

Local Government and Communities Committee

City Region Deals

Submission from Historic Environment Scotland

Thank you for seeking our views on City Region and local growth deals as part of your call for written evidence. I offer the following comments on behalf of Historic Environment Scotland which is the lead public body set up to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment.

We are a non-departmental public body with charitable status, governed by a Board of Trustees, who were appointed by Scottish Ministers. We lead and enable Scotland's first historic environment strategy *Our Place in Time*, which sets out how our historic environment will be managed. It ensures our historic environment is cared for, valued and enhanced, both now and for future generations.

We have provided comments in relation to some of the areas highlighted by the Committee and would be happy to provide further information in support of these, or other related matters, should this be helpful.

- **What is your understanding of the purpose of City Region Deals?**

We understand that City Region Deals are a means of facilitating greater decision making at a local level on matters of greatest significance to that particular area. In doing so, these seek to unlock new or existing funding mechanisms and influence key decisions that will increase innovation and improve economic competitiveness of that area.

- **Are City Region Deals on track to deliver local growth, innovation and infrastructure schemes which would not have otherwise been delivered?**

No comments.

- **What is your understanding of the governance arrangements for City Region Deals, and how well are these arrangements working in practice?**

We have had limited involvement with the governance arrangements associated with City Region Deals and therefore have no view on the success or otherwise of existing arrangements. Our interaction with City Regional deals has tended to focus around specific initiatives identified within these deals, principally relating to major developments and infrastructure improvements, where we have a role in facilitating delivery as part of the spatial planning system.

- **Have local residents and businesses been kept informed and involved in the development and activities of City Region Deals?**

In response to the Scottish Government recent consultation on the review of the Scottish Planning System, we highlighted the potential for greater integration

between Local Development Planning and the preparation of City Deals. In many instances there will be a clear connection between the projects being identified as part of the City Region Deal process and the spatial planning system. Indeed, the Local Development Plan and its associated impact assessments and action programmes will be a key delivery mechanism. Closer alignment between these processes would seem not only desirable, but necessary, particularly if decisions are being taken within the City Region Deal process that will significantly influence the Local Development Plan, which is where local people might often become aware of proposed and emerging new developments and have an opportunity to contribute their views.

It may be possible to build on the established consultation procedures already in place for development planning and use these as a vehicle to increase local community participation in City Region and Local Growth Deals.

- **Are regions not covered by City Region Deals able to access equivalent funding and support for growth, innovation and infrastructure schemes?**

No comments.

- **Are City Regions Deals supporting a shift towards local decision-making on major investment projects?**

No comments.

- **Any other issues relating to City Region Deals which you wish to bring to the attention of the Committee?**

Preserving the built heritage is of great importance to the success of our city regions and town centres, because investment in our historic environment is key to supporting improved quality of life for many people across Scotland. In support of this, we fund City Heritage Trusts in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Stirling, Inverness and Perth to operate grant schemes on our behalf. [Edinburgh World Heritage](#), for example, operates a scheme for the city's World Heritage Site. Like City Region Deals, these provide a means of delivering focused investment in the historic built environment and enable decisions on funding priorities to be taken at a local level.

Yours sincerely,

Alasdair McKenzie
Deputy Head of Casework
Historic Environment Scotland