**Business in Parliament Conference (BiPC) 2023**

**Workshop 6 Note – *Strategic Decision Making: Techniques and process for stronger strategic decision making***

**Co-Chairs**:

Lorna Slater, MSP, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity

Michelle Thomson, MSP, member of the Economy and Fair Work Committee

**Co-Hosts:**

Dr Deborah Benson, Institute of Directors (IoD) Scotland

**Summary**

Co-chairs welcomed attendees to the workshop and the Minister highlighted the importance of Strategic Decision Making, for everyone including delivery of the National Strategy for Economic Development (NSET).

Dr Benson introduced and led the discussion, exploring different techniques and process for stronger strategic decision making.

During the session, attendees considered a range of questions including:

* what a strategic decision is and why organisations find it difficult/challenging;
* where strategic decisions are made in their organisations; and
* how they involve their staff.

Attendees explored (in breakout sessions) the types of strategic decisions they make, and the level of risk associated with these.

During the discussion, attendees were broadly in agreement that some or all the NSET programmes of action are relevant to the strategies for their own organisation and commented on the importance they placed on delivery and implementation of NSET. Some highlighted they felt there was more than just financial value in the NSET programme of actions and there were greater opportunities for international benchmarking to measure and understand what policies work elsewhere.

Different techniques were explored in assessing strategic options for businesses, examining the suitability, acceptability and feasibility of strategic decisions through weighting and scoring of options. While this approach is a valuable tool, there still needs to be a final sense check to ensure the option is right for the business. Scenario planning was also explored, including the benefits of carrying out a “pre-mortem” to consider how the option might fail.

In closing, the Minister recognised the challenges that small businesses face trying to implement the array of business policies and regulations and reiterated the importance of on-going engagement with the sector. Michelle Thomson MSP reflected on the importance of creativity when undertaking strategic decision making.

The Minister agreed on the need for closer, continuous engagement with small businesses when developing economic policies and regulations.