

Economic Outcomes Programme

Interim Review

Improvement Service

December 2013

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1. Introduction / Purpose of Review

The Economic Outcomes Programme (EOP) was established in July 2012 to embed within Councils the key messages set out within the [“Local Authorities’ Economic Development Improvement Guide”](#). The *Guide* had previously been developed by the Improvement Service in conjunction with SLAED and the Scottish Government and was published in October 2011.

The EOP is scheduled to run for two years. The total cost of the EOP is c.£180k for the two year period (c.£90k pa). The Improvement Service contributed approximately two-thirds of the total programme cost (£120k). The Scottish Government contributed the balance of one-third of the total programme cost (£60k).

As the EOP is circa two-thirds into its lifespan, this interim review has been carried out in order to:-

- assess the impact of the delivery to date;
- highlight what is working well / areas for improvement;
- assess likely demand and feasibility for extending the EOP beyond its initial two year period; and
- help determine priorities for the remainder of the Programme;

A summary of the review methodology, together with detailed feedback obtained from various stakeholders is set out within the appendices.

2.) Summary of Key Findings from the Interim Review

- The EOP has been well received, is seen to be ‘adding value’ and performing an important function by the vast majority of participating Councils and wider stakeholders.
- The Programme is contributing to building the capacity of Councils and partnerships in order to maximise the positive impact they have on the economy.
- The review has identified that the EOP is performing extremely well in terms of delivery and has already exceeded most of the Programme targets agreed jointly at the outset by the Improvement Service and Scottish Government.
- The nature of the Programme means it is primarily focused on embedding the key messages of the *Guide*. This is largely achieved via knowledge transfer, capacity building and other development activities¹.
- Accordingly, assessment of EOP impact is focused on activity and output measures, together with qualitative assessment of the Programme obtained from primary research conducted with the key target audience and a wider range of stakeholders. Due to the scale and nature of the Programme, an assessment of EOP additionality in relation to *Outcomes* is not appropriate at interim review stage².
- There is clear evidence from the various forms of stakeholder feedback that the EOP has delivered a wide range of useful activities and outputs. It is anticipated that these will, over time, result in improved economic outcomes. Many of these benefits would not have occurred at all had the EOP not existed; in other instances, EOP input has served to add value in the quality of deliverable.
- The Guide and EOP originated in discussions with SLAED. In terms of operation, the EOP has sought to develop a strong relationship with SLAED in order to ensure alignment in appropriate areas and to encourage a sustainable legacy from the EOP work.
- There is growing recognition within the public sector that maximising Economic Outcomes can also assist a much wider range of outcome areas beyond economic recovery, growth and employment. This means that the EOP is operating in an area that is pivotal to the

¹ (The EOP does not, for example, seek to directly deliver economic development interventions to businesses, to unemployed people, etc).

² The nature and scale of the EOP, time lags in impact and technical issues concerning data availability and attribution mean it is not methodologically feasible to assess EOP impact in terms of economic outcome indicators, such as changes in Employment Rate, GVA, etc. Nevertheless, the following illustration provides an outline of the broad ‘logic model’ in terms of how the EOP capacity building approach is designed to ultimately impact on outcomes. (e.g. EOP input helps a Council / Partnership develop a more robust Economic Strategy; That enhanced Strategy is expected to result in more effective interventions; Those interventions ought to have a greater impact on assisted businesses, individuals, etc; That, in turn, ought to flow through in terms of improved economic outcomes).

prevention agenda and likely to be instrumental in managing down longer-term demand for public services.

Support to Councils

- The EOP undertook initial engagement with all 32 Councils, which was aimed at setting out the role of the programme and support available, as well as assessing potential demand.
- The programme has delivered bespoke, 1-2-1 support to more than half of Scotland's Councils. The Programme provides practical support and challenge to Councils / partnerships. Examples of areas where EOP has operated are provided below with more detail in Appendix 2:
 - Development of Economic Profiles and Strategies;
 - Development of Action plans concerning implementation of economic development strategies;
 - Alignment of Economic Strategies, etc to wider SOA;
 - Appraisal, monitoring and evaluation; and
 - Reviewing and strengthening Partnership approaches.
- Much of the 1-2-1 support has involved drawing upon the various checklists and other support materials included within the *Improvement Guide*, and the facilitation of workshops, meetings and groups to develop these components of economic development.
- It is also worth noting that the Programme is pitched to support and improve delivery; but does not undertake the work itself on behalf of officers. In this sense, the intention is that knowledge and information within the assisted Council is being developed and improved.

National Interventions

- In addition to work with individual Councils, the EOP has also delivered a range of 'national interventions', which have benefited all 32 Councils and other partners. This has included:-
 - Developing the SLAED Indicators Framework and compiling a report on 2012/13 data covering all Local Authorities. As well as the benefits of providing an annual report on the cumulative impact of Council delivery of economic development, anecdotal feedback from Councils suggests additional benefits from this process as Councils will improve the approach they take in respect of data collection and performance management, including using the Indicators data to help drive improvements.
 - Delivering workshops across Scotland on *'Maximising Economic Impact; The Role of Elected Members'*. To date, 6 workshops have been delivered, attended by a total of c.90 Councillors. Feedback from participating Elected Members has been extremely positive.

- Contributing to the development and alignment of the Business Gateway Performance Management Framework, and coordinating with other business development support provided through national agencies (SE and HIE).
- Working with others to develop a number of workstreams / support areas relating to Economic and Employability issues arising from Welfare Reform.
- Acknowledging the 'space' the Programme is occupying, at the centre of Council delivery of economic development in local areas, contributing to a review of Economic Outcomes within SOAs for the Scottish Economic Partnership Group.
- Participation in a range of other ad hoc activities, including delivering presentations, developing case studies, other support activities, etc.

