

Scottish communities to be celebrated at AGM

Seven years of community funding success at the heart of event

Invaluable insights into one of Scotland's most successful community benefits programmes are being offered to public sector bodies, which are being urged to sign up to attend.

The event will provide insight into the impressive successes delivered through the Scottish Procurement Alliance's Community Benefit Fund (CBF), which has delivered £910,000 worth of funding in seven years with an additional £1.1m in match funding.

Lesley Anderson, Regional Director for SPA, Scotland's largest free-to-join procurement organisation said: "This is a unique opportunity for public sector organisations to gain deep insights into the transformative impact of community benefits across Scotland and the importance of investing in communities."

Joining SPA at the September 24 event in Livingston, West Lothian, will be experts from LHC, [Scottish Community Development Centre](#) (SCDC), [South Ayrshire Council](#), [Hawthorn Housing Cooperative](#) and [South Lanarkshire Council](#).

Lesley Anderson, added: "Those who attend will hear directly from industry experts and public sector organisations who have successfully implemented community-led projects. That will provide invaluable lessons on best practices and innovation while offering insight into the mechanisms and processes that have led to success.

“We’ve got a fantastic range of workshops and presentations from those at the forefront of community development all geared towards offering a clearer understanding of community benefits.

“One of those is SCDC, who are experts in community engagement and actively works with our partners, hosting workshops, training sessions, and offering vital consultancy services as well as playing a crucial role in informing government policy on community development.

“This is going to be a fantastic celebration of achievements and will provide brilliant insight into why community benefits are vital as well as showcasing the impacts of magnitude they can have.”

The sessions will form part of the SPA AGM and will reflect on the achievements of its Community Benefit Fund over the past seven years but also provide a holistic view of the journey from implementing community benefits to now.

Since 2017, the CBF has played a significant role in community support, providing over £2 million in grants and match funding to 102 community groups and charities. These efforts have positively impacted the lives of at least 27,931 people, generating over £5.1 million in social value.

A variety of organisations will share insights into their projects and explore how they’ve achieved success alongside their future ambitions. Attendees will also hear from SCDC who will lead a workshop on community-led impact research and participatory budgeting.

David Allan, Deputy Director from SCDC said: “SCDC are delighted to see the work that SPA are doing around community benefits.

“It is vitally important for public sector organisations to understand the real needs and issues within communities and to

be able to engage with local residents about how these needs should be addressed and how money should be allocated.

“Community-led action research and participatory budgeting are becoming much more widely used and can be extremely valuable in helping this to happen.”

SPA is part of the LHC Procurement Group, which has been supporting public sector organisations with technical procurement for close to 60 years.

The AGM will highlight key initiatives in product development and community impact. Shona Snow, Director of Product Innovation at LHC, will discuss the role of product innovation and future project opportunities.

George Stevens, LHC’s Director of Communities, will introduce the transition from the Rebate Programme to the Community Benefit Fund and outline LHC’s Social Value Strategy to enhance the impact of its work.

1st Step Development Ventures will showcase successful community-led projects, while representatives from South Ayrshire Council, Hawthorn Housing Cooperative, and South Lanarkshire Council will share stories of tackling local issues with LHC support.

Attendees will also receive updates on SPA’s performance for 2023/24, upcoming initiatives, and a preview of the organisation’s strategic direction.

SPA works with over 134 public sector organisations, offering effective frameworks for the procurement of goods and services for the construction, refurbishment, and maintenance of social housing and public buildings.

SPA is currently managing 626 active projects valued at £1.1 billion, while also benefiting more than 260 suppliers delivering works and services to public sector partners.

Additionally, partners can access a range of free, value-added services, including expert technical, procurement, and social value advisory support.

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