

Scots communities boosted by windfall for good causes

Social housing leaders delivering much-needed homes across Scotland have been bolstered by a £300,000 windfall from Scotland's leading not-for-profit procurement organisation.

Delighted staff at public bodies including housing associations, co-operatives and councils have welcomed the rebates, with many investing the cash into a host of causes, charity foundations and community projects.

The rebates have come via the Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA), which offers 120 public sector partners an efficient and compliant route to market for the construction, refurbishment, retrofitting and maintenance of social housing and public buildings.

As a proud not-for-profit organisation, SPA gives its partners the opportunity to share in surplus funds based on use of its frameworks and on projects procured throughout the last financial year. SPA encourages its partners to invest the money back into worthwhile community projects.

In 2023, 40 SPA partners have received a share of the £303,442 rebate pot, with payouts ranging from a few thousand pounds up to £65,000

Lesley Anderson, Regional Director for SPA, said: "Few thing feels as rewarding as helping and supporting our partners to

make a positive difference in the lives of real people across Scotland.

“This money is helping those who are feeling the pinch, struggling to make ends meet, worried about looking after their kids, finding work or coping with ill-health or disability. We’re incredibly proud that the day-to-day work of SPA helps us to make a positive impact.

“Since our rebate programme was launched seven years ago, we have delivered a total of £3.7 million in payments. We are committed to helping and supporting our partners to make a positive difference in the communities where they are working.”

This year the money is being invested in a diverse and meaningful way. Some of SPA’s partners provide the funds to charitable foundations supporting disadvantaged people or providing children with access to sport camps.

Lesley added: “We’ve also seen money used to help schools provide educational events, trips and learning materials they otherwise would not be able to afford. Elsewhere the funds have supported the creation of playparks and community gardens.”

As Scotland’s largest free-to-join procurement organisation, SPA ensures housing associations, councils, blue light services, the NHS and a host of other public sector organisations/bodies procure the services they need while

achieving best value for money and being fully compliant.

It has more than 600 live projects worth £1.1 billion. It also delivers value to the 300 hundred suppliers who provide works and services to its partners, who enjoy access to a host of free, added value services, including specialist technical, procurement and social value advisory support.

SPA's rebate programme is accessible to all its partners, offering a chance to acquire surpluses derived from the procurement of projects on many SPA frameworks and the efficiencies delivered by its dynamic purchasing system (DPS). Rebates kick in once a total project value threshold is reached.

With the combination of swingeing cuts in the public purse and the cost of living crisis, the rebates are particularly welcome. Public bodies are also wrestling with soaring supply costs, wage inflation and increased borrowing charges.

That leaves little room to support community projects and initiatives. Elsewhere, local authorities are axing popular services like swimming pools, libraries and children's services.

Lesley added: "We actively encourage partners to reinvest allocated funds back into communities, this is especially important at a time when public sector bodies are feeling the squeeze.

"We've seen some incredible projects being supported and it's brilliant to see the positive impact of the rebate scheme. Whether that is families benefitting from improved facilities or services, we are helping to make better places to live.

"In real terms that means people are engaging more in their local area, building support networks, starting new friendships, enjoying a greater sense of safety and feeling valued. All of this helps encourage a greater feeling of

ownership and pride in communities, improving everyday life.”

SPA’s commitment to fostering community well-being is exemplified not only through its rebate program but also via its Community Benefit Fund (CBF) initiated in 2017.

Since its inception, the SPA Community Benefit Fund, established in 2017, has channelled £1.6 million into 91 distinct projects, encompassing groundbreaking initiatives like community gardens, digital inclusion programs, mental health support, food banks, and more – delivering £3.9 million in social value.

<https://www.scottishprocurement.scot/>

