



QUARTERLY CONNECT

NEWSLETTER 1 July 2022

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That's you guys

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**John Rossiter
Executive Director,
Solomons Europe**



WELCOME



Swimming
with the big fish
SME MATCHMAKER SERVICE

Helping high-performing SMEs to secure high value,
long-term framework contracts on major projects



There was a bumper turnout at the first ever Swimming with the Big Fish SME Matchmaker Service Quarterly Connect meeting on Monday (July 25).

More than 40 people gathered at Solomons Europe's striking Papcastle Depot offices for the practical, open and honest forum to discuss Programme and Project Partners (PPP) pipeline projects and requirements.

It brought together senior figures at PPP, its Key Delivery Partners (KDP) and representatives of around 30 SMEs that have been through the Matchmaker Service process.

The scene was set by Dominic Doig, Managing Director of Solomons Europe, which is delivering the Service for PPP, and Peter Hogg, Head of Supply Chain Management

at KBR for PPP before John Rossiter pressed home the fresh approach of PPP's Multi Project Procurement commercial model.

"The important point is we're all trying to work as one team – to find the best supply chain of the best in the industry. That's you guys," he said.

A lively and constructive discussion then took place involving key figures from current PPP KDPs, Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick (HVAC, Electrical and Instrumentation, Mechanical Pipework), Parker Technical Services (HVAC), NG Bailey (Electrical and Instrumentation) and Doosan Babcock (Mechanical Pipework), which covered issues such as timescales, scope, programme delivery and SME and wider supply chain engagement as they move towards the delivery phase.

They were joined by Seddon Construction who, on the same day of the meeting, were officially unveiled as the KDP for the £175m 17-year building fit-out work package (KDP9).

It was then on to the SME Spotlights, with two companies that have Heads of Terms in place for KDP contracts, Delkia and Swagelok Manchester, and Responsive Limited, who are hungry to secure a contract to help them deliver their growth and social impact ambitions.

Dominic wrapped up the meeting after Andrew Dodds gave an overview of the progress and support on offer from West Cumbria based recruitment brokerage service All Together Cumbria.

QUARTERLY CONNECT PERSPECTIVES

PPP AND THE SME MATCHMAKER SERVICE

Dominic Doig, Managing Director, Solomons Europe for the Swimming with the Big Fish SME Matchmaker Service

"It was a very open and energetic event. It was really encouraging to see high calibre SMEs in the room, those who have committed to significant pledges and really want to leave a positive legacy in the region. It's now about giving them a platform so the KDPs are aware of these pledges and the capabilities and capacity we have among the SMEs who've been through the Matchmaker process and are eager to secure long-term contracts.

"The KDPs were open, honest and transparent. They let us know where they were up to in terms of future procurements. There was a real will to drive things forward, communicate better and collaborate. This was just the first event – a great start. We're now looking at ways in which

we can use these meetings to bring KDPs and SMEs together to form the long-lasting relationships PPP's Multi Project Procurement model wants to see develop. Ultimately, we all have a stake in making that happen, to enhance project delivery on the Sellafield site, while delivering SME growth and investment and better outcomes for local people."

Peter Hogg, Head of Supply Chain Management, KBR for PPP

"This was a long overdue opportunity to get our really important SMEs together with our equally important KDPs, to improve connectivity and get them working constructively, so that the committed frameworks flow down the supply chain. It was superb to see 30 SMEs here and I was really encouraged by their willingness to have an open conversation with the KDPs and in front of some of their competitors.

"We set off with a decent challenge to achieve something and we've had a little bit of a reality check. Sorting out the scopes, the programmes and the detail has introduced time delays. The lesson for me is, we could have communicated that much better through the depth of the supply chain. These sort of events are an opportunity to get that connectivity going again."

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KDPs

Matthew Taylor, PPP Framework Director, Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick

“It was a very positive meeting from the outset. I thought the engagement was really good and positive, so I’m looking forward to taking the next steps. There were a lot of SMEs we’re already working with, and have Heads of Terms in place, or have knowledge of, but around half we hadn’t. That brings opportunities and we had good discussions after the session with SMEs coming to speak to me and the other KDPs directly.

“The important thing to remember is that this is an 18-year framework. We’ve got a supply chain, but we’re always looking to improve on that, develop it, enhance it and I’m sure we have gaps in that supply chain. So, this is very much alive. The next step is looking at the strategic requirements and find out what SMEs need from us to help them deliver their growth plans and transform the area. We very much need a collaborative supply chain to deliver the programmes ahead of us. The real work starts now.”

Steve Berry, Senior Contracts Manager, Parker Technical Services

“It was very useful for us going forward. We need to engage more with the SMEs. Communication and collaboration are key and next time we’d love to see more SMEs engaged. There are certainly people here today that I wasn’t aware of, and I’ve taken a lot of people’s business cards. I’ll be contacting them and sharing them with the KDP forum, so we can understand who can deliver what.

