



Moray Council Supplier Development Programme Launch Feedback Report

Horizon Scotland - 3 October 2019

#BestValueForMoray
#PowerOfProcurement
#HelpingYouBidBetter



Background

Moray Council officially launched the Supplier Development Programme in Forres on 3 October 2019. To seek suppliers' views on how they wish to be supported by Moray Council Procurement, as well as by the Supplier Development Programme, two surveys were conducted: one prior to the launch, and one on the day as a "Snap Poll."

Procurement Survey

The purpose of the survey was to gather views to develop a Moray SDP programme that is relevant, and will support businesses entering into public sector tendering, where in Scotland, there is a cumulative annual spend of £11bn.

The initial survey was open from 17 September until 7 October 2019. The survey was circulated through direct email to all suppliers that registered to attend the launch by the Supplier Development Programme on three occasions during this period. Additionally, Moray Council circulated the link to the online survey through various channels, and SDP promoted it through its social media channels on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Demographics

Overall, 76 respondents completed the questionnaire. Of the 76 respondents, 44 stated that their business is based in Moray, which made up 58% of the total. Following this, 10 suppliers (13%) were based in Highland, seven suppliers (9%) were based in Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire, six suppliers (8%) were based in Glasgow, three suppliers (4%) were based in Perth and Kinross, two suppliers (3%) were based in City of Edinburgh, and the remaining respondents were based in Dundee City, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, and Other Location (one apiece, 1% each) and one respondent from Angus that did not complete the survey.

The most respondents (64%) were sole traders, or from micro or small businesses. Of these 48 suppliers, 11 were sole traders (15%), 18 suppliers (24%) were from micro businesses (2-9 employees) and 19 suppliers (25%) were from small businesses (10-49 employees). A third of respondents were from medium-sized businesses (50-249 employees) with 25 suppliers (33%) and three respondents (4%) were from larger businesses (250+ employees).

Four respondents (5% of the total) stated that they were a Charity or Supported Business.



Public Sector Tendering Background

When asked if the business is registered on www.sdpscotland.co.uk, a majority of 60 suppliers (79%) responded yes, and 16 suppliers (21%) responded no. When asked if the business is registered on www.publiccontractsscotland.co.uk, a fraction more responded affirmatively as 62 suppliers (82%) responded yes, and 14 suppliers (18%) responded no.

When asked if they had tendered for a public sector opportunity before, 51 suppliers (67%) responded yes. For 38 of these suppliers (75% of the 51), the experience was either positive or very positive. Thirteen suppliers (26%) had a negative or very negative experience.

Of the 25 suppliers (33%) who had never tendered for a public sector opportunity before, eight responded that they had a new start business. Six suppliers responded that they were unaware of the system, or didn't know how to tender. Other responses as to why they had not tendered before included:

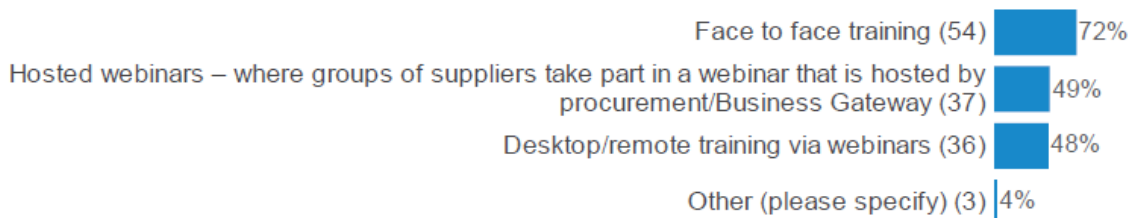
- “The opportunity has never arisen.”
- “Not seen any suitable.”
- “We have had the business for four years and my daughter has just gone to Primary 1, so I know have more free time to concentrate on my business and tendered opportunities.”
- “Haven't really considered it until now.”
- “I have only recently come into post and have not yet had the opportunity to be part of the tender process.”
- “No reason really, just not considered it before.”
- “Senior management undertake this process.”



Future Preferences

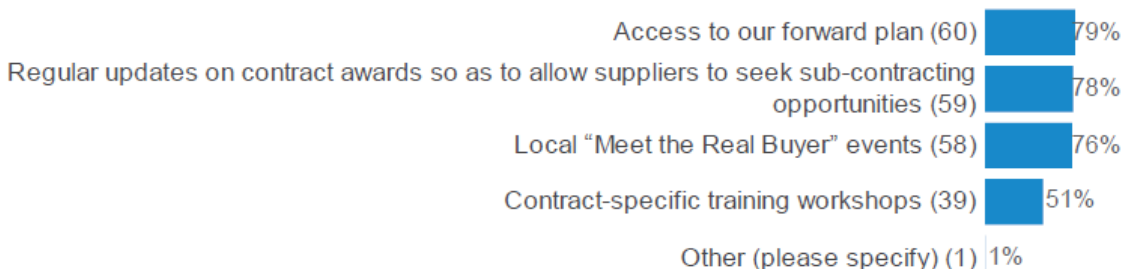
To develop a Moray SDP programme that is relevant, and will support either your business entering into public sector tendering, where in Scotland there is a cumulative annual spend of £11bn, 54 respondents (72%) showed a preference for face-to-face training. This was followed by 37 respondents (49%) with a preference for hosted webinars, 36 respondents (48%) with a preference for traditional remote webinars, and three other responses (4%) of other, but were unspecified.

In this respect, please tell us: what do you want from Supplier Development Programme? (select all that apply)



To develop a Moray SDP programme that is relevant, and will support either their business entering into public sector tendering, where in Scotland there is a cumulative annual spend of £11bn, 60 respondents (79%) showed a preference for access to the Moray Council Forward Plan. This was closely followed by 59 respondents (78%) who said that they wish to receive regular updates on contract awards so as to allow suppliers to seek sub-contracting opportunities. A high majority of 58 respondents (76%) want to engage with local “Meet the Real Buyer” events in the local authority, and more than half (51%) with 39 respondents said they want contract-specific training workshops in the future.

Please tell us: what do you want from Moray Council? (select all that apply)



All 76 respondents (100%) agreed that email is the best method of communication for their business.



Other Comments

“Information is very good and I thank you for that, most of the problems are probably down to ourselves, but we are getting better.”

“Buyer engagement with suppliers is required prior to live tending. Suppliers need advance warning of opportunities. More PIN Notices would both allow the buyer to test the market and it gives the supplier a much better prospect of offering a proposal to the buyer.”

“As a small business working in engineering consultancy, we find it problematic in establishing ourselves as alternatives to providing environmental and geotechnical consultancy services that are often being provided by the larger consultancies, notwithstanding a commitment to use SMEs as far as reasonably practicable. I am hoping that this chance to meet with Moray Council (and others) will give us a chance to put a face to the name when it comes to tender responses. We want to tailor our service offering to best suit the needs of the client, we can't do this when we are not getting beyond initial tendering stages.”

“As a sole trader, I'm looking to move the business forward and expand the workforce and try and open up new opportunities for business.”

“No real comments just pleased that Moray Council are pro-active with this venture. Thank you.”

“Working from your forward planning more supplier engagement prior to tenders being advertised.”

“More use of PIN notices in advance of tenders being advertised.”

“As a specialist company with niche skills I believe we can offer real value and quality for council jobs, however, as a micro business, we struggle to jump through all the bureaucratic hoops required to win contracts or are not able to undertake all aspects of a project and therefore get excluded from the opportunity.”

“We would welcome any opportunities to engage with The Moray Council in terms of supply chain engagement to foster a "working together" culture that identifies opportunities to improve the service to end users and other challenges and overcomes them through collaborative working.”

“We have built good working relationships with [name redacted] and [name redacted] which has helped with the smooth delivery of the service to new and existing service users.”



“Snap Poll” Survey

The “Snap Poll” was conducted during the official launch of SDP on 3 October 2019, after they had participated in presentations by Moray Council Procurement and the Supplier Development Programme. The purpose of the survey was to gather views of the suppliers that attended the official launch on the demand for future training within the SDP training guide. In total, 42 attendees at the launch returned a “Snap Poll” on the day. Respondents were encouraged to pick as many options as they wished. No demographic information was collected.

SDP Training Workshop	Respondents	Percentage
2.3 - Improving Your Bid Score	32	76%
2.1 - Tender Procedures and the ESPD	32	76%
3.1 - Seeking Feedback and Improving Your Bid	29	69%
Webinar: Quick Quotes Made Easy	27	64%
2.2 - Finding and Understanding Framework Agreements	25	60%
2.4 - Understanding Community Benefits and Sustainability	23	55%
Webinar: Helping You Bid Better; Examine the ESPD Question by Question	21	50%
1.1 Introduction to Tendering 3.2 - The Supplier's Role in Contract Relationship Management	20	48%
1.2 Using Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) and Other Portals	19	45%
0.1 – Introduction to Working with the Public Sector	13	31%
Webinar: Quality Management System - ISO9001 Policy Workshop	12	29%
3.3 - Expanding Your Procurement Marketplace	12	29%
Webinar: Health and Safety	7	17%

Other Comments

“Despite having been successful in winning a contract for Moray Council, as a “Micro” Business, I find using the PCS daunting.”

“Do you run similar training for Buyers? My experience of PCS is that Buyers are often less than professional in their approach e.g. lack of information about the opportunity in the abstract, or failure to meet their own timing targets for response to tenders (almost all of the tenders I have submitted have been late in announcing the decision).”



“You mentioned local content for tender meaning of local.”

“Tendered for over 10 years. Grown our business through PCS/PCS-T.”

“For me, the focus must be on how, as a micro business, we can deliver in our area of a much larger contract. We are specialists, very rarely does a contract come up that we can fulfil in full, but often we could provide our element of a larger contract better and cheaper than a general contractor would deliver.”

“Sector Specific Guidance relating to submitting bids for the provision of Healthcare Services - complex and bespoke care packages. [Personal contact information redacted]”

“How to pull resources with other companies to improve bids. Third sector organisations and working with them.”

“Reminder of contracts coming up for tender if application has been submitted before.”

“It would be useful to see "Meet the Real Buyer" events to understand what people are looking for. Also looking at how a tender is "marked" within TMC. Is this Department specific?”

Next Steps

Next steps include scheduling training events for SMEs and supported businesses based in Moray Council, which are based upon this quantitative and qualitative data.

More Information

For further information on the Supplier Development Programme, visit www.sdpscotland.co.uk or email info@sdpscotland.co.uk.