development Programme (SDP) which was undertaken for Scottish Enterprise (SE) between September and December 2015.

## Background

The SDP is a local authority partnership involving 31 of the 32 local authorities in Scotland[[1]](#footnote-1) - it was established in late 2005, and became a limited company in 2008.

The Programme is currently funded through local authority members’ contributions, and additional funding for the period 2014/2016 was secured a grant from the Scottish Government through the Digital Scotland Business Excellence Partnership (DSBEP), which introduced a digital procurement element to the SDP. The DSBEP funding is due to come to an end in March 2016.

The SDP provides a wide range of procurement business support activities free of charge to Scottish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and third sector organisations.

The overall aim of the SDP is to support SMEs and third sector organisations become more informed, aware and capable of tendering for public sector contracts in Scotland, the UK, and further afield. The intended outcome is for more Scottish businesses to win contracts, grow their business, and thereby support the local and national economy.

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| The SDP provides information, support and training events to assist businesses to navigate the complex tendering processes used in public sector procurement. |

A review of the SDP was undertaken in 2013 which resulted in a refreshed model of service delivery and management. The review sought to ensure that the SDP was better positioned to deliver on its national ambitions.

Since July 2014, South Lanarkshire Council has been the host organisation for the SDP, and the Programme was re-launched at an event in November that year.

## Study Aims and Objectives

The review period covers July 2014 onwards, as this marked the SDP host transition from Glasgow City Council to South Lanarkshire Council.

The review has been driven by two factors:

* the Programme has been running in its new format for 17 months and after this initial ‘bedding in’ period it is now appropriate to review the performance, and consider the future strategic direction, scale and scope of the SDP; and
* the DSBEP funding is coming to an end in March 2016 and while the Programme could continue in a much reduced capacity based on members’ contribution, a review of alternative funding sources was considered appropriate to identify whether other funding sources could be secured to allow the SDP to continue at its current level or expand services.

The evidence gathered through the review has been used to assess the economic and strategic value and contribution of the SDP, and will inform the next Business Planning period.

The detailed study objectives were to:

* gather customer feedback – engage with customers, analyse and report on the value which the SDP service has brought and will bring to its customers;
* gather stakeholder views – engage with the SDP’s national and local partners, analyse and report on the value which the SDP contributes to national and local economic development, procurement and digital agendas;
* make conclusions on the value of the new SDP, based upon the contribution it is making to its customers, partners and policy objectives;
* assess the effectiveness of different aspects of the SDP such as: core and additional services, website, marketing and communications, management, governance, including Board and other Groups, partnership working, and measurement; and
* provide recommendations on options for the future development of the SDP, which can be considered and adopted into the new Business Plan as appropriate:
  + service offering – nature and scale
  + management and other operational areas such as website, marketing and communications
  + governance and partnership working
  + financing – in light of review evidence on the SDP’s contribution and the ending of DSBEP funding, what scale and nature of SDP service is needed in the future (larger, same, smaller, different, any), and what alternative sources of income could the SDP secure.

## Study Method

The study method comprised the following elements, as illustrated below.

#### **Figure 1.1: Study Method**

## Partner Engagement

The feedback from partners and stakeholders has been incorporated throughout the report, and in particular has helped shape the Conclusions and Recommendations.

EKOS would like to express thanks to those that were able to contribute their input and **Table 1.1** provides a breakdown of consultees that participated in the review.

Table 1.1: Stakeholder Consultees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Contact | Organisation | Job Title |
| Gillian Cameron | South Lanarkshire Council | SDP Programme Manager |
| Fran Goldie | South Lanarkshire Council | SDP Development Officer |
| Sarah Maxwell | South Lanarkshire Council | SDP Development Officer |
| Elizabeth Bailey | South Lanarkshire Council | SDP Programme Assistant |
| Mike Sinclair | Scottish Enterprise | DSBEP SDP Project Manager |
| Graeme Rennison | Scottish Enterprise | DSBEP Business Programme Manager |
| Scott Bell | Scottish Government | Head of Procurement Reform |
| Cllr Christopher Thompson | South Lanarkshire Council | SDP Chairman |
| David Smart | Smart Consultancy | Director |
| George Sneddon | Fife Council | SDP Board Executive Team |
| Cllr Anthony Buchanan | East Renfrewshire Council | SDP Board Executive Team |
| Mollie Kerr | Edinburgh City Council | SDP Board member |
| Karen Lawson | Dundee City Council | SDP Board member |
| Douglas Duff | Falkirk Council | SDP Board Executive Team |
| Eliot Jordan | South Lanarkshire Council | SDP Regional Officers Group |
| Steve Keating | South Lanarkshire Council | Business Support and Property Development Manager |
| Pamela Stephenson | Fife Council | Business Gateway operational network/ SDP Strategic Planning Group |
| Pauline Wallace | Glasgow City Council | SDP Regional Officers Group |
| Roddy MacAskill | South Ayrshire Council | SDP Regional Officers Group |
| Jaye Martin | Cooperative Development Scotland | Specialist Advisor |
| Lawrie Willcox | Scottish Procurement | Procurement Capability Development Manager |

## Report Structure

The main findings of the SDP review are contained in **Chapters 2 to 6**, with study Conclusions and Recommendations presented in **Chapter 7**.

# Setting the Scene

Prior to describing the SDP as it is today, it is worth setting the scene in terms of the review undertaken two years ago. This Chapter then provides a high level overview of the refreshed SDP and its service offering.

#### **Figure 2.1: Timeline**

## Previous Review of the SDP

The SDP ran for nine years up to 2014 to a similar model of service delivery and management as today - albeit the funding for the SDP at this time was only from member local authorities and considerable in-kind contribution from Glasgow City Council for staffing. At this time, the Programme was hosted by Glasgow City Council, and it delivered three levels of procurement training to SMEs and third sector organisations across Scotland: 1. for those new to bidding for public sector contracts, 2. for those with some experience, and 3. for more experienced bidders. During 2013 there was an identified need to rethink and refresh the SDP - Kynesis undertook a review and was tasked with considering options for the continued development of the service[[2]](#footnote-2). While the service was continuing to deliver strong outputs, the review was driven by a number of factors, namely:

* financial sustainability - funding for the Programme was reducing;
* governance - structures were considered insufficiently robust and transparent;
* membership (frustration and stability) - there was a perception among some member local authorities that they did not get “good value” for their investment;
* consistency - a lack of consistent support on public sector tendering for SMEs across the country; and
* national - that the service was not delivering nationally.

There were also considered to be emerging opportunities that the SDP could capitalise on. These centred on greater engagement with the wider public sector (beyond local authorities), and larger private sector suppliers in building the Scottish supply chain (Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers), and building cross-sector competitive SMEs.

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| Review Key Findings | |
| Establishment of robust governance | Refreshed Board needs to establish a firm way of working, set up planning and monitoring mechanisms and a regular timetable of meetings. |
| A strategy to deliver on national priorities and a plan to meet local needs | The need to develop a clear strategic plan which should define the scope and focus of the Programme and how it will deliver nationally, and across the public sector. There should be an associated operational plan informed by the economic and business needs of local authority partners. While there is activity data, linking this to robust measures of impact is difficult. A monitoring framework requires to be developed. |
| Maintain fundamental strengths | A valuable tool for business development where it is used effectively. It has exceptional reach and a good reputation. Changes to the model should build on the current strengths. |
| Funding | Current figures suggest that the fully funded Programme could cost in the region of £500,000. Future funding is likely to come from a number of sources, however, funders will want to see a strategic and operational plan. |
| Extending reach and effectiveness | The Programme is not perceived as equally available to all, and local authority interaction and use of the SDP is also varied. There needs to be a consistent programme to all SMEs, to integrate the work with that of public procurement professionals consistently across the country, and to capitalise on impact by bringing other public bodies into the partnership with the SDP. The extent to which the Programme is integrated with other SME business support mechanisms (e.g. Business Gateway) is largely driven by local authorities, and is patchy across the country. |

Source: Kynesis, Supplier Development Programme: Options Review.

The review considered four options: 1. As-is Plus, 2. Partnership, 3. Business Gateway Integration, and 4. Tender the Programme. Partnership - forming a new partnership between local authorities, Scottish Government and other public sector bodies - was the recommended option. This option retained and built on the core functions and delivery model of the SDP, making use of a resourced national staff team and cross-sector support.

## SDP Transformation Project

An SDP Transition Board worked on the delivery model options and “transition” during 2013/2014, facilitated by a consultant who managed the process through to the emergence of the current SDP (and acted as an interim Programme manager).

It was identified that the SDP had the potential to contribute to DSBEP objectives – and for the DSBEP to become a significant short-term funder (see **Chapters 4 and 5** for more detail).

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| “*The Digital Scotland - Business Excellence Partnership will collectively be responsible for promoting a culture of strong partnership, continuous improvement, and constructive challenge that can support Scotland to become a world class digital nation by 2020. The partnership will have collective responsibility for raising the profile of ‘digital’ and creating a ‘digital culture’ in Scotland*”. |

Source: DSBEP, Terms of Reference and Governance Structure.

The Transition Board reviewed and developed the design of the current SDP service. Through the transition process the Board developed a SDP Project Plan[[3]](#footnote-3). The Project Plan was structured along ten development outputs - with transformation anticipated to be completed by 31 March 2014. For each output, the Plan detailed actions, outcomes, named responsibility[[4]](#footnote-4), and timescales.

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| SDP Project Plan Outputs | |
| Establish fit-for-purpose SDP management and governance systems. | Establish new SDP office. |
| Develop a detailed SDP Operational Plan and budget. | Establish new SDP procurement activities. |
| Finalise the terms of grant/financial support from the Scottish Government and associated compliance arrangements. | Develop a robust SDP performance framework. |
| Finalise new regional planning delivery model based on Business Gateway contract areas. | Develop a digital procurement strategy and events programme. |
| Recruit a new SDP staff team. | Prepare a communications and marketing strategy and liaise with all local authorities and other stakeholders on the proposed new SDP structure. |

Source: David Smart, Supplier Development Programme Transformation Project, Project Plan February - March 2014, 11th February 2014.

## The Refreshed SDP

### Overview

The SDP Operational Plan (2014/15)[[5]](#footnote-5) sets out the aspirations for the Programme, as detailed below.

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| “*Forging a new partnership with the Scottish Government, based on retaining the strengths of SDP delivery to date but significantly enhancing these to ensure more Scottish SMEs and social enterprises engage with, and benefit from new opportunities in digital procurement and service delivery”.* |

Funding for April 2014 to March 2016 was secured from local authority partner contributions and Scottish Government funding through Digital Scotland - the DSBEP (Scottish Enterprise is the fund holder for DSBEP monies).

The three core level training events were retained, however, the SDP was refreshed, as follows:

* a new Council sponsor - changed from Glasgow City Council to South Lanarkshire Council in July 2014;
* a new SDP team - changes included a new Programme Manager and two new Development Officers (and an Administrator who Tupe transferred from Glasgow City Council). The team are responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of the service;
* a national focus - as of July 2014, 28 of Scotland’s 32 local authorities were members. This has since increased to 31, and discussions with the one remaining local authority are ongoing[[6]](#footnote-6);
* a new digital focus - the SDP events programme content has recently been refreshed to include training on e-procurement topics and the provision of digital services (webinars); and
* local and national partnerships - the SDP has sought to proactively connect with procurement, digital and economic development partners at local and national levels to ensure that its services are complementary to the existing business support landscape.

### SDP Governance and Management Arrangements

As mentioned, the SDP is a local authority partnership and a registered limited company. At present, only local authorities can be full members of the SDP. The operational and working relationship between the SDP and member local authorities are detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding. This sets out the SDP’s roles and responsibilities as:

* holding, managing and operating the assets of the SDP;
* acting as a central resource for all members, co-ordinating support activities at the national and local level;
* working with business support organisations, procurement teams, and other experts to formulate partnerships and to develop specialist support activities which support the objective of enabling more SMEs and social enterprises to compete for private and public sector contract opportunities; and
* implementing Programme management responsibilities as the SDP Board may determine from time to time (e.g. database, communication materials, reporting, etc).

It also sets out members’ roles and responsibilities, as follows:

* participate in local events within their area and, where agreed with SDP, will be responsible for arranging the provision of local speakers, venues and catering;
* SDP will be promoted and communicated through established local channels and networks in order to build local company participation;
* promote the Programme and associated events, and provide information on how this is being done to the SDP staff team;
* contribute towards SDP’s website content, promotional materials and annual reports;
* contribute towards the development of SDP through piloting new products, initiatives, and local partnerships;
* ensure that SDP database information held on the Programme is maintained and updated; and
* provide appropriate local information and support to the new SDP performance monitoring framework.

The Memorandum of Understanding is then reflected in the formal company Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The governance and management structure for the SDP is outlined in **Figure 2.2**.

#### **Figure 2.2: SDP Governance and Management Structure**

**SDP Members - Local Authorities**

**Executive Sub Group**

**SDP Staff Team**

**Regional Officers Group**

**Wider Stakeholders and Customers**

**Strategic Planning Group**

**SDP Programme Manager**

**South Lanarkshire Council Supervision**

**SDP Board**

Source: SDP Summary of Structures and Reporting Arrangements, January 2014.

#### SDP National Team

The day-to-day management and administration of the SDP is the responsibility of the SDP National Team. The SDP team is employed by South Lanarkshire Council[[7]](#footnote-7) (via a Service Level Agreement (SLA)), and includes a Programme Manager, Development Officer (Events), Development Officer (Digital), and an Administrator. The team manage the event scheduling, the procurement of training, registrations, and Programme administration.

The SDP National Team is supported by a network of regional officers based within member local authorities. The SDP sits within Economic Development functions within each partner local authority.

The Administrator Tupe transferred to South Lanarkshire Council from Glasgow City Council when hosting responsibilities changed - she therefore brought prior knowledge and experience of the SDP. The remainder of the SDP team came in fresh to the SDP. The two Development Officers (Events and Digital) started in August 2014, with the Programme Manager not in post until December 2014. At the time of reporting, the full staff team have only been in post for twelve months.

A support and supervisory function is provided to the SDP Programme Manager by a lead officer within South Lanarkshire Council’s Regeneration Services Team. The SLA specifies that the Regeneration Management Team requires to formally report to the SDP Board once per annum (and when required).

#### SDP Board and Other Structures

The SDP National Team reports to, and takes its direction from an SDP Board which is composed of 12 members from 12 local authorities, and which meets quarterly. Meetings are held across Scotland. Work has been progressed to co-opt new members on to the Board to ensure better geographic spread of inputs and to add stronger procurement expertise.

An Executive Sub Group was established as part of the SDP transformation process to enable delegated decisions to be taken outwith the cycle of full Board meetings. The Sub Group is made up of four Board Directors and the SDP Programme Manager. The Executive Sub Group Chair is the first point of contact for the SDP Programme Manager on issues requiring action beyond the Manager’s standard range of responsibilities and level of decision-making

A SDP Strategic Planning Group has been established. The Group is meant to meet at least twice a year. To date it has met once and a second meeting date has yet to be scheduled. This group, has an advisory function and was set up to enable wider stakeholders and - non local authority partners to be involved in informing the future strategic direction of the SDP and ensuring that relevant partnerships and connections are made across the procurement and digital agendas of the Programme. The SDP Strategic Planning Group is comprised of representatives from the Scottish Government, Business Gateway National, NHS Scotland, Federation of Small Businesses and Chambers of Commerce, and the SDP Programme Manager.

The SDP Regional Officers Group is the structure that ensures ongoing dialogue at an operational level between the SDP team and local authority partners. Officers represented on the Regional Officers Group are from local authorities, but represent a wider region based on Business Gateway boundaries. There are 16 members and the Regional Officers Group meets quarterly.

A key role for local authority representatives is to establish local mechanisms to ensure economic development, procurement and Business Gateway perspectives are inputted to the Regional Officers Group discussions. Among other things, the group discusses the support to be delivered, share information and experiences about their area, and consider potential gaps.

