



The City of Edinburgh Council Meet the “Real” Buyer

<https://www.sdpscotland.co.uk/events-edinburgh-mtrb/>

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Jennifer Payne, SDP Development Officer – Events and Marketing

Jenifer.payne@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

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Overview

On 25 October 2022, an in-person event entitled, “The City of Edinburgh Council Meet the “Real” Buyer” took place at the Waverly Court in Edinburgh. The event ran from 9.30am to 2.00pm and provided an exhibition space with tabletop stands for businesses and social enterprises to discuss with exhibitors and network.

The City of Edinburgh Council in partnership with the Supplier Development Programme hosted this in-person event to help local SMEs, supported businesses, third sector organisations and social enterprises of all sizes engage with the Council and hear about upcoming opportunities and where to find them.

Supplier Registration and Attendance

The City of Edinburgh were keen to ensure that the event was not oversubscribed and capped the initial bookings. In total, 291 pre-registered interest on the SDP website with 6 on a waiting list. There were 131 actual attendees on the day. Of those, 95 were from Scottish SMEs/Supported Businesses, and 82 were unique Scottish SME businesses. Of those, 30 were based in Edinburgh.

Buyer Exhibitions

This event focused on connecting suppliers with the decision makers and category managers within Edinburgh Council. In total there were 17 exhibitions, and of those, 14 were based in The City of Edinburgh Council and represented the following areas:

- Fleet/Roads
- Transport
- Facilities
- Construction
- Housing
- Family Support
- Health and Social Work
- Education and Children's Services

The additional three stands included the Supplier Development Programme, Business Gateway Edinburgh, and Edinburgh City Region Deal.

The City of Edinburgh Council Meet the “Real” Buyer event was opened by Lynette Robertson, The City of Edinburgh Council’s Commercial and Procurement Delivery Manager. In the pre-planning meetings, it was decided that no formal agenda was required to allow for ample time for suppliers to talk 1-to-1 with buyers.



Supplier Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all registered suppliers for The City of Edinburgh Council Meet the “Real” Buyer event. Of those who responded to the survey 88% participated in the event and 13% did not attend.

The post-event survey highlighted that 71% of Scottish SMEs said they were more likely to bid for public contracts after participating in the event.

When suppliers were asked if they think they would have engaged with supply chain opportunities without The City of Edinburgh Council Meet the “Real” Buyer event, 57% said no and 43% said yes.

86% of respondents thought area-specific events definitely support business and public sector procurement in the local area they are based in.

As this was the first City of Edinburgh Council Meet the “Real” Buyer event in two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council wanted to know, if after attending the event, have suppliers identified any significant barriers as a business in bidding for public contracts. 71% said yes and 29% said no.

When asked to elaborate on these barriers some comments from suppliers included:

- “The amount of compliance and associated paperwork required of a small company at the outset.”
- “Getting on the radar of the buyers.”
- “Being able to let contacts within the City of Edinburgh Council know about the range of training we offer.”
- “As a new homecare agency in the City of Edinburgh, we have found it very difficult to get help in getting clients in Edinburgh. We have been told the Council doesn’t admit new companies to the Providers list, so it has been difficult for us as a new company.”



29% of respondents said they have had successful bids for public contracts after participating in previous Meet the Buyer events, whereas 71% said they hadn’t.

50% of respondents thought The City of Edinburgh Council Meet the “Real” Buyer event demonstrated that public sector procurement is open and transparent, despite challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When asked what other public sector buyers’ suppliers would like to see exhibiting at next year’s City of Edinburgh Meet the “Real” Buyer event, one respondent said, “More buyers from outside the Council.” Another said, “I would like to see City Bridge Engineers represented, along with the Housing Stock Building Surveyors.

Promotion through the Supplier Development Programme

Social Media Analytics

The Supplier Development Programme has a robust social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which is utilised to promote contract opportunities and engagement events on a regular basis to Scottish businesses. In advance of the Edinburgh Meet the “Real” Buyer event, SDP promoted the event across its social media channels. The promotion ran from 6 to 25 October and collectively the posts earned 2,353 impressions (the number of times users saw a post) and 180 engagements (the total number of times a user interacted with a post).



Newsletter/Mailings

On 21 September, SDP included a “save the date” for the Edinburgh Meet the “Real” Buyer event in its monthly mailing which received 88 clicks. The event was again featured twice in the programme’s October mailing, which collectively received 145 clicks.

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](#).