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20 November 2017

Bob Doris MSP
Convener
Local Government and Communities Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Sent by email to LocalGovernmentandCommunities@parliament.scot

Dear Bob,

Local Government and Communities Committee Inquiry into City Region Deals

Thank you for your letter of the 14 November 2017 and also for the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee earlier this month. I hope this letter provides you with further detail relating to our regional commitment to deliver inclusive economic growth.

Following the meeting of the Glasgow City Region Cabinet on 11 October, I wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work to emphasise the Cabinet's view that the City Deal must be a mechanism that helps to deliver long term inclusive growth, and expressing our commitment to work with both Governments to achieve this.

The Glasgow City Region City Deal Agreement, signed by the Scottish & UK Governments and by the 8 Council Leaders, sets a clear aspiration to spread the benefits of growth across the city-region and to ensure that deprived communities benefit from this growth. Our commitment to put inclusive growth at the heart of the city region's wider economic aspirations was embedded through the Glasgow City Region Economic Strategy and Action Plan which was approved by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet in February 2017.

As you will be aware, the Glasgow City Region City Deal is the only Scottish City Deal that falls within the scope of the National Evaluation Panel and the 5 yearly gateway review process. We are part of this process alongside 10 other English and Welsh city regions and our first gateway review is scheduled for December 2019. This evaluation process, which is still being developed, will consider the progress made in the delivery of the Infrastructure Fund investment and any economic impact that may be identifiable at this time.

In addition to the gateway review process, Glasgow City Region City Deal is unique in that we have established our own independent Commission on Economic Growth, chaired by Professor Anton Muscatelli, and consisting of a number of commissioners with a range of economic expertise and experience. The Commission serves as a critical friend and as the primary source of economic advice to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet.

The Commission has also taken on a key role in developing an approach to consider how and why inclusive growth can usefully be considered in the context of GCR City Deal and the wider regional economy. The Commission intend to submit a report to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet in December 2017 which sets out their thoughts on how this can be progressed.

In addition, we are working alongside the Commission, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, and other partners to develop an innovative pilot project that will consider how to practically apply a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the inclusive growth effects from one of the major capital investment projects within the City Deal. The scope for this project is currently being finalised but we anticipate that it will inform how we can practically apply inclusive growth to the evaluation of individual projects and identify where the delivery of these projects can be shaped to maximise inclusive growth.

Work is also underway to develop the business case for a proposed Glasgow City Region Intelligence Hub. In addition to a wider role in providing an intelligence and data function for the city region, the Hub will potentially play a role in the monitoring and evaluation of City Deal and wider economic performance, from assessing the inclusive growth impact of individual projects to monitoring regional outcome indicators using the Scottish Government's Inclusive Growth Diagnostic Tool, and other evaluation work.

Delivering our ambition of inclusive economic growth must be underpinned by a commitment to partnership working, not only across the 8 councils of Glasgow City Region, but across all public sector agencies and with the Scottish and UK Governments, the private and third sectors. Bringing multiple agencies together can be challenging but through the emerging Regional Partnership approach I believe that we will see a significant change in the way that we work together.

Our commitment to partnership is evident in the approach we have taken working with the national transport agencies to develop the City Deal transport projects, such as the Airport Access Project. Whilst there are always challenges in delivering projects of this scale, where issues have arisen we have been able to practically work through them, particularly through the Ministerial Working Group that has been established to support the project.

I hope this response provides you with a summary of the work currently underway in Glasgow City Region and how we are developing our approach to monitoring and evaluating inclusive economic growth. Please let me know if there is any further information that I can provide to you and the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Susan Aitken