“It’s very important for us to understand people’s capacities. It might only be 2 companies who deliver, say £10m of work each, or there could be 20 who deliver the work if they all want £1m each. A key message is that the opportunities are ongoing and it’s a 2-way street in finding out who can be part of delivering this work. We’re heavily invested in this. We opened an office in Whitehaven a few months ago and have employed 6 people to work there so far, when our initial commitment was for just 2 jobs in the first year. Our key partners have also promised to invest heavily as well. Social value is really important to us.”

Tom Hill, Pre-Contract Manager Power Sector (Engineering) and PPP Framework Lead, NG Bailey

“Quarterly Connect was a really good opportunity for us to give the supply chain an idea of where we are in the process. And it was a better opportunity for us, being new to Sellafield as a KDP partner, to meet some of the supply chain that we will eventually be working with.

“There’s a lot of work going on in the background that SMEs aren’t aware of. It probably seems like is a long, drawn-out process for them. Hopefully, they learned today that things are progressing, perhaps not as quickly as some would like, but things are moving forward in the right direction. This is new for everyone and we’re all learning. However, since we’ve been involved it has all been positive and we’re looking forward to engaging more locally.”

**QUARTERLY
CONNECT
PERSPECTIVES**

SMEs

Joe Bullimore, Sales Manager – UK and Ireland, RTR GmbH & Co KG

“It was a great opportunity to meet people from the KDPs, who we wouldn’t normally get to see. It was useful to get their perspective and understand that it is a long-term project and things aren’t just going to happen quickly. We are already established suppliers to Doosan, but to have the opportunity to meet someone face-to-face from the likes of Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick, who we know have their eye on materials we are offering, was really helpful.


“When you look at the numbers and timescales – 18 years and however many billions – it can’t not be of interest to people. We want to develop as a company. This is about investment in Cumbria and also the knock-on effect it could have on our existing presence in the North East. The opportunities are huge.”

**QUARTERLY
CONNECT
PERSPECTIVES**

Pat Garth, PA to the Board of Directors, Graham Engineering

“It was great to meet all the other SMEs who’ve been through the SME Matchmaker programme. It was also good to see the faces of the KDPs and ask them some very honest questions. It’s been invaluable to understanding the KDPs’ barriers – what they’re having to cope with in terms of scope, and that this all as part of their other day-to-day work. They’ve given us a good insight into why things are taking as long as they are. Hopefully, they’ll take away that the SMEs want to help – and they have the skills and capability to save them money and deliver all the desired outcomes over the project life cycle.

“We’re based in Lancashire and to have a branch here would take a good commitment from PPP, or any other company. To get that commitment we need to have an introduction and give them a better understanding of our capabilities. That hasn’t happened yet, which is why I was encouraged that my suggestion to have a networking event focused on making these connections was well received. I’m looking forward to seeing that happen.”



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MOVING FORWARD



This was an opening salvo in our quest to deliver real results when it comes to turning matches between SMEs and KDPs into real contracts, real jobs and apprenticeships, real investment in offices and facilities, and meaningful social impact that makes a real difference to the lives and career prospects of local people. We not only want to see matches made, but pledges turned into reality.

We listened intently to feedback from SMEs and KDPs. There's a lot of work to do and a long way to go.

Our key takeaways from the meeting and thoughts for future Swimming with the Big Fish SME Matchmaker Service Quarterly Connect gatherings are:

- We now have a better understanding of why there have been time delays, but things are moving in the right direction!
- Both KDPs and SMEs are keen for more opportunities for face-to-face introductions and engagement and we will look to leverage this in the period before the next session
- Now that frameworks have been awarded to the KDPs, we need to continue to create in person opportunities for SMEs to showcase their capability, capacity, expertise and growth potential to the KDPs and PPP
- There is potential for a more targeted approach, where visibility exists, to enable more collaborations to begin sooner. For example, holding interim meetings homing in on one or two KDP packages and the immediate procurement needs
- There is a genuine feeling of positivity and a willingness to make this process a success – we can continue to collaborate and build on these foundations at the next session!

KEEP IN TOUCH

What do you think? We'd love your constructive feedback on what you'd like to see from future Swimming with the Big Fish SME Matchmaker Service Quarterly Connect meetings. We know many attendees invested a lot of time and effort to come along, so we want to ensure you get maximum benefit from coming along.

Please leave your feedback with Hazel Duhy on 016973 44905 or hazel.duhy@solomonseurope.co.uk



Swimming

with the big fish

SME MATCHMAKER SERVICE

Solomons Europe is regularly publishing news and views on the SWTBF SME Matchmaker Service on its website and social media channels.

Be sure to visit the website and follow them on the handles below.

Website: www.solomonseurope.co.uk/blog

LinkedIn: [@solomons-europe](https://www.linkedin.com/company/solomons-europe)

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