

Briefing:

Parliamentary debate on City Deals and Regional Economic Partnerships

January 2019

Introduction

This briefing aims to inform MSPs ahead of the debate on City Deal and Regional Economic Partnerships which takes place at 2pm on Tuesday 22nd January

Background

RTPI Scotland has welcomed the Regional Economic Partnership and City Region Deals and is of the view that they could, if effectively utilised, provide transformational change in the short, medium and long term for the Scotland. However, this will require the following:

Better Integration with the National Planning Framework

The impending review of the National Planning Framework (NPF) provides a key opportunity integrate strategies for an economically successful, community focused and environmentally sustainable Scotland. The NPF sets out a long-term vision for the development of Scotland. It is described as the spatial expression of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy - with a focus on supporting sustainable economic growth and the transition to a low carbon economy.

We believe that there needs to be a more formalised connection between City Region Deals and the NPF an opportunity that is potentially being missed with the majority of City Deal proposal documents not currently referencing the NPF.

There must be an enhanced role for the NPF – and planning in general - in setting the context for the future development and implementation of City Region Deals.

Better Integration with other strategies

Beyond unlocking economic growth, with the correct implementation, City Deals and Regional Economic Partnerships should also generate a wide array of social and environmental benefits for the country. To unlock this transformational change, integration and alignment with other national and regional strategies will be essential. These include:

- Strategic planning through emerging regional strategies
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- National Transport Strategy
- National Economic Strategy
- National Energy Strategy

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- National Marine Plan
- Land Use Strategy
- Historic Environment Strategy
- Fairer Scotland Action Plan
- National Waste Management Plan
- Regional Transport Partnerships

The on-going parliamentary scrutiny of the Planning (Bill) Scotland provides a significant opportunity to help align Regional Planning Partnerships with City Region Deals and better co-ordinate transport and infrastructure planning at a regional level. The transport and energy strategies reviews offer further offer an opportunity to address sectoral and policy silos.

Better Integration with regional planning

If City Region Deals are to provide this transformational change for our communities they need to be part of a strategy that integrates approaches to economic, social and environmental issues. They need to recognise how a range of investments across the region can complement one another and bring mutual benefit. And they need to look beyond the immediate to ensure that investments bring sustainable and lasting benefits in the longer term. They cannot be a list of individual projects and initiatives sitting in isolation

There is a need to ensure future approaches to regional and strategic planning complement and integrate with any new approaches to regional and strategic planning.

More Holistic Measure of Success

Currently the measure of the success of investments from City Region Deals is based upon their contribution to GVA. We believe that a more holistic approach is required if the City Region Deals are to deliver transformational change and this must mean that environmental and social benefits are also aimed for.

The Royal Town Planning Institute

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the champion of planning and the planning profession. We work to promote the art and science of planning for the public benefit. We have around 2100 members in Scotland and a worldwide membership of over 25,000. RTPI Scotland's members will in large part be responsible for the successful implementation of the Bill, once enacted.