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| Feedback from the consultations was that the new structures put in place had addressed the previous SDP review finding that governance structures were insufficiently robust and transparent. Some consultees, however, felt that the current structures could be streamlined.  Changing the membership of the Regional Officers Group which reduced the size of the group was considered to be working well in practice.  Wider issues raised included the importance of recruiting the ‘right’ individuals onto the Board to ensure an appropriate mix of ‘operational’ and ‘strategic’ thinkers, the need to ensure a strategic focus at Board level going forward, and for a regular schedule of Strategic Planning Group meetings to be arranged. |

### Marketing and Communications

The new Programme has delivered a range of marketing activities to raise the profile, visibility, and promote wider engagement with the Programme, including:

* development of a Marketing and Communications Strategy (December 2014);
* refresh of the SDP brand - this included a refresh of the brand design and addition of a new strapline “Helping You Bid Better”;
* deeper integration and links with Public Contracts Scotland - through signposting on the confirmation email and also on the contract alert emails; and
* complete redevelopment of SDP website - to allow a greater focus on digital learning, an enhanced online resource for SMEs, partner local authority access, and better reporting software. The website redesign is currently ongoing. The team inherited a website that was largely not fit for purpose, and have improved the website significantly. In addition, there is a new social media presence through the use of Twitter (SDP has 1,800 followers and has posted 3,100 ‘tweets’).

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| Stakeholders were positive about the benefits and kudos that comes with being part of a national programme and brand like the SDP.  There were, however, issues raised regarding the time taken to develop the website. In particular, this centred on members’ access to relevant information and data. During the time it has taken to develop this side of the website, partners have been able to approach the SDP team for access to data. |

# SDP Events and Activities

This Chapter provides an overview of the advice, information, training and events delivered by and through the SDP. The analysis is based on a review of background information/data provided by the SDP team. Further detail is presented in **Appendix A**.

## SDP Registrations

#### Registration Process

SMEs are required to register for support through the SDP on the Programme’s website. The form has been scaled back considerably by the SDP team, following feedback that the length and detail required by the previous registration form was off-putting for many SMEs. The current registration form requires basic information only, including:

* business name;
* contact name and details (telephone, email, address);
* local authority area where business is based; and
* type of business (SME or third sector organisation) - yes/no response.

Once registered, the business will be prompted to set up a business profile when they log on - to add to the basic information already provided. The business will receive an annual email reminder to further populate and update their profile (e.g. tendering history). If this is not actioned after three “prompts”, the account will be frozen, until the business confirms with SDP that it is still active.

The initial registration process has been streamlined - however, the overall process remains largely the same. The detailed questions previously required at the resignation stage, are simply now required to be completed following registration. It will be important to ensure that SMEs do complete this.

Once a business is registered, it can access all of the SDP support for free and will receive a monthly e-bulletin.

#### Growth in Registrations

There has been a steady growth in the number of SMEs registered with the SDP, as illustrated in **Figure 3.1**. The number of registrations increased from 5,122 in March 2014 to 6,600 registrations at the end of September 2015.

This represents an increase of circa 1,500 SME registrations over the 18-month period to September 2015 (an increase of 29%). This reflects a mix of: additional businesses from existing member local authority areas registering with the SDP, and businesses located in new associate member local authority areas.

#### **Figure 3.1: SME Registrations**

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

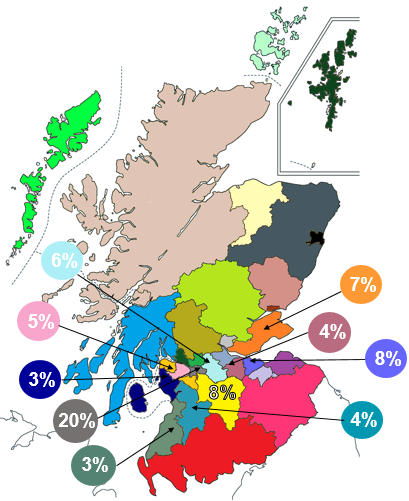
|  |
| --- |
| SDP has a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to achieve 7,200 company registrations by March 2016. Strong progress has been made in reaching more companies, with the company registration target 92% achieved to date. This is on track to being achieved in full by March 2016. |

#### Profile of Businesses Registered with SDP

Data on business type is very limited from the registration data provided (over 6,000 entries have “n.a.” in the organisation type column)[[8]](#footnote-8). As such, it is not possible to provide any meaningful breakdown of registration by private sector businesses or third sector organisations[[9]](#footnote-9).

**Figure 3.2** illustrates the geographic distribution of businesses registered for SDP support (top ten areas).

#### **Figure 3.2: Geographic Distribution of SDP Registered Businesses (Top Ten Areas)**



Source: SDP Registration Profile Report

N=6,927. The remainder of local authorities are listed in **Appendix A**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Glasgow** | **20%** |
| **South Lanarkshire** | **8%** |
| **Edinburgh** | **8%** |
| **Fife** | **7%** |
| **North Lanarkshire** | **6%** |
| **Renfrewshire** | **5%** |
| **West Lothian** | **4%** |
| **East Ayrshire** | **4%** |
| **South Ayrshire** | **3%** |
| **North Ayrshire** | **3%** |

In terms of volume, the top three local authority areas for member registrations are Glasgow (1,353, 20%), Edinburgh (580, 8%), and South Lanarkshire (530, 8%). **Table 3.1** shows the geographical distribution of SMEs[[10]](#footnote-10) in Scotland and compares this to the SDP registrations and SDP Direct Training Events by local authority area. There are 15 local authorities whose SDP member registrations are greater than the proportion of SMEs – these are highlighted in green, and the majority are located in the central belt – the other three are Fife, Clackmannanshire and Dundee City.

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| Glasgow is a significant area for the SDP: although the city accounts for around 10% of all SMEs located in Scotland, nearly 20% of all SDP registrations are Glasgow-based, and more than a quarter of all direct training events took place in the city. Businesses located in neighbouring local authority areas are often willing to travel into the city centre to access training. Indeed, there is an agreement that Greater Glasgow & Clyde local authorities (eight) collectively plan the SDP training event programme for the region. This was progressed based on supplier feedback and attendance at meetings. The local authorities have a working group that meets quarterly to consider the Programme. The number of businesses located in Edinburgh and Lothians that registered for SDP support is c. 16% and to date has hosted 9% of the direct training events. No traditional events took place in the north of Scotland - this reflects the associate member status of most of the local authorities in the region i.e. Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Highland, Moray, and Shetland Islands (Shetland joined in September 2015). Western Isles joined as a full member in September 2014 but have not requested any regional events to date, and Orkney Islands are not members. Despite being the location of one quarter of all SMEs in Scotland, only 4.5% of all businesses registered with SDP are based in the north. |

Table 3.1: Distribution of SMEs, SDP Registrations and SDP Direct Training Events in Scotland by Local Authority Area (2015)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Local Authority | Nos of SMEs | % SMEs in Scotland | % SDP Registrations | % SDP Direct Training Events |
| Edinburgh | 17,480 | 10.4% | 8.4% | 9%\* |
| Glasgow City | 17,090 | 10.2% | 19.5% | 26% |
| Aberdeenshire | 14,205 | 8.5% | 1.3% | - |
| Highland | 10,895 | 6.5% | 0.5% | - |
| Aberdeen City | 9,460 | 5.6% | 2.2% | - |
| Fife | 9,120 | 5.4% | 6.8% | 25% |
| South Lanarkshire | 8,600 | 5.1% | 7.7% | 4% |
| North Lanarkshire | 7,115 | 4.2% | 6.1% | - |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 6,455 | 3.8% | 2.1% | 2% |
| Perth & Kinross | 6,135 | 3.7% | 2.6% | 7%\* |
| Scottish Borders | 5,130 | 3.1% | 2.5% | - |
| Renfrewshire | 4,455 | 2.7% | 4.9% | 4% |
| West Lothian | 4,420 | 2.6% | 3.8% | 9%\* |
| Angus | 3,945 | 2.3% | 1.7% | 7%\* |
| Argyll & Bute | 3,925 | 2.3% | 1.8% | 2% |
| Stirling | 3,880 | 2.3% | 2.0% | 16%\* |
| Falkirk | 3,765 | 2.2% | 2.0% | 16%\* |
| South Ayrshire | 3,465 | 2.1% | 3.1% | 5%\* |
| Dundee City | 3,335 | 2.0% | 2.4% | 7%\* |
| Moray | 3,225 | 1.9% | 0.2% | - |
| North Ayrshire | 3,220 | 1.9% | 3.1% | 5%\* |
| East Ayrshire | 3,140 | 1.9% | 3.9% | 5%\* |
| East Lothian | 2,980 | 1.8% | 1.2% | 9%\* |
| East Dunbartonshire | 2,850 | 1.7% | 1.9% | 2% |
| East Renfrewshire | 2,525 | 1.5% | 2.0% | - |
| Midlothian | 2,250 | 1.3% | 2.4% | 9%\* |
| West Dunbartonshire | 1,770 | 1.1% | 1.5% | - |
| Inverclyde | 1,620 | 1.0% | 0.9% | - |
| Orkney Islands | 1,510 | 0.9% | 0.1% | - |
| Shetland Islands | 1,440 | 0.9% | 0.1% | - |
| Western Isles | 1,190 | 0.7% | 0.03% | - |
| Clackmannanshire | 1,155 | 0.7% | 1.4% | 16%\* |

Note: This data only refers to the registered enterprises. Unregistered are sole traders and partnerships who are not registered for PAYE or VAT. Totals may not equal the sum of the constituent parts due to rounding. Size band is based on the number of employees that the enterprise employs across the UK

Sources: [Scottish Government](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Business/Corporate/table5sic07), March 2015; SDP Registration Profile Report; and SDP Event Reports

\*Direct training events that took place across Forth Valley (Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling)

\*Direct training events that took place across Ayrshire (North, South and East Ayrshire)

\*Direct training events that took place across Tayside (Dundee, Perth & Kinross and Angus)

\*Direct training events that took place across Edinburgh & Lothians (Edinburgh City, Midlothian, East and West Lothian)

NB: Direct training events took place between April 2014 and September 2015.

## SDP Support

### Background

The SDP is a procurement business support initiative which uses training and information to improve the competitiveness of SMEs and social enterprises across Scotland. It provides information, support and training events - free of charge - with a view to helping businesses grow through successful tendering and supply chain engagement.

The main activities delivered through the SDP can be categorised as follows:

1. Direct Training Events - this includes SDP and partner local authority hosted workshops and events as well as external events, for example organised by Hub South West, New College Lanarkshire, etc.
2. Online Resources - this includes webinars, case studies, videos and information guides on tendering and procurement.

The SDP support is open to Scottish SMEs, and delivery is structured to support those with no or limited knowledge and experience in bidding for public sector contracts, to more experienced bidders, with levels defined as follows:

* Level 1 - for companies and social enterprises that have had little or no experience of tendering and would like to become ‘tender ready’. This level is designed to help companies decide if tendering is for them and how to go about it;
* Level 2 - for companies and social enterprises that have some experience of tendering with varying success but would like to become more proficient; and
* Level 3 - for companies and social enterprises with plenty of experience and success of tendering. This level explores potential new markets (including overseas) and capacity building.

A core programme of SDP training and events were run until the end June 2015[[11]](#footnote-11), with a refreshed and new course programme introduced in September. The new events programme has included new topics, updated content, and better access for rural business that might find it challenging to devote time away from the office for training.

**Table 3.2** provides details of the previous programme of training and events (delivered up to end of June 2015) - broken down by level of knowledge and experience in tendering for public sector contracts. While much of the training is assigned to a particular level, some activities were open to all or a mix of levels:

* Policy Workshops - open to level 1, 2 and 3.
* Meet the Buyer Exhibitions - as above.
* Doing Business With… - open to level 2 and 3.

The refreshed programme has retained the three distinct Levels, and added a new Introductory Module, as outlined in **Table 3.3**. All events are now half-day sessions.

As the evaluation examined the period since July 2014, the data presented later in this Section is largely based on the previous programme of SDP training/events.

#### **Table 3.2: SDP Direct Training Events Programme (to end June 2015)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Experience | Training |
| Level 1 | Little or no experience of tendering. | * Is the Public Sector for You? - A comprehensive guide on procurement topics such as understanding the public sector market place, deciding if your business is ready for tendering. * Policy Workshops - Cover a range of topics including Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Environmental Awareness, and Quality Management. Aimed at those businesses that do not have polices or looking to update existing policies. * Tender Portals Made Easy - Learning about Public Sector Contracts, Quick Quotes, Supplier Profiles, PCS-T and other e-tendering systems. * Meet the Buyer Exhibitions - Networking opportunities for buyers to meet potential suppliers. |
| Level 2 | Some experience, little success. | * Find It, Win It, Keep It - Designed for companies who want to improve their success rate at the pre-qualification (PQQ) and invitation to tender (ITT) stages. * Policy Workshops - As Level 1. * Doing Business With… - This is an opportunity to hear first-hand from main contractors as to how they go out sub-contracting and connect with their suppliers. * Meet the Buyer Exhibitions - As Level 1. |
| Level 3 | Plenty of experience, some success. | * Maximising Your Tender Score - A focus on maximising scores when submitting tenders and covers topics such as understanding the weighting and scoring, key components of the bid and the risks. * Value Add and Innovation - Explains how to use value add and innovation as key differentiator against competitors when bidding for contracts. * Expanding Your Procurement Horizons - encourages bidders to be more ambitious and explore how they can bid for a wider sectoral and geographical range of contracts. * Tendering Together - Looks at working in collaboration to combine resources and increase capacity to bid for larger contracts in the public sector. * Doing Business With… - As Level 2. * Meet the Buyer Exhibitions - As Level 1 and 2. |

#### **Table 3.3: SDP Direct Training Events Programme (from September 2015)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Experience | Training |
| Introductory Module | Businesses who are new to bidding. | * Introduction to Working with the Public Sector - Is aimed at those new to bidding, and provides an overview of the public sector market and introduces concepts of tendering and procurement. |
| Level 1 | Businesses who are new to tendering, or refreshing their skills. | * Are You Ready to Tender? Is the Public Sector For You? - Helps businesses to decide if you’re the business sis ready to start bidding. * Using Public Contracts Scotland and Other Portals - Learning about Public Sector Contracts, Quick Quotes, Supplier Profiles, PCS-T and other e-tendering systems. * Winning Work Through the Supply Chain - Exploring how many contractors use smaller suppliers to help fulfill public contracts, and how to get into the supply chain. |
| Level 2 | Businesses with some tendering experience who are looking to improve. | * Understanding Framework Agreements - Explains the types of framework available and what businesses can expect from them. * Completing a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire - covers the PQQ and invitation to tender (ITT) process, and provides tips and guidance to improve success rate. * What the Buyer Looks for in Your Tender - Looks at scoring process and how to ensure scores are as high as possible by understanding what buyers are looking for from your bid. * Sustainable Procurement - Covers environmental issues and community benefits. Recommended for third sector organisations. |
| Level 3 | For experienced bidders look to win more work. | * Seeking Feedback and Improving Your Bid - Explains the rights of bidders and how businesses can learn from successful and unsuccessful bids. * Expanding Your Marketplace - How to grow the business by exploring new public sector markets, including across the rest of the UK, European Union and International. * Keeping the Contract - The Importance of Contract relationship Management - Explains how businesses deliver on successful bids and what to do when things go wrong. |

SMEs are encouraged to self-select what level of training is appropriate to them, depending on their experience of public procurement. Given the significant membership base, an upfront diagnostic of business support needs would not be feasible and self-selection is the most appropriate approach. The role of the SDP team is therefore to provide relevant information and guidance to ensure businesses make an informed choice. That being said, the question for some stakeholders was the extent to which informed choices were made by SMEs. Members can attend a training event in any partner area and an identified issue in the past was that some companies would select training courses which were most convenient in terms of date and/or location - rather than which were most appropriate for their level of knowledge and experience.

