



Ayrshire Meet the Buyer Outcomes

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East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council, in partnership with the Supplier Development Programme, hosted a pan-Ayrshire 'Meet the Buyer' event online on Wednesday, 28 April 2021. The theme of the event was "Community Wealth Building."

Ayrshire businesses were able to meet procurement teams from the three Ayrshire councils, alongside other public and private sector buying organisations. Suppliers had the opportunity to virtually visit exhibition stands, download information, flyers and leaflets, and more while they waited in a queue to speak directly on a one-to-one basis with buyers via in-built video conferencing.

The [agenda](#) ran from 9:30am to 2:30pm. The day started with an opening message from the Chief Executives of all three councils, which set the scene and gave suppliers an overview of how procurement is integral to economic development, as well as current and upcoming projects like the Ayrshire Growth Deal. The formal agenda also included a presentation on how to be invited to Quick Quotes with all three Ayrshire Council procurement staff, where suppliers were able to ask questions in a live question and answer session. Energy giant Vattenfall UK also joined Scottish primary contracting civil engineering firm RJ McLeod to talk about opportunities related to the renewables project at South Kyle Wind Farm.

Outcomes

The Supplier Development Programme collated some statistics from the virtual event, including:

- Prior to the event, there were **659** supplier attendee bookings on the SDP website.
- On the day of the Ayrshire Meet the Buyer virtual event, in total, there were **391 participants** made up of **317 supplier attendees** and 74 exhibitors/speakers/public sector colleagues.
- Of these, **199 attendees** were from **179 unique Scottish SMEs/supported businesses**.
- Included within this number, there were **22 unique businesses based in East Ayrshire, 29 unique businesses in North Ayrshire, 23 unique businesses in South Ayrshire**

Supplier Engagement

There was a high level of engagement during the Ayrshire Meet the Buyer event, both with the main agenda and within the Exhibit Hall. Outcomes included:

- 209 attendees at Welcome to Ayrshire Meet the Buyer - 'Community Wealth Building' with the three CEOs and followed by a Live Q&A with Procurement Staff of EAC, NAC and SAC
- 156 attendees at Pan-Ayrshire Quick Quotes Presentation with a Live Question and Answer Session with EAC, NAC and SAC
- 96 attendees at Supply Chain Opportunities for Supported Businesses and Local SMEs at the South Kyle Wind Farm
- 102 attendees at Top Tips for Tendering with the Supplier Development Programme
- 2,433 visits to exhibitions, 4,669 brochure downloads, 749 networking connections made in the Meeting Hub
- **6,179 exhibition live meetings and 1,338 exhibition live chats**
- 5,993 visits to the virtual exhibition area (full list of exhibitors) and 17,611 individual visits to exhibitions

On the Day Polls

The Supplier Development Programme also conducted online polls during the Ayrshire Meet the Buyer event. Attendees were very positive about the main agenda:

- 92% said the Welcome to Ayrshire Meet the Buyer - 'Community Wealth Building' Session encouraged them to bid for more public sector contracts (46 questions/comments received)
- 100% said the Pan-Ayrshire Quick Quotes Presentation with a Live Question and Answer Session with EAC, NAC and SAC encouraged them to bid for more public sector contracts (34 questions/comments received)
- 100% said the Top Tips for Tendering with the Supplier Development Programme Session encouraged them to bid for more public sector contracts (8 questions/comments received)
- 100% said the Supply Chain Opportunities for Supported Businesses and Local SMEs at the South Kyle Wind Farm session with Vattenfall UK and RJ McLeod encouraged them to consider if there are other sectors, like renewable energy, civil engineering and construction, where their business could similarly be part of the supply chain to primary contractors, and 100% said the session made them more likely to consider working with RJ McLeod.

Supplier Survey Results

The Supplier Development Programme also conducted an online survey after the event concluded, and there were 70 responses. After attending the Ayrshire Virtual Meet the Buyer Event in partnership with the Supplier Development Programme:

- 91% of suppliers said they were more likely to bid for public sector contracts as a direct result of participating in the event.
- 96% agreed that the virtual Ayrshire Meet the Buyer event, delivered in partnership with the Supplier Development Programme, demonstrated that public sector procurement is open and transparent, despite challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A little over half - 55% - would prefer the format of procurement and business support events like Meet the Buyer to continue as virtual events in the future, while 45% would like Meet the Buyer to return as in-person events.

Some supplier comments included:

- "A very well-run event, the online facilities were superb - the best I've seen by a long way. Well done to the team, this is such a refreshing approach and should be the blueprint for other local authorities to adopt."
- "The event was really useful and a great opportunity for buyers to tell us how they want to engage on projects and opportunities. I hope to see more focused events like this in the future."
- "Ayrshire Meet the Buyer helped clarify the processes and procedures involved, and enabled me to know who will be overseeing a specific tender and timeframes."
- "Having the process explained on how to get our company profile noticed by buyers has made us more confident in bidding for contracts."
- "The event made the process of bidding on smaller projects more accessible. We haven't yet investigated this process, but now knowing it is available may encourage us to look at these more often as the platform was always deemed to be larger contracts."
- "I feel more confident that small businesses like mine will be given equal footing to larger organisations."
- "Didn't know what to expect but I was pleasantly surprised. Well organised and very excited with the view to develop our community."

- "I found the event most informative, and I actually preferred the virtual option to previous live events I have attended. Before COVID, if there were large queues at an exhibition stand, I would normally walk by but while at the Ayrshire Meet the Buyer event, I was able to complete other tasks while in the waiting room. The documentation in the download sections in most instances was helpful and being in electronic format I was able to share it with my colleagues."

Contact

More information on the Supplier Development Programme can be found at www.sdpscotland.co.uk and on social media via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).