

EU referendum – Greens say Edinburgh City Deal now in doubt



A multi-billion pound programme of investment in the economy of Edinburgh and surrounding region hangs in the balance after the UK narrowly voted to exit the EU.

According to Green councillors, the City Region Deal – which aims to inject up to £2 billion of public money into the regional economy, matched by similar levels of private investment – has been thrown into chaos by the EU vote.

Green economy spokesperson Cllr Gavin Corbett said: “The City Region Deal has been in preparation for almost two years now and is due for final submission to UK and Scottish Governments in the late summer.

“The City Deal offers a massive opportunity to forge a new kind of low carbon, jobs-rich, high-skilled economy through major investment in transport and public places and building on the region’s natural strengths such as its universities and food production.

“It is a once-in-a-generation chance to transform the regional economy. But the UK exit vote comes at exactly the wrong time, for three main reasons:

“First of all, it leaves a period of deep political instability at a time when the UK Government needs to be making real long-term decisions.

“Secondly, it jettisons the role which EU programmes have played for a long time in investing in infrastructure, pioneering new standards of low carbon development,

encouraging labour mobility and easing international exchange of ideas in universities.

“And thirdly, it sends a signal to would-be investors that the UK is turning in on itself, and declining to learn from the best of our international competitors.

Cllr Corbett added: “Of course, the bitter irony is that, in a city where people voted 3:1 to stay in the EU, all of these opportunities now hang in the balance because of a vote which feels utterly out of our control.

“Both UK and Scottish Governments need to make very firm statements soon that long term investment will not be compromised by the shock referendum result.”

Council Leader Andrew Burns said: “Discussions are ongoing with the UK and Scottish Governments on securing a City Region Deal_for Edinburgh with robust and detailed business cases being developed. The deal contains proposals to accelerate growth in Scotland’s capital city and wider regional economy that will benefit Scottish and UK economies while tackling inequalities and deprivation.

“It will also give the region greater autonomy on determining investment priorities and help to identify and deliver appropriate solutions to local issues and opportunities. As Council Leader, my primary concern will continue to be ensuring the best possible quality of life for all the residents of Edinburgh.”

The City Council will debate the City Region Deal at its [next full meeting](#) on Thursday 30 June 2016