Meet the Buyer South 2026

7 October 2026 – Corn Exchange, Haddington

www.sdpscotland.co.uk

Noemi Finetti, Events and Marketing Graduate
noemi.finetti@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer South 2026

524
People pre-registered for the event

228
Attended on the day

110
Unique Scottish SME businesses attended

17
Exhibitors in attendance on the day

Including East Lothian Council, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Government, Government Commercial Agency, hub Southeast Scotland, McTaggart Construction, Midlothian Council, NHS Lothian, Scotland Excel, Scottish Borders Housing Association and more!

96%
of respondents **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

94%
of respondents **plans to pursue opportunities** with organisations they met at the event

89%
of respondents said the event helped them **make useful connections** that could benefit their business



Suppliers said:
"Meet the Buyer South was an invaluable market discovery event. I loved having the opportunity to engage directly with procurement teams from Scotland Excel, NHS Lothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders Councils."

Overview

The Supplier Development Programme has published a report on Meet the Buyer South, run in partnership with East Lothian Council and Scottish Borders Council. The event was held at the Corn Exchange, Haddington, on Wednesday 7 October 2026.

This free event gave suppliers in the Southeast of Scotland access to buyers and decision makers from across the public and private sector, helping suppliers raise their profile as a business, and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities.

Supplier Registration and Attendance

In total, 524 suppliers had pre-registered interest on the SDP website prior to Meet the Buyer South. There were 228 actual attendees on the day. 140 of those attendees represented 110 Scottish SME unique businesses. 37 (34%) of those SMEs in attendance were based in the Southeast of Scotland, with 29 (26%) from East Lothian and 8 (7%) from the Scottish Borders.



Buyer Exhibitions

The 17 exhibitors at the event included headline partners: East Lothian Council, Scottish Borders Council and SDP, as well as Scottish Government, Forestry and Land Scotland, Government Commercial Agency, Henry Brothers, hub Southeast Scotland, McTaggart Construction, Midlothian Council, NHS Lothian, Ogilvie Construction, PfH Scotland, Scotland Excel, Scottish Borders Housing Association, Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA) and Transport Scotland.

Attendee Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all that attended Meet the Buyer South. The survey was conducted over the month of October 2026. 47 responses were received and 37 (79%) of these came from SME employees.

The survey highlighted

- 96% of respondents rated the event as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.
- 94% of respondents said they are planning to actively pursue opportunities with one or more of the organisations met on the day.
- 89% of respondents said the event has helped them network and make useful connections that could benefit their business.
- 81% of respondents reported that the event has encouraged them to consider bidding for more public sector opportunities.
- 77% of respondents said the event increased their awareness of opportunities in the private sector supply chain.
- 64% of survey respondents reported feeling more confident about bidding for public sector contracts after attending the event.

Some comments from suppliers included:

- *“It was a really useful event. I had some good conversations and made contacts with companies looking for our services. It was good to meet people face to face and discuss how we could help.”*
- *“I enjoyed being able to speak with potential clients and getting access to information on how to work with them.”*
- *“On the day, I spoke to some good contacts and went away with a better understanding of business requirements in procurement.”*
- *“I attended the event to allow me to engage with the procurement team at Scottish Borders Council about a future tender opportunity and I was able to achieve my desired outcome. The event was well attended by relevant exhibitors, and it provided excellent opportunities for introductions and discussion.”*
- *“Meet the Buyer South was an invaluable market discovery event. I loved the opportunity to engage directly with procurement teams from Scotland Excel, NHS Lothian, and local councils like East Lothian and Scottish Borders.”*



Exhibitor Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all Meet the Buyer South exhibitors. The survey was live from 7 October to 6 November 2026. 4 responses were received.

The survey highlighted

- 100% of respondents felt the event provided them with an opportunity to engage with new suppliers.
- 100% of exhibitors' responses reported the event helped them make their supply chain more open and transparent.
- 100% of respondents said the event helped make public contracts more accessible to SMEs.
- 100% of respondents said they would participate in future Meet the Buyer events.

Some comments from exhibitors included:

- *"It was an extremely busy day for us, and we were pleased that several contacts were made for requirements for which we find it difficult to find contractors."*
- *"I had a really positive experience at Meet the Buyer South 2026. It was a great opportunity to meet suppliers face-to-face, have useful conversations and provide more information about upcoming procurement opportunities."*
- *"The event was well organised, and I found it very worthwhile attending."*

Post Event

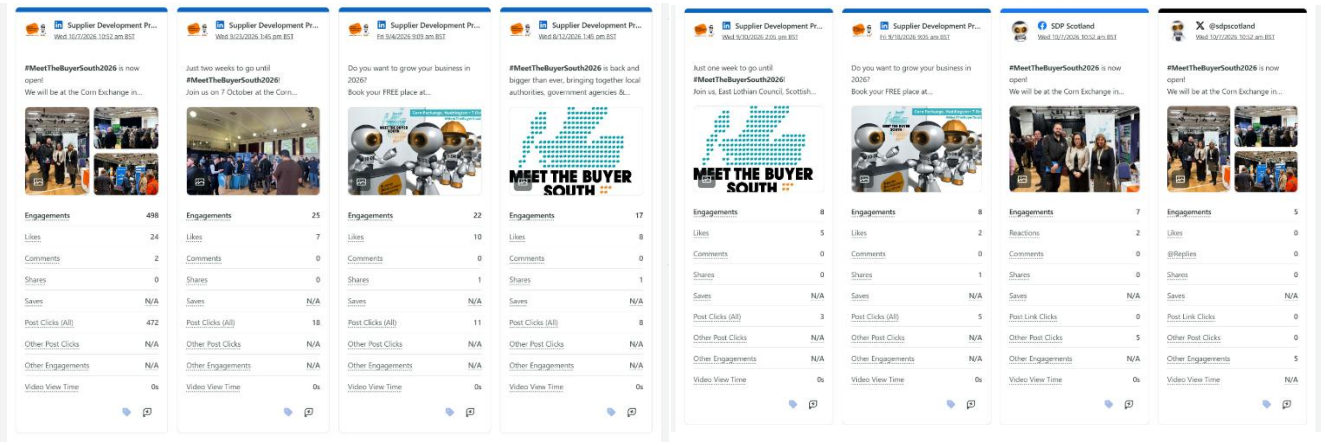
Delegate feedback was reviewed and individual questions addressed. SDP will consider all comments when planning its future events.



Promotion through the Supplier Development Programme

Social Media

Prior to the event, from August to October 2026, SDP published 18 posts, across Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (X), promoting Meet the Buyer South. Collectively, the posts earned 3,274 impressions (the number of times users saw a post) and 607 engagements (the number of times users interacted with posts). In total, there were 517 clicks on the links embedded in these posts.



Newsletters/Mailings

Meet the Buyer South 2026 was promoted in SDP's August and September newsletters.

- June 2026 Newsletter received 164 clicks to the MTB South event page
- July 2026 Newsletter received 86 clicks to the MTB South event page
- August 2026 Newsletter received 242 clicks to the MTB South event page
- September 2026 Newsletter received 602 clicks to the MTB South event page
- October 2026 Newsletter received 417 clicks to the MTB South event page

SDP also utilised a targeted approach to email marketing, sending out three solus emails about the event to suppliers based in the region and event attendees.

- 16 September 2026 solus email received 32 clicks to the MTB South event page
- 30 September 2026 solus email received 149 clicks to the MTB South event page
- 6 October 2026 solus email received 196 clicks to the MTB South event page

Contact

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