The SFT’s role in securing additional investment

SFT has allocated funding to Aberdeenshire Council on behalf of the Scottish Government as part of the Scotland’s Schools for the Future Programme. This has been welcomed by the Council and primed investment in three new secondary schools in Aberdeenshire. With regard to seeking additional investment, this may be applicable on other work streams being delivered by Scottish Futures Trust, but other than the Scottish Government money there has been no additional investment for Aberdeenshire Council.

The SFT’s role in securing better value for money and improved public services

SFT have played a positive role here in encouraging collaboration, sharing examples of good practice and the like.

Working with others challenging how services are provideddesigned has encouraged innovative solutions and, in context of schools, improved learning & teaching environments suitable for delivering the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The use of funding metric has also focussed minds to achieve best value. However, it is important to ensure quality is not compromised and that buildings meet the requirements of users, which is not always achievable within metric (particularly for primary schools).

The Council worked collaboratively with the SFT on the schools programme. Their input was welcomed, particularly around governance and programme management. One of the projects was through a Not for Profit Distribution model, which is nearing completion and will be a tremendous asset for the Community. However, there was some disquiet about the value for money aspects of some areas of the project, particularly around revenue costs for ongoing Facilities Management activity and the whole life cost of the Not for Profit Distribution model. There may be merit in a public sector comparator test to demonstrate value for money.

The SFT’s role in fostering innovation to improve outcomes

SFT role here is valuable. An example is the ‘Inspiring Learning Fund’ and encouraging ‘Try Before You Buy’. SFT role is a facilitating one, and an essential element of this is developing relationships between partners, which for schools/
community campus is very positive. SFT has advised on best use of space for both school buildings and the common aspiration towards the one public sector estate agenda.

The SFT’s role in encouraging collaboration to improve efficiency

Comments above.

The SFT’s efficacy in securing better outcomes including job creation, training and apprenticeships, environmental sustainability, broader community benefits and digital connectivity

The Council has been supported by SFT in the digital connectivity programme for Aberdeenshire. As part of the school delivery programme they have promoted community benefit clauses; the Council do likewise in their directly procured programme of works.

Any other comments you might have on the SFT's work towards achieving its key aims

Officers are working collaboratively with SFT on the City Region Deal (CRD) – they would be best described as a trusted friend. This includes exploring programmes/projects with them and they have provided critical and protected feedback. This has been both through day sessions with them as well as email/phone contact. The SFT has also supported the Council in meetings with Scottish and UK governments also. They also test the water externally, provide expert views, e.g. on housing and generally provide us with ideas on alternative methods of working across the public sector. The experience has been very positive; the intention will be to continue working with them extensively in the CRD negotiation process.