



Growth Deal External Communications and PR Report, March to November 2018

Overview of Growth Deal Communications Activity

Since our last report in February, SKV has manually collated over 50 pieces of relevant media coverage (see PDF attached).

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

References to Growth Deal funding and support continues to be articulated as an enabler, which is our primary key message. This 'enabler' message is also frequently used in the quotes drafted on behalf of a Growth Deal spokespeople.

In a majority of cases such quotes have been carried in subsequent media coverage.

Local partners continue to reference Growth Deal in their communications. However, despite our offer to provide supportive quotes to support their own PR efforts, some local partners choose not to contact us.

In a majority of cases when this has happened it has transpired that the story in question doesn't really warrant an LEP director's quote.

However, there have been some occasions when we believe an LEP quote could have been included on higher profile stories, but the option wasn't explored.

And while SKV has been successful in 'retrofitting' a quote to such stories in the past - with Lancashire's Growth Deal enjoying media exposure as a result of our intervention - this process could have run smoother.

Specific Communications Activity

Infrastructure

Growth Deal investments in transport and other infrastructure projects continue to be referenced across many parts of Lancashire.

Padiham Flood Defences

The £4.9m of proposed (and then approved) Growth Deal funding to improve flood defences in Padiham saw extensive coverage in the Lancashire Telegraph, Burnley Express, Place North West and 2BR Radio.

Positive quotes from Graham Cowley appeared in a majority of articles, while Burnley Council's Chief Executive Mick Cartledge was further quoted publicly thanking the LEP for its support.

Some of the articles also carried a descriptor of the Growth Deal fund which included a number of our key messages regarding driving growth and creating jobs.

Burnley Town Centre Improvements

A package of road improvements in Burnley town centre – part of the £13m Burnley Pendle Hyndburn Growth Corridor programme – received positive press coverage with the Burnley Express and 2BR Radio.

A photo-call featuring Graham Cowley, Burnley Council Leader Mark Townsend, members of the Lancashire County Council highways team and other councillors/officers was organised to support the story.

Quotes from Graham Cowley were also included in the press release, emphasising how easing of congestion in Burnley could bring a boost to the economy and drive more investment.

Blackburn with Darwen

Two Growth Deal investments for Blackburn with Darwen received local media coverage in this period. One was focussed on £290,000 announced by Blackburn with Darwen Council to install more new bus shelters in the borough.

Another was centred on the Pennines Gateway scheme which looks to improve the three main gateways into Blackburn off the M65 at junctions 4, 5 and 6.

The Growth Fund investment in the Pennine Gateways project was also cited in the story as being part of the wider £320m Growth Deal fund for the whole of Lancashire.

Preston

Preston city centre improvement works around Lancaster Road were reported on by a number of local media outlets in this period.

And while some stories did reference ongoing disruption, a highly positive quote from Graham Cowley highlighting the 'bigger picture' benefits of the works - being funded by the Growth Deal to help unlock more economic potential in Preston – was also carried.

Lancaster

A story carried by the Lancaster Guardian about a major bid by Lancashire County Council to secure £100m HIF Forward Fund to improve transport links in South Lancaster concluded with a very positive reference to Growth Deal support for an existing scheme at Junction 33 of the M6 which was set to bring housing and job growth opportunities in addition to supporting the HIC development.

Blackpool

The extensive works in Blackpool, as part of the Making Blackpool Better umbrella initiative, continue to be reported on in local press.

In this period the ongoing tramway extension works on Talbot Road, and repairs to Devonshire Bridge Road Bridge, were both featured in local press and on radio, and for both projects the Growth Deal was referenced. The tramway extension was also subject to an extensive local engagement campaign in the resort.

Skills & Education

Digital Skills Partnership

The announcement that Lancashire was set to be home to the UK's first Digital Skills Partnership - between DCMS and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub - was used to further reinforce messaging around how the Growth Deal had invested millions in vocational training. Coverage carrying that message, in the form of a quote from LEP director Mike Blackburn OBE, appeared in a range of regional and local press.

UCLan's EIC

Press coverage linked to the release of drone footage showing progress on the EIC, and further updates on the EIC within the context of UCLan's £200m Campus Masterplan, included references to the £10.5m Growth Deal backing for the EIC scheme.

Other stories issued by UCLan in this period also included Growth Deal references, but such references were edited out of subsequent reporting.

