

Appendix A

Growth Deal External Communications & PR July 2017 - March 2018

Context

Since July 2017, the LEP's retained agency SKV has been formally managing and co-ordinating PR activity around Growth Deal projects including liaising with local partners and project sponsors.

As part of this process all partners received a new, official Growth Deal communication protocols document and Growth Deal branding.

The new protocols incorporated new key messages from BEIS which link to how the Northern Powerhouse brand is presented and described in all external collateral and communications. A new Lancashire Growth Deal 'boiler plate' was also included.

The new protocol and branding was sent both communications staff and project managers with a responsibility for Growth Deal projects before Christmas.

In addition, SKV has continued to work on Growth Deal communications which have a county-wide, North West or potentially national significance – either in partnership with a local sponsor (e.g. Lancashire Energy HQ's official opening with B&FC) or as a LEP-led campaign (e.g. the skills investment piece based around several vocational milestones which were close together in the calendar last autumn).

Overview of Growth Deal Communications Activity

Despite not having access to a paid-for media monitoring service which provides cuttings or links to Growth Deal stories in the press, SKV has collated over 60 pieces of relevant media coverage since July 2017 (see PDF attached).

A majority of these have explicit references to Growth Deal funding, while some others credit the LEP's support more generically.

In nearly all cases the references to funding and support is articulated as an enabler, which is our primary key message in all communications.

This 'enabler' message is also frequently used in the quotes drafted on behalf of a LEP spokesperson (e.g. Edwin Booth, Graham Cowley, Dr Michele Lawty-Jones) which are included in partner press releases.

In a majority of cases the quote, or part of it, have been carried in subsequent media coverage.

Specific Communications Activity

Skills

Growth Deal investments in skills infrastructure have continued to provide a number of PR platforms for the LEP to talk about the importance of vocational training and how it links to the wider economic fortunes of Lancashire.

These included the opening of the Sentamu Teaching Block at University of Cumbria's Lancaster campus, the new £7.5m Food and Farming Innovation & Technology Centre (FFIT) at Myerscough, and the relocation of Lancashire's adult learning service to the Northlight development in Pendle.

For all of these projects SKV liaised closely with local partners to ensure not only that the LEP's role in each was highlighted, but also to emphasise that the Growth Deal fund had been the enabling source of investment.

Working with local partners, and supporting them in terms of advice and strategy, resulted in extensive local and regional coverage for each separate story:

Myerscough College

Myerscough College have reported that their own PR activity around the opening secured coverage in local press, plus Farmers' Guardian, Farmers Weekly, Farming UK, National Farmer, NFU magazine and Business Lancashire magazine, among others.

It was also featured twice on BBC Radio Lancashire including a three hour show broadcast live from site to showcase facility.

Cumbria University

Cumbria University's Sentamu Building official opening at Lancaster secured extensive coverage on BBC Radio Lancashire, with a four-hour programme being broadcast from the building.

The opening, attended by Edwin Booth, also enjoyed coverage in the Lancashire Post, Lancaster Guardian, Westmorland Gazette and News and Star together with The Bay, Lakeland Radio and In Cumbria.

Runshaw College

Runshaw College undertook local PR activity in this period in relation to its Engineering offer, which included the Growth Deal funded Science Engineering Innovation Centre (SEIC). This included the college sponsoring one of 13 trucks as part of the South Ribble Truck Trail where they sponsored one of the 13 trucks to help promote engineering in the area to young people.

Lancaster University

In November, Lancaster's investment in cutting-edge 3-D technologies, supported by Growth Deal funding, was the subject of a press story produced by the university.

Featuring a quote from Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Director of the Lancashire Skills Hub, the piece centred around academic research, skills training and potentially for collaborative research and product development for regional businesses.

Lancaster is not aware of any external press coverage, but the story was uploaded to the University's news area of their website.

