



26/09/24

Claire Baker MSP, Convener Economy and Fair Work Committee

Sub; City Region Deals

Dear Convener,

Our campaign wishes to contribute to your committee's understanding of the City Region Deals, their implementation and effectiveness, contribution to local issues and if the public fund investment has contributed to inclusive growth for the benefit of local communities such as Inverclyde.

Unfortunately, Inverclyde has seen little or no benefit from the City Deal investment - please find attached our complaint recently sent to the City Deal regarding Inverclyde.

Our campaign group formed in December 2017 following the destruction of the Inchgreen dry dock cranes in July of that year. We were very active from the start and received initial support from Inverclyde Council. In 2020 we were approached by the council's Director of the Environment and Regeneration asking us to support their application to Clyde Mission for investment to refurbish Inchgreen Dry Dock Platers Fabrication Shed as PED SHIPS were

moving into the shed to build steel hulled yachts, they received £1.6m but the company disappeared.

However, Inverclyde Council never approached or consulted us regarding their application for City Deal funding for the refurbishment of our national asset, Inchgreen Dry Dock. We found that strange after our successful collaboration on funding for the platens fabrication shed.

Inverclyde Council's business case for City Deal funding was treated as highly confidential by the Council's leadership team and councillors and we were kept in the dark until informed that the council leadership team had agreed a joint venture with Peel Ports. There was little discussion on this JV strategy by Inverclyde Council's Environment and Regeneration Committee, it was a 'fait accompli'. No scrutiny of the council strategy or measurable outcomes were properly discussed, only a bun fight on who would sit on the JV board, it was pushed through and rubber stamped by the full Inverclyde Council. The confidential strategy was used by the leadership team to keep everything secret until they needed councillor's agreement, a failure by Inverclyde councillors to scrutinise the strategy is coming back to bite them as no jobs have been created to date!!

The campaign agreed with Katy Clark MSP (supported by Paul Sweeney MSP) to create a Scottish Parliament Petition and submit it to the Citizen Participation and Public Petition Committee PE2029, but it was killed off by the Scottish Government at the committee meeting on 11th September 2024 despite concerns being raised by CalMac, Ayrshire Council, Ferguson Marine Trade Union Representatives, Professor Alf Baird and both MSPs Katy Clark and Paul Sweeney. We spent 18 months compiling information, encouraging additional submissions from other sources and provided information on our 3 submissions, but the Petition was still killed off without any opportunity to provide evidence to the Petitions Committee - so much for Public Participation! We believe the petition submissions would be a viable source of information for your committee as it highlights the use/misuse of public funds by the Clyde Statutory Harbour Authority Peel Ports, who have received millions from the public purse since their arrival on the Clyde in 2003.

We believe the City Deal Complaint attachment and the Public Petition PE2029 submissions will assist your committee's enquiry. Inviting MSPs Katy Clark and Paul Sweeney to give oral evidence would provide you with a bigger picture about the river and the neglect of our critical industrial marine facilities on the Clyde.

Yours Sincerely

Robert Buirds
Secretary
Campaign to Save Inchgreen Dry Dock