

Economy and Fair Work Committee
Wednesday 4 November 2024
32nd Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

City Region and Regional Growth Deals – Note by the Clerk

Background

1. City Region Deals and Regional Growth Deals are funding deals agreed between the Scottish and UK governments, and local partners. They are designed to bring about long-term improvements to regional economies, attract investment, create new jobs, and accelerate inclusive economic growth.
2. There are currently 12 [City Region and Regional Growth Deals in Scotland](#), each at different stages of their life cycles. The first Deal established in Scotland was announced in 2014 for the Glasgow City Region. The most recent is the Falkirk Growth Deal, which was signed in November 2024.

Previous scrutiny

3. The Accounts Commission and Auditor General for Scotland assessed the Scottish deals in 2020, and in June 2023, published an [update on the progress made against recommendations made in their report](#).
4. Following this, the Committee agreed to scrutinise the Scottish Deals further. The Committee agreed to delay the beginning of this work when the Scottish Affairs Committee launched its own similar inquiry. Due the dissolution of the UK Parliament in 2024, this work was not completed.

Inquiry Remit and Structure

5. Following the initial work conducted by the Scottish Affairs Committee, the Committee agreed to continue its work on City Region and Regional Growth Deals to understand whether the deals are achieving their aims.
6. The inquiry will consider—
 - The implementation and effectiveness of deals;
 - how they have contributed to addressing local issues; and
 - how they have supported development and inclusive growth.
7. The Committee's call for written views ran from 20 September to 14 November 2024. [Thirty-eight responses were received](#). The written views are in the process of being summarised and the Committee will be invited to

consider if further witnesses will be asked to give evidence. The UK Government [submitted a response](#) and are keen to engage with the inquiry.

8. In addition to this, the Committee will also consider evidence submitted earlier this year to the [Scottish Affairs Committee](#).
9. The inquiry will be held over six evidence sessions—
 - Session 1 – an overview of the Deals;
 - Session 2 – Mature Deals;
 - Session 3 – Recent Deals;
 - Session 4 – Supporting local economies and supply chains;
 - Session 5 – Local communities and devolved decision making; and
 - Session 6 – Session with the UK Government
 - Session 7 – Final session with the Scottish Government.
10. The Committee visited the National Robotarium on Monday 25 November to learn more about how the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal has supported innovation.

Evidence Session

11. Today's evidence session will focus on the mature Deals in place in Scotland. The Committee will consider how best practice is shared across different deals, the flexibility that exists towards the end of each deal's lifespan, and the arrangements in place at the end of each deal's term.
12. The Committee will hear from—
 - Stuart Bews, Programme Manager, Aberdeen City Region Deal;
 - Paul Lawrence, Chief Executive, Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.
 - Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council and Chair of the Glasgow City Region Cabinet; Councillor Owen O'Donnell, Leader of East Renfrewshire Council and Depute Chair of the Glasgow City Region Cabinet; and Kevin Rush, Director of Regional Economic Growth, Glasgow City Region Deal; and
 - Matt Bailey, Programme Manager, Inverness and Highland City Region Deal.
13. [Aberdeen City Council](#), [Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal consortium](#), [Glasgow City Region](#), and [The Highland Council](#) all contributed to the Committee's call for views.

**Clerks to the Committee
November 2024**