

Press release: £105 million economic package for the North West

The Derry-Londonderry region will receive £105 million in major new investment, the UK Government announced today.

The package – £50 million for the Derry and Strabane City Deal and £55m for the new Inclusive Future Fund – aims to boost the economic potential of the City and support a more prosperous, united community and stronger society.

The Derry City and Strabane City Deal investment will help boost innovation and the digital potential of the city region and unlock local partner funding.

This will enable new projects such as a Centre for Industrial Digitisation, Robotics and Automation; and a programme of digital and smart cities interventions, subject to business case approval.

The City Deal will be bolstered by a £55m Inclusive Future Fund aimed at bringing greater prosperity and social benefits to the whole of the community.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley, said:

This £105 million investment package is a major boost to the economic potential of the region and will help strengthen the foundations for greater prosperity and a stronger, more united society.

The new Inclusive Future Fund recognises the unique circumstances facing the region and will help create new opportunities for the whole of the community, especially for young people.

As Secretary of State, I am deeply committed to building a dynamic, prosperous, outward-looking Northern Ireland that works for everyone, irrespective of community background.

Today's announcement is a major milestone in my personal determination to unlock the huge potential that the whole of Northern Ireland has to offer.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

This major investment in the people and community of Derry-Londonderry and Strabane will bring enormous benefits for years to come.

It will create high-value jobs, put the area at the forefront of the UK's growing digital economy and complement the Belfast Regional City Deal.

Derry City & Strabane Region City Deal

The UK Government is committing £50m towards the Derry City & Strabane Region City Deal.

Subject to business cases, this will be directed towards enhancing the region's innovation and digital capabilities through:

a Centre for Industrial Digitisation, Robotics and Automation – developing a research and design facility in robotics, automation and internet of things technologies; and

a programme of digital and smart cities interventions – 'Digital Enabling Infrastructure', which will provide a future proof digital infrastructure by delivering next-generation connectivity. This will dovetail with 'Smart City' investment to support pre-market testing and validation of new smart technologies.

Inclusive Future Fund

- The new Inclusive Future Fund will enable investment in projects that could:
- Support local young people by providing jobs and skills opportunities;
- Tackle the causes and consequences of long-term social deprivation
- Build on the economic potential of the local university and making the local area more accessible and attractive to live, visit, study and invest.

The new funding package aims to build on the work of the previous Executive, which invested in the economic, cultural and social regeneration of the area.

As with the previous announcement of a Belfast Regional City Deal, to ensure a successfully integrated programme of investment for the North West, one that will deliver a step change in inclusive economic growth and productivity to the benefit all communities in Northern Ireland, requires a fully-

functioning devolved government in place. The Government is starting a fresh round of political talks today to try and achieve that.