Overarching Skills PR

SKV combined many of these separate elements, and the proposed official opening of the Energy HQ in Blackpool as originally scheduled for September, to create an overarching skills investment piece which highlighted the strategic significance of the LEP's skills strategy, the role of the Skills Hub, and the impact of the Growth Deal programme.

The release also featured quotes from Edwin Booth, Dr Michele Lawty-Jones and Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry.

Subsequently the wider skills piece ran as a full colour feature page in the Lancashire Post print edition, and the addition of the Jake Berry quote (plus references to Brierfield Mill/Northlight) saw the Lancashire Telegraph run a rare 'countywide' positive LEP story in both print and online.

Further, national education trade title FE news also ran the overarching skills investment story, as did Business Quarter magazine (BQ).

Infrastructure and Transport

Partners continue to use major milestones linked to infrastructure to highlight the levels of investment going into their respective location, and Growth Deal funding is widely credited in subsequent press coverage.

In addition, Graham Cowley and/or Edwin Booth are regularly invited to attend partner photo-calls and events linked to Growth Deal funded infrastructure projects (e.g. ground breakings, road openings).

A quote from the LEP and, on occasion, the NPH Minister is also often requested.

Blackburn To Manchester Train Services

In November Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council organised a photo-shoot to highlight the launch of a new, more frequent Blackburn to Manchester train service.

Graham Cowley was invited to the event and was quoted in the accompanying press release talking about the Growth Deal as an enabler for better transport and economic growth.

The story was featured in the Lancashire Telegraph, and was promoted widely on BwD's own channels.

East Darwen Link Road

BwD also recently invited Graham Cowley to another photo-shoot to mark the start of work on Ellison Fold Way, the new, which will make it easier for residents and businesses to access the M65.

Graham was photographed and filmed, and references to GD funding were included in the press release. At the time of drafting this report any media coverage was still TBC.

Blackpool Quality Corridors

In November 2017 Blackpool Council undertook a major PR and public engagement campaign to raise awareness of the Quality Corridors programme as part of the wider *Making Blackpool Better* initiative.

It also marked the launch of the *Property Improvement Fund* (PIF) scheme launch.

The wide scale engagement and media campaign involved regular newsletters (print and online), partner briefings, resident leaflet drops, advertising, signage/hoardings, drop-in events, direct mail shots and an extensive social media campaign.

Social media output includes regular posts, generating on average five likes, 15 comments each time; highest number of shares is 86.

Press coverage included front page of Blackpool Gazette, and further update stories online. The PIF was also featured in Insider and on The Business Desk. Much of this coverage credited the role of the Growth Deal investment as an enabler for the improvement works.

Blackpool Trams

Extension of Blackpool's existing tramway network from The Promenade to Blackpool North Station was announced in November as part of the *Making Blackpool Better* launch.

Press coverage with references to the Growth Deal and the trams was secured with the Blackpool Gazette, That's Lancashire, Rail Technology Magazine and Radio Wave news bulletins.

Blackpool Intelligent Transport System (ITS)

In February 2018, Blackpool Council promoted the start on site for the installation of 21 new electronic signs around Blackpool to provide information on traffic, car parking and roadworks, in order to reduce congestion and delays.

A social media post generated 1,709 likes, 40 comments and four shares while the Blackpool Gazette carried the story (print and online) with Growth Deal References.

Preston City Centre

LCC recently undertook PR activity in relation to Preston City Centre improvement work which aims to create a more welcoming and attractive city centre.

Based around work starting on site, LCC undertook a press and social media campaign which resulted in Facebook and Twitter interactions and articles in the Lancashire Post.

Radio coverage on Radio Lancashire and Rock FM, and on local news website Blog Preston was also secured.

References to Growth Deal support as an enabler were included in all external media relations.

Preston Western Distributor

A Transport for Lancashire meeting in January, where the costs of the Preston Western Distributor were discussed, was picked up on by The Lancashire Post.