Areas for EOP Consideration

- Whilst the overall feedback from the vast majority of stakeholders has been highly positive, the review also identified a number of potential and additional areas for development in the EOP. These included:-
 - **EOP Profile**
There was seen to be a general need to raise the profile / visibility of the programme.
 - **Connections with other groups**
It is recognised that there are numerous national groups relating to economic development (e.g. SEPG, SEF, CoSLA DES Exec Group, etc.). It was suggested by a couple of stakeholders that the EOP could be more formally connected into some of these groups. It is also noted, however, that a key difference between those groups and the EOP is that the EOP is principally focused on the improvement agenda and on delivery of support aimed at embedding the key messages of the *Improvement Guide*. Care needs to be taken, therefore, to ensure that any linkages to other groups did not unduly impact on the EOP workplan to the extent that delivery may be compromised.
 - **EOP Board**
The EOP has an Advisory Board, comprising Scotland's key Economic Development organisations. It was stressed in the consultations that any additions to the EOP Board should only take place where the additional organisation / individual will genuinely add value to the core work.

The Board meets three times per annum and this was seen to be 'about right' for the majority of stakeholders.

There was a general consensus that the right organisations / individuals were represented on the Advisory Board, with a few exceptions. Agendas and meeting papers were generally seen to be timely, appropriate and well written, although there is an opportunity for some streamlining of a couple of standing item papers, and the adoption of a less formal approach to reporting. Meetings were seen to be well organised and well chaired. A key issue, however, from a number of stakeholders

was that more value ought to be squeezed from Board members. In particular, it is suggested that individual board members need to take a more pro-active role in terms of promoting connections, cascading information and seeking out opportunities for joint working between their organisations and the EOP / Councils.

○ **Focus of EOP activities**

Stakeholders generally would prefer the EOP to continue to develop so that a mix of 1-2-1 support and wider national interventions can be provided. The general preference, however, is for the bias to be towards devoting the bulk of EOP resources to national / regional level support and development. The majority of stakeholders felt that this is where the programme could add most value and achieve the greatest impact.

In addition, and in response to the approach to public service reform since the Christie Commission, the Programme could have a contribution to make in embedding a more strategic approach to economic development and maximising the corporate economic impact by CPP partners,

The review has suggested that the EOP should seek to increase the difference achieved by 'raising the bar' in terms of its work concerning maximising the corporate economic impact of individual Councils / CPPs. Whilst there was seen to be merit in continuing to offer economic development 'operational' support to Economic Development managers, a far greater impact could potentially be achieved by focusing on supporting CMT / CPP Board level interventions. This would also result in a more explicit link between the Programme, the Government Economic Strategy and the economic performance of local places. Significantly ramping up this aspect would likely require additional resources a different mix of input. It would also require stimulation of demand and generation of CMT / CPP Board time and commitment.

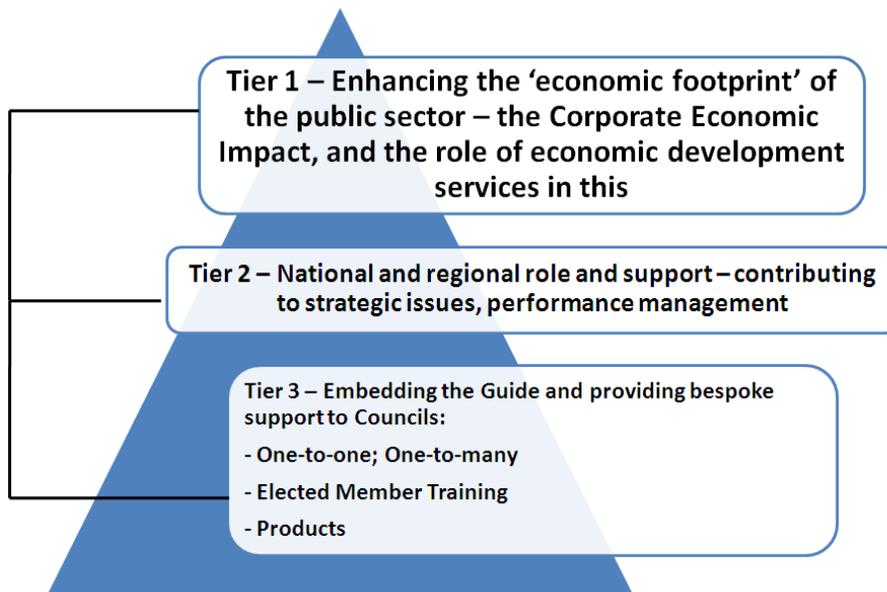
A number of stakeholders suggested additional areas that the EOP could potentially focus on. Examples of the types of more strategic activity suggested included:-

- Developing a workstream scoping how Councils and the wider public sector can explore how they can maximise economic benefits arising from the significant growth expected in the care market in the next decade.
- Developing a workstream on issues such as how Councils - collectively and with other partners - can clarify their role and maximise their impact on issues such as supporting inward investment.

Potential Demand for extension of initial two year EOP

- Stakeholders were asked their views on whether the EOP ought to consider an extension to its initial two year timescale.
- A key point made by many was that any extension needs to have absolute clarity and be purposeful and respond to specific need – either ongoing or residual demand; and new ‘market development’ in strategic areas that will develop as transformative change is delivered from public service reforms.
- Many of those surveyed made the point that the task of embedding the key messages of the *Guide* had only begun and could not hope to be fully accomplished in two years.
- In terms of funding any potential extension of the EOP, the consensus was that it ought to involve a combination of Council and Scottish Government funding, reflecting the fact that the issues the programme would focus on would be of interest and benefit to both levels of government and would be seen as a strong sign of commitment to more effective joint working in an area of shared interest.

In light of experience of delivering the Programme since July 2012, and based on the evidence of this interim review, the original components of delivery are still seen to be relevant. However, in addition, feedback suggests ‘three tiers’ of future support from the Programme, as illustrated below.



3.) Options and Next Steps

Discussion is required firstly on whether there is an appetite to consider / fund an extension of the EOP. This is primarily a function of the perceived importance of this area, fit with other provision and value add of the EOP.

Thereafter, discussion would be needed on the optimal mix of all or some of the above noted 'Tiers' of support. Within that, discussion would also be required on the broad areas of support that would be seen as likely priorities.