Lancaster's HIC

The commencement of works on the site of Lancaster University's Health Innovation Campus (HIC) saw regional and local press releases carry quotes from Northern Power House Minister Jake Berry, which SKV helped to source, and Graham Cowley (talking specifically about The Growth Fund's role in the scheme).

Graham's comments were also used strategically to highlight the emerging healthcare sector in Lancashire, something reinforced by a separate comment piece

drafted for Lancashire Business View - on behalf of Lancashire County Council's Andy Walker – where the HIC was again linked to Growth Deal funding.

As part of the same LBV feature on healthcare, the appointment of Dr Sherry Kothrai as director of the HIC also carried a reference to Growth Deal funding.

Blackpool's Energy HQ

The official opening of the Energy HQ in Blackpool was hampered by very bad snow and icy conditions which meant many VIPs (including Graham Cowley) were unable to attend the planned photo-call and other local media opps. Jake Berry, Northern Powerhouse Minister, was able to attend.

Despite Graham's absence, a quote attributed to him Graham - welcoming the facility while also reinforcing how Growth Deal funding is there to drive sectors like energy and environmental technologies across the county - was carried in local and regional media reporting about the opening.

Blackpool Energy HQ also undertook an extensive digital and social media campaign to announce the opening.

A second wave of PR was generated by the college through the announcement of a formal partnership with British Independent Utilities (a national energy management company). However, no references to Growth Deal funding appeared in any local reporting on this story.

Edge Hill Tech Hub

Edge Hill announced via their website the launch of their new Biotechnology Labs which are part of the Growth Deal-funded Tech Hub.

Growth Deal references were included in the announcement, but no external press coverage was generated.

Myerscough College

Myerscough College was voted Skills Provider of the Year at this year's Red Rose awards. References to Growth Hub funding were reportedly included in subsequent press material, and the college reports that it such references were picked up by some local media.

However, a deep search by SKV cannot find any such references online, nor in the links included in Myerscough's communications report.

Regeneration, Homes & Jobs

Vision Park, Burnley

£1.7m Growth Deal support for Burnley's Vision Park was cited in a Place North West article linked to the successful letting of first phase units.

Burnley also continues to issue regular press material about Vision Park lettings which includes Growth Deal references - but often media do not include these in any subsequent reporting.

Lomeshaye Industrial Estate, Brierfield

A report in the Lancashire Telegraph, announcing that Pendle Council had secured the Lomeshaye estate following a CPO, referenced the £4m Growth Deal fund which was helping to underpin the development. The story also suggested the scheme could create 1,000 new jobs for the area.

Baxi Site, Padiham

A funding package to bring forward the former Baxi site in Padiham involving Homes England, the Environment Agency and the LEP's Growth Deal was reported in Place North West. While this was linked to the Padiham flood defence funding news, it also highlighted the potential to build up to 240 new homes in the area, in addition to improvements to the public realm.

Blackpool

In addition to the backing of the Energy HQ in Blackpool (see Skills & Education) and the transport improvements cited in section 1, this period has seen additional coverage about Blackpool's wider regeneration which has included references to The Growth Deal.

Blackpool Housing Company

The £26m Growth Deal support for Blackpool Housing Company, allowing it to convert poor quality hotel and B&B accommodation into high quality apartments enjoyed several pieces of positive media coverage.

Amuseum

The announcement that the Amuseum project had secured HLF funding to help progress the plans included references in the media (including on BBC online) to The Growth Deal being a potential funding stream, alongside the Coastal Communities Fund.

Blackpool's £100m Regeneration Package

Blackpool Council's confirmation of £100m of investment in new projects across the resort was issued with references to Growth Deal funding.

However, SKV also ensured an extensive quote from Graham Cowley, highlighting how the Growth Deal was supporting many of the programmes within the £100m package, was added to the story as it began to get traction beyond local press.

Subsequently Graham/The Growth Deal was referenced in a range of both regional and national press, including ITV Granada and The Daily Express.

Additional Coverage

The Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre

This period saw Lancashire County Council's Cabinet agree to plans to progress the proposed Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre at Samlesbury. Reports in the Lancashire Telegraph and Chorley Citizen about the decision included references to the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre having secured Growth Deal funding.

MIPIM

In this period The We Are Lancashire partnership both attended MIPIM International in Cannes and MIPIM UK in London.

Both events saw

major Growth Deal-backed projects put in the spotlight (including the AMRC and the HIC at Lancaster).