Despite the piece leading with a headline about escalating costs and a funding 'bombshell', the Post's reporting also highlighted many key positive messages about the project and referenced the support of the LEP and the Growth Deal.

Jobs, Innovation and Enterprise

A number of major Growth Deal funded projects, designed to drive innovation and stimulate enterprise in Lancashire, have been coming forward in this period. These have included some major flagship projects linked to education such as the HIC, EIC and Energy HQ.

Lancaster University's Health Innovation Campus

Lancaster University's Health Innovation Campus (HIC) was another major part of the PR activity SKV undertook in support of the MIPIM UK Lancashire trade mission in October 2017, as part of a wider focus on Lancaster as an investment hotspot.

Subsequently the University has undertaken its own PR around the start of works for the HIC, and the press release included a three-paragraph quote from Graham

Cowley about the significance of the HIC for Lancaster and the county as a whole. Graham's quote also highlighted the LEP's support for the 3,500 home Garden Village development.

SKV did approach the NPH office, via Paul Evans at BEIS, with regards to a potential Minister's quote.

However, the quote supplied arrived too late for inclusion in Lancaster's release.

The HIC ground-breaking generated substantial media coverage locally and regionally including coverage on BBC Radio Lancashire, Lancashire Business View, Insider, Lancashire Evening Post and Place North West.

Much of this coverage included quotes from Graham about the GD investment.

University of Central Lancashire's Engineering Innovation Centre (EIC)

January 2018 saw a burst of PR activity linked to the completion of the EIC's steelwork.

This included a press release, UCLan web story, UCLan newsletter story and social media activity.

Media coverage, including references to Growth Deal, was secured with Lancashire Evening Post Place, North West Business Desk and Bdaily.

Lancashire Energy HQ

At the time of drafting this report the official opening of the Lancashire Energy HQ was imminent.

SKV had been liaising closely with Blackpool & Fylde College on the shape and content of the launch activity, while also working with Paul Evans at BEIS regarding the Minister's involvement.

It was agreed with regards to media that B&FC would manage local and regional press, plus B2B and education media. SKV was asked to pitch the event to regional broadcast and national news media.

As part of this process SKV asked to get sight of any approved press release to share with the Minister's office with a view to getting a quote, and also asked if the college could share any approved language/messaging around shale in order to brief Graham who is due to attend the event on behalf of the LEP.

Updates and outcomes of the above activity TBC.

Burnley Vision Park

Burnley Council has been actively undertaking PR to promote Vision Park to end users to attract tenants. Recent activities have included first spade on site, a partner photoshoot and an official launch event in January 2018 which was attended by Graham Cowley.

All PR has included references to Growth Deal support. Coverage has been secured in Insider, Lancashire Telegraph, LBV, Property Week

Lomeshaye

In November 2017 news that Pendle Borough Council had agreed to inject £1.9m to extend the Lomeshaye Industrial Estate in Brierfield, in conjunction with Lancashire County Council agreeing to give £1.5m towards the scheme, put the project back in the local spotlight.

Pendle Today ran an article on the investment boost, which also referred to the support the scheme had enjoyed from the Growth Deal fund.

Northlight/Brierfield Mill

In September 2017 the £32m Northlight complex as the new home for the Lancashire Adult Learning created a PR milestone for Pendle Council and the PEARL partnership (Pendle Enterprise And Regeneration Ltd).

A launch event and press release was prepared, and Graham Cowley was invited to the event and quoted extensively in the release.

The story was covered extensively in the local Leader/Times newspaper series.

Local press coverage highlighted the LEP's contribution of £750,000 of Growth Deal Skills Capital and the overall £4.2million of Growth Deal funding to the scheme.

In December 2017 Pendle also announced how planning permission had been granted for 52 apartments, cafes and restaurants and offices for the Northlight complex.

A news story was issued with architects' impressions which included a credit for Growth Deal funding.

Coverage for the story was secured in local press and on local radio.