Options for the future delivery of the EOP are summarised in broad terms within this Review Report. If appropriate, a more detailed options appraisal can be worked up:

1. 'Reference Case' – which examines what would happen anyway in the absence of the Programme. In this case, 'doing nothing' would mean that there would be no additional funding from the current funders beyond the scheduled end to the Programme in July 2014. That would result in termination of delivery at that time.
2. Contract Delivery – under this option, the Programme is delivered as planned, but through a third party organisation. The implications of this option are that the momentum, knowledge and capacity that has already been achieved may be 'lost' as a new organisation assumes responsibility for delivery. The review feedback also indicates the importance of the relationship between the Programme team and Councils, and the trust and credibility there is as 'public service partners'.
3. Status Quo – under this option, the Programme would be delivered according to the current delivery model and in response to current and residual demand. The costs would remain the same (assumed), and while it would continue to deliver the target outputs/ outcomes from above, the scale and impact from these could be constrained.
4. Enhance Delivery – under this option, the Programme will deliver under the 'status quo' option but additional resource and investment would be directed at the 'Tier 1' work and the delivering of support to CPPs to maximise the Public Sector's economic impact. This would involve additional time and leadership to implement this, as well as additional cost.

Initial discussion is sought within the EOP Board on the broad options. If there is an appetite for activity beyond the 'do nothing option', a more detailed and costed options appraisal will be developed by the IS.

Appendix 1

EOP Review Methodology

The EOP Review was carried out in-house by IS analysts over a c.6 week period, commencing October 2013.

The review consisted of the following steps:-

A) Review of EOP administrative records

A review of EOP administrative records was carried out in order to quantify the range of activities and support delivered by the Programme.

This was assessed relative to the initial targets developed for the Programme by the Improvement Service and Scottish Government.

EOP webpage statistics were also gathered to assess traffic on the programme webpage.

Appendix 2 summarises key EOP performance data relative to the Programme's agreed targets.

B) Interviews with Councils

Telephone interviews were carried out with Councils that had been provided with 1-2-1 bespoke support through the EOP. Interviews were conducted by an IS analyst, using an interview topic guide. Interviews were generally conducted with a senior economic development manager from participating Councils. All Councils that received 1-2-1 support were invited to participate in this and interviews were achieved with ten Councils.

Feedback on the EOP from Councils has also been built into the SLAED membership survey, which the EOP is undertaking for SLAED. The main focus of that survey is on issues relating to the SLAED Development Plan. The questionnaire does, however, contain a series of questions relating to the EOP. This includes specific questions for Councils that have not yet taken up the offer of 1-2-1 support. In order to explore reasons, barriers, etc. The timing of the SLAED survey has been delayed for reasons outwith the control of the EOP, which means that the survey feedback will not be available in time for the initial drafting of this Review Report. However, the Review report can be revised if there are any significant points arising from the SLAED survey that might influence the future priorities of the EOP.

C) Analysis of Evaluation Feedback forms from Elected Member workshops

To date, a total of six sessions have been delivered for Elected Members across a range of areas of Scotland. A total of 86 Elected Members have participated in these sessions to date.

At the end of each session, participating Elected Members are asked to assess the session in terms of the quality of the facilitator, materials used, discussion, relevance to their work and likelihood of them using learning from the session to influence their future work / performance.

This includes asking Councillors to rank scores for the various areas and to provide qualitative feedback, including areas that could be strengthened.

Completed evaluation feedback forms from each session were collated and assessed as part of the review and the findings are set out in a separate appendix.

Appendix 2

EOP Delivery Relative to Programme Targets

In developing the EOP, the Improvement Service and the Scottish Government agreed a number of activity and output targets. It was agreed that that these targets may be amended, if appropriate and subject to agreement of both parties, in light of emerging EOP priorities.

The table below provides a summary of the deliverables from the EOP as specified in the contract agreement between the IS and Scottish Government. It also includes the latest position in relation to actual delivery against each target.

In overall term, the EOP has already met or exceeded the majority of its targets. Discussion both within the IS and with the Scottish Government indicates that the funding partners are very happy with EOP performance relative to targets.

Measure	Target	Actual to date
Councils/ Partnerships receiving in-depth support	6	17 (283%)
Delivery of Elected Member Sessions	3	6 (200%)
Publish Case Studies	5	2 (40%) (Three further case studies are currently at planning stage)
Delivery of National Workshops	2	3 (150%) (Input to various national conferences / workshops on Economic Development, BIDs, SLAED Conference)
Training & Development materials	1	3 (300%) Elected Member Training materials / presentations developed and delivered Project appraisal tool (multi criteria analysis) developed; Business engagement and economy proofing tools drafted
Establish a Peer Review Network	1	0 (0%) (Challenge currently provided by EOP Team and brokering expertise on support areas where appropriate).

EOP Webpage

Both general EOP information and a range of EOP outputs are hosted on the Programme's webpage www.improvementservice.org.uk/economicoutcomes.

Analysis of traffic visiting the EOP webpage confirms there have been c.900 unique visitors since the programme commenced.

Appendix 3

Feedback from Interviews with Councils that have experienced 1-2-1 support

As part of the interim review of the Economic Outcomes Programme, a series telephone interviews were carried out with lead officers in Councils that have received support from the project team to date.

In total, ten Councils contributed to the findings outlined in this report, as follows:-

- Angus
- Argyll & Bute
- East Lothian
- East Renfrewshire
- Eilean Siar
- Dundee
- Midlothian
- Moray
- Scottish Borders
- West Dunbartonshire

It was noted that comments provided would be non-attributable.

The interviews focused on a series of short questions covering the following key areas

1. The SLAED Improvement Guide
2. Initial meeting with the EOP team and the range of support offered to staff
3. Quality and range of support received
4. The wider impact and benefit of the support individual Councils received
5. Marketing and promotion of the EOP
6. Further support and work

1. The Local Authorities' Economic Development Improvement Guide

The *Guide* was launched in October 2011 in advance of the EOP. Officers were asked to state whether they were aware of the *Guide* prior to the launch of the EOP and, if so, whether it was used.

Officers noted the following:

- There was broad awareness of the *Improvement Guide*, either through email notifications from the IS, SLAED or from attending the Ministerial launch event.
- The *Guide* is a useful reference tool for external sources of information.
- The *Guide's* case studies highlighted a range of good practice across Scotland.

