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Dr Andrew Murrison MP  
Chair, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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20 December 2017

*Dear Andrew,*

### **Northern Ireland City Deals**

Thank you for your letter of 5 December on Northern Ireland City Deals. As you note, this Government is committed to working towards a comprehensive and ambitious set of City Deals. Northern Ireland has so far had no city deals, whereas England, Scotland and Wales have had 33 deals worth up to £4.9bn. We know that these deals have the potential to lever in private sector investment of up to £30bn. It is right that Northern Ireland should also be able to secure City Deals in order to boost investment and productivity.

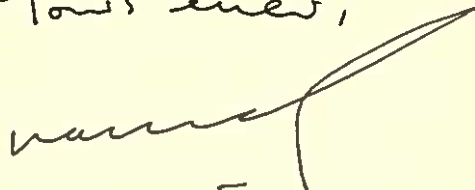
As you also point out, the Chancellor set out at Budget that we intend to open negotiations for a Belfast region City Deal, with local leaders working together to develop proposals for consideration to unlock the region's huge economic potential. This does not, however, affect our openness to listening to proposals for other City Deals. If councils elsewhere in Northern Ireland come forward with proposals, we are certainly open to considering them.

The key for all proposals, though, is that they are locally led. At the heart of any City Deal is a clear commitment to local leaders working collaboratively, and bringing the public and private sectors together, to drive growth across a functional economic area. That means identifying the key opportunities and challenges, as well as identifying the right area for a City Deal.

It is also important to be clear that many of the policy areas in this sphere are devolved: all of our City Deals in Scotland and Wales have been jointly signed by the local partners, the UK Government and the relevant Devolved Administration. Before any City Deals can be secured, therefore, we would need political decision-makers in place to agree on how local councils and the Northern Ireland administration would each play their part. As such, we would not want to pre-empt discussions about the specific powers or projects that any future City Deal may involve.

You and your Committee colleagues can, though, be reassured that we are very keen to see what progress can be made. My officials, along with those from HM Treasury and the Department for Communities and Local Government, have already met with counterparts from councils in Belfast and Londonderry, along with the Northern Ireland Civil Service, to discuss the development of proposals and to set out the process to follow. Similarly my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, along with Lord Duncan of Springbank and I, have all engaged with political representatives in Belfast and Londonderry to discuss the work that is underway across Northern Ireland.

We very much look forward to seeing how these proposals develop and would welcome updating your Committee on progress in due course.

Yours ever,  


**RT HON JAMES BROKENSHERE MP**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**