Finance Committee

Scottish Futures Trust/ NPD Programme

Submission from Fife Council

The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) was established by the Scottish Government in 2008. Its website states that its mission is ‘to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of infrastructure investment and use in Scotland by working collaboratively with public bodies and industry, leading to better value for money and improved public services’. Further information about the SFT’s role and key aims can be found in its Corporate Plan 2014-19 and SFT’s Business Plan for 2015-16.

The Committee is interested in hearing views on the success of the SFT in achieving this aim and specifically—

• The SFT’s role in securing additional investment;
  o Fife Council has benefitted from additional investment from Scottish Government through its Scotland’s Schools for the Future programme and has been assisted in securing this investment in partnership with SFT. This has enabled delivery of:
    ▪ a replacement for Auchmuty High School three years ahead of FC’s programme;
    ▪ the new Levenmouth Academy replacing both Buckhaven and Kirkland High Schools;
    ▪ an innovative new civic facility at ‘the Waid’ in Anstruther that delivers a range of services including secondary education.
  o SFT’s support for the approach adopted at the new Waid facility was instrumental in successfully securing Phase 3 funding.

• The SFT’s role in securing better value for money and improved public services;
  o SFT has an overview of development throughout Scotland and is advantageously placed to act as a hub for good practice both in terms of value for money and improved service delivery. Having access to such information enables SFT to challenge existing practice and promote exemplary service delivery as an alternative to the ‘status quo’.
  o Through the use of its challenging space and cost metrics SFT have fostered a reappraisal of our approach to design and construction parameters to ensure that we deliver an optimum balance between operation need and available budget.

• The SFT’s role in fostering innovation to improve outcomes;
  o SFT’s lead in the design and construction of exemplars provides built examples of best practice to the overall benefit of everyone embarking on similar projects.
During early discussion within the Council about the potential replacement of Waid Academy in Anstruther we began to explore the potential for approaching this as a much wider civic/community offering. SFT were very supportive of this approach and not only engaged in the innovative briefing process but contributed to this.

In recognition of the Council’s willingness to move away from a school-centric approach to a wider community-centric model encompassing not only other Council services but also Police Scotland among others, SFT jointly funded the initial feasibility study. Due in no small part to its innovative approach Waid received SG funding from Phase 3 and is now on site and scheduled to complete in 2017.

- The SFT’s role in encouraging collaboration to improve efficiency;
  - The SFT led hub initiative reflects a national approach to the delivery of new community infrastructures across a range of community planning partners and has proven itself to be sufficiently flexible and adaptable to enable early delivery of a range of projects.
  - SFT were very supportive of and collaborated in an exercise to investigate a pan-authority initiative to provide standardised approaches to innovative school design and specification. This ‘vanilla’ approach has positively informed school projects within Fife.

- The SFT’s efficacy in securing better outcomes including job creation, training and apprenticeships, environmental sustainability, broader community benefits and digital connectivity.
  - Through its standard Key Performance Indicators it provides a comprehensive range of requirements which are utilised on all hub projects throughout Scotland thus enabling a consistent and challenging approach.
  - Being a national standard makes the implementation more easily achieved particularly in challenging commercial times.

- Any other comments you might have on the SFT’s work towards achieving its key aims.
  - All local Authorities are striving for continuous improvement and much time is devoted to research in search of innovative solutions that respond to a continuously changing educational environment and provide best value. SFT performs a valuable role in using in disseminating and driving good practice on a national basis enabling individual Authorities to benchmark themselves against ‘best in class’.