- The *Guide* coincided with the development of new economic development strategies in a number of councils.
- Several councils had used the *Guide*'s checklists to help them develop new economic strategies/ action plans.

Prior to the establishment of the EOP, in general, Councils were not using the *Improvement Guide* extensively to inform the delivery of economic outcome services.

Following establishment of the EOP, initial set-up meetings were arranged with councils. Interviewees consistently highlighted the following;

- Economic development teams were actively encouraged to participate in the programme of support available
- The set-up meetings improved Councils' awareness of the *Guide* and gave them a better understanding of how to use the checklists in a practical setting.

It is recognised that Councils are at varying stages of developing their economic strategies / plans, etc. To date, the following elements of the *Guide* have been used by the Councils that were interviewed.

Elements of the SLAED Improvement Guide	Councils known to be using this element of the Guide
Economic Profile Checklist	Angus Argyll & Bute East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Dundee Midlothian Scottish Borders
Economic Strategy Checklist	Angus Argyll & Bute East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Dundee Midlothian Moray Scottish Borders
Appraising Economic Development Interventions Checklist	Angus East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Midlothian
Assessing the Council's Corporate Economic Potential Checklist	Angus Argyll & Bute East Renfrewshire Dundee Midlothian Moray

Assessing the Monitoring and Evaluation system Checklist	Angus Argyll & Bute East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Midlothian Scottish Borders
Economic Development Partnership Checklist	Angus Argyll & Bute East Renfrewshire Midlothian Moray
Case Studies	Argyll & Bute East Renfrewshire Midlothian

Councils also made the following specific comments in relation to using the *Guide*:

Council A: The launch of the *Guide* coincided with the publication of our new strategy. We therefore used the *Guide* extensively to ensure our strategy aligned to the model outlined in the *Guide*.

Council D: We use the *Guide* extensively. It focuses our decision making and ensures our outcomes and action plans are evidence based.

Council E: The *Guide* was useful for setting the context of our work as a rural council - often we feel isolated from the wider economic development agenda.

The Appraising Economic Development Interventions checklist was very helpful in setting criteria for applications when we used it to develop our Capital Grants Fund.

Council G: We attend SLAED meetings and were aware of the *Guide*. It was extremely useful in the development of our Economic Recovery Plan

Council I: The *Guide* made us more pro-active in contacting other Local Authorities to share good practice.

The Appraising ED Interventions & ED partnership checklists will be used in the near future to help us integrate the Economy Strategy Action Plan with the work of the Community Planning Partnership Economy Group

Council J: We were aware of the *Improvement Guide*, but did not actively consider using it. I did not see an identified need for the *Guide* (at that time)

Our involvement with the EOP was prompted by a conversation at a SLAED event; otherwise we wouldn't have felt a need to engage with the programme.

Fronting up the *Guide* made us take far greater notice of it and the tools it contains.

2. Initial set up meetings

The EOP Team engaged in a series of initial discussions with councils to scope out the kind of support and assistance officers could benefit from.

The officers interviewed all supported the following statements:

- “The support available to our council was adequately explained”
- “I was made aware of the full range of support services available to me through the EOP and how to access it.”

The following specific comments were also noted:

Council A: Third party support was vital to getting robust feedback and buy-in from partners and elected members. Our action plan would not have been effective without the support of the EOP team.

Council B: The resource was beneficial

The EOP was extremely helpful in assisting in the alignment of our Economic Development Action Plan to our SOA

Council F: The set-up meeting was extremely helpful. We were able to use this as a sounding board for teasing out our priority areas.

Council C: Richard was extremely helpful and worked well with me and my team. He was also extremely well received by our elected members and Council Management Group.

Council E: We were hugely impressed with the programme of work on offer.

The strategy workshop informed our economic development strategy (action plan and outcomes) and the EOP was invaluable in ensuring our strategy was as effective as possible.

Council G: The set-up meeting went really well. The experience was extremely positive. Any external support is welcomed.

Council H: The process to date has gone very smoothly. We established a good working relationship, which has gone from strength to strength.

Council J: Richard was extremely helpful and a good advocate for the agenda.

-The relationship he established (with input also from Andy McGuire) with us was very productive. We were comfortable discussing a range of issues with the team without feeling threatened.

3. Areas of support accessed

Councils were asked to identify the areas of support they accessed from the following list.

Areas of support	Council
'Critical Friend' support on Economic Profile	East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Midlothian Scottish Borders
'Critical Friend' support on Economic Strategy	Angus Dundee City East Lothian Eilean Siar East Renfrewshire Midlothian Scottish Borders West Dunbartonshire
'Critical Friend' support on Action Plan	East Renfrewshire Midlothian Scottish Borders
Aligning Economic Strategies and SOA	East Renfrewshire Midlothian Scottish Borders
Support in development of Action Plans	Angus Dundee City East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Midlothian Scottish Borders
Support on prioritisation of actions within Action Plans	East Lothian East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Midlothian Scottish Borders
Using the checklists in the <i>Guide</i> – officer support	East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Midlothian Scottish Borders
Elected Member Training	East Renfrewshire Moray Scottish Borders
Reviewing partnership working and collaboration	East Lothian East Renfrewshire Scottish Borders
Sessions on the 'whole' Council approach to realising corporate economic potential	East Lothian East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Moray

Ad hoc support	Angus Argyll & Bute East Lothian East Renfrewshire Scottish Borders West Dunbartonshire
Case Studies – have used	East Renfrewshire

The following comments and ad-hoc support was also noted:

Council F: Teleconference to discuss the SLAED Indicators. This discussion helped improve our understanding of the indicators and reflect on some of the associated challenges.

Council D: The EOP kept us extremely focused, especially in the development of our new economic strategy.

Refined our action plan into achievable targets.

Council G: We are planning to work with the team in 2014 on a range of training sessions for elected members, the Corporate Management Team and the CPP

Council H: Our work with the EOP has been focused principally on working with elected members

Council I: More work required around prioritisation of actions within Action Plan.

Discussion held around reviewing partnership working and collaboration. The team has a better understanding of how the CPP should be operating, however this is not current practice-particularly in relation to budget alignment.

Council J: We asked for support on quite a specific task, namely to research models of regeneration. The piece of work was excellent and very well received. It included info from England as well as Scotland which was beneficial. This work has been included in our report to committee.

