

AYRSHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

MEETING – 25 APRIL 2024

REPORT BY HEAD OF ECONOMIC GROWTH EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: AYRSHIRE GROWTH DEAL –COMMS PROTOCOL UPDATE – MARCH 2024

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To advise the Economic Partnership Board Members on the updating of the AGD Communications Protocol.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Agree the content of the report and recommend approval to the AEJC to note;
 - (i) the updated Communication Protocol March 24.

BACKGROUND

3. In line with good practice and governance requirements the Comms Protocol is regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the AGD and its Partners. The last update of the Protocol was in June 2023, when a series of minor changes were made principally around changes in contact names. Formal approval is not required by the Partnership Board but the PMO seeks to highlight the amendments being proposed, which can then be forwarded to the Joint Committee

MAIN REPORT

Updated Comms Protocol

4. The Comms Protocol has been reviewed and updated in light of the following pressures:
 - Overall shift in the Programme from a period of development to delivery.
 - The outcomes of the Programme Review are becoming clear with an expectation that a reinvigoration of the Deal is desired in order to raise its profile and the benefits it will deliver
 - Recent project progression has sought the need to clarify how and when to invite senior politicians from the Scottish and UK Governments to key stages in the development of projects e.g. ground breaking events, opening new facilities -including required periods of notice.

- Changes in named contacts from the Governments.
- The minor changes made provide greater clarity and are focused on the following:
 - Updated text on the management of Scottish and UK Governments in relation to the Ayrshire Growth Deal, principally on how and when to invite/engage with Ministers from the Scottish and UK Government where a media opportunity exists (section 4).
 - Updating of named lead contacts principally from the Scottish and UK Governments (section 10).
 - All changes proposed have been shared with the Governments and project leads.

IMPLICATIONS

- Eight implications have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Implications	Yes	No	Paragraph number in report
1. Policy/Strategic Planning		No	
2. Governance/Legal	Yes		Para 11
3. Human Resources	Yes		Para 12
4. Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty	Yes		Para 8-9
5. Financial	Yes		Para 10
6. Risk	Yes		Para 13
7. Community Wealth Building		No	
8. Net Zero		No	

ALIGNMENT WITH SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE GROWTH AMBITIONS

- Inclusion is a key driver for the AGD. Deal business cases for projects demonstrate how they will reduce inequalities and tackle the inclusion challenges specific to Ayrshire.
- The Comms Protocol provides a framework for communicating the delivery of inclusive growth ambitions for each project and the programme as a whole.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- The Comms Protocol will have some financial impact albeit these costs will be incorporated as part of the development and delivery of projects.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The legal implications arising from this report are covered through the Agreement between Ayrshire's Councils and the recently revised Governance Document which was approved at the Joint Committee meeting on 8 December 2022.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

12. The implementation of the Comms Protocol is undertaken as part of operational activities for the AGD by the PMO, and Project Leads in consultation with communication teams across the Ayrshire Councils.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

13. Strategic and operational risk registers continue to be developed, reviewed and updated for the AGD Programme. This is being undertaken by the PMO with the support of EAC audit. The Programme Risk Register has been updated in accordance with the commitment to be reviewed every quarter as approved by the AEJC on 26 June 2023. Details of the latest update is considered elsewhere on the agenda.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14. There is no equalities impact relating to this report. Inclusion is a key driver for the AGD. Project leads will be required to complete an Equality Impact Assessment for their project and append to the associated business case. Project leads have received Equality Impact Assessment training organised by the Scottish Government. Project Leads are being encouraged by the PMO to link up as soon as possible with their Equalities Officer within their authority who will be able to assist with this matter.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Updated Comms Protocol March 24

Background Papers:

[Heads of Terms](#), signed by both the UK and Scottish Governments and Ayrshire's Councils on 8 March 2019

[Deal Document](#), signed by both the UK and Scottish Governments and Ayrshire's Councils on 19 November 2020

Members requiring further information should contact:

Graham Saunders, Ayrshire Growth Deal – Interim
Strategic manager and Programme Manager
Graham.saunders@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Implementation Officer:

Graham Saunders, Ayrshire Growth Deal – Interim
Strategic Manager and Programme Manager

Graham.saundets@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Updated Comms Protocol March 24 (TEXT FORM)

Note a formal version will be prepared for publication in line with previous Comms Protocols

- **Partner commitment**

This document sets out an agreed framework for communication protocols around the Ayrshire Growth Deal. It is designed to ensure:

- Areas of responsibility and working practices across the partners are clearly defined;
- Effectiveness, clarity and timeliness of action when matters concerning one or more partners are deemed likely to be of public/media interest; and
- Good partner working relationships.