SMEs can view and search forthcoming events on the Events Diary (SDP, webinars, partners external organisations) and book events directly through the SDP website. The SDP team has added more descriptions about each event, for example, “*this event is suitable for you if you have a good understanding of public sector procurement (completed Level 1 or have equivalent experience) and you want to improve your bid score*” - to help more informed choices being made.

The SDP team estimate that the vast majority of companies that access SDP support are at levels 1 or 2. This does not match the profile of SDP direct training events delivered to date[[12]](#footnote-12) - as shown later in **Table 3.7** just under half of all the SDP direct training events were level 1 or 2 (46%). The remainder were level 3 (33%) or open to companies at any level (21%).

|  |
| --- |
| At present there is no data available to show what stage companies are at when they access SDP support (or whether companies progress through the different levels). This is likely to present a challenge for the team and local authorities to forward plan events if it is not known for certain what demands looks like. As the intention is that companies progress through each level as their knowledge and skills increase, there is scope for the team to consider how best this might be routinely captured, measured, and reported against. In particular, as the refreshed training programme has been scheduled so that ideally companies follow the courses as a structured programme. It is our understanding that the new website should allow this type of data to be collected and reported on. |

During 2015, SDP have gone out to tender / quick quote for training content; training delivery - framework of training providers for each region; and website development and maintenance.

### Summary Overview

The analysis provided below is based on a review of background data sourced from the quarterly SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015). While we provide a separate overview of webinar activity, the data presented in the SDP Event Reports captures webinars (i.e. number of webinars, SMEs, attendees[[13]](#footnote-13)) within the total figures reported for direct training events.

**Table 3.4** provides an overview of the total number of events and webinars organised and delivered through the SDP as well as the SDP team’s promotion of, and engagement in partner and external organisations events.

#### **Table 3.4: All Events and Activities - April 2014 to September 2015**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | SDP Direct Training Events | Webinars | Partner/  External Events | Total |
| April - June 2014 | 13 | - | 10 | 23 |
| July - September 2014 | 7 |  | 6 | 13 |
| October - December 2014 | 8 | - | 22 | 30 |
| January - March 2015 | 10 | 3 | 16 | 29 |
| April - June 2015 | 16 | 5 | 10 | 31 |
| July - September 2015 | 3 | 10 | 14 | 27 |
| **Total** | **57** | **18** | **78** | **153** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

|  |
| --- |
| A KPI for SDP is deliver 164 events and activities by March 2016. Strong progress has been made here too, with the target 93% achieved. This is on track to being achieved in full by March 2016. |

**Figure 3.3** presents a time-series breakdown of SDP direct training events, webinars, and partner events.

**Figure 3.3: All Events and Activities - April 2014 to September 2015**

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

Key points to note include that:

* SDP direct training events experienced an increase to June 2015 but then declined - this reflects less demand from local authorities for events over the summer months. Webinars and partner/external events continued to be held during the summer; and
* there has been a steady growth in the number of webinars delivered since the first webinar in March 2015.

**Table 3.5** provides details of SME participation. It should be noted that the figures represent multiple attendances rather than individual SMEs and attendees.

#### **Table 3.5: Attendance at Events and Activities - April 2014 to September 2015**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Nos. of SMEs | Nos. of Attendees |
| Direct Training Events | 1,255 | 1,393 |
| Webinars | 285 | 288\* |
| Partner / External Events | 1,939\*\* | - |
| **Total** | **3,479** |  |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to Sep 2015). Note: Figures included for July-Sept 2015 might not match those contained in that quarter’s Events Report, as all events have since taken place, and figures on actual attendees was provided separately.

\* Typically recorded as one attendee per SME.

\*\* Based on estimates of 10 SMEs attending each event.

The SDP target for webinars relates to number of SMEs involved rather than attendees. That being said, the quarterly SDP Events Reports include attendee figures for webinars, albeit this is typically recorded as one attendee per SME. The reality is, however, that up to five individuals per SME can book to take part in a webinar, therefore the number above potentially under-reports actual attendance. As booking and registration are not taken via the SDP website for partner/external events, actual attendance figures are not always available[[14]](#footnote-14). The quarterly Event Reports provide estimates, (where actual figures were not available) of 10 SMEs per event[[15]](#footnote-15). SDP collect business cards from attendees and these are entered onto spreadsheets for future marketing and follow up to encourage SDP registration.

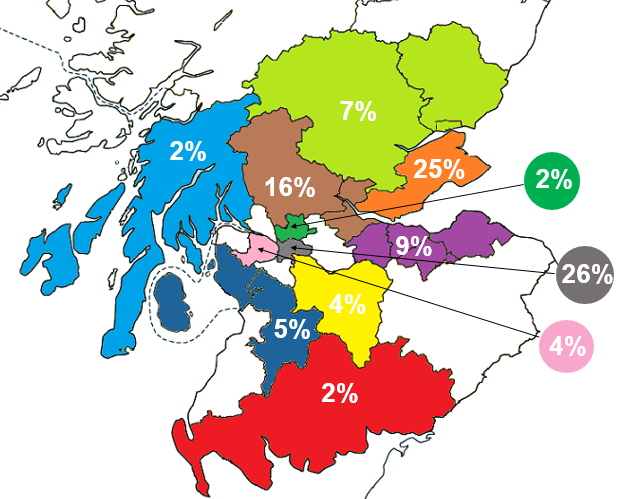
|  |
| --- |
| An approach that estimates attendance at events is not conducive to informing future planning of event delivery, in particular identifying those events which worked well and those which were less popular and therefore might not need to be run again. |

### Direct Training Events

A total of 57 direct training events took place between April 2014 and September 2015. The average number of events is three per month across Scotland. Analysis shows that SDP direct training events have taken place across 11 regions in Scotland, albeit to varying degrees, **Figure 3.4**[[16]](#footnote-16).

|  |
| --- |
| The geographic distribution of events shows a clear emphasis across the Central Belt, with some local authorities much more active and engaged with the SDP than others. No training events were delivered in the North of Scotland as the local authorities of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Highland, and Moray, are associate members of the SDP and there is a Digital Support Programme (or similar operating in the region). Associate membership allows businesses to access the digital and online aspects of the SDP service. Orkney Islands Council is not currently a member of the SDP (although discussions are ongoing) and Shetland Islands Council has only recently joined (September 2015). |

#### **Figure 3.4: Geographic Dist. Direct Training Events (Apr 2014 - Sep 2015)**





Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

N=57

|  |
| --- |
| Given the size of the SME base in Fife and Edinburgh and the Lothians (and proportion of SDP company registrations), to date there has been a ‘disproportionate’ number of direct training events delivered across these regions.  The SDP Programme (to some extent) is reactive to demand - delivery of training events is directed by discussions with the Regional Officers Group. It is therefore important that there is ongoing engagement and effective channels for communication between the Regional Officers Group and the SDP team – local authority partners have a central role in shaping the support.  The Events Diary for September 2015 to July 2016 was planned and scheduled by the SDP team, in consultation with local authority members to help ensure that events take place across all regions and at the appropriate levels based on previous events and supplier feedback. |

A total of 1,255 SMEs have attended multiple SDP training events and have involved 1,393 individuals. The April - June 2015 figures are skewed to a large extent by the Scotland Excel and SDP Meet the Buyer event - estimated attendance of 600 individuals from 600 SMEs.

#### **Table 3.6: Direct Training Events - April 2014 to September 2015**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Nos. Events | Nos. SMEs | Nos. Attendees |
| April - June 2014 | 13 | 143 | 184 |
| July - September 2014 | 7 | 47 | 54 |
| October - December 2014 | 8 | 72 | 96 |
| January - March 2015 | 10 | 107 | 123 |
| April - June 2015\* | 16 | 865 | 913 |
| July - September 2015 | 3 | 21 | 23 |
| **Total** | **57** | **1,255** | **1,393** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015) \*600 estimated for SMEs and Attendees

Key points to note (if the Scotland Excel and SDP Meet the Buyer event is excluded) are that:

* the average number of SMEs per event is 12; and
* the average number of attendees per event is 14.

The direct training events covered a wide range of topics, **Table 3.7**. It should, however, be noted that the Table includes a mix of “old” and “new” training event topics - as described earlier in **Tables 3.2 and 3.3**.

Table 3.7: Core Events by Level, Topic and Attendees (April 2014 – Sept 2015)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core SDP Event | Nos. of Events | Nos. of SMEs | Nos. of Attendees |
| **Level 1** | | | |
| Tender Portals Made Easy | 10 | 113 | 154 |
| Is The Public Sector For You? | 7 | 70 | 83 |
| **% of Total** | **30%** | **15%** | **17%** |
| **Level 2** | | | |
| Find It Win It Keep It | 7 | 87 | 106 |
| Understanding Framework Agreements | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Completing a PQQ | 1 | 13 | 14 |
| **% of Total** | **16%** | **8%** | **9%** |
| **Level 3** | | | |
| Maximise Your Tender Score | 7 | 63 | 77 |
| Value Add & Innovation | 5 | 56 | 65 |
| Expanding Your Procurement Horizons | 4 | 16 | 20 |
| Tendering Together | 2 | 20 | 25 |
| Seeking Feedback and Improving Your Bid | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| **% of Total** | **33%** | **13%** | **14%** |
| **Open to All Levels** | | | |
| Quality Management Policy | 2 | 18 | 23 |
| Environmental Policy | 2 | 18 | 21 |
| Equality & Diversity Policy | 2 | 15 | 16 |
| Scotland Excel and SDP Meet the Buyer \* | 1 | 600 | 600 |
| Sustainability Workshop | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Meet the Buyer | 1 | 126 | 144 |
| Health & Safety Policy | 1 | 9 | 12 |
| Completing the Standardised Scottish PQQ | 1 | 7 | 7 |
| Bid/No Bid | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| **% of Total** | **21%** | **64%** | **60%** |
| **Total** | **57** | **1,255** | **1,393** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015).

\* Estimated attendance not actual.

|  |
| --- |
| An examination of the split of training delivered by level shows that 30% was at level 1 and a further 16% at level 2. One-third of SDP direct training events was at level 3, and the remainder was open to all SMEs and third sector organisations (21%). |

### Webinars

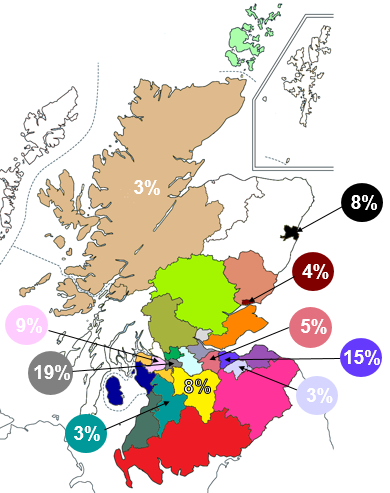
Webinars are a new addition to the service offering since the transformation process, and aligns to the DSBEP funding and the growing emphasis placed on digital procurement. Previously, the SDP was delivered solely as traditional ‘classroom’ style training events. While SMEs can attend training events in any partner area, providing they are able to travel, this model was considered to work less well in rural areas and/or for sole traders constrained by time and finances. Webinars are a form of one-to-many support which allows SDP training courses to be delivered online to a large number of viewers from a single location. In terms of digital delivered training, SDP webinars are a mix of live and recorded sessions.

The SDP Development Officer (Digital) is responsible for scheduling the webinars, arranging for trainers/partner organisations to deliver the webinars, for emailing the joining instructions and link to participants the day before the event via Cisco WebEx (the software purchased to deliver the digital curriculum), and for ensuring everything is set up and organised on the day. Presentations used by the trainers are also available to download from the SDP website. SDP has worked with partners, including Cooperative Development Scotland and Business at the Mitchell to deliver webinars. Discussions are ongoing between SDP other organisations to deliver future webinar sessions e.g. Zero Waste Scotland and Healthy Working Lives.

There have been a total of 18 webinars delivered as at September 2015, with the first three webinars taking place in March this year. The number of webinars has increased each quarter. Key points include that:

* 285 SMEs have taken part in multiple webinars;
* the average number of SMEs per webinar is 16 - this is higher than that for traditional SDP direct training events (12); and
* attendee data is typically recorded as one attendee per SME, although this can be higher.

#### Figure 3.5: **Geographic Distribution of Webinar Attendees (Top Ten Areas)**



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Glasgow** | **19%** |
| **Edinburgh** | **15%** |
| **Renfrewshire** | **9%** |
| **South Lanarkshire** | **8%** |
| **Aberdeen City** | **8%** |
| **West Lothian** | **5%** |
| **Dundee** | **4%** |
| **East Ayrshire** | **3%** |
| **Falkirk** | **3%** |
| **Highland** | **3%** |

Source: SDP Webinar Report (July – September 2015)

N=221

**Figure 3.5** above illustrates the geographic distribution of businesses participating in webinars. Data on geography is only available for the ten webinars that took place between July and September 2015[[17]](#footnote-17).

While there is representation from businesses across 26 Scottish local authorities, proportions vary greatly. Businesses involved in the webinars are most commonly located in Glasgow (42, 19%), Edinburgh (33, 15%), and Renfrewshire (19, 9%).

|  |
| --- |
| The introduction of webinars was, in part, to make it easier for businesses in rural and remotes areas in Scotland to tap into SDP support to overcome travel and time constraints in attending face-to-face training events. While uptake of webinars is growing, it has not (as yet) necessarily been among businesses in rural areas. This suggests that there needs to be a continued marketing and promotion push of webinars, in particular to rural businesses by member local authorities and SDP. It might also in part be due to the lack of appropriate broadband/internet access. |

Table 3.8 shows the range of topics covered in the webinars delivered to date and the number of SMEs participating. Equality and Diversity has been the most common topic covered (four webinars, 22%).

Table 3.8: Webinars by Topic Area and Attendees (April 2014 – Sept 2015)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SDP Webinar | Nos. of Webinars | Nos. of SMEs |
| Equality & Diversity Policy | 4 | 28 |
| Introduction to Working with Public Sector (Module 1) | 2 | 62 |
| Introduction to Working with Public Sector (Module 3) | 2 | 54 |
| Introduction to Working with Public Sector (Module 2) | 2 | 47 |
| Collaborate to Tender | 2 | 33 |
| Intellectual Property for Business | 2 | 25 |
| Quality Management & ISO 9001 | 2 | 19 |
| Quality and Tender | 1 | 10 |
| Environmental Policy | 1 | 7 |
| **Total** | **18** | **285** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

|  |
| --- |
| Overall, feedback from the consultation process was that the SDP provided a good mix of face-to-face training and webinar provision, and that a mix of approaches was valuable.  Some, however, felt there was an element of duplication between the new Introductory module and level 1 modules.  Other comments centred on the need for one-to-one specialist support for more experienced bidders (i.e. over and above level 3 events). It is our understanding that some Business Gateways are exploring options for plugging this gap in provision. As such, a role for the SDP could be to signpost and ensure a smooth “hand-over” of clients. Proactive two-way engagement between SDP and Business Gateway would be required. |

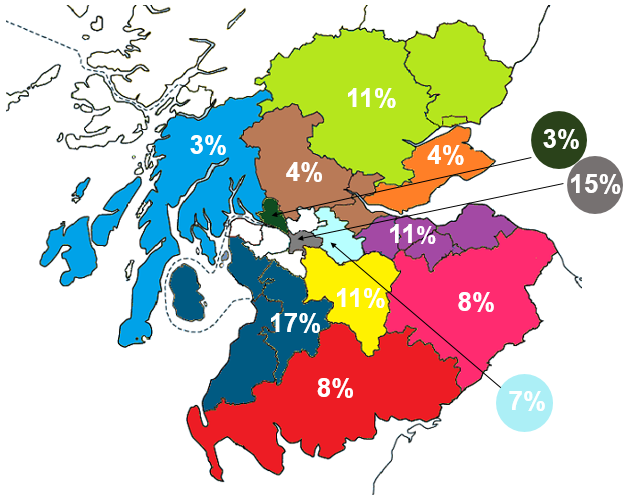
#### Partner and External Events and Activities

The SDP Event Reports refer to “*related activities*”. These are non-SDP events of interest to SMEs and third sector organisations (e.g. local authority Business Week, Meet the Buyer events, etc) - many are large scale “drop-in” sessions and events. The role of the SDP National Team is to support member local authorities to develop and promote non-SDP events. Scheduled non-SDP events are promoted in the SDP Events Diary on the website and members of the team often attend events e.g. have a stand, deliver presentations, etc.