4. Delivery of support

Officers were asked a series of questions on the quality and delivery of the support they received from the EOP team. Overall the feedback from officers was extremely positive and all officers interviewed agreed with the following statements:

- “The team had a sound technical understanding of the key economic development issues affecting our Council”
- “The team had a good general knowledge of our Council and local area”
- “Our expectations for accessing support through the EOP team were fully met”

The following general comments were also noted:

Council A: The team were extremely knowledgeable and well informed. The team was well briefed before coming to meet with us and had a sound understanding of our SOA and economic action plan.

Council B: Richard was well prepared. He had a good understanding of the area
The support was excellent and we had very positive feedback from our elected members
Useful to have a third party facilitator who was able to moderate all parties involved in the discussions

Council F: We are grateful to the team for the level of support they have offered us to date. Support was delivered locally and delivered on our terms (we decided what to focus on). This localised/ rather than nationally mandated, approach to the delivery of support completely changed my team's perceptions of the IS for the better.

Council E: The programme was extremely assessable- phone calls are always returned promptly.

The EOP has considerable expertise and hands-on experience and we have felt immensely supported by the EOP, the process has never threatened the work we are undertaking, but helped us to refine our offering and improve our performance.

I cannot praise the initiative highly enough.

Council H: EOP acted as a critical friend. We found it useful to be able to access a resource which was one step removed from the council. This heightened the importance of our work with elected members.

The Council Administration and leader recognised the value of the support from the IS.

Council J: We found the impartiality of the EOP to be extremely useful. It added credibility to our own work and gave our recommendations to our elected members more authority and validity.

Working with the EOP has changed our perception - our relationship and the value we place on the resources of the IS has greatly improved.

5. Wider effects of support

Understanding the wider impact the EOP has had on economic development work in Councils was a key focus of this interim evaluation. Officers were therefore asked a series of questions on the impact the EOP had on the councils understanding and awareness of key issues relating to economic development.

Officers note the following positive impacts within the Council of working with the EOP team:

- "Our technical understanding of economic development has improved"
- "Our service is more aware of, and likely to use, the *Improvement Guide* checklists"

- “We have a better understanding of what our key economic development priorities are
- Internal staff co-ordination has improved and this has resulted in greater discussion of the impact of policy decisions on the local economy”
- “The support has been beneficial to the wider work of the Council”

However officers consistently commented that more work is needed to improve the awareness of elected members on the Council’s corporate role in delivering economic development and more generally in the importance of economic development in decision making.

Council A: More work needs to be done to engage a wider group of elected members

Council C: We have undertaken some work with elected members, particularly with regards to agreeing our new economic strategy; however there is more work to be done.

Council D: We would benefit from a session with the full council,

Council E: Further support is needed for elected member development- the team is aware that more work needs to be done.

Council G: Further work is needed to raise the raise the profile of economic development with elected members and other corporate officers.

Council H: Work within Economic Development is still in its infancy. Our management focus is on building the capacity of our team, before we can start to filter down key themes and messages to our services.

The Council now recognises the importance of ED and has highlighted it as our council’s top priority.

However this rhetoric needs to be supported by actions.

Council I: More could be done with all elected members, however we are pleased that councillors including the members with responsibility for the economy portfolio attended a training session organised by the IS and was extremely positive about it.

Interviews also highlighted the benefits of working with the EOP in relation to the new Community Planning structure and improving collaboration with local and national partners.

The following general comments were also noted:

Council A: The EOP played a pivotal role in establishing consensus amongst partners, which we would otherwise have struggled to reach. He was also able to bring our partners together and make them realise the importance of their contribution

Council F: We did not take advantage of the offer to facilitate wider engagement sessions with other areas of the council and our partners. This is something we would consider in the future- if funding/ resources permitted.

Council D: the EOP was central to the development of our monthly Economic Monitor which is downloaded by 200-300 people per month.

Council G: Working with the EOP ensured that economic development was a key priority in our Community Plan

Richard gave a presentation to our thematic group which was attended by our MSP's (Christine Graham and Colin Beattie). This was an excellent opportunity to showcase our work to-date with a wider audience.

Council H: We are now working more in partnership with another Council

Economic development is now a core theme progress our work in partnership across the CPP.

Council I: Our decision to bring Business Gateway in-house was validated and subsequently received greater supported as a result of the work of the EOP team.

6. Marketing and promotion of the EOP

Officers were asked to consider how effectively the team has marketed and promoted the EOP and the range of support being on offer to Council's.

The majority of councils interviewed are actively using the EOP web page and the information provided on the IS website. Councils who use the webpage consider it to be a useful resource for the service and a good way of accessing the range of support available to them.

None of the officers interviewed are currently following the Improvement Service on Twitter (IS@Outcomes).

Overall officers were consistent in their feedback that more work needs to be done to promote the team and highlight the following observations;

Council A: A weekly bulletin- similar to the Scottish Government roundup would be helpful.

Council B: There should be a link to the EOP from the SLAED website

EOP should have a slot at the SLAED Conference

An email alert would be useful

Council F: The IS website is out dated and difficult to use.

Council D:The website is not easy to use and the content of the EOP webpage is pretty generic

The team doesn't do enough to promote itself or the range of services which are on offer. A newsletter or regular update would be extremely beneficial.

EOP should be better incorporated into SLAED. Potentially as a standing agenda item. This would raise the profile of the work

Council E: A LinkedIn group for economic managers would be useful- there are a number of discussions on key issues regarding economic development already being held on the site

Council G: Website is excellent and a good source of information

Council H: Our Council staff are not enabled to use twitter

Promotion of the programme is adequate

Council I: More events for Economic Development teams or managers. There is not enough face-to-face networking

Council J: The team needs to be more assertive on following up with officers and reminding us what we agreed to work on

An annual learning event/ conference which is Scotland wide to learn from shared experiences, network and support best practice would be extremely useful. Many of the challenges we face are the same across the sector (jobs, growth, investment, regeneration)

7. Further support and work

Council A: We would benefit long term from a health check on a bi-annual basis

Council B: A further session on the development of our area based plans- building on our previous discussions

Council F: Assistance in marketing our work, communicating in language which is understandable to the private sector would be helpful. We would also benefit from the development of a simplified framework

Council D: - A session with our elected members and potentially the full Council would be beneficial.

