

Local Government and Communities Committee

City Region Deals

Correspondence from Highland Council to the Convener of 21 November 2017

Mr Bob Doris MSP
Local Government and Communities Committee
T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Doris

Thank you for your letter dated 14th November regarding the City Regional Deal.

Please find attached further information to your enquiry as requested.

Yours sincerely

Depute Provost Graham Ross
City of Inverness

1 Introduction

- 1.1 “Through the City-Region Deal the UK Government, Scottish Government and The Highland Council are working together to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth”.¹

The OECD’s definition of inclusive growth² is:

‘Economic growth that creates opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society’.

The Scottish Government refers to: growth that combines increased prosperity with greater equality, creates opportunities for all, and distributes the benefits of increased prosperity fairly.

Promoting inclusive growth can help to encourage fair work practices, develop sustainable and inclusive jobs, and to address long standing barriers to the labour market. It can also help to tackle socio-economic disadvantage and inequality faced by people with particular equality characteristic and place-based disadvantage.

- 1.2 The aspirations for inclusive growth within the City Region Deal are set in the following context:

- median weekly earnings of full-time employees, who reside in Highland, in April 2016, were 1.4 per cent lower than those in Scotland as a whole.
- lack of Higher Education opportunities in the past and a limited range of employment opportunities have contributed to significant outmigration of young people
- addressing fuel poverty and reducing carbon emissions has particular significance; the harsh climate and low wages combine to produce high levels of fuel poverty
- in common with other parts of the country and ageing demographic provides challenges for social care and health providers
- also in common with the rest of Scotland, employment rates for disabled people are lower than the Scottish average and a gender pay gap persists despite some reduction in the size of the gap;
- a shortage of affordable and accessible housing
- high degrees of rurality - socio-economic conditions particular to rural Scotland exacerbate “hidden poverty”¹, impacting particularly on disabled people, low skilled and young unemployed and ethnic minority groups

¹ Inverness and Highland City Region Deal Document

² Review of Equality Evidence in Rural Scotland 2015 (Scottish Government)

2 Approach to Social Inclusion

2.1 Appendix 1 lists all the projects funded by either the UK or Scottish Government within the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal. Broadly speaking there are projects who are inherently concerned with Inclusion and tackling disadvantage and those that have as their primary focus economic growth and economic growth capacity. Certain projects also present an opportunity to promote fair work practices, tackle barriers to the labour market and address under-representation of particular groups in sectors of the labour market.

2.2 Projects aimed Inclusion and tackling disadvantage

The projects that have as their aims social inclusion or tackling disadvantage will describe within their business cases the activities required to deliver the project and the expected benefits and impacts. E.G. A reduction in levels of long term unemployment, an increase in affordable housing, percentage of people in rural communities with access to high speed broadband.

2.3 Assessment of Community Impacts

Community Impact Assessments (CIA) will be the Councils holistic approach to ensuring initiatives and policies are deployed in a fair and inclusive manner and that the impacts of any such initiatives or policies apply equally to all stakeholder groups. This will include our duties to give 'due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the forthcoming Socio-economic Duty, as well as considering Poverty and Rural Impacts. As a matter of course these will apply to the City Region Deal projects and programmes and requirement is shared with our partners in Highlands and Islands Enterprise and The university of the Highlands and Islands.

Albyn Housing Association are working with Councils officials with respect to the housing allocation policy for the Fit house project. Appendix 1 shows an early view of where Community Impact Screenings or assessments may be necessary. The process would be for the majority of initiatives to be subject to an early screening and where appropriate initiatives will be followed up with a full assessment.

3 Measurement

3.1 Where measurement is made either as the prime purpose of an initiative, (Affordable housing or skills and employability) or as a way of understanding and demonstrating inclusiveness of deployment (Children entitled to free school meals achieving high scores in STEM subjects) these will be reported as part of the Economic Dashboard within the programme governance. Reporting will be to the City Region Deal Programme Board, The Highland Council Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee and The Scottish City Region Deal Delivery Group. Reports will

be available to the general public.

- 3.2** The Inverness and Highland City Region Deal is working with other local authorities and the Universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow as part of the project to identify measures for the impacts of the City Region Deals which includes measures of inclusive growth. This will be used to inform the development of the economic dashboard mentioned above.

Author: John Robertson
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Project	Lead Org	Funder	CIA Required	Project Status	Project Focus
Science Skills Academy	HIE	Scot Gov	Y	Implementation phase	STEMD engagement and attainment
School of Health and Life Science	UHI	UK Gov	Y	Implementation phase	Creating rural health care solutions and increasing commercial activity and based on this companies in the Highlands
Northern Innovation Hub	HIE	UK Gov	Y	Implementation phase	Increasing levels of Innovation within Highland businesses.
Fit House	Albyn	Scot Gov	Y	Implementation phase	To enable vulnerable people to remain in the community for longer and reduce the cost on the public purse
Inverness Castle (Tower)	THC	Both	Y	Project Delivered	To create an initial visitor attraction for the Inverness Castle complex
Affordable Housing	THC	Scot Gov	Y	Implementation phase	The creation of affordable houses for predominantly young people
Land Remediation	THC	UK Gov	N	Implementation phase	N/A
Roads	Trans Scot	Scot Gov	N	Design	N/A
Digital (WI-FI)	HIE	UK Gov	Y	Strategic Outline	To be determined but will include providing superfast broad for as many residents in the Highlands as possible and stimulating economic activity

Skills And Employability	THC	N/A	Y	Strategic Outline	To support those furthest away from employment into work and more skilled work
Air Access	Hitrans	N/A	Y	Watching brief	To maintain and develop the air connectivity to and within the Highlands