SDP have been involved in 78 partner and external events and activities to date. The average number of events is four per month. Like the SDP direct training events, there are generally fewer events held in the summer months.

**Figure 3.6** on the next page shows the geographic spread of partners’ events. Almost a third took place in Ayrshire and Glasgow (24, 32%). Ayrshire had the highest number of partner and external events (13, 17%) – which in part reflects the many events organised by Hub South West.

#### **Figure 3.6: Geographic Distribution of Partner Events (April 2014 - Sep 2015)**



|  |
| --- |
| **Argyll & Bute** |
| **Ayrshire** |
| **Borders** |
| **Dumfries & Galloway** |
| **Edinburgh & Lothians** |
| **Fife** |
| **Forth Valley** |
| **Glasgow** |
| **North Lanarkshire** |
| **South Lanarkshire** |
| **Tayside** |
| **West Dunbartonshire** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

N=75 (excludes three events which were Digital Training Events).

Booking and registration are not via the SDP website and where actual data is not available the SDP quarterly Event Reports provide estimates, and these are based on an estimate of 10 SMEs per event[[18]](#footnote-18), as detailed in **Table 3.9**.

#### **Table 3.9: Partners and External Events/Activities - April 2014 to Sept 2015**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Nos. Events | Nos. SMEs |
| April - June 2014 | 10 | 100 |
| July - September 2014 | 6 | 60 |
| October - December 2014 | 22 | 614 |
| January - March 2015 | 16 | 320 |
| April - June 2015 | 10 | 360 |
| July - September 2015 | 14 | 485 |
| **Total** | **78** | **1,939** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

|  |
| --- |
| As highlighted earlier, an approach that estimates attendance at events is not conducive to informing future planning of event delivery, in particular identifying those events which worked well and those which were less popular and therefore might not need to be run again. |

The types of activities delivered included:

* events where suppliers had the opportunity to meet key decision makers from public and private sector organisations - there were 32 ‘Meet the Buyer’ or ‘Supplier Engagement’ events, accounting for 41% of events;
* events with a sectoral focus - for example, construction (17 events, 22%) and energy (7 events, 9%);
* events that provided advice and support on a broad range of business and procurement issues - aimed at improving skills relating to supply chain contractors. This included topics such as presentation skills, introduction to public procurement, and sales advice; and
* business networking events, with no specific link to the procurement or tendering process (such as SCVO’s The Gathering, the Federation of Small Businesses AGM, and Dumfries & Galloway Business Week).

### Wider Online Resources

The SDP website offers a number of online resources including:

* comprehensive information about Public Contracts Scotland;
* signposting to business support providers (and a list of local authority business support contacts);
* links to websites offering contract opportunities; and
* information about e-commerce.

# Financial and Performance Monitoring

This Chapter provides an assessment of the performance of the SDP, including an assessment of spend and progress towards achieving Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

## Budget and Expenditure

#### SDP Budget

Funding for the SDP comes from a mix of sources, primarily local authority membership contributions and through DSBEP, as outlined in **Table 4.1**. A small contribution is provided by the Scottish Government for third sector development.

#### **Table 4.1: SDP Budget (April 2014 to March 2016)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Budget | | |  |
| Funding Source | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2014/16 | % Total Contribution |
| Local authority contributions | £174,060 | £175,581 | £349,641 | 48% |
| Scottish Government - DSBEP | £180,000 | £180,000 | £360,000 | 50% |
| Scottish Government - Third sector contribution | £6,000 | £6,000 | £12,000 | 2% |
| **Total** | **£360,060** | **£361,581** | **£721,641** | **100%** |

Source: SPD Team.

Note: Difference in amount from local authorities for 2015/2016 reflects additional members coming on board either part way through the financial year or at the start of the financial year.

Local authority membership contributions are derived through a formula based on the number of SMEs in each area. Membership contributions have remained at the same levels for the last few years.

In order to ensure a pan-Scotland Programme, the Board agreed a mixed membership model which recognised the varied needs of different local authorities. The local authorities of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Highland, and Moray are associate members of the SDP - they pay a reduced annual membership for access to digital and online aspects of the service. Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire run their own “Positive Procurement Programme”.

Within Highland and Moray there is a localised procurement support programme delivered by Business Gateway, Highland and Island Enterprise and Highland Opportunities. HIE approached SDP in January 2015 to understand the services on offer with a view to future consideration.

#### SDP Expenditure to Date

**Table 4.2 and 4.3** provide details of expenditure to date. There have been changes to how finances have been managed, with South Lanarkshire Council’s Finance Department responsible for finances and reporting since April 2015. As such, the information provided below uses different cost centres and has been provided separately for each year.

The SDP spent 75% of its forecast budget in 2014/15. With the full staff team not in post until December 2014, there was an underspend within a number of the cost centres, including programme development costs, marketing and promotion, website development, and monitoring the contract.

#### **Tables 4.2: SDP Expenditure (April 2014 to March 2015)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cost Centre | Expenditure | % of Total |
| Staffing costs - including Interim Project Management | £152,786 | 57% |
| Staff training and travel | £653 | 0.2% |
| Direct training costs/events - committed | £24,440 | 9% |
| Programme development costs - including digital | £1,786 | 1% |
| Location costs - inc office set up | £11,640 | 4% |
| Marketing and promotion | £696 | 0% |
| Website hosting and development | £13,907 | 5% |
| Monitoring contract | £0 | 0% |
| Professional fees | £18,101 | 7% |
| VAT | £30,817 | 11% |
| Corporation Tax | £10,353 | 4% |
| Bank Charges | £64 | 0% |
| Miscellaneous | £3,920 | 1% |
| **Total** | **£269,162** | **100%** |

Source: Information provided by SDP Team

#### **Table 4.3** provides a breakdown of the SDP budget by cost centre heading and expenditure to date for the financial year April to October 2015.

#### **Table 4.3: Budget and Actual SDP Expenditure to Date (Apr 2015 to Oct 2015)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cost Centre | Budget 2015/16 | Actual Spend to Date 2015/16 | % Spend To Date |
| Employee Costs | £170,000 | £88,465 | **52%** |
| Property Costs | £3,520 | 0 | **0%** |
| Supplies & Services | £210,500 | £1,327 | **1%** |
| Transport & Plant | £1,000 | £492 | **49%** |
| Administration Costs | £24,980 | £309 | **1%** |
| Marketing & Promotions Costs | £60,000 | £5,815 | **10%** |
| Payments to Contractors | £70,000 | £32,512 | **46%** |
| Financing Charges | £78,000 | £-6,596 | **-** |
| **Total** | **£618,000\*** | **£122,325** | **20%** |

Source: South Lanarkshire Council SDP Budgetary Control Report for 2015/16 (SDP P8)

**\* The SDP Budget for 2015/16 includes £335,000 reserves**. Therefore, figure does not match Table 4.1.

Colour coding: Green – 80% achieved or more, Amber - between 50% and 79% achieved, red – achieved less than 50% of target

There is currently a significant underspend in the SDP for 2015/16 - 20% has been spent to date. It is our understanding that there are a number of large payments due to be processed this year (e.g. website development, etc). In addition, administration costs for South Lanarkshire Council will be billed at the end of the financial year (circa £20,000).

Much of the underspend relates to the DSBEP funding. It is our understanding that circa £260,000 is spent/committed to the end of March 2016 (representing an underspend of £100,000). However, given the delayed start of the SDP, and other projects supported through DSBEP, the Scottish Government has indicated that there will be a “grace period” of 12 months beyond March 2016 to allow for further expenditure. The DSBEP funding has (and will) provide the SDP with:

* the SDP website;
* webinar technology and software;
* additional digital tools e.g. e learning platform, supplier matching tool; and
* access to Spikes Cavell data.

In addition, the last financial report provided by South Lanarkshire Council shows reserves of £335,000 which is comprised of a historical underspend.

If reserves are excluded:

* the SDP has spent £391,487 between April 2014 and October 2016[[19]](#footnote-19); and
* this expenditure equates to 54% of total SDP budget of £721,641 for 2014/16[[20]](#footnote-20).

## Finance - Post March 2016

It is our understanding that the annual running costs for the SDP are circa £300,000. With DSBEP funding coming to an end in March 2016, there will be a funding gap at the current level of service of circa £120,000 per annum. The SDP could continue to run on members’ contributions alone - but on much reduced capacity and scale.

#### **Figure 4.1: SDP Annual Running Costs, Income and Funding Gap**

## Performance against KPIs and Reporting

The review of the SDP undertaken in 2013 identified that while there was activity data on the Programme (i.e. immediate outputs), linking this to robust measures of outcomes and impact was less evident. It was identified at this time that a monitoring framework was required to significantly improve how SDP performance is recorded, reported and used. As part of the Transformation process, a new Performance Management Framework (PMF) was developed with input from the Improvement Service in June 2014.

The purpose of the PMF was to strengthen monitoring systems and processes, and to take into account the requirements of the new DSBEP funding.

The operational targets for the SDP to the end of March 2016 are outlined in **Table 4.4** showing the latest achievements (to the end of September 2015). The KPIs are a mix of strategic milestones (e.g. staff in post, new Board, launch event, etc) and more traditional KPIs associated with actual Programme delivery. There is also a mix of KPIs that have an annual or quarterly target.

Table 4.4: Performance against Targets (to September 2015)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| KPI | Target to March 2016 | Achieved to Date | Progress |
| New SDP team in post in new office | 1 | 1 | **100%** |
| New SDP Board in post | 1 | 1 | **100%** |
| Completion of new SDP Digital Strategy plans | 3 | 3 | **100%** |
| Completion of new Communications and Marketing Strategy | 1 | 1 | **100%** |
| Tendering of Training Delivery and Website Development and Maintenance contracts completed | 2 | 2 | **100%** |
| Website redesign completed/launched | 1 | 1 | **100%** |
| SDP relaunch event | 1 | 1 | **100%** |
| Platform for sharing of intelligence data with local bodies completed | 1 | 0 | **0%** |
| Receipt of income from other sources\* | £721,641 | £464,460 | **64%** |
| Increase company registrations | 7,200 | 6,600 | **92%** |
| Increase SDP website hits | 64,000 | 50,000 | **78%** |
| SDP events/activities | 164 | 153 | **93%** |
| Deliver events or remote access training opportunities to SMEs | 1,320 | 3,481 | **264%** |
| Deliver events or remote access training opportunities in digital specific e-procurement topics | 820 | 401 | **49%** |
| Facilitate the on-boarding of suppliers to a national e-Invoicing solution | 5,000 | 0 | **See below** |
| Undertake an external evaluation and develop new Business Plan and sustainability strategy. | 2 | 2 | **100%** |

Source: Collated via SDP Progress Reports and Other reports

\* Target is budget for 2014/15 and 2015/16 (Table 4.1). Actual to date is budget for 2014/15 and income achieved to date from SDP Budgetary Control Report for 2015/16 (SDP P8)

Colour coding: Green – 80% achieved or more, Amber - between 50% and 79% achieved, red – achieved less than 50% of target

Overall, progress towards KPIs has been strong, with many targets met or exceeded, with a number of others on track for achievement by March 2016. Key points include:

* all of the milestone KPIs associated with the transformation phase have been met;
* there has been strong progress in reaching more businesses - targets for company registrations and events are on track to be met in full, and as detailed below, SMEs involved in events or remote access training is high;
* the target for delivery of events or remote access training opportunities to SMEs has been significantly exceeded, which perhaps suggest that the original target was set too low; and
* website hits - the figure of 50,000 refers to the period to March 2015. Google Analytics no longer reports on “hits”, so data against this KPI is no longer collated. The data now being recorded by the SDP team is sessions and page views, with achievements as at March 2015: 25,337 sessions and 122,340 page views.

Performance to date has been weaker for delivering events or remote access training opportunities in digital specific e-procurement topics. This is less than 50% achieved as at September 2015. Webinar activity only came on stream from March 2015 onwards and the refreshed training programme was only introduced in September 2015, as such further progress against the target will be achieved over the coming months. The delayed start to the digital events (webinars) was in a large part due to the difficulty in securing the use of the WebEx software through South Lanarkshire Council’s network due to security concerns and infrastructure restrictions, and further activity was put on hold until the SDP Manager was in post (December 2014).

In relation to the platform for sharing of intelligence data with local bodies, this is in progress and discussions are progressing around accessing Spikes Cavell data.

It has been agreed to drop the KPI - facilitate the on-boarding of suppliers to a national e-Invoicing solution - as there is now a team within the Scottish Government that aims to fulfil this function. However SDP include online resources such as a video and links to the e-invoicing team at Scottish Government explaining what the topic is about and continue to work closely with them - participating in relevant events.

|  |
| --- |
| There is a need to develop a refreshed performance monitoring and evaluation framework for the SDP post March 2016. Few of the KPIs relate to actual deliverable outputs for SMEs, with many strategically focussed KPIs (e.g. staff team in place, undertake evaluation, etc). The menu of KPIs selected should focus on measuring delivery and go beyond traditional activity and output measures. The ability to report on impact locally was an area for improvement identified through the consultation process. |

The SDP team provide regular reports on progress towards KPIs to the Board and other groups, and a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status is used. The reports provide updates for the previous quarter. An Annual Events Report provides an overall picture of registrations and events, including a breakdown by local authority.

|  |
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| There is scope to improve progress reporting. While it is important to keep track of progress towards quarterly targets, there should be equal consideration of progress over the longer-term. For example, in addition to presenting actual achieved in the previous quarter (e.g. number of SDP events/activities delivered), reports should include progress towards annual targets set (i.e. achieved to date for 2015/16, 2016/17, etc). |

Wider feedback is gathered from businesses following attendance at events. However, forms are hard-copy, and were therefore not in a format in which analysis could be readily or easily undertaken. The SDP team are currently collating the results into a spreadsheet for analysis and reporting purposes[[21]](#footnote-21).

|  |
| --- |
| The SDP team should implement a more effective system for capturing feedback from SMEs to establish the extent to which they are satisfied with various aspects of delivery and content and benefits achieved. This is particularly important, as feedback from some local authority contacts was that the quality of some trainers was variable. The system should not be paper-based as this requires data entry from the staff team. An e-survey could be used - this would be less time-consuming and would make analysis easier. This should be routinely analysed and reported on, including for example, setting an appropriate KPI. |

# Strategic Fit

This Chapter considers the strategic fit of the SDP and its contribution towards a number of different policy agendas.

## At the Time of the SDP Refresh

#### The Government Economic Strategy (2011)

The purpose of the Government Economic Strategy[[22]](#footnote-22) was to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

The strategic priority of Supportive Business Environment was relevant for the SDP, including support for business growth and job creation. The strategic priority of Equity was equally relevant. This included a focus on ensuring that all of Scotland benefited from shared and sustainable economic growth. It recognised the important contribution that the third sector makes to Scotland’s economy (often providing services and support within disadvantaged communities and to vulnerable groups).

Public sector procurement was frequently referenced within the Strategy - with a focus on increasing the public sector’s contribution to the economy through smart use of public procurement in order to promote jobs and growth. In particular, help for SMEs and third sector organisations to compete effectively for contracts (a fair chance to compete).