Council E: More face-to-face time would be welcomed. It is our intention to invite the team to come and discuss the review of our economic strategy.

Work around better performance management and the delivery of our plan would be beneficial. This is also tied into the new SLAED indicators.

Council G: I hope we can work with the EOP on Elected member training/ a session with the Corporate Management Team/ A session with staff in the economic development team/ a follow-up session with the CPP.

Council H: EOP should have a slot at the SLAED Conference and update us all on the work to-date and future opportunities to work with the team.

We are interested in any future opportunities to work on monitoring, performance and partnership working.

Council I: There are a number of challenges facing economic development teams in LA's across Scotland. An obvious solution to the problem is for the EOP team to play a greater role in SLAED. Currently SLAED is under resourced and lacks leadership, for example certain working groups are more effective than others (Tourisms works well, Company growth doesn't) This has affected our ability as a service (across Scotland) to work collaboratively and address

national priorities as a collective. The EU Programme calls for better collaboration and there is a real opportunity for us to lobby other national agencies better as a collective.

Local Authorities need to reduce duplication and share resources better, the EOP could provide valuable assistance in achieving this.

Support us to better engage with Scottish Enterprise and other national agencies and to explore the opportunities which public sector reform offer us to work in a radically different way.

Council J: Work with the team to develop a key questions set for businesses (hotspots/ key themes for economic development)

8. General comments

- “The EOP offers a first class service. The support offered by the team is invaluable at a time when staffing numbers are dropping, we face greater pressure and demand on resources and the need to improve economic delivery continues to grow in importance.”
- “I think there is a need for this kind of support long term and I am concerned that the EOP team is not big enough to sustain the level of support needed across the country.”
- “Working with the EOP team has completely changed our perceptions of the Improvement Service for the better. The experience to date has been extremely positive.”
- “The team needs to be more assertive in pushing councils to commit to development work they have previously agreed to carry out”
- “Overall the support, advice and time given over to us has been excellent.”
- “We have been extremely impressed by the programme, grateful for the level of support to date and we believe the EOP has enormous value in the current economic climate”
- “We are extremely pleased with the support the EOP has given us to date.”
- “A central support service has been particularly useful in bringing different councils and agencies together and highlighting any of underlying tensions around ED in Scotland. For example we have been able to challenge SDS and Scottish Enterprise on their commitment and involvement to local targets and delivery on our ambitions for economic development in a local context.”

Appendix 4

Feedback from Elected Member Workshops

In consultation with Councils and other key stakeholders, the Improvement Service developed a national Elected Member Development Strategy for Scottish Local Government. This includes the delivery of a series of workshops and development programmes aimed at supporting Elected Members to further develop their skills and knowledge.

Following publication of the *Economic Development Improvement Guide* and prior to the formal establishment of the EOP, the IS recognised the potential of developing Elected Member workshops focused on the role councillors can play in maximising economic impact.

The following paragraphs are an extract from Elected Member Workshop material on the Role of Councillors in Maximising Economic Impact:-

“A robust, thriving and diverse economy is of vital importance for all of Scotland’s communities. In addition to their role as major employers and procurers of services, Local Authorities lead on the delivery of critical functions such as planning, licensing, education and local regeneration. The effective, joined-up delivery of these services can have a major positive impact on the local economy.

Elected Members play an important role in helping to ‘raise the bar’ in economic development, through assessing the key success factors and ensuring that the economic impact of the Council is maximised. Elected Members also have the ability to encourage a joined up, corporate approach to economic development within Councils, and to influence spending decisions, resource allocation and prioritisation of economic development.”

A total of six Elected Member Economic Outcomes workshops have been delivered to date, as follows:-

Council Area where session was hosted	Number of EM Attendees
Aberdeen City	12
East Lothian	8
Inverclyde	14
Moray	25
North Ayrshire	17
Perth & Kinross	10

The workshops held in Aberdeen, Inverclyde, East Lothian and North Ayrshire were run as part of the wider Improvement Service [Elected Member Masterclass Programme 2012/13](#) (and 2011/12). This means that Councillors from across Scotland were encouraged to attend, resulting in each session having input from a mix of different Councils.

The workshops held in Perth & Kinross and Moray Councils were specifically requested as a support area offered by the Programme.

Each workshop typically takes place over a full day. The workshops explored key components of effective economic development and the steps Councils and Elected Members can take to ensure they deliver thoughtful, innovative, ambitious and effective economic development services. The purpose of the sessions was:

- To provide an update on recent thinking on the role of Local Authorities in economic development
- To share, consider and discuss examples of good practice in economic development; and
- To encourage discussion and debate amongst Elected Members about the role they can play in maximising positive impact within the economy.

In the sessions that were open to two or more Councils' Elected Members, benefit was seen to be added in terms of good cross boundary and cross political party input. Sessions were highly interactive, combining presentations with various group discussions, therefore allowing Councillors to share individual ideas and experiences with the wider group. This was useful in highlighting the different issues facing Elected Members in different Council areas.

Bespoke Sessions

The additional sessions requested by Moray / Aberdeenshire and Perth & Kinross Councils were bespoke in that they were tailored to meet the individual and specific economic development challenges facing these areas. At these sessions, Elected Members were encouraged to discuss the following key points in relation to their Council area:

- The main things the Council can do to help the local economy
- Anything preventing us from maximising economic potential
- Key roles that Members play in improving economic impact
- Is there anything compromising that key role?
- How effective is the economic partnership in the area?

The single Council approach was beneficial in bringing an individual Council's Elected Members together to focus on economic development and share ideas and approaches. Attendance at these sessions was good and Members input a lot of opinions and experiences into discussions on each of the above points at all sessions.

Feedback

Following each workshop, Elected Members were asked to complete an evaluation form to provide feedback. Councillors were asked to rate four aspects of the sessions from 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The form also included two open-ended questions

which gave Councillors the opportunity to give more detailed feedback. The following statistics relate to the aggregated feedback across all six workshops.