The profile of Northlight was also raised within Pendle's business community during PEARL's Focus on Your Business Week which included a spotlight on the redevelopment of the Brierfield Mill site.

Other Media Coverage & Growth Deal References

The Lancashire Growth Deal continues to be referenced in more generic Lancashire inward investment stories which often also refer to City Deal and other programmes and initiatives.

MIPIM UK

The Lancashire MIPIM delegation enjoyed extensive local and regional media coverage both pre and post-event. References to the Growth Deal as a major facilitator of Lancashire's economic growth were included in all press releases, and these were included in a majority of the subsequent coverage.

BAE, Alstom & Job Creation

The Growth Deal as a facilitator of growth also highlighted in an in-depth feature in the Lancashire Post prior to Christmas which asked local MPs and other influencers what Lancashire was doing to help create jobs in the wake of BAE and Alstom announcements of redundancies.

Blackpool Conference & Exhibition Centre

Visit Blackpool and the Winter Gardens recently undertook a B2B campaign highlighting their presence at the Confex trade show in London. Confex is dedicated to the conference, meeting and exhibition industry.

An update on the £25m Conference & Exhibition Centre was included in the story, and a new CGI of the project was issued to trade media.

The Winter Gardens update enjoyed substantial coverage in a number of exhibition and conference press and the story was later picked up by Lancashire Business View and Blackpool Gazette.

NB the trade press omitted details of the conference centre funding, but references to GD funding and LEP support did appear in local coverage.

Other stories and projects where the Growth Deal was cited in this period include the Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub's Social Value Toolkit, Aerospace Lancashire's presence at Paris International Airshow, M55 Heyhouses Link Road, LCC's appointment of Stephen Young as Director of Growth, and Blackburn with Darwen's new construction framework.

Learnings and Recommendations

A vast majority of partners who manage and promote Growth Deal funded projects now explicitly reference the LEP's GD support in all external communication.

Some also regularly approach SKV to request a supportive quote from the LEP and/or NPH, and often invite the LEP to attend events and milestone photo-calls.

This, combined with the consistent 'enabling' message which SKV embeds into all GD communications activity, means the Growth Deal is widely referenced and recognised as a facilitating fund which is helping projects– both big and small – across Lancashire to drive growth and regeneration.

SKV believes there is an opportunity to build on this momentum, and recommends the following approach to increase GD PR visibility going forward:

- Proactively contact all communications partners and offer the option of an LEP quote on every GD project they are looking to publicise, with the proviso we need at least three days' notice to respond.
- As sometimes the Growth Deal gets written out of wider Lancashire inward investment pieces by the media, we recommend that 'Growth Deal' is explicitly referenced somewhere in any LEP spokesperson's quote, even if the story is not directly linked to GD funding. This will improve the chances of getting it referenced in any subsequent coverage.
- We propose the six-monthly coverage book (as attached) is circulated to all partners and project sponsors - both within communications and operations teams – to demonstrate how individual, local projects fit into the wider, positive inward investment narrative for Lancashire - with Growth Deal support as the common factor.
- Due to the fact many partners have struggled to give us indications of potential PR milestones on the horizon, we recommend we work more closely with LEP/LCC colleagues to anticipate potential PR opportunities based on schedules outlined on the main Growth Deal project planner.

Forthcoming PR Opportunities (as highlighted by partners)

- Lancashire Energy HQ Opening, March 8th
- Lancashire at MIPIM International (March 13-16)
- AMRC (TBC)
- Preston Western Distributor milestones (TBC)
- Preston city centre improvement works (TBC)
- Further HIC milestones (TBC)
- Young Farmers Leadership Academy at Myerscough 1st Anniversary (September 2018)
- Progress on new arts garage for In-Situ arts at Northlight
- Progress on new facilities for Burnley Football Club in the community at Northlight
- Official launch of PEARL website at Northlight (March 2018)
- Burnley Vision Park new tenant announcements

- Burnley Vision Park media & partner tours

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