#### Scotland’s Digital Future - A Strategy for Scotland (2011)

Scotland’s Digital Future[[23]](#footnote-23) sets out the Scottish Government’s ambition to support future innovation in the digital economy and ensure that Scotland’s businesses (particularly in rural areas) remain competitive, and are better placed to compete in a global digital environment and take advantage of new opportunities.

It sets out ambitions that:

* next generation broadband will be available to all by 2020, and significant progress made by 2015;
* the rate of broadband uptake by people in Scotland should be at or above the UK average by 2013, and should be highest among the UK nations by 2015.

The Strategy covers four key themes: public service delivery, the digital economy, digital participation and broadband connectivity - and sets out a co-ordinated approach to make sure that Scotland is better positioned to exploit the opportunities provided by the digital age. Some key points:

* delivery of public services - improving public services through digital technology, and e-procurement was identified as an area where digital technology would make public sector co-ordination easier;
* growing the digital economy - digital technologies are seen as enablers of productivity and key of innovation and international trade, supporting business growth; and
* business use of broadband - research published by the Scottish Government found that 25% of micro and SMEs did not use the internet at all. Most of this group did not intend to start using the internet over the next few years. They identified both a lack of skills and did not see the relevant to their business. Where the interest was used this was largely for basic functions such as emails and web searches. This is considered as a missed opportunity to drive innovation, productivity and growth.

Scotland’s Digital Future: Supporting the Transition to a World-Leading Digital Economy - Emerging Findings (2013)

Following the initial and early stage implementation of Scotland’s Digital Future (detailed above), it was recognised that there was a “*need to build on existing partnerships to create a genuine Team Scotland approach to promoting Scotland’s digital economy”.*

The review[[24]](#footnote-24) was initiated to assess progress to date, and importantly provided recommendations aimed at ensuring Scotland is at the forefront of the digital revolution - and is able to deliver on its ambitions by 2020.

The review emphasised the importance of ensuring that “*all businesses have the confidence, capability and skills to take full advantage of the benefits the digital economy can bring*”. In particular, as digital technologies help support business growth across all sectors (improved productivity, increased turnover, reduced costs, better customer service).

“*The Scottish public will add value to the digital economy in Scotland in the way that it chooses to both procure and deliver services. It will provide opportunities for Scottish business to develop digital capabilities and provide a platform for such businesses to compete internationally in increasingly competitive digital markets*”.

The review highlighted that encouraging and supporting Scotland’s businesses *“to fully exploit the benefits of digital technologies requires concerted, joined up action across all sectors of our economy”*. It went on to identify the need to improve basic digital literacy and that businesses have a clear understanding of the immediate and long term impacts that investing in technology and fully exploiting digital channels to market can bring. One of the review recommendations led to the formation of the DSBEP (see below) to help ensure that strategic partnerships are strengthened, and that there is greater co-ordination between enterprise and support agencies “*to promote agile and integrated responses to emerging opportunities and deliver fully integrated and effectively deployed programmes of intervention”.*

Scotland Can Do: Becoming a World-Leading Entrepreneurial and Innovative Nation (2013)

Scotland Can Do[[25]](#footnote-25) sets out the Scottish Government’s plan for boosting entrepreneurship and innovation in the Scottish economy, covering four themes, including:

* capable - ensuring that businesses have the right leadership and technical skills to innovate and grow, with government facilitating this by providing a range of business support services; and
* demand and opportunities – stimulating demand and market opportunities to accelerate the development of new products and services, particularly through innovative public procurement.

Digital Scotland - Business Enterprise Programme

The DSBEP is a partnership of agencies in Scotland[[26]](#footnote-26) that support Scottish businesses take advantage of the opportunities of the digital age. Overall, it aims to stimulate and maintain a vibrant digital economy. The partnership has collective responsibility for raising the profile of ‘digital’ and creating a ‘digital culture’ in Scotland.

The Business Support Group focuses on supporting SMEs to ‘*get up the digital curve*’ (a Skills Group focuses on skills issues), which has distributed and overseen the spending of £7 million of extra Scottish Government money on national partnership projects during 2014/15 and 2015/16 which benefit SMEs.

Scottish Enterprise manages the budget and approval process for the DSBEP Business Programme on behalf of the DSBEP. The Programme consists of two main thematic areas:

1. Demand - to develop the digital capability of businesses across sectors.
2. Supply - to develop and grow Scotland’s technology sector.

The Business Programme has supported a number of partnership projects (including the SDP) - projects that aim to: achieve greater breadth or depth from a Partnership approach; that demonstrate a fit with the Digital Economy Review recommendations and/or world-class ambition; that have potential to be of national benefit; and were additional to core agency activity.

The DSBEP Business Programme seeks to contribute towards some of the high-level objectives set out in the Digital Economy Review, namely

* strengthen the breadth and depth of support offered to companies of all sizes;
* strengthen ways of working in the public sector to promote commercial opportunities;
* strengthen knowledge exchange opportunities; and
* strengthen the capability sector (technology sector).

Much of the activity to be supported fell into four themes of Changing Culture; Raising Awareness; Providing Advice; and Supporting Investment.

One Scotland - The Government’s Programme for Scotland (2014/15)

The Programme for Government[[27]](#footnote-27) provided details of the programme of policy delivery and legislation for 2014/2015.

The SDP aligns with the theme of creating more, better paid jobs, in a strong, sustainable economy - which includes support to SMEs (and third sector) to further grow the economy, and recognition that digital infrastructure is essential for providing Scottish businesses with opportunities of new ways of doing business and increasing their competitiveness in the fast moving digital economy.

It referred to the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 in terms of how the national legislative framework for sustainable public procurement will allow Scotland to maximise the economic benefit brought to Scotland from more effective and efficient public procurement activity - streamlining, simplifying, and standardising processes for public, private and third sectors alike.

As part of the inclusive growth agenda, the aspiration is that public procurement contracts in Scotland will be more accessible micro businesses, SMEs and third sector organisations - providing more opportunities for these business to benefit.

|  |
| --- |
| While the refreshed SDP has a new digital focus - encouraging SMEs to engage with digital procurement and service delivery, and ensuring they benefit from these new opportunities – the overall aim of the SDP is to support SMEs through the process of public sector procurement.  The SDP assists businesses to navigate the complex tendering processes used in public sector procurement. In doing so it makes businesses more aware of tender opportunities and increases their skills (including digital skills) in preparing and submitting tenders. As such, the SDP supports clients to compete more effectively for contracts. Supporting businesses to win contracts ultimately supports businesses to develop and grow.  The SDP aligned with a number of themes within economic, procurement and digital strategies, including: supporting business growth and the creation of jobs; supporting future innovation in the digital economy; exploiting the benefits of digital technologies; and ensuring that public procurement contracts in Scotland are more accessible to micro businesses, SMEs and third sector organisations. |

## Continuing Strategic Fit

The SDP continues to contribute to national and local economic development, procurement and digital agendas.

#### Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act[[28]](#footnote-28) establishes best practice, encourages public bodies to consider Community Benefit Clauses (CBCs) in high value procurements, and establishes a national legislative framework for public procurement that supports Scotland’s economic growth by: delivering social and environmental benefits; supporting innovation; and promoting public procurement processes and systems.

The new Act sits alongside the existing Scottish public sector procurement regulations (namely, The Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2012), and essentially creates a two-tier procurement regime for public contracts in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has described the aim of the new Act as being *‘to establish a national legislative framework for sustainable public procurement that supports Scotland's economic growth by delivering social and environmental benefits, supporting innovation and promoting public procurement processes and systems which are transparent, streamlined, standardised, proportionate, fair and business-friendly”*.

#### Scotland’s Economic Strategy (2015)

Scotland’s Economic Strategy[[29]](#footnote-29) sets out the Government’s commitment to the overarching priority of achieving sustainable economic growth through increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality.

While in broad terms, the priorities remain the same, the refreshed strategy has a new emphasis on achieving ‘inclusive growth’ and ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are spread more equitably across Scotland.

Priorities of relevance to the SDP include:

* fostering a culture of innovation - among other things, this includes developing and delivering new approaches to public service reforms and making better use of our public procurement to drive innovation. By making procurement processes as accessible as possible for SMEs and third sector organisations, their chances at success are considered to be greatly increased;
* investing in our people, infrastructure and assets in a sustainable way - the Scottish Government is committed to using public contracts to deliver Community Benefits, and is encouraging its further use. Community Benefit Clauses (CBCs) provide a means of achieving sustainability in public contracts, and include: targeted recruitment and training; SME and social enterprise development; and community engagement; and
* promoting inclusive growth - including realising opportunities across Scotland’s cities, towns and rural areas to deliver more equal growth across Scotland.

#### A Stronger Government - The Government’s Programme for Scotland (2015/2016)

The Programme for Government[[30]](#footnote-30) sets out the legislation for the coming year, as well as summarising the Scottish Government's key achievements and main goals for the future - both legislative and non-legislative. The key priority of relevance to the SDP is the contribution to maintaining a strong, sustainable economy, through the expansion of Scotland’s digital infrastructure (continuing to roll out the £400 million Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme) and supporting businesses to innovate, to drive long-term competitiveness, productivity and growth.

|  |
| --- |
| The SDP is directly referenced in this document as part of the Government’s plans to invest in education and skills. Recognising the significance of digital skills for the country’s future, the Government plan to invest £7 million to promote business awareness of digital technologies in two ways, including helping SMEs with digital procurement (through the SDP). |

#### Scottish Government - e-commerce Strategy (2015)

The recently published e-commerce strategy[[31]](#footnote-31) identifies that e-commerce is an important enable of public procurement. The strategy is set within the wider context of the procurement reform agenda - the vison for Scottish Public Procurement is defined as “*delivering procurement that improves public services for a prosperous, fairer and more sustainable Scotland*”. The effective use of technology is a central component of the Public Procurement Reform Programme[[32]](#footnote-32), which identified that the one of the roles of procurement is to “*promote and engage in the implementation of relevant technology solutions, including e-procurement, to minimise purchase to pay costs*”.

The SDP is explicitly referenced within the e-commerce strategy in terms of its role in facilitating small, medium and third sector enterprises to be better able to take advantage of contract opportunities in Scotland (and further afield). The SDP builds “*supplier capability to maximise supply side gains from available technology*”.

# Client Engagement

This Chapter presents feedback from SMEs and social enterprises registered with the SDP. An online survey was distributed by the SDP team to 6,876 contacts and a reminder sent mid-way through. A prize draw was used to help boost responses. A total of 162 responses were received (a response rate of 2%). The confidence level is 95% with a confidence interval of plus or minus 7.61.

## Profile of Respondents

The majority of clients that responded to the survey were private sector companies, with the remainder social enterprises, **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1: Clients by Business Type

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sector | Number | % |
| Private sector | 131 | 83% |
| Social enterprises | 27 | 17% |

N=158

Clients were located across 31 of the 32 Scottish local authorities[[33]](#footnote-33), with the highest level of response from clients located in Glasgow (29, 20%), Edinburgh (18, 12%), and South Lanarkshire (10, 7%).

More than half of respondents (93, 58%) had accessed SDP training and/or online resources since July 2014. The remainder had registered with the SDP, but were yet to attend any training events or access online resources. As not all clients have yet used SDP services, some survey questions were not relevant to this group.

## Awareness of the SDP

Clients found out about the SDP in a range of ways, with the most common through another support organisation (52, 33%) – **Figure 6.1**.

Figure 6.1: Initial Awareness of the SDP  N=160

## Previous Tendering Experience and Support

A relatively high proportion of clients reported that they had little or no experience of tendering for public contracts prior to their contact with the SDP (96, 60%), with most of the other clients reporting that they had some experience but had mixed success.

Figure 6.2: Previous Experience of Tendering

  
N=161

Among those SDP clients with previous experience of tendering for public sector contacts (i.e. those that reported some or plenty of experience):

* all had used paper-based submissions in the past, while much fewer had used digital/online submissions; and
* since engagement with the SDP, nearly all now use online/digital submissions, with much less emphasis on paper-based submissions. This reflects increased demand from public and private sector organisations for tenders to be submitted online.

Figure 6.3: Methods Used for Submitting Public Sector Tenders    
N=44 and 58

A total of 35 businesses provided details of bids they had submitted in financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Table 6.2: Public Sector Contract Bids in 2012/13 and 2013/14

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Total number of bids | Nos. of Businesses Winning Bids | Nos. of Businesses Losing Bid |
| 1 to 5 | 19 | 19 |
| 6 to 10 | 9 | 7 |
| 11 to 20 | 3 | 4 |
| 21 to 50 | 1 | 2 |
| 50+ | 3 | 3 |

N=35

Key points include that:

* 670 bids were won, with each client’s cumulative value of bids ranging from £30,000 to £8m. The average total was £774,800, although excluding two outliers of £5m and £8, this decreases to £341,435. Many of the larger contracts were won by larger construction-related businesses;
* 572 bids were lost, with cumulative value per client ranging from £7,000 to £10m, with an average client total of £930,000. Excluding outliers of £5m and £10m, this decreases to £353,000; and
* bids were to a Scottish local authorities, the Scottish Government and associated agencies, housing associations, the NHS, and UK Government departments.

The majority of SDP clients that responded to the survey had not received any other procurement/tender ready support from another agency or organisation prior to their engagement with the SDP (141, 88%).

Among those clients that had received similar support (20, 12%), this had been provided by a range of organisations including: Business Gateway, local authorities, enterprise agencies, a specialist tendering support company, Construction Line, the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply, and Community Enterprise in Scotland.

## Initial Engagement with the SDP

Client ratings for their initial engagement with the SDP was mixed - it ranged from a low of 59% (rated good/very good) for the ease of finding out what support was available and for usefulness of the SDP website, to a high of 76% for the ease of registration. The website received further mixed feedback, with over one-third rating it average or below for ease of navigation.

Figure: 6.4: Initial Engagement with the SDP

Suggestions provided on how clients’ initial engagement with the SDP could be improved included (all identified by one client each):

* it is not always clear that events are targeted at SMEs and the Third Sector;
* presentations and documents should be made available online to businesses unable to attend events;
* the events calendar should be more up to date; and
* more training and assistance could be targeted at rural and remote businesses.

## Engagement with the SDP

Just under a quarter of clients that had accessed SDP services since July 2014 make ‘regular’ use of the SDP (21, 23%), with a further 57% accessing the range of support less often – **Figure 6.5**.

Figure 6.5: Frequency of Accessing Support from SDP  N=93

Customers reported accessing a range of support from the SDP, with the most commonly cited attendance at SDP traditional training events (65, 70%) – **Figure 6.6**. This was followed by webinars, with online resources less utilised.

Figure 6.6: Types of SDP Support Accessed  
N=93

The main focus of the support accessed can be grouped as follows: Introduction to Working with the Public Sector (59, 64%), hints and tips on completing forms/PQQs (54, 59%), and Using Tender Portals (49, 53%) – **Figure 6.7**. These are typically Level 1 and 2 training modules.

Figure 6.7: Topics Covered by Support Accessed  N=92

Responses under ‘other’ were equalities and diversity, learning about new procurement rules, and networking opportunities.

## Views on SDP Support

Ratings of good/very good for each type of support ranging from a low of 59% for external partner events to a high of 78% for online resources – **Figure 6.8**.

Figure 6.8: Views on Support Accessed

A small number of clients identified areas for improvement, with this centring on sound/video quality during webinars, while a few others felt that ‘Meet the Buyer’ events had little substantial engagement.

Other improvements, suggested by individual customers, included: having "masterclass" seminars aimed at businesses who are already successful at tendering for public contracts (it is worth noting that there are already events aimed at level 3 businesses), but could still learn more; having more practical examples of how to answer specific questions; and increased notice for events and reminders in advance.

The following sections provide more feedback from clients on specific forms of support accessed.

#### SDP Events

Generally, SDP events were rated highly, with good/very good ratings ranging from 70% for content to 77% for location. No aspect of SDP events received a very poor/poor rating of more than 5%.