Councillors scored the sessions an average of **4** on whether **the presentations were useful and informative**. This demonstrates that, on the whole, the content of the presentations was relevant and beneficial. One Councillor found the presentation *“very informative and opened up good debate amongst the group”*, while another stated that it had given them *“lots of ideas and notes”*, and another that it had *“improved my understanding of the position of economic development in the Council”*.

Councillors also scored the sessions an average of **4 out of 5** for whether **the group discussions were generally useful and informative**, suggesting that the topics were of interest and relevance to Elected Members. One Councillor found it *“very useful to hear from experiences of other Elected Members”* and another thought that *“good and varied points were brought forward but also common themes identified”*. One Elected Member found that *“the cross chat from other Council areas was most educational”*. This demonstrates the benefit gained from bringing Elected Members from various Council areas together to discuss economic development challenges facing individual Councils, as well as common issues impacting on several Council areas.

Councillors scored the sessions an average of **3.8** on whether, **as a result of the session, they will be able to act more effectively as an Elected Member**. One Councillor *“feels more aware of how positivity/drive/focus by Elected Members can drive things forward”*, and another *“generally feels better able to comment on economic development”*. Further benefit of the sessions is that Councillors *“will be more switched on to work of ED team in Council & look to support them as well as feed local info into them”* and have a *“better understanding of the issues and tools to assist”*. This demonstrates that these sessions can encourage Elected Members to understand and input into their Council’s economic development service.

On whether, as a result of the sessions, Councillors **intend to encourage their Council to do things differently**, Elected Members scored the sessions an average of **3.6**. Response was varied as some Councillors stated that they feel unable to influence economic development colleagues or their *“views may have little impact”*. However, the majority of Councillors identified a range of issues that they intend to focus on as a result of the session, such as *“cut through delay mechanisms. Expedite decisions/ engagement”*.

Councillors were asked **how the Improvement Service could improve similar workshops in the future** and suggestions included better marketing, longer sessions with more detailed case studies and increased challenges to Elected Members’ statements. One Elected Member suggested that other CPP partners might be included in these sessions in future.

Finally, Councillors were asked for **any further comments** on the sessions and the majority used this to comment on the usefulness and benefit of the session. Typical examples include *“the workshop was really interesting and has certainly given food for thought”*, *“excellent & worthwhile day”*, *“enjoyed the course and the opportunity to hear opinions of other Councillors from other authorities”*.

Conclusion

Based on the feedback received from sessions so far, Elected Member workshops have been well received across participating Council areas, and there seems to be clear benefit gained by most participants.

Whilst around 90 Councillors have now participated in these Economic Development Workshops, this is still a relatively modest proportion of Scotland's total of 1,223 Elected Members. Accordingly, it is likely that the EOP will continue to offer additional workshops and explore further methods of reaching a wider audience of Elected Members.

Due to the success of these sessions so far, the EOP has issued an ongoing open invitation to all Councils to facilitate further workshops wherever there is demand. These can be generic, based on providing an overview of the *Economic Development Improvement Guide* / role of Elected Members in maximising economic impact and open to all/multiple Councils. Alternatively, the EOP can deliver more bespoke sessions focussed on the specific needs of an individual Council or a small group of Councils.

Appendix 5

Analysis of Feedback from EOP Board Interviews

All EOP Board members were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews as part of the review. Interviews were conducted with eleven Board members. Approximately half were carried out face-to-face and half via telephone. A Topic Guide was used for these interviews.

The following EOP Board Members participated in an interview as part of the review process:-

- Martin Wight, Scottish Enterprise
- Oonagh Gill and Karen Jackson, Scottish Government
- Chris Brodie, Skills Development Scotland
- Jim Galloway, Edinburgh City Council / SLAED
- Keith Winter, Fife Council / SOLACE
- Susan Love, Federation of Small Businesses
- Claire Ross, Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Professor Alan McGregor, Glasgow University
- Bryan McGrath, Scottish Borders Council / SLAED
- Robin Presswood, Fife Council / SLAED

Board members were advised that their comments would be non attributable.

A summary of key points from the Board interviews is set out below:-

Guide

- *Guide* has been very useful – we refer to it frequently.
- *Guide* was a great step forward – it provides an opportunity for consistency in approach to delivery
- *Guide* is a useful tool – for Councils and other agencies. It is very user friendly and pitched at the right level.
- *Guide* / EOP doing a great job. Providing objectivity / critical friend is helpful.
- *Guide* is useful – a great first step. But suspect penetration of *Guide* has been variable

Links with SLAED

- Need to be clear on role of EOP vis a vis SLAED.
- Need to ensure a legacy for SLAED
- Good to see alignment with SLAED
- EOP is not SLAED and shouldn't seek to take on leadership role that SLAED ought to provide. However, *Guide* / EOP is a catalyst for SLAED.
- SLAED needs support as it is weak even on basic engagement / communications - Local Govt simply isn't 'at the table' on key issues of relevance. There is a lack of clarity re role of SLAED theme groups
- EOP attendance at SLAED Exec mtgs is helpful. Need to ensure sustainability of EOP work via integration between SLAED and EOP. Essentially, there are strong common objectives between SLAED and EOP. But don't blur the lines too much, as SLAED needs to be independent and strong.

Role / Focus of EOP

- EOP has a very clear role.
- EOP is still at foundations stage – recognition that it will take time to see difference.
- EOP has had very positive engagement and has been very successful at making links into Councils.
- Without EOP, we wouldn't have had the dialogue and connections with various Councils / partners nor the detailed understanding of strengths and weaknesses.
- EOP a resounding success, but frustrating at times in terms of Council engagement
- Key challenge for Council is resource / capacity issues. Econ Dev has been a declining resource in recent years. There are less senior / capable econ dev mgrs now.
- Challenges require Councils to have a much higher level of professionalism and leadership/ management.
- Culture for applying *Guide* is not currently there across all Councils. Response from Councils hasn't been robust enough. Should consider an annual return from each council on issues covered by checklist

- Had initially envisaged a focus on 2 or 3 big themes. However, in hindsight, ‘surgery’ type approach with individual councils has been helpful in building engagement and was what was required.
- EOP has delivered enough to demonstrate grant outcomes.
- Have been surprised at how much time has had to be spent on what are fairly basic issues – supporting development of local Econ Strategies, Aligning Econ Plans to SOAs, developing Indicators, etc.
- The SLAED Indicators work simply wouldn’t have happened without EOP support. It has allowed us to ask specific questions on the contributions Councils are making, as a result of the evidence provided in the annual report.
- EOP has helped BG develop more robust framework.
- EOP should not focus on issues such as BG pipeline problems, as there ought to be mechanisms in place to deal with that.
- Key value has been in agitating re improvement agenda and encouraging others to think in terms of what can be improved.

