

**Community Planning Partnership - Chief Officers Group**

**City/Region Deal Briefing**

**7 August, 2015**

**Summary**

This briefing updates colleagues on progress with the development of a City/Region Deal and requests that Community Planning Partnership contributes to the overall governance of this project.

**Background**

Initial discussions with both the Scottish and UK Governments at both political and officer level indicated a willingness to explore the Council's ambition for a City/Region Deal.

The work to develop a City/Region deal for Inverness and the Highlands has continued and has been reported to Council and the City Committee. The UKG has appointed an account manager to work with the Council, and the SG has done likewise and dialogue with both Governments has continued with a view to developing the thinking around what such a deal would look like.

**Development**

Two announcements of funds were made prior to the election, with an indication of £100k available to support the development of the City/Region Deal, and also £3m available to spend in 15/16 on city centre projects. Two projects to the value of £3m as part of an initial allocation for the city centre by UKG have been identified. These are public realm works in proximity to Inverness Castle and a public access Wi-Fi project for the City. The business cases for both these projects have been submitted to HM Treasury for approval.

Initially the Council had been working with Ernst and Young who had been appointed by Scottish Futures Trust to prepare a feasibility study on a Growth Accelerator Model for the city of Inverness.

The Council in partnership with Highland and Islands Enterprise have now appointed Steve Westbrook, Economist to help develop a bid document.

**Progress**

The vision for the deal is to have a skilled region that is attractive to visitors, which grows existing businesses and attracts new businesses and generates increased investment, all contributing to the economic output of the region.

Three overarching themes have been identified

1. A skilled economy
2. A growing economy – sectoral development
3. An enabled economy – infrastructural and regional hub development

Some of the projects that were identified included

- Longman Interchange improvements
- East Link
- West Link – Regional sports facility
- City Centre regeneration – Inverness Castle visitor attraction
- Muirtown regeneration
- Broadband, Mobile and Wi-Fi
- Skills Development

### **Next Steps**

- Further investigation and costings of the identified projects and refinement of the financial outcomes from each project and financial modelling of incomes
- Further investigation and refinement of the economic outputs
- Developing a strong case to inform discussions with SG and UKG
- Consideration as to what additional powers and responsibilities the Council would wish to take control of as part of the City Deal.

It is intended to submit an initial scoping document to the Scottish and UK Governments in early September setting out the asks both in terms of specific projects and powers/responsibilities that are being sought. This would be reported to the next Council meeting in September.

### **Engagement**

Engagement has taken place with a range of business organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, SCDI and Federation of Small Businesses. The possibility of wider public engagement through social media is being considered.

### **Governance**

It is proposed that the Community Planning Partnership contribute to the overall governance of this project by monitoring the progress and delivery of this project.

### **Recommendation**

Colleagues are asked to note the briefing.

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