

City Region Deal will be on the table later today – for signing!

The First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Damien Green, will be visiting Edinburgh today to assist with signing off the City Region Deal which once promised £1 billion of inward investment for the Edinburgh area.



Accompanied by Keith Brown MSP the Minister for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, The Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell and Council Leader Adam McVey there will be a flashing of pens as the dotted lines are signed later.

The City Region Deal was welcomed by the former City of Edinburgh Council leader Andrew Burns who wrote a blog about it in November 2016 welcoming the news that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had confirmed the UK Government's commitment to the deal in the Autumn Statement. Since then there has been much toing and froing but even a week or so ago it was not clear [this was actually going to happen](#) before the UK Government recess.

Council Leader Adam McVey is very happy this is happening now.

He told The Edinburgh Reporter : "I'm delighted we've secured an ambitious city which will deliver significant investment in the region and strengthen our economy.

"It will form an important part of our drive to increase innovation, improve infrastructure, deliver world class culture venues, boost housing and implement a skills programme

that will improve career opportunities for everyone in our communities.

“The collaborative working with partners including the Scottish Government and universities has made sure our deal works in the best interests of Scotland and the Capital.

“This process has been a long one and has taken a great deal of effort but I’m pleased that the first major achievement of the new Council is to secure this agreement.”

Only The Green Group at The City of Edinburgh Council have mentioned the actual figure which is some way short of the figure initially promised. Green councillors have described the City Region Deal as a long way short of what it could have been.

Green councillor Melanie Main said: “Of course £600m is an awful lot of money, so any additional investment has to be welcome. However, the truth is that the offer is less than what was expected and what is missing is as important as what is included.

“On transport, the priority should be dramatic improvements to public transport, walking and cycling; instead the centrepiece is the Sheriffhall roundabout.

“On housing, the offer, as it stands, is way short of what is needed for the region and a much bolder approach to land supply has been ducked.

“Also missing is any commitment to regional energy planning and both UK and Scottish Governments have resisted calls to give councils powers to raise their own funds, through, for example, a visitor levy.

“It’s been said that this City Deal will be the final one of its kind. It certainly feels that way. The task now is to make sure that this weaker deal can be fully focused on building

the cleaner, greener economy which is the city region's only future."

SIX PARTNERS

There is more than Edinburgh in the deal though and today's signing is likely to involve the leaders of neighbouring local authorities who are all set to benefit. The other councils in East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, South Borders and West Lothian are all set to share in the funding which will be put towards investment such as affordable housing, transport, infrastructure and skills development. These areas are home to around a quarter of Scotland's population.

Colleges and universities are also set to share in the investment which aims to accelerate growth by opening the door to significant government investment and additional funds from the private sector.

If successful then the initial funding could generate additional private investment first thought to be in the region of £3 billion.