Table 6.3: Views on SDP Events

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Very poor | | Poor | Average | Good | Very good | |
| Content | 2% | 0% | | 28% | 31% | | 39% |
| Relevance | 2% | 0% | | 27% | 34% | | 37% |
| Location (events) | 2% | 0% | | 22% | 37% | | 40% |
| Timing (events) | 0% | 2% | | 25% | 38% | | 35% |
| Trainer (events) | 3% | 2% | | 19% | 32% | | 44% |

N=64

Only a few clients suggested improvements that could be made - a greater focus on sector specific events, SDP events could go into greater detail on the next stage and provision of technical support.

#### External Partner Events

Events run by partners and external organisations received satisfaction ratings lower than the SDP Direct Training Events, see **Table 6.4**.

Table 6.4: Views on External Partner Events

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Very poor | | Poor | Average | Good | Very good | |
| Content | 3% | 3% | | 41% | 38% | | 15% |
| Relevance | 3% | 3% | | 41% | 36% | | 18% |
| Location (events) | 0% | 8% | | 31% | 41% | | 21% |
| Timing (events) | 0% | 3% | | 29% | 47% | | 21% |
| Trainer (events) | 3% | 5% | | 29% | 45% | | 18% |

N=39

#### Webinars

Overall, webinars were rated relatively highly by clients, with good/very good ratings of 74% for content and 67% for relevance.

Table 6.5: Rating of Webinars

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Very poor | | Poor | Average | Good | Very good | |
| Content | 0% | 5% | | 21% | 38% | | 36% |
| Relevance | 2% | 2% | | 28% | 37% | | 30% |

N=43

A few clients commented that: presentations could have been more specific to their needs; that it should be easier to obtain copies/recordings of webinars; and the sound quality could be improved.

#### Online Resources

Online resources were rated as good/very good rating of 76% for content and 76% for relevance.

Table 6.6: Views on Online Resources

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Very poor | | Poor | Average | Good | Very good | |
| Content | 0% | 0% | | 24% | 48% | | 27% |
| Relevance | 0% | 0% | | 23% | 54% | | 23% |

N=35

## Client Expectations

The majority of clients’ that had accessed SDP support reported that the support either met or exceeded their expectations (73, 80%), **Figure 6.9**.

Where expectations had been exceeded, reasons provided by clients were that the SDP support had enhanced their understanding and knowledge of public sector tendering and that the support had been practical and useful. Some comments which reflect this include:

* *“The training has been SO useful, I've really enjoyed listening to the experts and speaking to a variety of people. The practical help has been of immeasurable value to me”.*
* *“I didn't expect a free seminar to be that useful and considering it was a whole day, the time flew by. Really good and I'd recommend this course to my colleagues who also work on tendering and PQQs”.*
* *“There feels like a genuine interest to support local business and the programme seems very focused on integrating local businesses.”*

Figure 6.9: Expectations   
N=91

Where expectations were not met, this was largely because clients felt they had not benefited from the support to the extent they thought they would - especially if that business had not won any public sector contracts since their engagement with the SDP. A small number of respondents felt that the support should be more focused on their particular needs as a business, rather than generic advice.

## Benefits of the SDP Support

Just under three-quarters of clients reported that their engagement had generated some qualitative benefits (68, 73%), with a further reporting that it was too early to say (18, 19%).

The most common benefits reported were an increased understanding of tendering (55, 84%) and an increased awareness of tendering opportunities (57, 81%). Increased confidence in preparing tender submissions, a more positive attitude towards tendering, and an increased understanding of the structure of the public sector in Scotland were also reported by two-thirds of clients.

Figure 6.10: Benefits of SDP Support N=68

When asked to consider any wider benefits that their engagement with the Programme has generated, a larger number of clients reported that it was too early to say (36, 39%) or that they could not identify any (15, 16%).

Of those clients reporting wider benefits (41, 45%) - three-quarters said that they had improved the quality of their tender submissions as a direct result of SDP support (31, 76%) and two-thirds reported increased skills.

Figure 6.11: Other Benefits of SDP Support

N=41

## Business Impacts

More than two-thirds (63, 69%) of customers reported that, since receiving SDP support, they had submitted public sector contract tenders, or intend to in the near future. The majority of the remaining clients reported that they are considering doing so at some point in the future, **Figure 6.12**.

Figure 6.12: Tenders Submitted Since Receiving SDP Support   
Among businesses that had submitted tenders or intend to in the near future since accessing support from the SDP, 43 provided further details, Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Outcome of Bids Since Receiving Support

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of bids | Customers winning this number of bids | Customers losing this number of bids | Customers with this number of bids awaiting a decision | Customers with this number of bids in the pipeline |
| 1 to 5 | 30 | 16 | 18 | 12 |
| 6 to 10 | 7 | 4 | - | - |
| 11 to 20 | 4 | 3 | - | - |
| 21 to 50 | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| 50+ | - | - | 1 | - |

Key points to note include the following:

* bids were primarily submitted to Scottish local authorities and NHS boards, but also government agencies (e.g. Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland);
* 93 bids were won (29 were reported by one client and combined value not specified). Where cumulative values were provided, this ranged from £30,000 to £1,750,000, with an average total of £333,600;
* 152 bids were lost – totals ranged from £9,000 to £5,000,000, with an average of £579,700;
* 123 bids are awaiting a decision (94 were for one client and value not specified). Where cumulative values were provided, this ranged from £35,000 to £625,000, with an average totals of £168,000; and
* 22 bids are in the pipeline - with cumulative values per client ranging from £7,000 to £130,000, with average totals of £93,600.

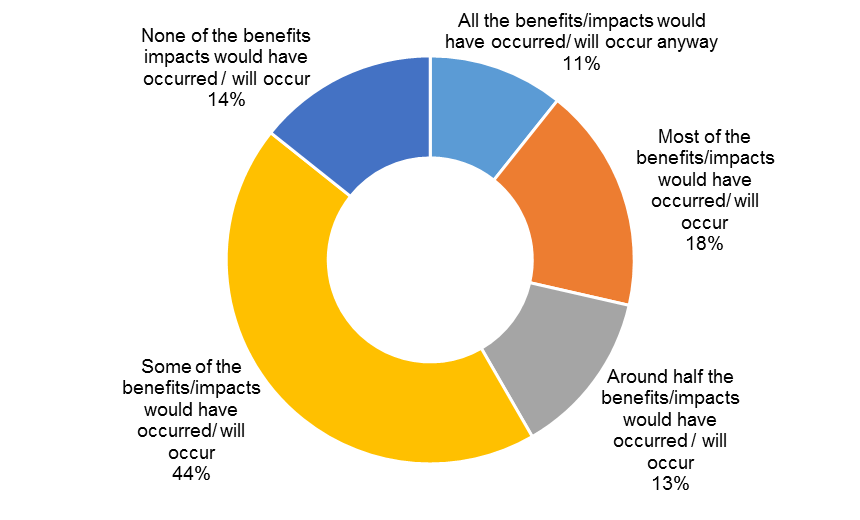
Where customers had not submitted any public contract tenders since accessing SDP support, reasons reported were that (each by one respondent):

* the process is too complex;
* it is time consuming;
* lack confidence;
* lack understanding of with how the system works;
* waiting for the right tender opportunity to come up; and
* usually a sub-contractor within large contract opportunities.

## Additionality of the Support

Seventy-one percent of clients reported some degree of additionality (i.e. that none, some, or half of the impacts would have occurred in the absence of SDP support **Figure 6.13**. Only 11% (9) reported that all benefits would have occurred anyway.

Figure 6.13: Additionality

  
N=84

## Customers Who Have Not Yet Accessed Support

As highlighted earlier, 42% of clients that responded to the survey, while registered for SDP support have yet to access any.

Some are, however, already booked on to a forthcoming event/webinar (22%). More than half of this client group intend to use the SDP website to stay up to date with relevant opportunities (32, 55%), while 41% (16) plan to attend an event, webinar or access online resources in the next six months – **Figure 6.14**.

Figure 6.14: Future Use by Businesses Still to Access Support   
N=58

## Future Procurement Support Needs and Use of SDP

Around half of customers reported a need for additional procurement/tender ready support in the future (84, 52%). However, a significant number were unsure (69, 43%) – **Figure 6.15**.

Figure 6.15: Future Need for Procurement/Tender Support    
N=161

Key areas around which customers are likely to require tendering/procurement support in the future were identified as:

* writing bids (32, 42%);
* understanding the tendering process (22, 29%);
* developing policies (e.g. environmental or health and safety) (15, 20%);
* networking and engagement with buyers (13, 17%);
* finding/choosing a contract to tender for (10, 13%);
* understanding of the PQQ process (9, 12%); and
* finance and pricing bids (9, 12%).

The most common preference for how support should be delivered was face-to-face events and workshops (67, 81%) – **Figure 6.16**.

Figure 6.16: Preferred Delivery Method for Future Support  N=83

Of those who selected ‘other’ and specified how they would like the support delivered (five clients), all said they would like more detailed and specialist advice on a one-to-one basis or in a smaller, sector-specific group.

Around three-quarters (121, 76%) of customers reported that they are likely or very likely to access SDP support in the future. Only a small number (7, 5%) said that they were not likely/not at all likely to – **Figure 6.17**.

Figure 6.17: Likelihood of using the SDP in the future   
N=159

## Final Comments

Around a third of respondents chose to leave a final comment. Several expressed frustration with the nature of public contract tendering/procurement, particularly the amount of time they have to dedicate to completing submissions and said that this places a large burden on SMEs. Some reported that they feel disadvantaged compared to larger businesses and detailed instances where they have lost out on tenders.

However, among those who used this opportunity to comment directly on the support offered through SDP, the feedback was very favourable, with customers reiterating how helpful they found the Programme. A selection of comments which reflect this are below:

* *“Before attending training/accessing resources from the SDP, I had had no support whatsoever in tendering and at times felt as if I was completely in the dark as to what I should and should not be doing; although I tried my best I knew I was probably wasting precious hours focusing on the wrong things, but didn't know where to look for the right kind of support. So thank you for all you offer, tendering had become something I dreaded and now it's something I look forward to getting my teeth into. Tiny businesses like ours need all the help we can get to compete with the bigger fish and that is what the SDP offer”*.
* *“It has been really useful to access these services as an SME. When new members of staff join and need to be involved in bids this is an excellent way to get them some training and understanding. All the event topics are relevant and all those I have attended have been useful. A great service!”*.
* *“SDP are an excellent organisation. There is a lot of training and advice available on the subject – for a price. It is refreshing to have such a fantastic resource for free. It gives SMEs the opportunity to develop and compete.”*

# Conclusions and Recommendations

This Chapter presents the study conclusions and provides a set of recommendations to be discussed and agreed with the Board at the Annual General Meeting.

## Conclusions

The conclusions have been set against the study objectives outlined in **Chapter 1.2**.

1. Gather customer feedback – *engage with customers, analyse and report on the value which the SDP service has brought and will bring to its customers*.

The survey of businesses received feedback from 162 clients that have either been supported through the SDP (58%) or are registered as members but have yet to access support (42%).

Overall, the support received positive feedback from clients that had accessed services with 80% reporting that expectations had been met or exceeded. Around three-quarters rated the SDP events as good or very good, with a similar proportion rating the webinars and online resources as good and very good. The external partner events received a lower satisfaction rating, however, the survey did not identify any specific feedback that helps identify the rationale for this lower rating.

Figure 7.1: Views on Support Accessed

The type of impact and benefit that clients reported can be broken down into two broad themes:

Raising awareness and changing behaviour:

* increased understanding of tendering (55, 84%);
* increased awareness of tendering opportunities (57, 81%);
* increased confidence in preparing tender submissions (45, 66%);
* a more positive attitude towards tendering (45, 66%); and
* increased understanding of the structure of the public sector in Scotland (45, 66%).

The feedback helps to demonstrate the qualitative value of the Programme, particularly in supporting the ‘lower tier’ of SMEs with little to no experience of public sector procurement or tendering.

One of the SDP’s strengths is raising awareness of tender opportunities and helping to change behaviour. For example, the clients that identified themselves as ‘having little experience of public sector tendering’, since their engagement with the SDP - 56% have either recently submitted or plan to submit a tender in the near future.

Enhancing skills and capacity:

Another way in which the SDP has benefitted the SME base is through increasing skills and capacity:

* improved the quality of tender submissions (31, 76%);
* increased skills (27, 66%); and
* enhanced engagement with local authorities (20, 49%).

While the survey sought information on the number of tenders submitted and their success rate since engagement with the Programme, it is challenging to quantify the success to the SDP. That being said, given the mostly positive feedback, the SDP has likely had some impact on supporting clients to win more public sector tenders, however, without further detailed analysis it is not appropriate to comment on the nature or scale of impact at this time. This is considered further within the recommendations (**Chapter 7.2**).

2. Gather stakeholder views – *engage with the SDP’s national and local partners, analyse and report on the value which the SDP is contributing to national and local economic development, procurement and digital agendas*.

#### National and Local Economic Development

The SDP (in the main) sits within the economic development function of the member local authorities and feedback suggests that this is the most appropriate location and helps to embed the SDP within local authorities.

The Programme’s over-arching goal of supporting the SME base to become more competitive and win more public sector contracts (and therefore retaining supply chain value in Scotland/region/local authority) fits well with the strategic economic development objectives of Scottish Government and local authorities.

We would note that the Programme’s contribution towards supporting business/employment sustainability and growth helps to ensure a strong fit within economic development.

Nonetheless, it is challenging to draw firm conclusions on the contribution of the SDP towards national and local economic development without detailed performance monitoring data. For example, the online survey of clients undertaken as part of this review suggests that the Programme is having a positive effect, but (to date) there has been limited evidence reported directly from clients – the SDP issues hard copy client satisfaction sheets at the end of direct events, however, data is in the process of being collated and analysed[[34]](#footnote-34).

In addition, feedback from stakeholders indicates that the SDP is *‘likely*’ delivering against the national and local economic development agenda/priorities, but needs to strengthen the evidence base for this.

As considered in the Recommendations, there are some improvements that can be made to collecting, measuring, and reporting on Programme performance (outputs, outcomes and impacts of the Programme), and specifically linking these to the cross-cutting economic development priorities of Scottish Government and member local authorities.

Procurement

The SDP makes a strong contribution to the emerging procurement agenda through raising awareness and promoting the opportunities of public sector tendering within the SME base – ‘levelling the playing field’ and supporting SMEs to compete more effectively.

The SDP is a free and independent service that is open to all Scottish SMEs, and through procurement the Scottish Government aspires to promote inclusive growth and innovation - providing more accessible opportunities for SMEs to benefit.

The SDP is an important link between procurement and economic development, and is identified in emerging procurement policy documents as the ‘route to market’ for procurement support.

Digital

At the outset there was seen to be a strong fit between SDP and the DSBEP funding. In particular, the Programme was pan-Scotland and there was an emerging priority for the public sector to utilise digital and online procurement – the SDP was viewed as mechanism to bridge the gap between the digital and procurement agendas.

The DSBEP funding has been implemented in the following (summarised) ways:

* use of webinars and e-topics to increase the reach of the SDP;
* direct training and partner events for e-procurement and training;
* website development; and
* purchase of software and hardware.

The monitoring data shows that by October 2015, only 3% of the DSBEP Year 1 funding had been spent, however, much of the Year 1 and Year 2 budget is committed, although not all of the budget will be spent by March 2016. It should be noted, however, that the SDP did not start delivering webinars until March 2015 and the refreshed training content which includes e-topics commenced in September. The Scottish Government has indicated that there will be a “grace period” of 12 months for DSBEP funded projects beyond March 2016 to allow for further expenditure.

Progress towards delivering against digital output targets has therefore been slower than expected (target of delivering events/webinars in digital specific e-procurement topics - 49% achieved to date).