Profile of EOP

- *Guide* is a strong document. But visibility of *Guide* and EOP has been poor
- Programme ought to raise profile re its various successes.
- EOP doesn’t have a high profile beyond its immediate target group. Local Govt generally is typically poor at selling itself.
- Should publicise EOP work done.

Board / Meetings

- Generally, the right organisations and individuals are involved in EOP Board. (with a couple of exceptions of poor attenders)
- Should look to develop stronger tie-in with SOLACE and perhaps also political side via Cosla.

- What is fit with broader Econ Dev groupings? Be wary of getting sucked into others' agendas.
- Board meetings could be more frequent than 3 pa, but with shorter agenda. Need to avoid 'talking shop' as there are already plenty of them. Ought to be more task-oriented in terms of gaining contribution of board members by having them actually 'do things'.
- Probably need more 1-2-1 engagement with individual board members outwith board environment. Also needs more Board members to actively input to agenda.
- Finds it strange that EOP Board membership / culture does not allow for open / candid discussion about naming individual Councils that are weak on Econ Dev.
- Role envisaged for Board members per initial Board paper³, hasn't really happened much in practice.
- Had initially wondered about extent to which EOP ought to be a broker / intermediary, when all partners ought to be actively engaged in CP. But now rethinking this - How can national partners best bring their knowledge, etc to CPPs in order to assist local partners in increasing impact? (e.g. in terms of helping to diagnosis problems / challenges and identify solutions. Likewise, in terms of raising debate re economic opportunities for Scotland).
- Need to get Board members better engaged. Ought to task individual board members.
- Suspects that other partners think they are there to assist with problems that Councils have. But issues often lie with others – e.g. lack of meaningful info / communications from *[national partner]*, problems with quality of contacts with *[national partner]*. Ought to be a more even focus on improving the partnerships.
- Board mtgs are well serviced, papers are of high standard and are well pitched – not being too long. Mtgs are well chaired. 3 mtgs pa is good, as have ltd capacity to do much more.
- Board has good mix of organisations. Outwith Board mtgs, would be good to have more opportunities to meet and chat informally.
- Board papers are of good quality. Mtgs are well chaired. Would like to see more frequent mtgs.

• ³ *Cascading info within their organisations, acting as ambassadors / advocates for publicising EOP work, etc; Providing robust challenge to EOP; Bringing ideas to table re opportunities for collaboration / increasing impact, etc; Brining forward agenda items for meetings, etc.*

- Can't do more frequent Board mtgs.
- Frequency of mtgs is correct
- Could drop papers from Board mtgs such as risk register, comms, plan, etc. Focus on getting more discussion.
- EOP Agenda and papers are good. Chair is efficient.
- Board papers are good. Should focus on matters to discuss / decide. Should avoid papers for noting.
- Board papers are very useful – language is helpful.

EOP Future direction / Priorities

- EOP was always going to be start of the process, but could never cover issues fully in just two years.
- We're only partly along the journey that Councils need to take re improvement
- Future focus should include a mix of 1-2-1 and national initiatives. More of the same is required, as it is still very early days.
- Any extension of EOP needs to have clarity of purpose. Shouldn't just be more of the same. Need for developing benchmarking would be a useful future EOP initiative.
- Opportunities re greater regional approach (e.g. in terms of Economy / labour market issues, skills assessments, etc).
- EOP should focus on mix of 1-2-1 and national initiatives.
- Focus ought to be doing more for less input; programmes of scale.
- Should have focus on more cross boundary work.
- Should be greater focus on regional issues / Lab mrkt / EU funding / where should various partners lead
- Would argue strongly for continuation of EOP. EOP has given a good start on issues. Ultimately, SLAED should aim to be capable of doing this themselves.
- Recognise that need is likely to remain – certainly beyond 2 yr of EOP.

- EOP should seek to develop beyond existing 2yr prog, providing it is adding value. And it has already demonstrated that it is doing so.
- Would be very odd if [*national partner*] did not have a programme supporting / developing Economic Outcomes, given centrality of these / role in prevention, etc.
- SOAs contain a lot of rhetoric but are fundamentally poor in what they say re Econ Outcomes. Need to challenge this more vigorously / effectively
- EOP ought to have scope to be responsive to emerging issues.
- Future EOP:-
 - It is still at early stages / building foundations
 - need to decide if focus should be on 'process-type' issues or bigger strategic initiatives.
- EOP should engage in some 'big ticket' items. Measurement / monitoring ought to be a key area. There is currently no consistency. Helpful to have a place to think about eg best basket of indicators.
- Econ Dev needs to develop stronger evidence base
- SLAED indicators Framework is a good and highly relevant piece of work. Key thing now is to ensure it is actually used. Could develop examples of good practice re how it is used.
- Welfare reform is a massive agenda - EOP could assist in Action Plans re mitigation actions.
- Having a mix of local 1-2-1 support and national initiatives is helpful.
- If forced to choose, then Indicators-type outputs are more visible and much more difficult to achieve.
- EOP should continue to focus on Econ Dev Service improvement issues. (This helps to build credibility and opens doors for more strategic work)
- But should also have even greater focus on Economic Outcomes
 - Wider range of issues and contributors
 - Corporate management of whole Council / CPP
 - National initiatives and developing economy's response to public service transformation (eg. Strategic Commissioning)
- Criteria for Councils accessing in-depth support should include requirement of them to put a local project team in place. If Councils don't demonstrate commitment to engage, don't waste your time.

- Why are opportunities in Care market not being exploited, given its scale, growth / job opportunities?
- Need for more general 'step change' / culture change re outcomes agenda