

Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board

29 January 2021

At a Meeting of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board at 2.00 p.m. involving participation by remote electronic means.

Present

Councillors Peter Henderson, Siobhian Brown and Brian Connolly (South Ayrshire Council); Marie Burns, Joe Cullinane and Alex Gallagher (North Ayrshire Council); Tom Cook, John McGhee and Douglas Reid (East Ayrshire Council).

In Attendance

C. Hatton, K. Yeomans and C. McAuley (North Ayrshire Council); E. Fraser, D. McDowall, J. McLauchlan and A. Craig (East Ayrshire Council); E. Howat, D. Gillies and T. Leijser (South Ayrshire Council); E. Baird and R. Phillips (Scottish Government); G. Adam and B. Fraser (Scottish Enterprise); J. Mone and M. Radosavljevic (University of West of Scotland); A. Dobson (Taste of Arran); S. Foster (Spirit AeroSystems); M. Goodfellow (Highlands and Islands Enterprise); K. Hutton (Skills Development Scotland); A. Gillespie (University of Strathclyde); A. McGregor (University of Glasgow); V. Russell (Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce); C. Turnbull (Ayrshire College); and H. Clancy (North Ayrshire Council).

Also in Attendance

L. Kirk, J. McLachlan and G. Robson (North Ayrshire Council); D. Manson (Ayrshire Road Alliance); F. Kennedy (NHS Salus).

Apologies

Malcolm Roughead and Hisashi Kuboyama

Chair

Councillor Peter Henderson in the Chair.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Partnership Board held on 14 September 2020 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

4.1 Food & Drink

Submitted report and received a presentation by Alastair Dobson, Taste of Arran on the Food and Drink Workstream. The presentation highlighted key priorities, creation of the virtual team, progress made so far and next steps.

The Partnership Board asked questions and was provided with further information in relation to: -

- post Brexit problems and support from the UK Government; and
- the use of regional data to create a food and drink database.

Noted.

4.2 Visitor Economy and Ayrshire Tourism Action Plan

Submitted report and a received presentation by Karen Yeomans, Director (Growth and Investment) North Ayrshire Council on the Visitor Economy workstream and the Ayrshire Tourism Action Plan. The presentation highlighted that the destination priorities and a short-medium term action plan had been identified through research and consultation with partners and the industry. The plan enabled Ayrshire's private and public sector partners to deliver short-term actions to support tourism industry recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and work towards the formation of a regional tourism collaboration and a longer-term strategic action plan to reboot sector growth through a destination development approach. The action plan set out a commitment to collective action that will benefit sector recovery and its return to sustainable growth and would be reviewed and updated as progress was made, along with the development of options in respect of a potential regional collaboration.

The Partnership Board asked questions and was provided with further information in relation to: -

- internal markets and local businesses for town regenerations;
- how the action plan fitted with Chamber Forward Together Strategy, in particular Ayrshire Connect; and
- getting the right approach to tourism.

The Partnership agreed to the implementation of the short-term measure of the Ayrshire Tourism Action Plan to be co-delivered by the private and public sector members of the Ayrshire Visitor Economy Strategic Sub-Group.

4.3 Space and Aerospace

Submitted report and received a presentation by Simon Foster, Spirit AeroSystems on the Space and Aerospace Workstream, highlighting the decommissioning MRO project.

The Partnership Board asked questions and was provided with information in relation to:-

- clarification that funding would be from both public and private sectors.

- the development of a wider range of strategic actions in respect of the space and aerospace workstream.

Noted.

4.4 Clean Growth

Submitted report by Theresa Correia (Scottish Enterprise) and Milan Radosavljevic (UWS) on the Clean Growth Workstream. A Scotland-wide Business recovery portal would be launched in February 2021 with an initial focus on our Scottish campus locations (Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire). The purpose was to continuously evaluate emerging needs within local authorities across Scotland and the initial information from several hundred CPD attendees indicated reskilling/upskilling/retraining as well as financial support to be the key needs (individuals and companies). It was also highlighted that the energy masterplan would require to be funded.

Noted.

4.5 Digital

The Partnership Board received a verbal update by Theo Leijser, South Ayrshire Council on the Digital Workstream.

The Partnership Board asked questions and was provided with further information in relation to: -

- digital transformation being a key enabler for all workstreams, business and community resilience; and
- development of a digital communication and document project management tool to aid the workstreams.

Noted.