- **Scope**

This protocol covers proactive and reactive communications activities in relation to the Ayrshire Growth Deal by the PMO, member authorities (North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Councils), Scottish and UK Governments, and other partners, with communications defined as:

- Press releases and written statements issued to the print, online and broadcast media;
- Interviews and opinion pieces provided to the print, online and broadcast media;
- Briefings, interviews, verbal statements and press conferences;
- Publicity material, including posters, brochures, leaflets, newsletters and reports;
- Media information, blogs and commentary released across each organisation's social media;
- Broadcast interviews, documentaries and public interest programmes;
- Information published on each organisation's website;
- Social media posts;
- Responses to FOIs, political and customer enquiries.

- **Lead organisation**

North Ayrshire Council Press Office will lead on and sign off Ayrshire Growth Deal programme communications in relation to output from all committees and governance groups.

- **Scottish and UK Governments in relation to the Ayrshire Growth Deal**

The UK and Scottish Governments will be engaged as early as possible in every Ayrshire Growth Deal project milestone, to allow opportunities for attendance at events and inclusion of media quotes.

The PMO will act as a liaison between individual projects and the Deal partners and will be the primary point of contact for the UK and Scottish Governments. As such, the PMO should be sighted on all potential project and programme level communications

activities to ensure the UK and Scottish Governments receive sufficient notice of, and opportunity to contribute to, any media opportunities, visits, or events.

Government partners will aim to advise the PMO in advance about proposed or planned media or visits by politicians or senior officers connected to the Ayrshire Growth Deal. They will also advise the PMO of any unplanned comments made about the Deal such as at parliamentary committees, or in the chamber.

If a member authority or partner intends to invite either the UK or Scottish Government to an event or media opportunity connected to the Ayrshire Growth Deal, or to offer space for a quote in a news release, the same offer must be made to both governments.

As a matter of courtesy, the PMO will share all AGD press releases with UK and Scottish Governments regardless of whether a quote is required.

Ayrshire Growth Deal Project Leads should work with the PMO to:

- Provide advance notice of any upcoming events, such as groundbreaking and project openings.
- Provide an outline of what Ministers would be expected to do at such an event.
- Identify a suitable date and time for ministerial involvement.
- Ensure appropriate supporting communications.

Please copy the UK and Scottish Government Deal Policy Leads for your area to any communication.

- **Spokespersons**

The agreed spokespersons are as follows:

- **For the Ayrshire Growth Deal programme:** The Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee Chair, and where appropriate, with UK and Scottish Governments;
- **For individual Ayrshire Growth Deal projects:** Lead member authority or partner will appoint, as appropriate. Where a project is carried out by two or more partners, it is acceptable to include quotes from the relevant spokesperson for each organisation;
- Where the subject crosses themes or more generally relates to the partnership, the Joint Committee Chair will be quoted;
- If the Joint Committee Chair is unavailable, such as in pre-election circumstances, the PMO shall liaise with the Chief Executives in relation to the spokesperson substitute.

- **Process**

The Ayrshire Growth Deal Communications Group shall meet monthly to:

- Populate and agree a communications planner and upcoming activity;
- Update the communications documents set out below; and

- Discuss the handling of any forthcoming communications opportunities that have arisen since the previous meeting.
 - **Media activity and press releases**
 - All media releases and briefing notes relating to the Ayrshire Growth Deal will be shared in advance with the PMO and all communications leads.
 - Media releases relating to the Deal will be posted promptly on the [AGD website](#).
 - In instances of sensitive, or conflicting positions, communication leads representing each organisation will keep each other informed on a 'no surprises' basis. Any confidentiality or embargo relating to this information will naturally be upheld.
 - All media releases **must** acknowledge funding from the UK and/or Scottish Government, as well as any other funding partners. This must be included in the body of the release, not as background information or editor's notes, and must be placed early in the release to ensure it is picked up in coverage.
 - Where appropriate, final releases will be shared with partners for wider ongoing circulation.
 - The flow chart attached summarises the approvals and sign-off procedure for joint press releases and statements.
 - Contact details for the partner communications leads are provided on page 7.
 - **Boilerplate**

The following statement must be adapted for use in all AGD project press releases:

Project x is being funded with £x million from the UK Government, £x million from the Scottish Government, and £x million from x Ayrshire Council as part of the £251 million Ayrshire Growth Deal, a ten year investment programme jointly funded by the UK and Scottish governments and local authorities.