While the SDP’s performance has been below target on the digital side it raises some interesting questions, in that, is the SDP the most appropriate organisation to deliver support related to the digital agenda?, and does the SDP have the in-house capacity and expertise?

The SDP focus is (and should remain) supporting the SME base to become more aware of opportunities in public sector procurement and to become ‘better’ at tendering. Digital technology and procurement are linked, with a further push from the EU to mandate e-tendering/e-procurement in the future. The SDP focus needs to remain high on ensuring that SMEs understand the requirements and processes involved in the various e-tender / e-procurement processes.

The SDP team already have a significant remit to deliver the Programme Scotland-wide (across four staff). As such, the SDP is therefore not the most appropriate organisation to be delivering against the wider digital agenda. The role of the SDP should be as a facilitator to refer and connect clients with other business support agencies (such as Business Gateway) ensuring that they provide the digital capability and capacity building.

The DSBEP funding was about building the capability of SDP to facilitate digital means to facilitate training and SME engagement, and delivering training on digital topics in relation to public sector procurement. In essence the core funding has (and will) provide the SDP with:

* the SDP website;
* webinar technology and software;
* additional digital tools e.g. e learning platform, supplier matching tool; and
* access to Spikes Cavell data.

3. Make conclusions on the value of the new SDP, *based upon the contribution it is making to its customers, partners and policy objectives.*

Overall, feedback suggests that the ‘new SDP’ has built on the foundations of the previous Programme and the changes implemented through the transition planning are helping to deliver a ‘better’ service that adds value in a number of ways.

Customers

We have highlighted the main benefits and impacts for customers which relate to both qualitative impacts such as raising awareness of public sector procurement opportunities and changing behaviour/attitudes to working with the public sector; and more tangible benefits like enhancing skills and building capacity.

As considered below (and based on positive client feedback), the support offering being delivered to SMEs appears to be effective and targeted appropriately.

Partners

The SDP contributes to economic development objectives/priorities of member local authorities and provides dedicated free support to the SME base – training and support related to procurement was an identified gap in the national SME support provision (although some procurement support activity is delivered via the Business Gateway on a regional basis - this tends to be one-to-one support based on an particular opportunity, and is not delivered by all Business Gateways).

Feedback from stakeholders was that the SDP is a useful tool for business development, and that it is an important intervention for supporting small, medium and third sector organisations navigate the complex tendering processes used in public sector procurement.

That being said, feedback suggests that the perceived ‘value’ partners get from the SDP varies depending on: their membership level (full member or associate member); the number of direct/partner events that have been delivered regionally; and the relationship’ with the SDP team – with some local authorities more active in engaging with the SDP than others.

In addition, consultees were, in the main unsure regarding the impact the SDP has had retaining supply chain activity and spend in the local regional/area. As discussed further in the Recommendations, there are a number of ways in which the SDP can enhance and better evidence its ‘value’ to partners (Scottish Government and local authority members). This mainly relates to improved targeting of the support, and monitoring and reporting of performance.

Policy Objectives

The SDP continues to have a strong alignment with, and contribution towards a number of policy objectives.

The over-arching aspiration is that public procurement contracts in Scotland will be more accessible, including to small, medium and third sector enterprises. The SDP plays an important role here in facilitating such enterprises to be better able to take advantage of contract opportunities in Scotland (and further afield).

The training events and webinars delivered through the SDP assist in raising awareness of how to find, win and keep contract opportunities and support businesses to navigate the often complex tendering processes used in public sector procurement, to enable “better” bidding. Supporting businesses to win contracts ultimately supports businesses to develop and grow.

There is a continued strong alignment with the Procurement Reform agenda of the Scottish Government. A number of recent Scottish Government policies also outline the SDP as the appropriate route to market for procurement support – The Government’s Programme for Scotland and the e-commerce Strategy.

We would highlight, however, that while the Programme has a strong alignment with digital policy and wider digital agenda, in terms of delivering activity and contributing towards targets and outputs, it has been less successful to date. The SDP Programme was, however, six-months behind schedule as a result of the delay in recruiting staff, and while the events programme was pre-established, the digital programme was a brand new element for the SDP.

4. Assess the effectiveness of different aspects of the SDP *such as: core and additional services, website, marketing and communications, management, governance, including Board and other Groups, partnership working, and measurement.*

Core and Additional Services

Based on a review of the Programme specification and feedback from both stakeholders and clients, the core support offering appears to be well positioned in terms of:

* the levels targeted – segmentation across three levels that will broadly capture all SMEs and allow businesses to self-select what level best fits their needs;
* the mechanisms for service delivery and engagement – direct events, partner events, webinars and online resources – there is a good mix of ‘products’ and approaches to service delivery that supports the Programme to operate effectively on a pan-Scotland basis; and
* the breakdown/content of support – the ‘menu’ of support and training topics is broad and covers a number of thematic areas – we consider this to be an appropriate approach for a pan-national Programme such as the SDP. Feedback from clients also suggests that the content of the support is positioned appropriately.

There were, however, points raised through the consultations with regards the core service delivery (a review of course content is planned for January 2016):

* the addition of the new ‘introductory module’ – and the potential for duplication with the support offered through level 1;
* the quality of some events and the training providers is variable;
* the flexibility of the direct events timetable – can these be tailored and respond to regional challenges; and
* the website - there have been some issues raised by clients and stakeholders with regards the accessibility and content of the website – although there was a broad recognition that the new website is a significant improvement.

Marketing

Marketing of the SDP appears to have been successful and would note that they have developed new branding and ‘strap line’ – ‘Helping You Bid Better’, and a new website. The organisation is viewed as independent from the local authority members and anecdotally this is viewed as a positive marketing message.

The SDP undertakes its own direct marketing and also relies on local authority partners and wider stakeholders to help promote the service. The survey of clients identified that one third initially found out about the SDP through another support provider.

Stakeholders were positive about the benefits and kudos that comes from being part of a national programme and a national brand/umbrella like the SDP. In addition, stakeholders often commented on the growing number of company registrations as a sign that more businesses were becoming aware of the Programme and tapping into the support - it has been successful in increasing its reach (and it was felt that this should be further built on).

As highlighted in the Recommendations, there are some strategic linkages with wider stakeholders (for example, Business Gateway) that SDP should look to strengthen in order to help the promotion and marketing of the Programme through more formal referral systems, etc.

Website

Feedback suggests that the website has notably improved its accessibility and functionality since the relaunch in June 2015, however, as might be expected there have been some initial ‘teething problems’. The team inherited a website that was largely not fit for purpose, and have improved the website significantly. In addition, there is a new social media presence through the use of Twitter.

An issue raised by local authority partners was the length of time taken to develop the website, in particular the development of the new “partners area”. With the full staff team not being in post until later than originally envisaged, time resources were focussed on other aspects of Programme delivery. During the time it has taken to develop this side of the website, partners have been able to approach the SDP team for access to data.

The SDP team regard the website as a ‘work in progress’ and will continue to develop both the content and functionality, this includes developing a supplier matching tool, and partner webinars, see Recommendations for further detail.

Management and Governance Structure

The new management and governance structures that have been put in place appear to be effective and have addressed the major issues identified in the 2013 review – that structures were “*insufficiently robust”* and lacked accountability and transparency. Feedback identifies that this was an important early task in the post transition period and has been important to secure buy-in from local authority partners.

Points raised through the consultation process included that:

* there might be scope for streamlining the governance structure;
* the importance of recruiting the ‘right’ individuals onto the Board to ensure there is an appropriate mix of ‘operational’ and ‘strategic’ thinkers - and the need to ensure a strategic focus; and
* there is clarity around roles and responsibilities of the individual groups..

Within the current structure, the Regional Officers Group is seen as a vital component of the SDP to ensure it remains flexible and responsive to regional training needs – it acts as the main link between the SDP and member local authorities.

Please see the Recommendations for further thinking on the current governance structure.

Partnership Working

As would be expected with a pan-Scotland programme, the level of engagement and partnership working between SDP and member local authorities varies – it should also be noted that some local authorities are only associate members and are therefore not necessarily going to have a close working relationship with the SDP.

Within this, it is important to consider that at the time of reporting the new Programme Manager has only been in place for a year and engaging/communicating with partners’ will be an ongoing activity for the SDP team.

To date, there have been some strong partnerships developed with local authority partners, that has resulted in the delivery of numerous partner events – partner events comprise around half of all the ‘direct’ activity delivered through SDP.

It was also recognised that some relationships and engagement with the regions and local authorities can be strengthened.

In addition to local authority members, the SDP has a role in working alongside other nationally targeted economic development and procurement support organisations, we would include Business Gateway and Scotland Excel as key partners.

Currently, the relationship and engagement with Business Gateway varies depending on region (this is further complicated by a number of different delivery models and organisations e.g. in-house, external tender, ALEO, etc). That being said, there is potential to develop a strategic relationship at the national and regional level which can support promotion and cross-referrals. There is already representation from the Business Gateway Operational Network (BGON) on the SDP Strategic Planning Group. In moving forward, this provides an opportunity for partnerships and connections to be strengthened.

The SDP and Scotland Excel have worked in collaboration to deliver joint Meet the Buyer events – and there is interest in developing this relationship further, including delivering further national Meet The Buyer events.

Monitoring and Measurement

The current Performance Monitoring Framework was set up to measure the Programme in the post transition period, and as a result is focused largely on measuring the progress towards achieving organisational milestones (for example, staff team in place, undertaking SDP evaluation, etc) with less focus on KPI output targets.

This focus of the monitoring was fit-for-purpose at the time (to support the post-transition delivery), however, stakeholder feedback recognises that the Performance Monitoring Framework should be updated to reflect and measure output targets, and link these with Programme outcomes and the economic development objectives of member local authorities.

The Recommendations provide more detail on developing a new Performance Monitoring Framework.

5. Provide recommendations on options for the future development of the SDP, *which can be considered and adopted into the new Business Plan as appropriate*.

Please see **Chapter 7.2** below for a summary of recommendations.

## Recommendations

Following completion of the Programme review we have outlined a number of recommendations for further discussion with the SDP team and Board members.

#### Event Feedback and Registration

At present, the SDP collects attendance data for direct events, but only collects feedback on customer satisfaction via hard copy sheets. Inputting the customer feedback from hard copies and collating it into meaningful charts and tables for analysis and dissemination is resource intense and not the most efficient method of approaching this.

In addition, there is currently no process to record either attendance (which is estimated by SDP) or client feedback from all partner/external events. It is our understanding that delegate lists are sought where possible and that business cards are collected and added to the SDP mailing list to encourage registration.

This is a missed opportunity in terms of gathering (and reporting) client satisfaction data and also for planning and developing future direct training events and partner events – i.e. information on what events are well attended/most popular, satisfaction with the content, etc.

The attendance and client satisfaction data could also be a useful tool for engaging partners and providing performance data – feedback highlights that the local authorities are interested in receiving more data from SDP in relation to what is being delivered across their region/area and the benefits and impacts it is generating for the SME base.

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| **Recommendation**: the SDP and/or partners should collect registration data for partner events and consider other methods for gathering client satisfaction feedback from both direct training events and partner events. For example, a short e-survey to all attendees with the responses collected and loaded directly into a survey analysis software - SNAP or Survey Monkey. This information should be routinely analysed and reported on. |

#### Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

One of the points that was raised during the consultations was the type and level of monitoring/performance data that SDP currently gathers and provides to partners - there is currently a lack of ‘hard’ empirical and quantifiable data that measures and demonstrates the value and impact of the SDP.

Ensuring that the SDP has the mechanisms in place to gather data to evidence the benefit and impact of the service is important, particularly in light of impending public sector spending cuts – partners will have to justify spending and resource commitments.

The current Performance Monitoring Framework (**Table 4.4**) is heavily focused on organisational milestones, for example, putting a new Board in place and developing a marketing and communications strategy, with only five indicators that measure delivery and performance. It should be noted that none of these indicators are focused on outcomes (i.e. how does the SDP impact the business base or deliver against policy).

At the time it was established the Framework was appropriate to support the SDP moving from the transition to delivery period, however, all of the organisational milestones have been achieved and there is now an opportunity to establish a more robust Performance Monitoring Framework that measures the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the service.

The type of outcomes and impacts that may be appropriate to measure include: additional number of tenders submitted, value of new tenders won, job/business sustainability and growth, etc.

The key benefits of developing a more outcome focused Framework include:

* improved evidence base to capture the value and returns of the Programme;
* stronger linkages with local authority and Government policy objectives; and
* marketing and promotion tool – ‘real world’ examples to promote and market the SDP.

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| **Recommendations**: the SDP should design, develop and implement a more robust Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (M&EF) to measure performance with consideration to the following:  1. In order to design a robust M&EF that captures the impact and value of the service it will be important to develop a clear and focused vision, SMART strategic objectives, and detailed activities to be delivered through the SDP.  2. The M&EF should be based on a ‘routes to impact’ model that highlights the linkages between the strategic objectives, inputs (financial and resources), activities (based on the detailed specification), outputs (what is delivered), and outcomes and impacts (what we hope to achieve).  3. The M&EF should link in more closely with the cross cutting economic development objectives (and wider policy e.g. Single Outcome Agreements) of the Scottish Government and partners.  4. The menu of indictors should consider both quantitative and qualitative measures as appropriate.  5. The Framework should allocate responsibility and frequency of collecting/reporting performance data. |

However, it should be noted that there will be a resource cost associated with both developing, and gathering the data and evidence to populate a new monitoring Framework. This resource cost is both financial and staff resource. These additional costs should be borne in mind and accounted for in future business planning.

#### Webinars

The webinars are a new ‘product’ the SDP has launched to engage with more rural businesses.

The usage/uptake of these webinars has been increasing (although it is still low in the rural areas) and client feedback is generally positive. The webinars represent a cost-effective and efficient method for the SDP to engage and support a wide range of clients at the pan-Scotland level. In the future it is likely that webinars will become an even more important resource for the SDP as more support and content goes online.

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| **Recommendation**: the SDP team should continue to develop the content of the webinars and promote them more widely, particularly within rural areas and amongst associate members. There is also a role for member local authorities to promote the webinars. |

#### Website

The SDP team recognise the value that the website provides in supporting their service offering, and as such regard it as a ‘work in progress’. The continued development and improvement both in terms of content and accessibility is a priority.

One suggested improvement is for the website to make the content and downloads from the direct training events and partner events available for those unable to attend (or for those that attend who wish to go back to the training materials) and the associate members. This would enhance the overall SDP offering and provide another tool for engaging with the SME base. However, some people may not turn up to events if the material is freely available online. The e-learning service will, however, provide a facility for SMEs to learn and engage with the content.

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| **Recommendation**: the SDP team should continue to develop the website (for example the SDP is reviewing the potential to develop a supplier matching tool) and consider opportunities for hosting additional material from direct and partner events. |

#### Governance

The 2013 review of the SDP identified that the governance structure was ‘*insufficiently robus*t’ and as a result a new structure was established to ensure greater levels of accountability and transparency. The new structure seems to have addressed these concerns, however, there is perhaps a need for more clarity around roles and responsibilities, and a review of whether the structure is ‘top heavy’.

The Programme has now been running successfully for a number of months and it is therefore an appropriate time to assess whether there is an opportunity to streamline the governance structure (this could also provide more clarity around roles and responsibilities).

It should be highlighted, however, that any new governance structure should retain the Regional Officers Group as this is seen as a vital link between member local authorities and the SDP.

The role and responsibilities of the Board in a more general sense should also be considered. During the port-transition period there was a need for Board members to support the operational and delivery side of the SDP – this was recognised as important to ensure the transition period was successful.

In the future, the Board should consider retaining a more strategic focus – the real value of having a Board with a broad mix of skills and experience within economic development and procurement will come from leading and driving the strategic direction of the SDP, considered further below.

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| **Recommendation**: Board to discuss whether current governance model remains fit for purpose or if there is scope/opportunity for streamlining the structure, and future role/responsibilities for Board members. |

#### Targeted Approach

Feedback from stakeholders identified a subscription based platform for data and intelligence analysis, ‘Grow Local’ which allows users to undertake detailed searches and analysis of public procurement spend data – value, sector, and geographic area, etc.