4.6 Skills

Submitted report by Andrea Glass, Skills Development Scotland on how? the Skills Workstream and Skills Development Scotland supported by Ayrshire College, UWS and the RES Skills Group, would facilitate the development of a Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP). This would set out collective and agreed understanding of the:

- demand for skills and people in Ayrshire over the short and medium term;
- current people and skills supply, and the gaps between supply and current and future demand; and
- people and skills priorities that enterprise and skills agencies and providers across the skills system should seek to address.

Co-designed by partners this would:

- set clear commitments and actions that partners would deliver over the next 3 years;

- provide an agreed baseline to monitor future progress; and
- outline proposals for clear governance, delivery and reporting arrangements.

Noted.

4.7 The Partnership Board received an update on plans for a workshop to look across all workstreams and the common principles of the partnership and growth deal projects to identify areas of complementarity and how these could be best take forward.

The Partnership Board asked questions and received further information in relation to: -

- the development of a communications plan to raise the profile of the work of the economic partnership as well as individual workstreams.
- the development of action plans for each of the workstreams
- the availability of business data to help inform development of workstreams.

5. COVID-19 – Ayrshire Wide Business Support Update

Submitted report by the Ayrshire Executive Group on the approach being taken across Ayrshire by the three local authorities, Scottish Enterprise and VisitScotland to support local businesses during the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic and in the adjustment period following the UK's exit from the European Union. The list of Scottish Government funds and funding intentions was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Noted.

6. Regional Business Support Update

Submitted report by the Ayrshire Executive Group on the work being progressed to develop Business Support offers at a regional and local level. The report set out an agreed shared vision amongst the three Councils and Scottish Enterprise on the development of respective business support activities, highlighting the existing regional consistent offer that was available and presented new opportunities under development to enhance regional offers.

Noted.

7. Freeports Update

Submitted report by Craig Hatton, Chief Executive North Ayrshire Council on the establishment of Freeports in the UK, including the Ayrshire response to the recent Scottish Government consultation on economic development zones including Freeports. The response was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Noted.

8. Community Wealth Building Update

Submitted report by Craig Hatton, Chief Executive North Ayrshire Council on regional Community Wealth Building activities including the launch of the Ayrshire Community Wealth Building Anchor Charter. The Anchor Charter was set out at Appendix 1, Terms of Reference set out at Appendix 2 and the Workplan set out at Appendix 3 to the report.

Noted.

9.1 Ayrshire Growth Deal Programme Update

Submitted report by David McDowall, Interim Head of Planning and Economic Development East Ayrshire Council on the Ayrshire Growth Deal. The Ayrshire Growth Deal and development of its component projects were set out at Appendix 1 to the report, the suite of deal documents set out at Appendices 2 – 8 and the finalised agreement set out at Appendix 9 to the report.

The formal virtual signing of the Ayrshire Growth Deal took place on 19 November 2020 and agreement reached with partners around an approach to management of cash flows in respect of government grant funding. An Agreement between East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council around governance, finance and reporting arrangements had now been agreed and pending formal signing. It was highlighted that the HALO project was due to complete soon and the AGD website would launch at the end of February 2021.

The board were advised of the inconsistencies and time taken to secure sign off of business cases by respective Governments and agreed to escalate these concerns to Officials and Ministers.

Noted.

9.2 Working for a Healthy Economy Project

Received a presentation by Greig Robson (Economic Development & Regeneration) North Ayrshire Council and Fiona Kennedy, NHS Salus on the Working for a Healthy Economy Project. The presentation highlighted the aims of the project, service delivery plans, challenges, service model and next steps. The Partnership Board was also provided with details of a recent case study of the project.

The Partnership Board asked a question and was provided with clarification on the delay in getting the business case signed off by Scottish Government.

Noted.

9.3 Community Wealth Building Project

Received a presentation by Julie McLachlan (Economic Development & Regeneration) North Ayrshire Council on the Community Wealth Building Project. The presentation highlighted the aims of the project, an overview of the project, what would be delivered, how the project would be delivered and managed, and next steps.

The Partnership Board asked a question and was provided with clarification on the delay in getting the business case signed off by Scottish Government.

Noted.

10. Strategic Transport Projects Review Update (STPR2)

Receive Presentation by Louise Kirk (Economic Development & Regeneration) North Ayrshire Council and David Manson, Ayrshire Roads Alliance on the Strategic Transport Projects Review. The presentation highlighted the purpose of the review, stakeholder engagement, phased approach, themes, regional transport appraisal, the 3 Ayrshire priorities, current position and next steps.

The Partnership was advised that the three Ayrshire Chief Executives had raised concerns and a letter had been sent to the Transport Minister seeking a meeting as transport was a key factor in creating employment in Ayrshire and was not adequately reflected in the national work published to date.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.