

**Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal :
Regional Growth Framework Elected Members Oversight Committee****Report by Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** This report recommends Council to appoint two Members to sit on the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Regional Growth Framework Elected Members' Oversight Committee.

2 Background

- 2.1** Council has received regular reports on the progress of the City Region Deal, the most recent being to the meeting of Council on 12 November 2019. That report summarised the aims, objectives and governance structure of the City Region Deal, and current progress in these early stages of this 15-year programme. Council noted the decision of the City Region Deal Joint Committee on 3 September 2019 to prepare a Regional Growth Framework (RGF) in order to assist delivery of greater alignment across planning, housing, transport and economic development, and thereby maximise the regional inclusive growth outcomes that are central to the City Region Deal. The report to this Council in November 2019 also noted other relevant issues supporting the preparation of a RGF, notably the emerging national planning and transport policies and strategies, as well as the absence of a definitive regional economic strategy.
- 2.2** The report to Council in November 2019 also informed that the Joint Committee had agreed governance arrangements for the preparation of the RGF, which includes the formation of an Elected Members' Oversight Committee (EMOC). This Committee would oversee the preparation of the RGF, as well as subsequent preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, and comprise members with relevant portfolio responsibilities in matters of planning, transport, housing and economy. The EMOC would advise and recommend to the City Region Deal Joint Committee. That Joint Committee would have ultimate responsibility for approving the RGF, but only once each of the City Region Deal partner Councils had agreed the content of the RGF. The EMOC is to comprise two Councillors from each of the six partner Councils (City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian).
- 2.3** As the work to prepare the RGF will relate closely to that of the regional planning partnership (SESplan) and the regional transport partnership (SEStran) there would be merit in considering for appointment those Councillors who represent Midlothian Council on the SESplan Joint Committee and the SEStran Board. Those representatives are currently Councillors Imrie and Smail.

3.0 Preparation of the Regional Growth Framework

- 3.1** There are clearly demonstrable benefits which can be realised from the preparation of a RGF; providing a context for City Region Deal investment projects, establishing a regional economic strategy, and providing a positive statement of regional strategic intent to influence emerging national policies and strategies, particularly in relation to planning and transport.
- 3.2** The nature of the RGF document and its preparation is under consideration and will need to be a matter for the EMOC to examine at an early date. As it will be a critically important statement, and one which will provide direction to the preparation of the subsequent Regional Spatial Strategy, the role of elected members will be significant. A particular consideration will be the need to ensure the inclusive nature of the RGF, through genuine regional partnership working not only within the governance structure of the City Region Deal, but also with bodies at national level such as Scottish Enterprise and Transport Scotland, and at regional level including the partnerships for transport (SEStran) and planning (SESplan). In addition, greater awareness of the City Region Deal within our communities, and genuine engagement on the RGF will need to be an integral part of the process.

4.0 Report Implications

4.1 Resources

At present, there is no indication that preparation of the RGF, including the governance arrangements, will require any additional budget contributions from partner Councils and bodies. This assumes that there is existing staff resource within the partner Councils to support the preparation of the RGF. As the programme for preparation of the RGF is only at an initial stage this matter of resource requirements will need to be kept under review.

4.2 Risk

The need for, and benefits of a RGF have been articulated within this report. Given the significance of the document, insufficient elected Member involvement would represent a notable risk to the relevance and significance of the document.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth

4.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The RGF will further assert and develop the central aim of the City Region Deal to achieve sustainable inclusive growth across the region, including all communities. It therefore fully accords with the Single Midlothian Plan priorities of reducing the gaps in learning outcomes, health outcomes and economic circumstances.

4.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The impact of City Deal investment will be monitored and evaluated through a defined process currently being prepared by the City Region Deal partners in discussion with Government officials for sign off formally by the Joint Committee. That can provide information on impact at both regional and, in conjunction with indicators in the Single Midlothian Plan, at local level in this area.

4.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The fundamental aim of the City Region Deal is to achieve inclusive growth across the whole region including the more disadvantaged communities, thereby arresting and reversing economic decline; particularly in the areas of skills, employability and housing. The RGF can reinforce this aim and its intended outcomes.

4.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

See paragraph 3.2 above.

4.8 Ensuring Equalities

An equalities impact assessment will need to be considered as an accompaniment to the RGF. In respect of this report the equalities assessment for the impact of City Region Deal in Midlothian prepared in June 2018 remains relevant.

4.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Sustainable place making, recognition of climate change and the low carbon agenda, together with a sustainable regional economy are all central to the defined outcomes of the City Region Deal; and will need to be reflected in the RGF.

4.10 IT Issues

None

5.0 Summary

- 5.1** As articulated in this report, there are good reasons to support the preparation of a Regional Growth Framework within the context of the City Region Deal. The RGF will not only provide that context for City Region Deal investment, but will also provide an up to date regional strategy which takes account of, and aligns with extant and emerging planning, economy and transport policies/strategies at national and regional level. The RGF will therefore be a particularly significant document, requiring essential elected member oversight in its preparation; with such oversight being provided by all of the City Region Deal local authority partners.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1** Council is recommended to:
- i) appoint this Council's two current representatives on the regional planning partnership (SESplan) Joint Committee, and the regional transport partnership (SEStran) Board to represent Midlothian Council on the Regional Growth Framework Elected Members Oversight Committee; and
 - ii) require regular update reports on the progress of the preparation of the Regional Growth Framework as well as progress on the City Region Deal.

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Background Papers: None