This is a potentially valuable tool that will allow member local authorities to review the number of projects and value of spend retained in their local area, what sectors/companies are winning contracts, and where there are gaps i.e. are there any areas of spend ‘leaked’ outwith the region, and the opportunity to retain spend.

Feedback from stakeholders identified that the service could benefit from being more flexible and responsive to changing regional demand (although recognising that there has to be an element of forward planning for the events calendar), the Grow Local tool would be important to help identify what the scale and nature of demand might look like.

There are a number of potential benefits from this, for example, helping to plan and develop support provision - i.e. capacity building amongst supply chain (where there are identified gaps and weaknesses), setting targets – for example 10% of all public sector spend to be retained in the local area, and helping local authorities target growth sectors and companies (responding to regional demand).

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| **Recommendation**: SDP to review the potential demand, benefits and feasibility of adopting the Grow Local tool as part of its service offering, this also includes funding for the platform. |

#### Engagement and Communication with Partners

Feedback suggests that engagement and relationships with member local authorities is varied across Scotland - this is not surprising given the number of partners and individuals involved (also the different membership status of some regions).

The SDP has made significant progress in developing the service to a national Programme (31 out of 32 local authorities are members) and the challenge going forward will be to ensure the ongoing support and commitment of members.

As highlighted above, the development of a more robust monitoring and reporting framework, and the development of tools such as Grow Local to allow a targeted approach will be important to demonstrate the value of the service at the local level.

In addition, there are some other national and regional organisations that the SDP should look to develop stronger relationships with, for example – Business Gateway works with broadly the same client group and Scotland Excel – deliver procurement training/support to the public sector.

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| **Recommendations**:  1. SDP to review partnerships and linkages/synergy with other bodies in the procurement and economic development landscape and identify opportunities for greater engagement and collaboration e.g.   * Business Gateway – develop a more formal relationship to help promote the SDP and cross-referrals. * Scotland Excel – continue to develop relationship and delivery of joint events and training. * Scottish Enterprise, Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC), NHS Procurement and MOD.   2. SDP should continue to be proactive in developing relationships and communication with member local authorities – this includes providing regular and ‘meaningful’ performance data and support to target sectors. |

#### Strategic Alignment and Funding

The SDP has a pan-Scotland remit to support SMEs and third sector organisations become more informed, aware and capable of tendering for public sector contracts. As such, a number of recent Scottish Government policies outline the SDP as the appropriate route to market for procurement support – The Government’s Programme for Scotland and the e-commerce Strategy. It is also recognised that the Programme has the potential to contribute to economic development objectives and priorities.

Feedback regarding where the SDP sits and can deliver ‘greatest value’ in the policy landscape identified that there was nearly unanimous agreement that the strategic direction and alignment of the SDP should remain focused on procurement and economic development.

The strategic fit and position of the SDP could be refined further and there is an opportunity to reflect on the future strategic direction of the SDP to ensure it has strong linkages and alignment with emerging procurement and economic development policy objectives and priorities.

Procurement

Scottish public sector expenditure amounts to over £10 billion per annum and EU and Government policy highlights that procurement should be used as a mechanism to drive economic, social, and environmental change.

Legislative and regulatory measures introduced by the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires that public sector spending bodies will need to develop strategies to deliver against the Sustainable Procurement Duty. The key objectives of the Duty are, through procurement the public sector will:

* improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the authority’s area;
* facilitate access to contracts by SMEs and third sector bodies, including supported businesses; and
* encourage suppliers to propose novel or innovative goods, works and services.

The Scottish Government has a role to play in supporting contracting authorities to comply with these changes.

One of the approaches SDP should consider is how they can work with the SME base and the supporting role they can play to ensure that the supply chain is able to respond effectively to these policy changes – retaining value in Scotland and local authority areas.

Economic Development

Given its remit to work with the SME and third sector base to compete for, and win a greater share of public sector contracts, the Programme already has a relatively strong fit with cross cutting economic development policy.

In terms of future contribution and alignment with policy, the SDP, has the potential to deliver against all four priorities of the Scottish Government Economic Strategy – **Investment**, **Innovation**, **Inclusive growth**, and **Internationalisation.**

Of particular note, the SDP could deliver significant value and contribute towards the inclusive growth priority, for example through retaining wealth and supply chain spend in local areas.

The Scottish policy landscape is evolving and procurement and economic development are no longer stand alone pillars – there are greater levels of synergy and crossover, with procurement being used as a tool to drive economic growth and development.

It is therefore important that to inform its strategic direction, the SDP considers its role in the changing policy landscape.

Funding Opportunities

Given the current and likely future constraints on local authority spending (new budgets announced in February 2016), the funding for SDP is likely to be based on the current model i.e. a mix of subscription based and grant funding. The DSBEP funding will no longer be a key source of revenue for SDP, and it is therefore appropriate to review the future strategic direction and alignment of the service - this will help identify potential funding sources for the Programme.

In terms of funding sources that could support the SDP, we have considered four broad options.

1. Increase membership subscription fees. *Feedback suggests that local authority members would not be able/willing to pay additional fees (based on the current level of service).*

2. Develop the service to engage with Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers (subscription based) to support development of preferred suppliers list and responding to changes in procurement, for example Community Benefits Clauses. *This is an approach worth considering, however, it may be challenging to engage enough private sector members for the service to be sustainable*.

3. Extend the scope of the SDP to include other public spending bodies, notably the NHS and HE/FE. *This is an approach worth considering and the SDP are currently engaged in discussions with the NHS*.

An option might be to expand the membership types:

* Affiliate Membership
  + Affiliate Membership would be open to organisations who, whilst not a local authority organisation, are public sector organisations including NHS, Higher Education, Emergency Services, Transport Scotland. The benefits to these organisations would be greater supplier engagement, assistance in raising awareness of how to do business with them and an increase in competitive bids for their contract opportunities, which may offer savings
  + Terms - as an SDP Affiliate Member there would be an annual organisation wide fee, plus the option to buy into wider supported marketing and events or pay per training event;
* Associate Membership
  + Associate Membership is open to trade bodies and other types of organisations e.g. federations, associations, etc providing support and to members.
  + Terms - as an SDP Associate Member there would be an annual fee, agreed attendance by SDP at least at one event per year plus the option to buy into wider supported marketing and events or pay per training event; and
* Corporate Membership
  + Extend membership model to the private sector, given the increase in importance of community benefit clauses; Tier 1 suppliers are looking for ways to attract suppliers into their supply chains. A corporate fee could be charged allowing the contract or to demonstrate their investment in providing support and training to their supply base
  + Terms - as an SDP Corporate Member there would be an annual fee, recognition of a Tier 1 supplier – perhaps offer them a page on the website to promote their contact details and links to opportunities plus the option that SDP would attend/facilitate an agreed number of supplier engagement days/events.

4. Scottish Government - Procurement. *This is an approach worth considering and the SDP should look to progress discussions with the Scottish Government*.

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| **Recommendations**:  1. Board to discuss and agree the strategic direction of the SDP and future funding opportunities, in particular we would highlight the potential to align the service more closely with both economic development priorities (4I’s – Investment, Innovation, Inclusive Growth and Internationalisation) and the procurement reform agenda (Sustainable Procurement Duty) of the Scottish Government.  2. The SDP team should continue discussions with other public spending bodies e.g. NHS and FE/HE to review other opportunities to expand the Programme.  **Key Action**: Progress discussions with central Government with a focus on a) the role of SDP in supporting procurement reform policy and Scotland’s SME base, and b) funding opportunities. |

Appendix A: SDP Data

#### Business Registrations

Key points include:

* there is representation across all 32 Scottish local authorities, albeit proportions vary greatly[[35]](#footnote-35);
* two-thirds of businesses registered with the SDP are based within 10 local authorities in the Central Belt (4,663, 67%); and
* in the north of Scotland[[36]](#footnote-36), 306 businesses registered for SDP support (4%).

**Table A.1** details business registrations in the remaining 22 local authority areas.

Table A.1: All Other Business Registrations by Local Authority Area

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Perth & Kinross** | **3%** |
| **Scottish Borders** | **3%** |
| **Midlothian** | **2%** |
| **Dundee** | **2%** |
| **Aberdeen City** | **2%** |
| **Dumfries and Galloway** | **2%** |
| **Falkirk** | **2%** |
| **East Renfrewshire** | **2%** |
| **Stirling** | **2%** |
| **East Dunbartonshire** | **2%** |
| **Argyll & Bute** | **2%** |
| **Angus** | **2%** |
| **West Dunbartonshire** | **1%** |
| **Clackmannanshire** | **1%** |
| **Aberdeenshire** | **1%** |
| **East Lothian** | **1%** |
| **Inverclyde** | **1%** |
| **Highland** | **1%** |
| **Moray** | **0.2%** |
| **Orkney Islands** | **0.1%** |
| **Shetland Islands** | **0.06%** |
| **Western Isles** | **0.03%** |

Source: SDP Profile Report

#### SDP Direct Training Events

#### **Figure A.1: SDP Direct Training Events - April 2014 to September 2015**

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

Looking at the period when the SDP host transferred to South Lanarkshire Council (i.e. July 2014), the number of direct training events held increased from seven events between July and September 2014 to a high of 21 events between April and June 2015.

Much of the SDP direct training events have been delivered in Glasgow, Fife and Forth Valley - these three areas represent two-thirds of the total number of direct training events held in Scotland (38 events, 67%).

Glasgow had the highest number of events - this reflects the fact that the city benefits from good transport links, and SMEs located in neighbouring local authorities are willing to travel to Glasgow city centre to access training and events. For example, there were no events held in North Lanarkshire, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire. However, there is an agreement that Greater Glasgow & Clyde collectively plan the programme over the eight local authorities as one region.

The most common SDP direct training events held were a mix of levels:

1. Tender Portals Made Easy (Level 1);
2. Find It, Win It, Keep It (Level 2);
3. Is the Public Sector for You? (Level 1); and
4. Maximise Your Tender Score (Level 3).

Taken together, these four training events represent over half the total direct training events held to date (31 events, 54%).

#### Webinars

#### **Figure A.2: SDP Webinars - April 2014 to September 2015**

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 – September 2015)

#### **Table A.2: SDP Webinars - April 2014 to September 2015**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Nos. Events | Nos. SMEs |
| April - June 2014 | - | - |
| July - September 2014 | - | - |
| October - December 2014 | - | - |
| January - March 2015 | 3 | 16 |
| April - June 2015 | 5 | 48 |
| July - September 2015 | 10 | 221 |
| **Total** | **18** | **285** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

Key points include

* While there is representation from businesses across 26 Scottish local authorities, proportions vary greatly. This ranges from one business each in the Scottish Borders, East Dunbartonshire and Perth & Kinross (0.5%) to 42 businesses in Glasgow (19%);
* over three quarters of businesses that attended webinars are based within 10 local authorities in Scotland (166, 77%), as illustrated in **Figure 3.7 -** these are all in the Central Belt; and
* in the north of Scotland[[37]](#footnote-37), there were 28 businesses that attended webinars (13%)

**Table A.3** shows the breakdown of business registrations in the remaining 22 local authority areas.

Table A.3: All Other Webinar Attendees by Local Authority Area

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Midlothian** | **3%** |
| **North Ayrshire** | **3%** |
| **Clackmannanshire** | **2%** |
| **Dumfries and Galloway** | **2%** |
| **East Renfrewshire** | **2%** |
| **Fife** | **2%** |
| **North Lanarkshire** | **2%** |
| **Orkney Islands** | **2%** |
| **East Dunbartonshire** | **1%** |
| **East Lothian** | **1%** |
| **Inverclyde** | **1%** |
| **Perth & Kinross** | **1%** |
| **Scottish Borders** | **1%** |
| **South Ayrshire** | **1%** |
| **Stirling** | **1%** |
| **Angus** | **1%** |

Source: SDP Webinar Report (July – September 2015)

N=221

#### **Table A.4: Webinars**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SDP Webinar | Nos. of Webinars | Nos. of SMEs | Nos. of Attendees |
| Equality & Diversity Policy | 4 | 28 | 30 |
| Introduction to Working with Public Sector (Module 1) | 2 | 62 | 62 |
| Introduction to Working with Public Sector (Module 3) | 2 | 54 | 54 |
| Introduction to Working with Public Sector (Module 2) | 2 | 47 | 47 |
| Collaborate to Tender | 2 | 33 | 33 |
| Intellectual Property for Business | 2 | 25 | 25 |
| Quality Management & ISO 9001 | 2 | 19 | 20 |
| Quality and Tender | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Environmental Policy | 1 | 7 | 7 |
| **Total** | **18** | **285** | **288** |

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

#### Partner and External Organisations Events

#### **Figure A.3: Partner Events and Activities - April 2014 to September 2015**

Source: SDP Event Reports (April 2014 to September 2015)

Key points:

* while some local authority areas based in the Central Belt had no events[[38]](#footnote-38) - businesses located in these areas often access events taking place in neighbouring local authority areas (e.g. Glasgow and Ayrshire). As highlighted in the main report, this in part reflects the agreement that Greater Glasgow & Clyde collectively plan the programme across the eight local authorities; and
* no data was provided regarding events taking place in the North of Scotland - i.e. those organised by associate SDP member local authorities or other organisations. However, this is unlikely to mean that no other events took place.

1. Orkney Islands Council is in discussions with the SDP about becoming a member. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kynesis, *Supplier Development Programme: Options Review*. The review involved consultation with the SDP Board and with wider stakeholders, including SDP staff, Scottish Government, local authorities, and SDP clients. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. David Smart, Supplier Development Programme Transformation Project, Project Plan February - March 2014, 11th February 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Covering David Smart, Pauline Wallace (previous SDP Project Manager), Transformation Board, South Lanarkshire Council, and Digital Scotland Business Excellence Partnership. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. SDP Operational Plan 2014/15, August 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Orkney Islands Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The SDP team are based in South Lanarkshire Council offices - Montrose House, Hamilton. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Source: SDP spreadsheet Registration Profile. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Data is, however, available through the old system but would need to be matched up with data in the new system. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Defined here as an organisation that employs fewer than 250 people. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Webinars and partner events continued to run over the summer months. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Not including webinars. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Webinar attendees is typically reported as one per SME, albeit actual attendees might be higher. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Actual attendance is available for some events - however, the reports use estimated attendance. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The April-June 2015 report uses 15 SMEs per event. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. There have been no events held over the period in South Ayrshire and the Scottish Borders, and few in Dumfries & Galloway and Argyll and Bute (one each). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The new SDP website went live in June 2015, therefore not all data is available. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The April-June 2015 repot uses 15 SMEs per event. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Actual expenditure in Table 4.2 plus Table 4.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See Budget in Table 4.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Prior to July 2015 this data was collated and analysed by the trainers and local authority representatives. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/357756/0120893.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/981/0114237.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00421478.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. [www.gov.scot/resource/0043/00438045.pdf](file:///\\EKOSSBS3\Company%20Shared%20Folder\files\2015\Live%20Jobs\SFC%20-%20KTP%20Evaluation\Reporting\www.gov.scot\resource\0043\00438045.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Business Gateway, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scotland IS, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00464455.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/12/pdfs/asp_20140012_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/03/5984> [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00484439.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00489123.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/256155/0076031.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Note that not all local authorities were members at this time. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The SDP team have been using a new system since July 2015 - data prior to this is available and data since July is currently being analysed. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. This includes some private sector and third sector businesses located in Orkney Islands and Shetlands Islands - the two local authorities were not SDP members at this time (Shetlands Islands now is). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Encompassing Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Highland, Moray, Western Isles, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. There were three local authorities in the north of Scotland with businesses that attended webinars: Aberdeen City, Highland, and Orkney Islands. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Including Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, and East Dunbartonshire. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)