Subsequent local and regional media coverage from MIPIM international did highlight many Growth Deal projects within wider reporting about the trade mission, but references to Growth Deal was not included in all coverage.

As a result of this for MIPIM UK, references to Growth Deal were embedded into a quote from Andy Walker as well as within the body copy. This helped ensure Growth Deal references appeared in a majority of coverage when the quotes were published.

Edwin Booth's Departure From The LEP

The announcement that Edwin Booth would be stepping down as Chair of the LEP was picked up by a number of local and regional media. Most reporting included references to the £320m Growth Deal pot the LEP had secured under his tenure.

An interview with Edwin in Lancashire Business View about his departure from the LEP also included reference to the Growth Deal programme.

East Lancashire Cycleway

Part of our role as the Growth Deal lead on communications is to look for set-piece opportunities for government.

In this period, and working with partners, we identified three milestone projects which we felt might offer a good platform for the NPH office.

The Energy HQ and the HIC ground breaking (as cited in section 2) were two such projects, while the third was the opening of a stretch of the Growth Deal-funded East Lancs Cycleway in Rossendale.

This media opp was presented to BEIS, who secured Jake Berry's participation, but we were then tasked with ensuring we had a compelling package for regional and local media.

This saw SKV working very closely with Lancashire County Council officers, and local groups in and around Rossendale, which resulted in us securing the presence of several supportive local stakeholders. These included the British Horse Society, Rossendale Harriers running club, the Northern Grip cycle festival.

This package of local people, together with the environmental and innovative manufacturing elements of the specific stretch of cycleway being opened, saw the BBC North West's Environment Correspondent (and Radio Five Live reporter) Judy Hobson commit to a morning's filming at the site.

SKV also arranged for photography to be taken, which was distributed to local press post-launch, along with a press release.

References to Growth Deal funding did not make the final BBC edit (despite Jake mentioning it twice during the interview as per our briefing), but quotes from Graham about Growth Deal did make local press coverage.

Despite this BEIS and the Minister were reportedly very happy with how it had all gone, and the professionalism, hard work and attention to detail to make this media opp run smoothly was noted.

Forthcoming PR Opportunities

- The Health Innovation Campus. Lancaster University is actively developing a range of business engagement channels (workshops, print and digital marketing collateral etc.) and has continually checked with SKV about Growth Deal Communications protocols. A new dedicated HIC comms manager is also being recruited, and SKV will be introduced to them once they are in post to look for joint opportunities.

- The Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre. SKV attended a meeting and were given of tour of the AMRC in Sheffield in this period alongside Kathryn Molloy and Anne-Marie Parkinson. We are now working closely with colleagues to gradually ramp-up messaging around the AMRC with a view to work starting on site early next year.
- Eden North. SKV attended a private partners presentation given by The Eden Project's senior team in Morecambe recently. Also present were comms colleagues from LCC, Lancaster University and Lancaster City Council. The agreed approach to comms is for Eden to lead, with relevant partners/funders being brought into the story as and when appropriate.
- Other opportunities include general milestones of major projects (e.g. HIC, EIC etc.), new Growth Deal funding announcements when/if approved (e.g. Amuseum in Blackpool) and other media opps linked to ongoing projects and schemes across Lancashire such as progress on Vision Park lettings, road improvements (e.g. Blackpool, Preston, BwD) and other infrastructure investments.

Other Activities/Insights

Sharing Media Coverage With Partners

At the last Growth Deal Board Meeting SKV was asked to attend, SKV recommended that the Growth Deal coverage book we had collated was shared with all local partners. This was to demonstrate the 'collective' high impact that references to Growth Deal projects in all press activity can generate.

This was agreed and executed in the summer, and we recommend we continue this process going forward (and using it to also remind partners of the protocols and expectations of both the GD board and Government with regards to inclusion of references, key messages and quotes to GD support).

NPH External Branding

As far as we are aware all partners are now comfortable with the required NPH/Growth Deal protocols, including the use of the NPH logo on external signage.

The GDMB may also be interested to know that in a draft 'best practice' paper being finalised by the LEP Group Communications team in London for Growth Hubs, a photo of Lancaster University's HIC signage is included as an exemplar of correct NPH/LEP branding.

NPH Branding & LEP Website

SKV was also recently tasked with ensuring NPH branding was in place on the LEP's website.

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21st November 2018