- **Media enquiries and FOI requests**

The PMO and North Ayrshire Council Press Office will together lead on responding to media enquiries relating to the Programme. Member authorities and partners should direct relevant media enquiries to the PMO and North Ayrshire Council Press Office. The PMO will lead on FOI enquiries relating to the programme. FOI and media enquiries will be discussed as a standing agenda item at Ayrshire Growth Deal Communication Group meetings.

- **Project-specific communications arrangements**

When preparing and issuing media releases for specific AGD projects, Communications Teams should ensure the following guiding principles are included:

- Media enquiries relating to individual projects should be dealt with by the relevant lead organisation;
- All partners should advise the PMO of any forthcoming media activity to ensure complementarity with other projects;

- All funding partners should be included and quoted;
- Final release should be shared with all communications partners, including relevant FOI enquiries, for their information prior to issue to media.
- **Social media**

For generic AGD programme content, the PMO will lead in posting content from the Ayrshire Growth Deal twitter account @ayrshireddeal.

The AGD main funders will be tagged in these posts -

@EastAyrshire @North_Ayrshire @southayrshire @scotgov @UKGovScotland.

For project specific social media posts, the lead authority will post to their own accounts and will tag @ayrshireddeal and relevant funders as required. If the project only receives funding from one partner,

e.g. the UK Government, only @UKGovScotland should be tagged in that post.

Local authority partners will retweet AGD social media posts on their own networks. Similarly, the PMO will share relevant local authority posts on @ayrshireddeal.

It may be appropriate to tag specific Ministers in social media posts if they have their own profile and they are quoted in the official press release to which the social media post relates, e.g. @MathesonMichael.

- **Communications Action Plan**

The Communications Action Plan provides a forward plan of proposed communications activities by all partners and will be updated by the partner Communications Leads and PMO ahead of each quarterly meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board and Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee as part of the AGD Programme Update, as well as each Ayrshire Growth Deal Communication Group meeting.

Public information about the Ayrshire Growth Deal, such as where meeting papers will be made publically available ahead of meetings, will be posted on @ayrshireddeal.

Communications leads should inform other partners and the PMO in advance and at the earliest opportunity of potential or actual media communication activities that are not recorded on the Plan.

- **Photo opportunities**

Photo opportunities will be organised by the relevant lead organisation on the project. All partner Communications Leads must be informed in advance and will bear responsibility for inviting relevant representatives from their organisation to take part.

15. **Communications information**

Partners agree to use the following in order to achieve consistency in messaging:

- (i) The [AGD website](#) provides a short description of the Ayrshire Growth Deal, how it came about, what it will do, what it hopes to achieve, and relevant details of timeframes and investment. Additional frequently asked questions and agreed responses are also captured on the website.

- (ii) **The Communications Action Plan**, which sets out the planned and completed AGD communications activities. It is the responsibility of the Communications Leads to populate the Plan and keep it up to date, so that it can be reviewed and discussed at Ayrshire Growth Deal communications group meetings.

16. Escalation

If a concern arises within the partnership, the partners will work together to agree a communications strategy, messaging and spokespersons prior to releasing any statement or comment on the matter.

17. Branding

Any physical manifestation of a project funded by the Ayrshire Growth Deal should be appropriately branded with UK Government and Scottish Government logos where applicable (i.e. where they have provided funding) including signage, and construction hoarding. Where both government logos appear together they should sit alongside each other and be of equal size. This branding must also apply to all public facing documents or communications materials with relation to the Ayrshire Growth Deal and its supported projects, e.g. press releases, websites, newsletters etc.

AYRSHIRE
GROWTH DEAL



Working together for a successful, fair and inclusive Ayrshire economy



18. Review

This protocol will be reviewed annually by the Ayrshire Growth Deal communications group, for discussion/approval by the Ayrshire Growth Deal Management Group.

