



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Right Honourable Alister Jack
Secretary of State for Scotland
The Scotland Office
1 Melville Crescent
Edinburgh
EH3 7HW

**Local Government and
Communities Committee**

T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5232
Calls via RNID Typetalk: 18001 0131
348 5232

enquiries@scotlandoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Email: LGCCCommittee@parliament.scot

2 July 2020

Dear Mr Jack,

I wrote to you on 12 September 2019 (see attached) to invite you or another Minister in your department to give evidence jointly with a Scottish Government Minister on the progress of Scottish City Region Deals. It is the Committee's understanding that these multi-billion pound Deals are a flagship UK Government policy and we expected that you would be keen to accept the opportunity to update us on the work being done under them.

Despite reminders of the invitation from Clerks to the Committee, and an acknowledgement from your officials well before lockdown, that it had been received, it is deeply disappointing that, more than nine months later, you have still not replied.

The Committee acknowledges that, since the invite was issued, the priority for the Government has rightly been the covid-19 emergency. However, as the country begins to move out of lockdown, it would seem opportune to measure the impact of covid-19 on the deals and how they can be progressed and, if necessary, re-energised. The devastating impact of the virus on some sectors means that measures to stimulate the country's economy seem more important than ever.

I am therefore writing to you once again to restate my original invitation and to ask you to confirm whether a representative of the UK Government will give evidence on this matter. Given the importance of intergovernmental partnership working on Deals, our preference would be for the UK

Government Minister to give evidence jointly with the Scottish Government Minister if practically possible.

I would be grateful for a response to my letter by close on 30 July 2020. The Scottish Parliament is currently in Recess. We resume normal sittings from the week of 11 August. In line with current advice on social distancing, we would be happy to conduct this evidence session by video conference.

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity had previously indicated his willingness to take part in a joint evidence session at a mutually convenient time. I have CC.d him to this letter and the Clerks to the Committee would be happy to coordinate between offices on potential dates for this session to take place.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

James Dornan MSP
Convener of the Local Government and Communities Committee

C.C. Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity



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12 September 2019

Dear Mr Jack,

The Local Government and Communities Committee takes lead responsibility in [the scrutiny of City Region Deals](#) in the Scottish Parliament and, since its 2017-2018 Committee inquiry, has maintained a watching brief, holding periodic evidence sessions to assess their progress.

As you will be aware, as part of its inquiry, the Committee heard from both the Scotland Office's Lord Duncan and Keith Brown MSP, then Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, on [22 November 2017](#).

I refer you to correspondence with your predecessor of [20 December 2018](#) and [17 January 2019](#) on arranging for a representative of the Scottish Office to give evidence on how Deals have progressed since our inquiry concluded. Following receipt of Mr Mundell's response indicating his willingness to attend, Committee clerks were in contact with the Scotland Office seeking confirmation of a suitable date. The Committee appreciates that the last few months at Westminster have been unusually busy, but it is still disappointing that the Scotland Office was not, in the end, able to confirm a date with us.

The Committee discussed its work programme this week, shortly after a fact-finding visit to Stirling University to meet local partners in the Stirling and Clackmannanshire Deal. We agreed once again to extend to the Scotland Office an invitation to provide oral evidence on the progress of Scottish City Region Deals jointly with the Scottish Government. The aim of the session would be to help us ascertain how well the UK and Scottish Governments are

collaborating on various deals. It would also provide an opportunity for the Committee to question how the recently reformed UK Cabinet is taking Deals forward as part of its priorities for government.

I hope you would agree with me that the UK and Scottish Government's joint work on City Region Deals is a matter of immense public interest and that you will therefore respond positively to this invitation.

An invitation to provide joint evidence is also going to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity.

If your officials have any questions regarding this meeting, or any queries as to a mutually agreeable date and time for an evidence session then the clerks to the Committee would be happy to help on the contact details set out above.

Kind regards,

James Dornan MSP
Convener of the Local Government and Communities Committee

C.C. Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity