

Minister Iain Stewart welcomes ambitious plans for Falkirk Investment Zone

UK Government Minister Iain Stewart has visited partners of the landmark Falkirk Growth Deal to hear how they intend to transform the region's economy by investing in innovative, sustainable industries.

The Falkirk Growth Deal Heads of Terms were signed at a virtual event on 21st December last year. This put in motion plans for £80m investment from the UK and Scottish governments, £45m from Falkirk Council, and £5.8m from Scottish Canals to create an Investment Zone for Falkirk and Grangemouth.

Over its lifetime, the Deal will work hand in hand with private sector partners including INEOS and Alexander Dennis Limited to bring in £1 billion of investment, create 2,000 jobs and put Falkirk and Grangemouth at the forefront of the UK's transition to a Net Zero economy.

The visit started at Grangemouth where he discussed plans for a Carbon Dioxide Utilisation Centre. The centre will support the development, manufacturing and use of low carbon technologies, which will help companies substitute their products and industrial processes with low carbon alternatives, using CO₂ as feedstock. The Centre will also be well situated to link in with hydrogen and wider Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS) projects. Last month INEOS announced plans to construct a Low-Carbon Hydrogen Manufacturing Plant at Grangemouth.

Minister Stewart also heard about plans for a Bioeconomy Accelerator Pilot Plant (BAPP) at Grangemouth. Emerging biotechnologies have the potential to be more efficient and better for the environment than traditional chemical processes, such as those using oil. These could use Scotland's access to a wide range of potential renewable feedstocks, including whisky and food processing by-products, to produce many of the chemicals we need. The BAPP will create facilities which are not currently available in Scotland, the UK or Europe, to trial and develop new biotechnologies, and will benefit from the innovative companies and world-class academics located in Scotland.

The visit concluded with a stop off at Alexander Dennis Limited (ADL) to hear about their vision for the world's first public transport net zero technology cluster, led by ADL in collaboration with other industry partners, which will focus on the cost-effective decarbonisation of public transport. Plans include a campus that boasts an R&D centre of excellence, a high-tech incubator, and flexible carbon neutral manufacturing space. ADL is the UK's largest bus and coach manufacturer and a global leader in double deck design and production, and plan to lead the sector in the design and build of zero emission vehicles, not only for the UK market but for existing and new export markets as well.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

It has been fascinating to hear about these ambitious plans, which will create thousands of jobs and opportunities for Falkirk's residents, while making it a powerhouse of the UK's Net Zero economy.

The UK is levelling-up communities right across Scotland with more than £1.7 billion of support for regional projects and initiatives.

Falkirk Council has also secured £20 million from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund for the development of Westfield Roundabout, which will significantly improve travel for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Cllr Cecil Meiklejohn, Leader of Falkirk Council said:

The Growth Deal will unlock many opportunities for economic growth, investment and employment locally. Working with both UK and Scottish Government along with local industry means we can really forge ahead with our ambitious plans for the area.

Paul Davies, ADL President & Managing Director, said:

As we continue on the road to net zero, we are excited to build upon nearly a century of manufacturing history in Falkirk with our plans for a new technology centre of excellence for the zero-emission age. We look forward to working with Falkirk Council, the UK and Scottish Governments, Scottish Canals and other stakeholders in progressing our plans and shaping the future of our economy right here in Falkirk and Grangemouth.

Andrew Gardner, CEO INEOS FPS said:

We were pleased to add our support to Falkirk Council as they hosted a visit by Iain Stewart, MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland. Mr Stewart was in the Forth Valley to learn more about the region's Growth Deal and the benefits this will bring economically and socially to all of us who live and work here. We took the opportunity to chat with the Minister and update him on the progress of our Road Map to net zero. This included the recently announced investment in a low-carbon hydrogen plant as well as a number of other projects that are underway at Grangemouth that will deliver on our commitment to be a net zero emitter by 2045.

As part of the Falkirk Growth Deal the UK Government is investing £9 million

in each of the CDU Centre, BAPP and net zero tech cluster, with the Scottish Government also contributing £1 million to each.

The UK Government is also investing £10 million in Strategic Innovation Sites, and both governments are contributing £3 million each to the £51 million Falkirk Arts Centre to drive regeneration in the town centre.

The Scottish Government has committed £21m in a Sustainable Transport Hub at Falkirk Grahamston and a Green Corridor connecting communities. Further details on the Deal and its proposed projects are available in the [Heads of Terms Agreement](#).