Ayrshire Growth Deal Communication Leads

Core communications group

Organisation	Main Contact	Contact details
Deal PMO		
UK Government	Paul Malley (primary)	Email: Paul.Malley@ukgovscotland.gov.uk Tel: 07795 262837
	Graham Bissell (secondary)	Email: Graham.Bissell@ukgovscotland.gov.uk Tel: 07771 972607
	Kirsten McSparran (secondary) Tom Peterkin (Special Political Advisor)	Email: kirsten.mcsparran@ukgovscotland.gov.uk Email: thomas.peterkin@cabinetoffice.gov.uk Tel: 07749 713914
Scottish Government	Michael McHugh (primary)	Email: Michael.McHugh@gov.scot Tel: 07580 750033
	Rebecca Macdonald (secondary)	Email: Rebecca.macdonald@gov.scot Tel: 07468 764849
North Ayrshire Council	Michele McColm (primary)	Email: MicheleMccolm@north-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 07766 725118
	Mark Sugden (secondary)	Email: MarkSugden@north-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 07738 001718
East Ayrshire Council	Lynne Buchanan (primary)	Email: Lynne.Buchanan@east-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 07827 841176
	Catriona Cochrane (secondary)	Email: Catriona.Cochrane@east-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 07554 332374
South Ayrshire Council	Sara Burdon (primary)	Email: Sara.Burdon@south-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 01292 616622
	Jenna Robertson (secondary)	Email: Jenna.Robertson@south-ayrshire.gov.uk Tel: 01292 612343

Ayrshire Growth Deal Overview

The Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) is a £251.5 million, ten-year programme aimed at matching business growth opportunities to employment progression, developing the future workforce and community development. Our programme is based on the achievement of economic growth and inclusive growth, with a clear focus on increasing innovation and productivity, while reducing inequality across the region.

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a people centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy. This will be the cornerstone of the AGD to ensure lasting benefits for our businesses and communities.

The AGD is based around five themes:



Communities 5 projects: Digital (2) Skills (2) Community Wealth Building (1)

£25.5m



Aerospace and Space

4 projects

£80m



Economic Infrastructure

5 projects

£69.5m



Energy, Circular Economy and Environment

3 projects



Tourism

2 projects

£23.5m

	Ayrshire Growth Deal Project	Funding Breakdown (£m)			Lead Delivery Partner
		Scot Gov	UK Gov	Council	
Aerospace & Space	Spaceport Infrastructure	5.0	18.0		South Ayrshire Council
	Aerospace and Space Technology Application Centre (ASTAC)	1.0	4.0	6.0 (SAC)	South Ayrshire Council
	Commercial Space Prestwick – industrial and hangar	12.0	10.0	7.0 (SAC)	South Ayrshire Council
	Prestwick Infrastructure - roads	12.0		5.0 (SAC)	South Ayrshire Council
Economic Infrastructure	HALO Kilmarnock	3.5	3.5	2.0 (EAC)	Halo Kilmarnock Ltd
	Ayrshire Engineering Park (Moorfield)	12.0		4.0 (EAC)	East Ayrshire Council
	Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor (AMIC)	13.5	10.0		East Ayrshire Council

	i3 Flexible Space	11.0		4.0 (NAC)	North Ayrshire Council
	i3 Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre (DPMC)		5.0	1.0 (NAC)	North Ayrshire Council
Energy, Circular Economy & Environment	Community Renewable Energy Project (CoRE)		17.0	7.5 (EAC)	East Ayrshire Council
	Hunterston Strategic Development Area		18.0		North Ayrshire Council
	International Marine Science and Environmental Centre (IMSE)		6.5	4.0 (NAC)	North Ayrshire Council
Tourism	The Great Harbour, at Irvine Harbourside and Ardeer	9.0		5.0 (NAC)	North Ayrshire Council
	Marine Tourism	9.5			North Ayrshire Council
Communities	Digital Subsea Cable and Digital Infrastructure	3.0	11.0		South Ayrshire Council
	Working for a Healthy Economy	3.0			North Ayrshire Council
	Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund	8.5			North Ayrshire Council
	Community Wealth Building Fund	3.0			North Ayrshire Council
	TOTAL	103.0	103.0	45.5	
	Grand Total	£251.5 million			

Procedure for approving joint press releases and statements.



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