

Cllr A N Woolcock
Chair, SBCD Joint Scrutiny Committee

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Swansea Bay City Region

Thank you for your email about the business cases for the Swansea Bay City Deal. Like you and your committee I am keen to see rapid progress to enable the delivery of this deal and the long-term transformation and economic growth it will bring.

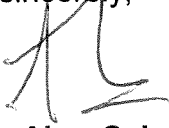
As you will be aware the UK and Welsh Government's jointly commissioned an Independent Review into the City Deal in December last year. This was in response to our concerns about the progress of the deal. This review has now been published and we will be working with the region to implement its recommendations. We believe that these recommendations will help drive forward the city deal although a number of these are for the region to take decisions on.

The pace of business case development has been slower than many of us would have liked. We want to complete the approvals process as quickly as possible, but it is the responsibility of region to deliver robust evidenced business cases that government can assess to ensure value for money for public funds. We have committed to expedite the remaining due diligence work for Yr Egin and the Swansea City Waterfront & Digital District as both projects are well advanced and look likely to be the first to be approved by government. I understand that the Joint Committee will now reconsider these two business cases on 28 March 2019, after which both the UK and Welsh Governments have committed to considering these as quickly as possible.

The review makes clear that it is not unusual for a portfolio of this size and complexity to take time to establish appropriate governance and compliance arrangements and the review was intended to make sure that we have the best processes in place to assure us that public funds are protected, whilst allowing the region to innovate. There is little in the 'process' that differs from accepted Best Practice.

I am copying this letter to Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport for the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AL', written over the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP
Secretary of State for Wales
Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru