



James Dornan MSP

Convener of the Local Government and Communities Committee

T3.60

The Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh

EH99 1SP

Your Ref:

Date: 4 April 2019

Dear James,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – CITY REGION DEALS

Thank you for your letter of 18 March 2019 following up on the Committee's evidence session on city region deals. The Committee asked for further information in relation to consultation with businesses and communities, the source and breakdown of housing monies and equality reports carried out by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission on business cases within the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. I should offer the following response:-

Consultation with businesses and communities

Prior to Deal signing

The city region's businesses have been key consultees from the outset of the city region partners coming together to form a bid for a Deal in 2015.

The "Accelerating Growth" brand was launched in August 2015. Over 300 people attended the launch, among them key businesses, public sector organisations, third sector organisations and community groups from across the region.

Several other round-table events were held in the aftermath with a selection of key businesses across the region. There has also been ongoing engagement with the local business forums and Chambers of Commerce, and residents have also been kept informed through the community planning process.

The website www.acceleratinggrowth.org.uk was also launched at this time. This included a short film and downloadable booklet explaining the need for a Deal and the potential benefits it might bring. The website is targeted at both the general public and regional businesses. The news section has been updated as major milestones have been reached, and news stories have been linked to. Over 200 different businesses pledged support to the Deal on the website in its first year.

Heads of Terms to Deal Document (July 2017 to August 2018)

The City Region Deal projects were listed in the [Heads of Terms agreement](#). Projects will be consulted on in line with the Planning process. This will include consultation with businesses.

Small, medium and large businesses from across the region, as well as Government and relevant agencies, were asked for their views on how businesses and social enterprise could best be represented within the Deal's Governance structure. Two workshops were held from which the Terms of Reference for a Regional Enterprise Council were agreed and included within the Deal.

The overarching purpose of the Regional Enterprise Council is to provide the voice of the business and third sector to guide the implementation of the City Region Deal. This group supports the other city region deal partners (local authorities, universities/colleges and government/public sector agencies), towards a shared ambition for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth for the city region. It does this in the following ways:

- uses its commercial knowledge and expertise to influence the Joint Committee and Executive Board in making spend and investment decisions that maximise benefits for the city region's economy and its people;
- engages with wider business and third sector networks across the city region to ensure that a wide range of views are captured; and
- champions the City Region Deal nationally and internationally to encourage further investment opportunities

Since Deal Signing (August 2018 to present)

The Regional Enterprise Council has been formed and consists of 15 individuals from small, medium and large business and third sector enterprises from across the region. Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland are also represented at Chief Executive level.

The group has held two official meetings – in December 2018 and March 2019. Their areas of interest include: shaping and updating the vision for the city region; developing a shared approach to community benefits in procurement to ensure inclusive growth in the region; and ensuring effective place-making when delivering the regional housing programme.

Breakdown of the £248m partner contribution for housing

On 23 January 2019, CEC and Scottish Futures Trust [launched](#) the new affordable housing partnership, Edinburgh Living. The £248m partner contribution is the money the City of Edinburgh Council is borrowing and on-lending to Edinburgh Living. Edinburgh Living is the housing partnership that City of Edinburgh Council established with Scottish Futures Trust to deliver a minimum of 1,500 homes at mid-market rent and competitive market rent levels.

This innovative project was a key part of the ESESCR Heads of Terms Agreement and Final Deal documents. The £248m borrowing undertaken by CEC is new borrowing complemented by a one-off £16.1m capital grant from Scottish Government.

Equalities reports by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission

Chris Oswald, Head of Policy and Communications, and Johanna Boyd, Consultant, at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the statutory regulator for Equalities and Human Rights across the United Kingdom, presented to the Joint Committee of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal on 1st March 2019. Their presentation and the Committee discussion that followed is publicly available via the meeting webcast at https://edinburgh.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/381869. The relevant element of proceedings forms Item 5.2 and begins 19minutes and 57 seconds into proceedings.

Chris spoke of the EHRC's objective for City Region and Growth Deals, and Regional Enterprise Partnerships, is to be a means of advancing equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics to improve the life circumstances of all. He spoke of the "positive engagement" with the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deals and all Scottish City Region Deals in promoting equality outcomes. The ESES City

Region Deal Programme Manager facilitated Chris and Johanna addressing the most recent meeting of Scottish City Region and Growth Deals PMO's on 20 March 2019.

Johanna highlighted to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee that the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal is at a good stage for business cases to be influenced to ensure better equality outcomes through these investment decisions. Whilst recognising that the business cases are primarily economic growth documents and necessarily adhere to Green Book requirements, Johanna advised that the EHRC had considered each of the business cases being considered by the Joint Committee and that good equality outcomes were coming forward.

Johanna described the EHRC's engagement with the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal as "regular, positive and in demand". The feedback that the EHRC has provided on the business cases arose from that ongoing dialogue and was reflected back through discussions, meetings and in some emails. It is important to clarify that the EHRC is the statutory regulator for equality and does not carry out equality impact assessments on behalf of public bodies. Such assessments must be carried out by the public body in order to fulfil the public sector equality duty as stipulated in the Equality Act 2010. Accordingly, no formal equalities reports were commissioned but the EHRC, as well as offering comment on the various business cases, has also informed the checklist for all covering reports for the ESES City Region Deal and this specifically requires that equalities considerations be detailed. The EHRC has also run training sessions for those involved in procurement and City Region Deals and has helped to inform the approach that the ESES City Region Deal is taking to secure community benefits. A couple of City Region Deal Procurement and Community Benefits training sessions were most recently run by the EHRC on Wednesday 3rd April and hosted by The City of Edinburgh Council.

I hope that this is helpful to Committee: please, however, do not hesitate to contact me direct if I can provide any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Shona Haslam
Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal