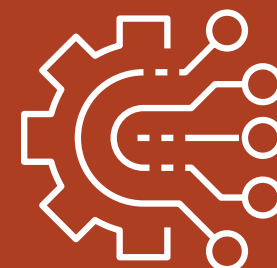


AYRSHIRE GROWTH DEAL

Annual Report

APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2025

Working together for a successful,
fair and inclusive Ayrshire economy



Our Vision is for Ayrshire to be 'a vibrant, outward looking, confident region, attractive to investors and visitors, making a major contribution to Scotland's growth and local well-being, and leading the implementation of digital technologies and the next generation of manufacturing.'



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Forewords

As we reflect on the achievements of the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) in 2024/25, it is clear that the Deal is growing in confidence in spite of challenges.

This year has been marked by definitive steps forward. We've seen infrastructure works progress on the ground, key facilities begin to take shape, and targeted investment reach businesses, people, and places across the region. From Prestwick's emerging role in the UK's aerospace sector, to the revitalisation of our local businesses and harbours, Ayrshire is building the foundations for a stronger, more inclusive economy.

Our momentum is not only measured in construction milestones or financial figures. It's visible in the strengthened partnerships across public, private, and community sectors. It's reflected in our efforts to embed Community Wealth Building and Fair Work principles into every project, ensuring that growth is genuinely shared. It's felt in the energy of new skills programmes, in the confidence of local businesses receiving support, and in the increasing engagement of residents who are shaping the future of their places.

Of course, delivering transformational change is not without its challenges. The wider economic context remains complex and, at times, uncertain. Yet it is in this context that the Ayrshire Growth Deal demonstrates its real value in providing long-term investment and strategic focus that creates resilience and opportunity in equal measure. The progress we've made this year strengthens our collective belief in what can be achieved, and focusses our ambition for what lies ahead.

We are encouraged by the progress of the AGD in 2024/25, and equally mindful of the work still to be done. As we look forward to another year of delivery, we remain committed to working collaboratively across all partners to ensure that the Deal delivers on its aim to support an inclusive economy for Ayrshire that benefits all.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Reid'.

Cllr Douglas Reid
Leader of East Ayrshire Council



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Burns'.

Cllr Marie Burns
Leader of North Ayrshire Council



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Connolly'.

Cllr Brian Connolly
Leader of South Ayrshire Council

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.

It is one delivery mechanism to achieve the region's economic vision, and is the most significant regional investment that Ayrshire has received in many years. At the highest level, the programme is focussed on the achievement of economic growth and inclusive growth, with a clear focus on increasing innovation and productivity, while reducing inequality across the region.

The AGD Partnership is being driven forward by the Scottish Government, the UK Government and East, North and South Ayrshire Councils. The Deal presents a unique opportunity to strengthen the Ayrshire's regional economy. Targeted, co-ordinated investment throughout the region acts as a powerful catalyst to stimulate growth, resulting in increased job opportunities and prosperity for Ayrshire, for Scotland and for the UK as a whole. The Deal is projected to unlock private investment of at least £300 million and generate 7,000 jobs. This year's annual report summarises progress for the past 12 months of the programme, from April 2024 to March 2025, with the exception of benefit realisation statistics shared on Page 12, which shows accumulative figures from the start of the programme to March 2025.

The AGD has focussed investment on six themes:



**Aerospace
and Space**
£80m



Communities
£11.5m



**Economic
Infrastructure**
£70.7m



Tourism
£23.5m



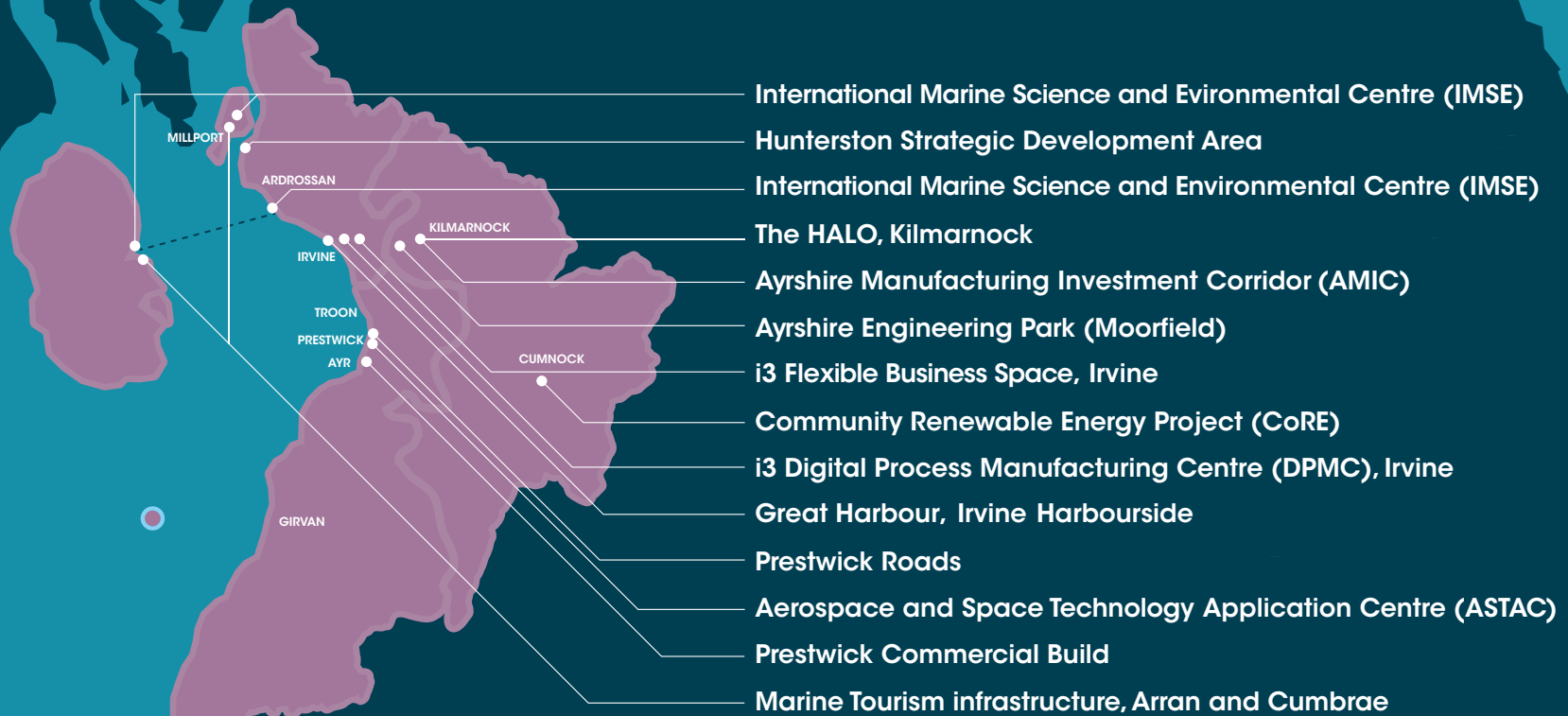
**Energy, Circular
Economy and
Environment**
51.8m



Digital
£14m

Geographical Overview

The map below shows where the projects are located across the region.



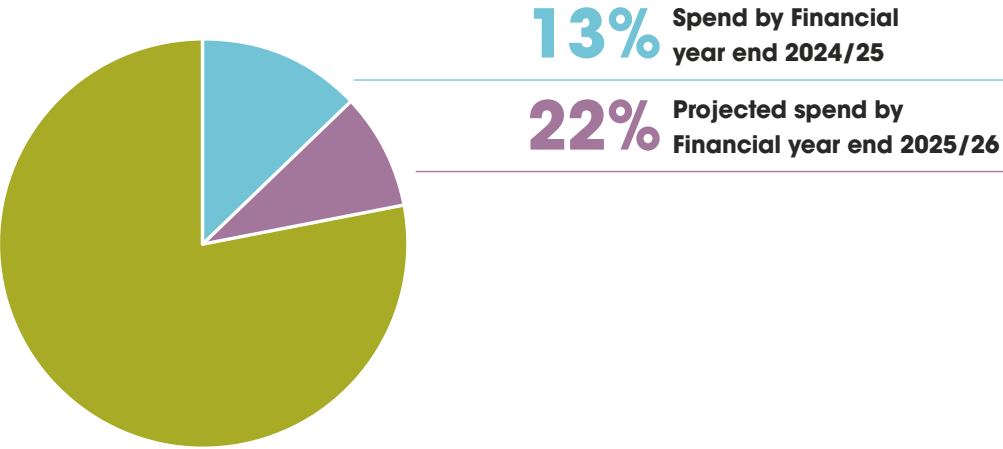
Financial Statement

At the financial year-end 2024/25, Partner and Government spend on the Deal was 13%, this is set to increase to 22% by the end of the financial year with a projected £24m spend in 25/26. Although this actual spend for 2024/25 is less than was initially anticipated for the year, projects are on track to increase spend and momentum in the new financial year.

Programme Expenditure to March 2025 (Partner and Government spend)	
Total expenditure to date	£32m
Total still to be spent	£219.5m

The Deal has received £21.2million in committed capital leverage and £6.6 million in committed revenue leverage. This has come about due to the proactive work of Partners to provide the right conditions to attract outside investment and willingness to collaborate for the benefit of delivering objectives of the Deal.

To reach the Deals original ambitions, efforts are being amplified in the development and delivery of the capital projects aiming to attract the most substantial private investment specifically in Energy, Circular Economy and Environment and Economic Infrastructure and Aerospace themes.



Financial Statement

A summary of the Ayrshire Growth Deal investment breakdown as of end of March 25, for the ten-year programme, is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: AGD Investment Breakdown

Programme	Ayrshire Growth Deal Project	UK Government Grant £'000	Scottish Government Grant £'000	Councils £'000	Total Government Grant £'000	Capital Leverage Committed by Other Partners £'000	Revenue leverage committed by other Partners £'000
Aerospace & Space	* Aerospace & Space Technology Application Centre	4,000	1,000	6,000	11,000	0	49
	*Prestwick Proposition: Commercial Space	28,000	12,000	2,000	42,000	0	0
	*Prestwick Infrastructure - Roads	0	17,000	10,000	27,000	0	0
Economic Infrastructure	HALO Kilmarnock	3,500	3,500	2,000	9,000	12,484	2,918
	Ayrshire Engineering Park (Moorfield)	0	12,000	4,000	16,000	0	33
	Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor (AMIC)	10,000	13,500	0	23,500	0	5
	i3 Flexible Business Space	0	11,000	4,000	15,000	5,673	0
	i3 Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre (DPMC)	6,225	0	1,000	7,225	1,437	3,165
Energy, Circular Economy & Environment	Community Renewable Energy Project (CoRE)	17,000	0	7,500	24,500	716	221
	Hunterston Strategic Development Area	12,000	0	0	12,000	40	0
	International Marine Science & Environmental Centre (IMSE)	11,275	0	4,000	15,275		20
Tourism	Great Harbour, Irvine & Ardeer	0	9,000	5,000	14,000	949	130
	Marine Tourism	0	9,500	0	9,500	0	119
Digital	Building Digital Capital	11,000	3,000	0	14,000	0	0
Communities	Working for a Healthy Economy	0	5,000	0	5,000	0	0
	Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund	0	3,500	0	3,500	0	0
	Community Wealth Building Fund	0	3,000	0	3,000	0	0
TOTAL FUNDING							

*Aerospace and Space budget is subject to Governmental approval of Review

The Ayrshire Growth Deal Financial Summary in terms of Government grant for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Financial Summary

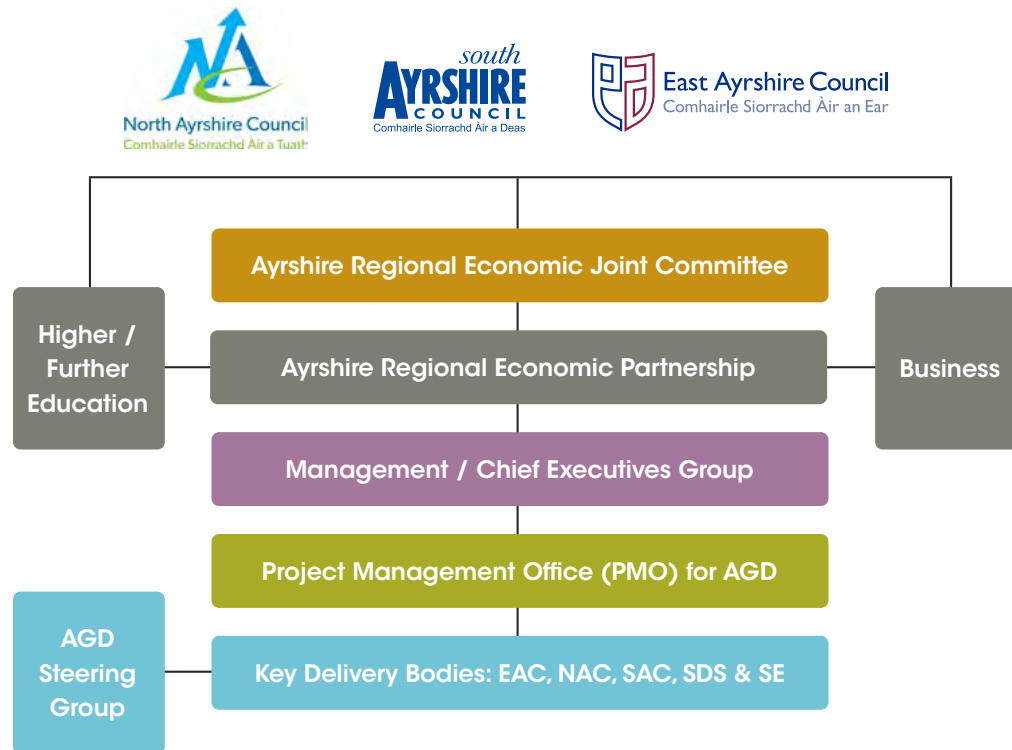
Programme	Ayrshire Growth Deal Project	2024/25	Cumulative (2018/19 - 2023/24)	
		AGD Grant Claimed (£'000)	Government Grant Claimed (£'000)	Government Grant % Claimed
Aerospace & Space	Aerospace & Space Technology Application Centre	0	0	0
	Prestwick Proposition: Commercial Space	0	2,554	6
	Prestwick Infrastructure - Roads	0	0	0
Economic Infrastructure	HALO Kilmarnock	0	7,000	100
	Ayrshire Engineering Park (Moorfield	0	0	0
	Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor (AMIC)	0	0	0
	i3 Flexible Business Space	1,383	2,502	35
	i3 Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre (DPMC)	0	0	0
Energy, Circular Economy & Environment	Community Renewable Energy Project (CoRE)	0	0	0
	Hunterston Strategic Development Area	0	0	0
	International Marine Science & Environmental Centre (IMSE), Ardrossan	0	0	0
Tourism	Great Harbour	955	0	11
	Marine Tourism	0	0	0
Digital	Building Digital Capital	0	0	0
Communities	Working for a Healthy Economy	906	1,821	55
	Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund	394	143	15
	Community Wealth Building Fund	680	2,320	100
TOTAL FUNDING				

Governance Overview

The diagram below summarises the Ayrshire Growth Deal's current structure. Governance is updated and reviewed regularly, and is subject to a more comprehensive review in the coming year.

This ensures as well as maximises its duties of scrutiny and endorsement predominantly through the Board and Committee, but to maximise potential opportunity in supporting the Deal to quicken the pace, given the pressing timescales for major projects to begin delivery phases and successful completion before the funding period ends.

Below is an overview of the Governance structure.



Descriptions:

Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee

The Joint Committee has ultimate control over key strategic and investment decisions required to support the Deal and the wider strategy. The Joint Committee comprises Elected Members from each of the three Ayrshire Councils together with representation from partners and businesses.

Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board

The Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership sits below the Joint Committee with responsibility for progressing the day-to-day business of the Partnership and the AGD. This Board comprises Elected Members from the Joint Committee, as well as more extensive representation from public sector partners, the third sector and businesses.

Management / Chief Executives Group

The Management/Chief Executive group provides an overview of the Deal and where needed strategic guidance to the Partnership and PMO. They also receive updates from the PMO on the progress made on the Programme and individual projects.

Programme Management Office

The PMO reports directly to the Chief Executives Group, Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board and Joint Committee, overseeing the operations of the Deal, and a formal Review is held between the Programme Partners and UK/SG annually known as the Annual Conversation.

The reporting schedule is set out in the Annual Grant Offer Letter by the UK/SG and includes:

- a monthly report and meeting to discuss the financial spend and forecast
- a quarterly report and meeting to discuss the finance, milestones, benefits, risks & issues
- a six-weekly update and meeting to discuss communications and procurement
- check point reviews for each project.

Annually the PMO provides:

- an annual report
- updated Implementation Plan
- updated Benefits Realisation Plan
- updated Financial Plan.

The PMO is also part of a wider City & Growth Deals UK PMO group that meets regularly to share best practice.

Key Delivery Bodies and Regional partners include Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, and Ayrshire College.

Audit

The Programme is subject to regular internal audits and has taken part in audits by Audit Scotland relating to the Deal externally. The findings, recommendations, and progress on follow up actions are reported to the Partnership Board and Joint Committee.



Benefits Realisation Plan

The [Ayrshire Growth Deal \(AGD\) Document](#) states that the realisation and evaluation of the impacts of the AGD is a fundamental requirement of all AGD Partners. The AGD Benefits Realisation Plan (BRP) sets out the overarching approach for monitoring and managing the outcomes of the Deal, in line with delivery plans and objectives. We will continue to monitor and evaluate outputs and outcomes each year as our projects develop.

The BRP indicates the importance of measuring Strategic Added Value (SAV) in order to capture the additional benefits of AGD partnership relationships and outcomes. By capturing SAV, we can highlight where partnership working across AGD projects has led to one or more of the effects set out below, using a qualitative ranking approach:

Strategic leadership & catalyst: Articulating and communicating regional development needs, opportunities and solutions to partners and stakeholders in the region and elsewhere;

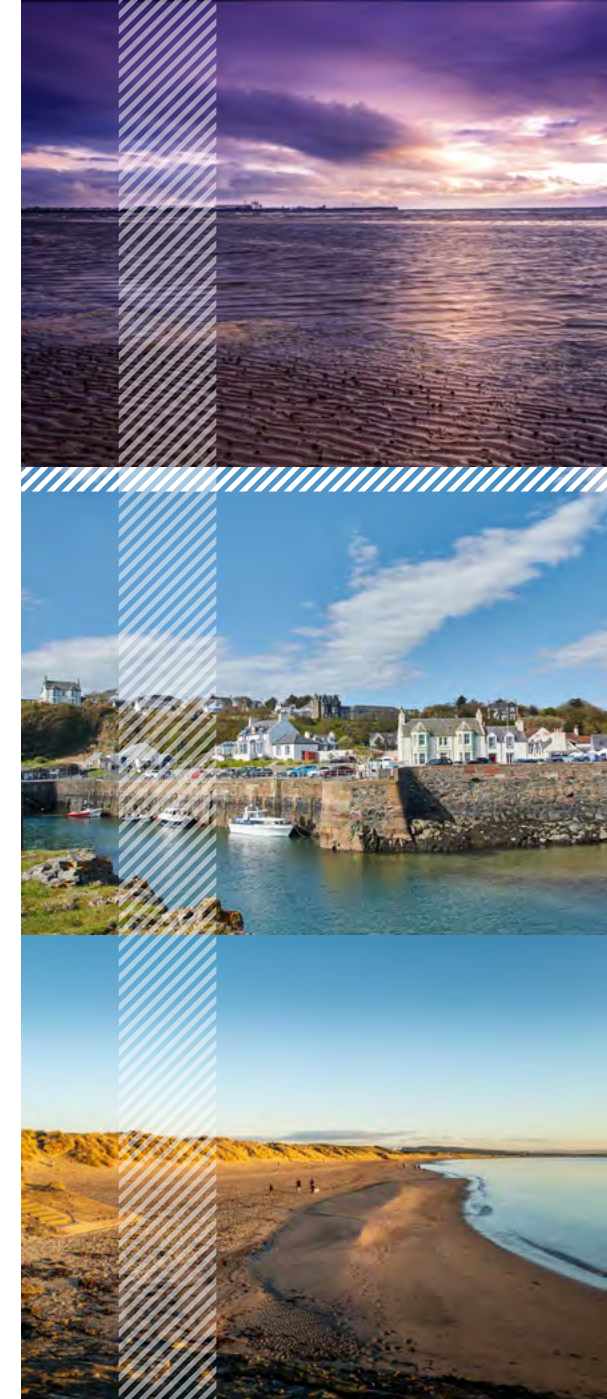
Strategic influence: Carrying out or stimulating activity that defines the distinctive roles of partners, encouraging commitment to shared strategic objectives and effective fund allocation;

Leverage: Providing financial and other incentives to mobilise partner and stakeholder resources (equipment, people and funding);

Synergy: Using organisational capacity, knowledge and expertise to improve information exchange and knowledge transfer and coordination and/or integration of the design and delivery of interventions between partners; and

Engagement: Setting up the mechanisms and incentives for more effective and deliberative engagement of stakeholders in the design and delivery of regional and sub-regional priorities and programmes.

The BRP figures have been updated and included in this report, and a further review and update to the BRP approach for the AGD will be available later in the year. This will be enabled through collaboration with other Deals. It is important to note that the projected benefits featured in this report for projects which are still in development are subject to update and change through the progression of their respective business cases. Evidence of SAV and related benefits are already apparent across a range of AGD activities and are only set to increase as further projects come into operation.



Key Achievements



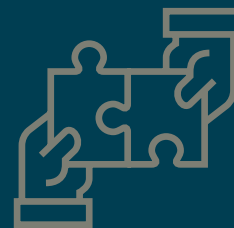
£28m of total
commitment to additional
investment projected



5321 residents
supported through
Working for a
Healthy Economy



3012
jobs supported

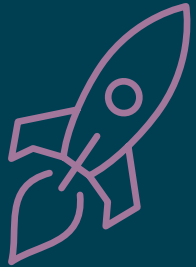


1152
organisations
supported by
Community Wealth
Building



£21m
invested from Scottish
and UK Governments

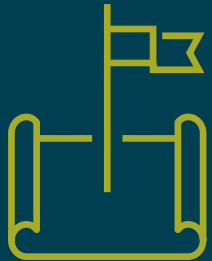
Key Achievements



286 new enterprises supported



10 Outline Business Cases completed



9.87ha development space unlocked



8 Full Business Cases completed



2 projects in completed

Key Highlights

The Programme Review

The 2024/25 financial year saw the conclusion of the Programme Review, which began in October 2023. The review assessed project progress, delivery challenges, and funding constraints across the Ayrshire Growth Deal. It led to decisions on project changes, including scope adjustments and delivery plans, to reflect current conditions. Governance and reporting processes were also updated to support implementation.

The review has been supported by the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board and Joint Committee, and concluded with ministerial support for the broad trajectory of changes proposed in the Economic Infrastructure, Energy, Tourism and Digital programmes, with further agreement required to support the change within the Space and Aerospace programme. The support for changes proposed in the review are contingent on HM Green Book protocols and AGD change management processes being upheld.

The Deal has now entered a reset phase. Focus has shifted from review to delivery, with clearer structures in place to support progress. Partnership working and active monitoring remain key to achieving the Deal's aims across Ayrshire.



Business Cases Developed

The 2024/25 financial year saw progress in the development and approval of business cases, moving key Ayrshire Growth Deal projects toward delivery.

The following business cases were completed and endorsed by UK and Scottish Governments:

- **Marine Tourism Programme:** The Programme Business Case was approved, setting out plans to strengthen Ayrshire's marine and coastal tourism sector.
- **Great Harbour, Irvine:** The Full Business Case for Phase 1 (the Coastal Hub) was approved, unlocking funding for the construction of improved outdoor facilities at Irvine Beach Park. The project's three phases will regenerate Irvine Harbourside as a tourism and visitor destination.
- **Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor (AMIC):** The Outline Business Case was completed and approved, enabling the next phase of development.

The following business cases were developed and submitted for review before the end of March 2025:

- **Ayrshire Engineering Park, Kilmarnock:** An Outline Business Case was finalised and submitted, awaiting endorsement by UK and Scottish Governments Aerospace Space and Technology Application Centre: A draft Outline Business Case was submitted in February 2025 which has since received feedback to enable further development.
- **Marine Tourism | Cumbrae:** A draft outline business case was submitted in January 2025 for early comments from the Governments, which have been taken on board to enable a resubmission of the business case in May 2025.
- **Aerospace Space and Technology Application Centre:** A draft Outline Business Case was submitted in February 2025 which has since received feedback to enable further development.

Though more progress needs to be made at pace to allow for successful delivery of the AGD, these approvals and developments mark a key step in the programme's progression, allowing projects to move from planning into implementation and delivering long-term economic benefits across the region.



Tangible Progress

In 2024/25, the Ayrshire Growth Deal saw several capital projects progressing from planning to delivery, marking a significant phase in the programme's implementation.

Key developments include:

- **Great Harbour, Irvine:** Construction commenced on this project, aiming to transform the Irvine Harbourside into a vibrant destination.
- **Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC):** The centre was launched, enhancing the region's capabilities in advanced manufacturing.

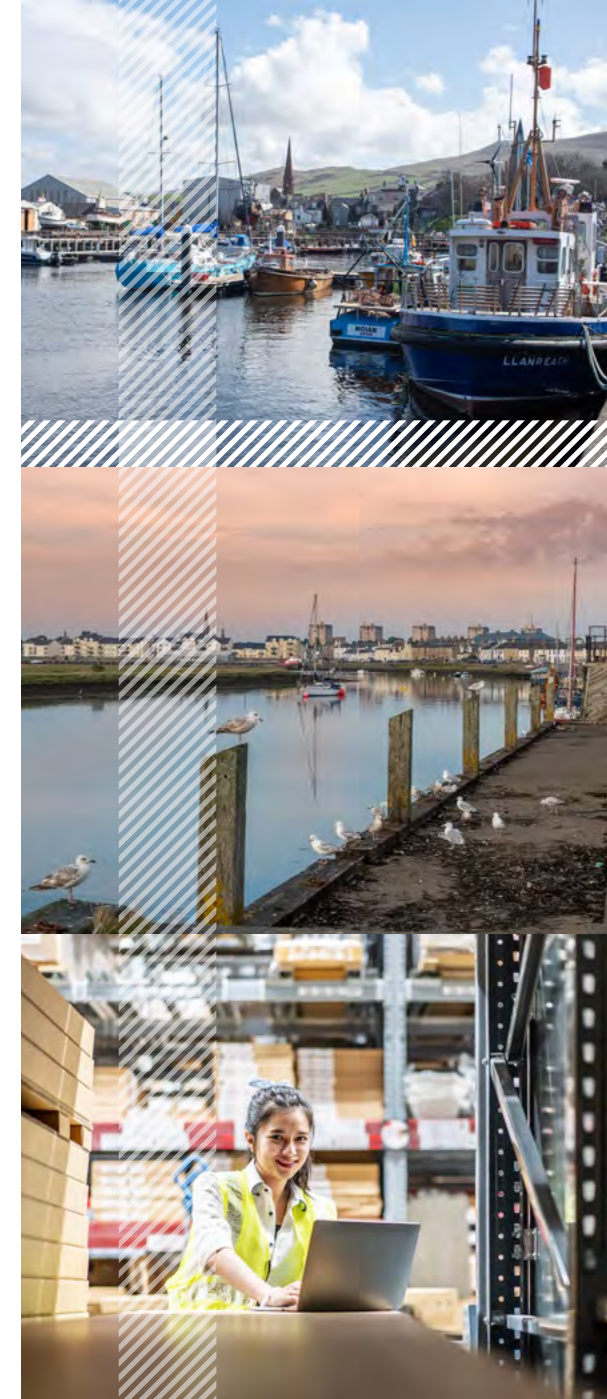
The report will provide further detail on progress for each individual project. In 2025/26 we hope tangible progress is matched and increased, kickstarted through the Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor and Ayrshire Engineering Park entering their construction phase.

Regional Alignment

The Ayrshire Growth Deal continues to align closely with the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy, ensuring that investment priorities support the region's long-term goals for inclusive growth, innovation, and sustainability.

This alignment is not only reflected in project development and delivery, but also in how the Deal is communicated and promoted. Through collaboration, a coordinated approach to communications has emerged, including the launch of a shared LinkedIn page for the Ayrshire region. This platform helps showcase regional strengths, highlight project milestones, and promote a joined-up Ayrshire identity to external audiences.

The programme recognises that strong, consistent communication is essential. Our renewed approach to communications seeks to ensure that every stakeholder feels informed, involved, and invested in the success of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.



Skills Developed

Amongst projects delivering well is the Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund, which supports local employers with grants to fill skills gaps across the region. We are delighted to share a series of videos that showcase some of the positive impact the project is having:



Enhanced Collaboration

During 2024/25, the Ayrshire Growth Deal strengthened its collaboration with regional and national partners through the Deals' PMO network. This has supported greater knowledge sharing, coordination, and consistency in how deals are managed across Scotland.

The Deal has also benefited from targeted support from other City and Growth Deals. Economic modelling from the Glasgow City Region Intelligence Hub has helped the development of business cases, whilst insights from the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal have supported aims to improve our approach to benefits realisation management.

These collaborations are helping to improve delivery, build shared learning, and ensure Ayrshire's approach continues to reflect good practice across the wider programme network.

Successful Project Completion

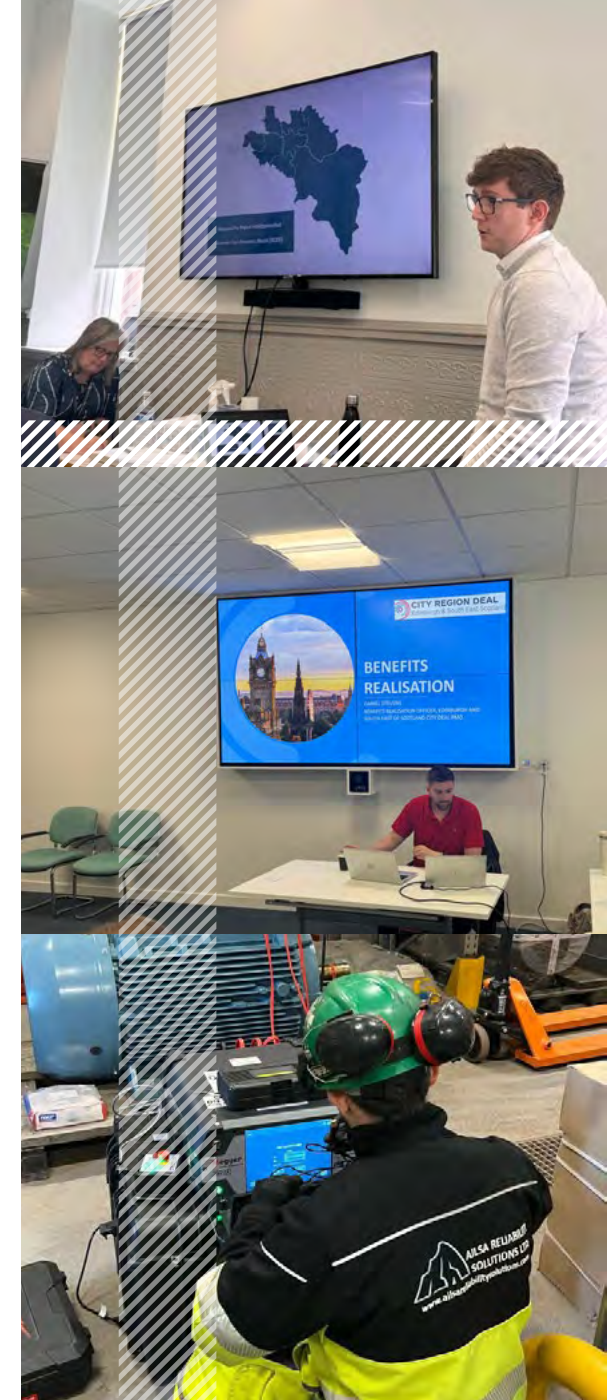
The Community Wealth Building (CWB) programme has now been successfully completed. The evaluation of the programme states:

"The Ayrshire CWB Programme has delivered measurable economic and social benefits while piloting a new approach to place-based development. Its legacy lies in its ability to shift economic power back to communities, build fairer labour markets, and foster resilience through local ownership and collaboration. The evaluation finds a clear mandate for continuation - and a compelling case for Community Wealth Building to become a mainstream component of Scotland's wellbeing economy."

Over the course of the project, more than 1,000 Ayrshire businesses were supported across key areas including procurement, employment, fair work, land and assets, and plural ownership. This work helped strengthen local supply chains, improve job quality, and encourage inclusive economic participation.

As the formal project comes to an end, the principles of Community Wealth Building will continue to be embedded and mainstreamed across all three Ayrshire councils - shaping business support services and wider economic development activity.

Building on this success, Ayrshire is committed to maintaining its role as a national leader in Community Wealth Building. The programme has not only delivered tangible local impact, but also helped make the Ayrshire Growth Deal unique in its approach to inclusive growth.



Key Challenges

The delays from previous years, created by challenges often outwith Partner control, have increased the pressure on the pace toward the successful delivery of the Deal. Essentially, the programme must be delivered in a shorter timeframe than originally planned, whilst maintaining the same level of complex approval processes and benefits realisation.

The importance of working closely across key delivery Partners and the Governments is more crucial now than ever, and the AGD is committed to the ongoing process towards improving and quickening the pace of progression.

The Economy and Fair Work Inquiry into City Region Growth Deals highlights many of these challenges which can be read in the recently published report. Many of the challenges and recommendations have resonated with the AGD:

Governance & Accountability

Flexibility

Risks

Transparency and scrutiny

Partnership working

Measuring Outcomes

Funding of Growth Deals

Inflationary pressures and the Construction Sector

Cluttered Policy and Funding Landscape

The AGD was represented by Head of Economic Growth, David McDowall, in presenting evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Economy and Fair Work Committee, 11 December 2024.



Read the full Economy & Fair Work Committee report



Communities Programme

Focussing on the health, wellbeing and progress of our local communities.



Development

Delivery

- Working for a Healthy Economy
- Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund

Complete

- Community Wealth Building



Working for a Healthy Economy



Phase: Delivery

Budget: £5m

Delivery duration: 7 Years

Next Stage: Delivery / Benefits Review

Progress Update

Working for a Healthy Economy (WfHE) is an occupational health initiative which was launched in May 2021 to help Ayrshire residents overcome health-related barriers to employment and support economic growth through the Ayrshire Growth Deal. Delivered by NHS Salus, it assists unemployed individuals in gaining work, helps employed individuals retain jobs, and supports local businesses in improving workforce health and productivity.

The project was implemented in May 2021, the initial contract expired in June 2024 and was replaced with a new contract from August 2024 which can remain in place for the duration of the funding period.

The Project continues to deliver with continuous improvement included as required to ensure the service meets project needs. A review of targets will be undertaken early in the coming year to ensure realistic targets can be included within the future delivery model. The benefits of an occupational health service are significant against the backdrop of inactivity and long-term health issues as we support more individuals across Ayrshire to retain good health to enable them to access and stay in work.

To date, 1,540 unemployed individuals have engaged with the Working for a Healthy Economy service. The clinical outcomes demonstrate significant improvements:

- **35.5%** reported reduced anxiety levels
- **35.9%** experienced a reduction in depression
- **34.0%** showed improved overall health and wellbeing

These outcomes reflect the positive impact of the service on participants' mental and physical health.

The project continues to deliver with positive feedback from beneficiaries and employability project staff. Parents who attended a recent ministerial visit in North Ayrshire highlighted the support they had received from WfHE as part of their overall employability journey.

Headline achievements

1,540

Unemployed
individuals engaged
with the Working for
Healthy Economy
Service

35%

Anxiety levels reduced
in participants
engaging with
WfHE support

174

People returning to
work as a result of
WfHE intervention

34%

Health and wellbeing
improvement reported
by participants

Project Journey Highlights

MAY 2024

- Engagement increase with the project through an animation created through a young person on the EQUAL Programme:

AUG 2024

- Interim Evaluation Report completed by The University of Glasgow's School of Health and Wellbeing.

NOV 2024

- WfHE is being further embedded into Local Authority employability services to increase engagement with the service.

MAR 2025

- The project is extended to 30th June 2027 to allow for funding and benefits to be maximised.

Next Steps

The Project will continue to deliver with continuous improvement included as required to ensure the service meets the needs. A review of targets is underway, seeking to ensure realistic targets can be included within the future delivery model.

Learn more about WfHE impact:



"By addressing health as a barrier to employment, we're not only improving individual wellbeing but also strengthening our local economy. The impact we've seen - both in clinical outcomes and personal journeys - demonstrates the power of integrated, person-centred support. This programme is a vital part of our commitment to inclusive growth, and we're proud of the difference it continues to make in people's lives."

Laura Neil, Project Lead | Working for a Healthy Economy



Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund



Phase: Delivery

Budget: £3.5m

Delivery duration: 8 Years

Next Stage: Delivery | Employer Grants Round 6

Progress Update

The Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund (ASIF) works with delivery partners, employers and employees to deliver a range of skills interventions to address skills gaps across the region and equip people with the skills to compete effectively in the labour market, ensuring Ayrshire has the skills required for the future. The project commenced in June 2023 and is progressing well.

The following statistics were reported following a review of the programme in April 2024:

- **100%** of businesses have noted a positive impact since receiving ASIF funding
- **92%** of businesses have addressed the skills gap
- **69%** have promoted staff and notices increase in productivity
- **23%** have created new jobs (may increase in time)
- **92%** think ASIF will benefit the Ayrshire economy.

These outcomes clearly demonstrate the positive contribution of the Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund. By working collaboratively with delivery partners and employers, the programme is not only addressing immediate skills shortages but also laying the foundation for long-term economic resilience. The high levels of employer satisfaction and tangible improvements in productivity, job creation, and workforce development highlight ASIF's vital role in shaping a skilled, adaptable, and future-ready Ayrshire.

Headline achievements

459

people
participating
in training

100%

of businesses have
noted a positive
impact since receiving
ASIF funding

92%

of businesses have
addressed the skills gap

76

successful employer
applications



Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- 76 employers and 140 employees have benefited from ASIF so far.

JUN 2024

- Annual Review completed
- High number of referrals received for college courses

FEB 2025

- Employers supported to create their own training academies, enabled through ASIF.

MAR 2025

- Fair Work and Skills video series completed and published online.

Next Steps

Following a recent evaluation of the programme, the following recommendations are being considered and integrated into planning and delivery across Ayrshire:

1. To consider opportunities to maximise the size of the fund in relation to the scale of the ambition in any future investment.
2. To support collaboration with industry to promote occupations in higher-demand sectors
3. To increase the awareness and availability of skills pathways in higher demand sectors
4. Measure the impact of the ASIF against its objectives by carrying out an evaluation of the fund
5. To coordinate and organise skills planning at a strategic level across Ayrshire with the priorities for the AGD, ASIP and ARES aligning under a collective agenda
6. To continue to explore ways in which these skills planning activities and investments can drill down to place level and ensure a place-based approach to skills development, so no part of Ayrshire is left behind.

Beneficiary quotes:

"The funding has given us the confidence and ability to continue investing in apprentices at our Prestwick facility. By having a constant stream of trainees we will be in a great position to service the ever growing aviation market in Scotland"

Morgan Ward, South Ayrshire

"ASIF funding has allowed us to further develop and deliver bespoke training for team members with management potential. We have also been able to look at longer term succession planning with certified external revenue management training."

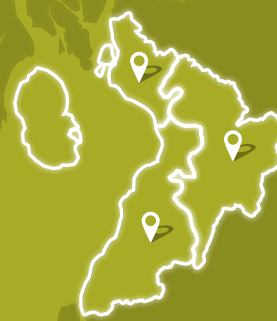
Auchrannie, North Ayrshire

"The Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund encourages Ayrshire businesses to address skills gaps and develop employees within priority groups, increasing motivation and productivity within the business and providing opportunities for growth."

Microtech, East Ayrshire



Community Wealth Building (CWB)



Phase: Delivery Complete

Budget: £3m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Monitoring | Legacy

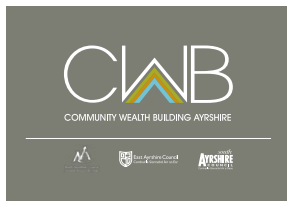
Progress Update

This year saw the Community Wealth Building programme draw to a conclusion after four years of delivery across the Ayrshire Region with the main purpose of supporting local enterprises to use CWB as a tool to strengthen their businesses as well as receive tailored support and further grant support through a £1m CWB fund.

The programme has delivered demonstrable benefits for enterprise engagement across Ayrshire, particularly among new businesses, social enterprises, and micro-enterprises. By December 2024, over 1,150 unique enterprises had been supported, including 154 businesses under 12 months old. This breadth of reach indicates that support has extended beyond established firms to include entrepreneurs and underrepresented enterprise types.

The CWB Fund and targeted consultancy support has helped many businesses address strategic challenges such as digitisation, marketing, and energy resilience. Evaluation data and stakeholder interviews highlight how these interventions created tangible economic benefits - including over 1,000 jobs safeguarded, over 160 projected new roles, and several examples of business recovery from pandemic or cost-of-living related downturns.

The programme also enhanced economic inclusion by supporting businesses in rural areas and town centres. In South Ayrshire, for instance, the Newmarket Street Traders formed a consortium cooperative focused on revitalising a key high street, demonstrating how CWB interventions can catalyse place-based regeneration.



Read the programme evaluation at www.ayrshiregrowthdeal.co.uk

Headline achievements

1152

Entities supported in the creation or transition to employee ownership or Co-Operatives

268

Enterprises registered on Public Contract Scotland

290

Enterprises receiving 1-2-1 procurement or consultancy support

1035

local people attending Fair Work Job Fairs in partnership with DYW

603

Enterprises attending CWB pillar specific workshops

1027

Jobs safeguarded through CWB interventions and support

162

new enterprises supported (<12 months old)

286

Enterprises receiving financial assistance through grant or consultancy support

270

enterprises engaged in Fair Work Action Planning

Project Journey Highlights

JUN 2024

- Key outputs achieved, progress update shared with Elected Members

AUG 2024

- CWB Project Evaluation is underway

FEB 2025

- Final grants awarded and evaluation approaching conclusion

MAR 2025

- CWB reaches completion and the project is mainstreamed within the Local Authorities.

Next Steps

Following on from the programme evaluation, Partners are considering the following strategic recommendations:

1. Sustain and scale the programme through continued investment, mainstreamed staffing, and cross-council delivery coordination
2. Create a shared CWB monitoring and reporting framework to support evidence-based decision-making
3. Target future resource allocation towards high-impact areas such as procurement support, fair work integration, and cooperative development
4. Formalise alignment with regional and national strategies, including Scotland's Net Zero Route Map, Fair Work Action Plan, and forthcoming CWB legislation
5. Use Ayrshire as a demonstration region, developing a replicable model for other parts of Scotland

Beneficiary quotes:

"Thanks to the CWB programme, we've modernised sustainably and built a resilient future for our team and customers."

Curtainwise Ltd, East Ayrshire

"The programme enabled strategic growth and positioned us for regional leadership in diagnostics and sustainability."

Ailsa Reliability Solutions, North Ayrshire

"CWB helped us build the confidence and capacity to win public contracts - our business has never been stronger."

Aroha Escapes Ltd, North Ayrshire

"This investment helped us become a hub of local culture, education and economic activity."

Dundonald Castle, South Ayrshire

"We moved from competition to collaboration - and saved our businesses in the process."

New Market Street Traders, South Ayrshire

Economic Infrastructure Programme

This programme will create conditions for growth, providing local jobs, strong regional supply chains and skills development across a number of sectors in Ayrshire.



Development

- Ayrshire Engineering Park (Moorfield)
- Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor

Delivery

- I3 Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC)
- I3 Flexible Space

Complete

- HALO



Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor



Phase: Development FBC

Budget: £23.5m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Delivery

Progress Update

The Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor Project (AMIC) will see the creation of a flagship regional Food and Drink Centre of Excellence.

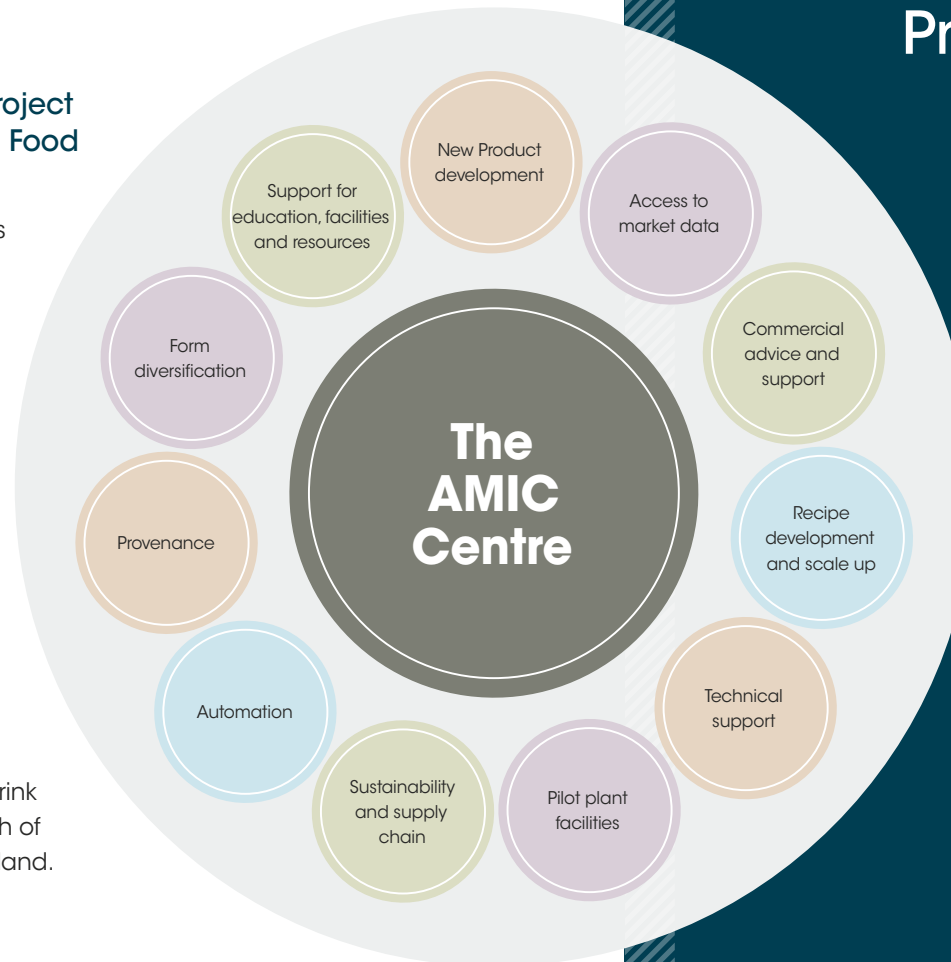
The project will provide businesses with the knowledge and tools required to reach their productive potential, through increased enterprise, innovation and investment, and by becoming more competitive in the global market place. The project seeks to provide a range of physical infrastructure which will support the sustainability and growth of the advanced manufacturing sector within Ayrshire and beyond.

This project comprises of three elements:

- **High quality modern industrial units** for the wider advanced manufacturing sector
- **A regionally significant Food and Drink Centre of Excellence**
- **Nine on-site support and start-up units**

The Centre of Excellence will allow sector specific food and drink businesses to start-up and grow, as well as enabling the growth of existing businesses across Ayrshire and the South West of Scotland.

On completion the Centre of Excellence will provide support across the following areas:



Projected Benefits

£113m

projected net additional GVA improvements for the Ayrshire Region over a 25 year span

60

Start-ups enabled through the AMIC project

2

upgraded roads/junctions to unlock economic growth and opportunity

126

full-time equivalent jobs created through commercial development

Project Journey Highlights

JUL 2024

- AMIC Outline Business Case is submitted to the UK & Scottish Governments.

AUG 2024

- Partnerships are agreed with an energy provider and digital provider for the site.

SEP 2024

- Project event engagement with Ayrshire Heads of Education, supporting the alignment of curriculum to AGD opportunities

NOV 2024

- Planning permission in principle secured

JAN 2025

- Progress update shared with local governance stakeholders, ahead of plans for the project breaking ground in 2025/26.

Next Steps

The Full Business case for the infrastructure works relating to both AMIC and AEP is awaiting endorsement from the UK and Scottish Governments. Following this, works can commence and are expected to take place in Autumn 2025. This will be a fantastic milestone for the programme as a whole and should support significant growth in an integral sector for the region.

The Opportunity

Nationally, Scotland's food and drink industry is the country's largest manufacturing sector, employing over 123,000 people and generating £11.2 billion in exports. (Scottish Government, 2024). Ayrshire contributes to this success through its blend of traditional farming, innovative food production, and a growing focus on sustainability and skills development.

AMIC has a clear opportunity to support Ayrshire's food and drink sector by enabling innovation, improving manufacturing processes, and helping businesses scale. Building on the region's established products and growing artisan base, AMIC can strengthen supply chains, support job creation, and increase the sector's competitiveness through modern production and business support.

"The co-location of AMIC and the Ayrshire Engineering Park at Moorfield will be transformative for the Food and Drink Sector. For years, food and drink businesses in Ayrshire have lacked access to modern, scalable facilities that support innovation and growth. This project not only addresses that gap but also creates a collaborative environment where producers, engineers, and educators can work together to drive forward sustainable manufacturing. It's a major step toward making Ayrshire a national leader in food and drink production."

Fiona Paterson, Project Lead | 2025



Ayrshire Engineering Park



Phase: Development FBC

Budget: £16.3m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Delivery

Progress Update

The Ayrshire Engineering Park (AEP) project aims to provide expansion and development of Moorfield Industrial Park in Kilmarnock which is a strategic industrial site for East Ayrshire Council, creating serviced plots and flexible, high quality business space, with a range of units to support the advanced manufacturing and light engineering sectors in Ayrshire.

The AEP Project will be co-located at Moorfield, Kilmarnock along with the Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor project (AMIC), known as the Ayrshire Innovation Park (AIP).

The AEP project addresses the critical shortage of high-quality industrial space in East Ayrshire, which has limited business growth and investment. A 2021 review by Avison Young highlighted a longstanding market failure and a lack of modern, well-connected premises compared to other regions. This development will support local business expansion, attract inward investment, and replace ageing infrastructure in an area with high unemployment. As part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal, AEP is key to unlocking the region's economic potential and improving its competitiveness.

The project proposes to create a fully-developed site with the required access and utilities infrastructure, high-spec digital connectivity and up to 7250 square metres of units for growth and expansion of the existing engineering business base, and to attract inward investment.



This year, planning permission in principle has been granted for AMIC and AEP collocated at Ayrshire Innovation Park in Kilmarnock

Project Journey Highlights

SEP 2024

- Project event engagement with Ayrshire Heads of Education, supporting the alignment of curriculum to AGD opportunities

NOV 2024

- Planning permission in principle secured

DEC 2024

- Outline Business Case submitted to UK and Scottish Governments for approval

JAN 2025

- Progress update shared with local governance stakeholders, ahead of plans for the project breaking ground in 2025/26.

Headline achievements

£148m

projected net additional GVA improvements for the Ayrshire Region over a 25 year span

2

upgraded roads to unlock economic growth and opportunity

7250

square meters of units for growth and expansion of the engineering base

154

full-time equivalent jobs created through commercial development

Next Steps

The Full Business case for the infrastructure works relating to both AMIC and AEP is awaiting endorsement from the UK and Scottish Governments. Following this, works can commence and are expected to take place in Autumn 2025. This will be a fantastic milestone for the programme as a whole and should support significant growth in an integral sector for the region.

Development Strength

The strength of the AMIC and AEP projects lie in their strong stakeholder collaboration, involving food and drink industry specialists, regional partners, local authorities, business representatives, and education leaders. Through 1:1 business engagement, expert consultancy, and skills development initiatives, the project ensures broad support and future-focused growth. Interested businesses are tracked in a database and receive regular updates on progress.





i3 Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC)



Phase: Delivery - Phase 1

Budget: £6m

Delivery duration: 6 Years

Next Stage: Delivery - Phase 2

Progress Update

An exciting milestone was reached for the pilot phase of The Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC) this year, as the facility became operational. This milestone was enabled through strong partnership, namely with NMIS (National Manufacturing Institute Scotland) / University of Strathclyde, and CPI (Centre for Process Innovation) and with support from Scottish Enterprise.

Located at the i3 site in Irvine, the pilot facility marks a major step forward in supporting Scotland's process manufacturing industries. The centre provides businesses with access to cutting-edge technologies - including AI, robotics, digital data management, and virtual/augmented reality - enabling innovation and low-risk adoption of digital tools.

The DPMC is designed to help manufacturers reduce energy costs, improve productivity, and move toward net zero. It also features 5G connectivity through a Mobile Private Network provided by Vodafone, supporting advanced wireless technology trials. Stakeholder engagement has been strong, with an industry roundtable in June 2024 and ongoing collaboration with local councils, business development teams, and the 5GiR pilot.

The successful operation of Phase 1 will inform early development of Phase 2, with the centre already attracting interest from businesses across Ayrshire and beyond.



Headline achievements

£19.8m

projected financial
leverage through
private sector or any
other leverage

1749

square metres of
development space
unlocked

95

new jobs created
and 84 construction
jobs created

154

full-time equivalent
jobs created
through commercial
development

Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- An event takes place to talk through the demonstrations and opportunities on site

MAY 2024

- Recruitment is underway for the Junior Engineers job positions, as part of Phase 1

JAN 2025

- The Head of DPMC is recruited

FEB 2025

- Launch of i3 DPMC Phase 1 takes place

"It was fantastic to see the first phase of the Digital Process Manufacturing Centre in action. The next stage of the Ayrshire Growth Deal project will see local partners use £5 million UK Government investment to build a permanent facility in the area."

The UK Government is focused on delivering our Plan for Change to turbo-charge economic growth and bring a decade of national renewal and opportunity for all. Pioneering facilities like this are testament to what we can achieve when we work together towards a common goal. I encourage stakeholders, business leaders, educators, and policymakers to seize this opportunity, engage with the resources available here, and contribute to shaping a vibrant, sustainable future for manufacturing in Scotland and the UK."

UK Government Scotland Office Minister Kirsty McNeill, DPMC Launch, February 2025

Learn more about the DPMC project



Next Steps

The key steps for the project over the course of the next year include the successful operation of Phase 1 and early development work for Phase 2 of the i3 DPMC project.



i3 Flexi Space



Phase: Delivery - Phase 1

Budget: £15m

Delivery duration: 6 Years

Next Stage: Delivery - Phase 2

Progress Update

The i3 Flexi Space project will deliver modern flexible advanced manufacturing floorspace at i3 business park in Irvine, which is a key strategic site for North Ayrshire Council. Phase 1 is close to completion, subject to power connection and meter installation which is taking longer than anticipated, and is being marketed for lease.

Phase 1 of i3 Flexi Space is an 18,180 sq ft (1,688 m²) industrial building built to shell specification with yard space, capable of subdivision and extension. Phase 2 is a similar unit of a similar size and is at planning application stage and is being mostly funded through Levelling Up Fund Round 3 (LUF 3), helping to leverage funds and expand on the scale of floorspace that can be built through the Ayrshire Growth Deal. A third phase is planned of smaller terraced units of approximately 7,500 sq ft (696 m²) and this is currently being designed, and subject to remaining funds it is anticipated that a fourth phase could be developed. The project is complemented by the Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC) at i3 to support businesses to improve their productivity and innovation and reduce their carbon footprint. Combined, both projects will create a central focus and cluster of industry and innovation at i3.

This new space complements the co-located Digital Process Manufacturing Centre (DPMC), creating a hub for innovation, research and development, and business growth. The flexible units are tailored to meet the needs of start-ups, spin-outs,

The combined offer at i3 is expected to attract significant investment and position Ayrshire as a national centre for digital processing and advanced manufacturing. The project also strengthens links with the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS) and Strathclyde University, enhancing opportunities for collaboration between academia and industry.

Headline achievements

£19.8m

projected financial
leverage through
private sector or any
other leverage

1749

square metres of
development space
unlocked

95

new jobs created
and 84 construction
jobs created

154

full-time equivalent
jobs created
through commercial
development

Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- Phase 2 is in the design phase

NOV 2024

- The planning application is submitted for Phase 2

JAN 2025

- The latest validation process is completed for Phase 2.

MAR 2025

- Phase 1 is nearing completion

Next Steps

In the coming year we can expect to see Phase 1 completed and the building let. Phase 2 is anticipated to progress to tender stage and award of contract by March 2026, subject to Full Business Case development and approval. Phase 3 will move to planning and full business case stage.

"The i3 area is a key strategic site which already has a wide and varied business base and home to around 40 companies including GSK, Vogel and Booth Welsh. We are creating a business and innovative hub and we want to provide even more opportunities to attract large-scale inward investment opportunities to support advanced manufacturing uses."

Councillor Marie Burns, North Ayrshire Council



"What is most exciting about the i3 Flexi Space is its potential to unlock ideas that haven't even been imagined yet. We're not just building units - we're creating a launchpad for the next generation of manufacturers, innovators, and digital pioneers. This space is designed to grow with businesses, giving them the flexibility and tools they need to experiment, collaborate, and scale right here in Ayrshire."

Project Stakeholder, Ayrshire Region





HALO, Kilmarnock



Phase: Complete

Budget: £9m

Delivery duration: 2 Years

Next Stage: Monitoring | Legacy

Progress Update

With a vision for a dynamic commercial, educational, cultural, leisure and lifestyle quarter where people can live, work, learn and play, the HALO Kilmarnock provides a sustainable community approach to a mixed-use development, powered by electricity with a net zero carbon footprint.

Completed in April 2021, and formally opened in April 2022, the HALO Enterprise and Innovation Centre continues to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem designed to stimulate innovative business practices between new and established businesses.

New business and employment opportunities focus on delivering 'workforces of the future' by offering training in digital skills with key partners. This ecosystem encourages the development of new digital and cyber security products and services, responding to the needs of the energy, health, and space and aerospace sectors.

Over the past year, The HALO Kilmarnock has continued to develop as a supportive environment for innovation and enterprise. With a focus on digital skills and low-carbon technologies, the site has welcomed new collaborations and business activity, helping to build local capacity in areas such as cyber security and data innovation. These developments contribute to the wider goals of the Ayrshire Growth Deal by encouraging skills development and creating opportunities for businesses to grow in a sustainable setting.

Headline achievements

£205m

GDP projected to be generated through HALO and full benefits realisation

693

jobs supported through the HALO project in Kilmarnock

9150

visitors engaging with the site

4069

square meters of development space unlocked

New Partnership

In a major boost for Ayrshire's green economy, subsea cable manufacturer XLCC has signed an exclusivity agreement with The HALO Kilmarnock to establish its Sales and Project Delivery Headquarters at the award-winning innovation centre. The move could bring over 300 high-quality jobs to the town.



This partnership supports XLCC's wider plans, including the UK's first HVDC cable factory at Hunterston and a Training Academy in Irvine in collaboration with Ayrshire College. Together, these developments are set to create 1,200 jobs and strengthen Scotland's renewable energy supply chain.

The HALO and XLCC are also exploring a Green Economy Sustainability Centre, featuring a Green Accelerator and SME Education Hub - further securing Kilmarnock's role in the energy transition.

"With a vision for a dynamic commercial, educational, cultural, leisure and lifestyle quarter where people can live, work, learn and play, the HALO Kilmarnock provides a sustainable community approach to a mixed-use development, powered by electricity with a net zero carbon footprint. Completed in April 2021, and formally opened in April 2022, the HALO Enterprise and Innovation Centre creates an entrepreneurial ecosystem designed to stimulate innovative business practices between new and established businesses.

New business and employment opportunities focus on delivering 'workforces of the future' by offering training in digital skills with key partners. This ecosystem encourages the development of new digital and cyber security products and services, responding to the needs of the energy, health, and space and aerospace sectors."

XLCC CEO, Ian Douglas, HALO website

HALO Enterprise and Innovation Centre



Latest news

Read HALO's latest news via their website

HALO®
DIGITAL, CYBER & INNOVATION PARK



Space and Aerospace Programme

This programme focusses on positioning Ayrshire as one of the UK's leading centres of aerospace and space activity.



Development

- Prestwick Commercial Space
- Aerospace and Space Technology Application Centre (ASTAC)
- Prestwick Roads Infrastructure

Delivery

Complete



Prestwick Proposition: Commercial Build



Phase: Change Management

Budget: £29m*

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Monitoring | Legacy

Progress Update

The last Annual Performance Report shared how the Commercial Build project would begin to navigate its way following the termination of original project development plans. Over the last year, the Lead Local Authority has been working to develop alternative plans which have been shaped into the promising proposal of the Prestwick Proposition. This will see the Commercial Build project capitalise on the significant growth in the aerospace sector whilst addressing issues around lack of expansion space within the Prestwick aerospace cluster.

Demand for expansion space has become increasingly urgent, whilst the previous model envisaged speculative development, more detailed and specific growth opportunities have been identified which if realised will result in significant private sector investment, job creation and the safeguarding of existing investments in the area.

Given the clear and known growth demand, South Ayrshire Council is proposing to prioritise specific projects which are being developed at pace to maximise the investment opportunity. The projects being taken forward offer a maximum return in private sector investment, job creation and strategic positioning for future investment. Given the known growth demand, certainty of delivery of economic returns can best be delivered through specific project delivery. The Commercial Build project as is currently proposed has been selected due to the scale of job creation, levels of private sector investment, strategic positioning of Prestwick for further Aerospace investment and the time-limited opportunity to secure 1000 FTEs for the region.

Ongoing discussions with UK and Scottish Governments, key partners and wider stakeholders are taking place to ensure the project can progress at pace once relevant details are identified

Projected Benefits

£130m

leverage projected
including private
sector and any other
leverage

2000

new jobs created
(direct & indirect)

Industry Engagement

Strong stakeholder development has taken place in the development of the Prestwick Proposition Proposal through consultation with key stakeholders, including the UK and Scottish Governments, South Ayrshire Council, and primarily through the Prestwick Aerospace Operational Group (PAOG).

Consultation through the PAOG group and its associated subgroups, has provided a clear message from industry as to the challenges and opportunities for growth, and validation of the proposals put forward through the new Prestwick Proposition.

*budget subject to change as per approval of review | reset proposals

Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- Following the termination of previous project, options for an alternative approach are developed

MAY 2024

- Work is ongoing on the development of the Prestwick Proposition

AUG 2024

- The Prestwick Proposition is presented to SAC Cabinet

NOV 2024

- Members briefing takes place on project proposal and the approach is validated
- Workshop with Scottish Enterprise to evolve options

JAN 2025

- A meeting takes place with Depute First Minister regarding the Prestwick Proposition.

FEB 2025

- A Change Management Request is submitted to Government.

MAR 2025

- A further meeting takes place with the Deputy First Minister and the Secretary of State to understand opportunities and plans proposed.

Next Steps

The next step following UK and Scottish Government approval of the Prestwick Proposition, is the development of Full Business Case which is proposed to be done in phases which will enable quicker progression to delivery.





Aerospace and Space Technology Application Centre



Phase: Review | Endorsement OBC

Budget: £11m*

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Development FBC

Progress Update

Aerospace and Space Technology Application Centre (ASTAC) has continued on in its developmental phase.

Since the original ASTAC concept was set out, there have been positive additions in the aerospace innovation landscape – namely, the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS) and Spirit AeroSystems' Aerospace Innovation Centre (AIC) which focus on early TRL (Technology Readiness Levels) innovations.

The innovation gaps hindering Prestwick's aerospace companies to fully exploit the global aerospace opportunity are clear: skills, workforce, and productivity – a challenge that is shared worldwide. The companies at Prestwick, who make up the majority of Scotland's aerospace sector, have come forward with their individual plans for site expansion and growth. This requires an enhancement of their skilled workforce, and a commitment to technological agility and innovation to stay competitive on a global scale - companies need expansion to secure future growth, but this is dependent on future skills provision.

By refocusing on innovation in skills and workforce development, ASTAC will support the progression of workforce training to increase the productivity and attractiveness of Prestwick for Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and Tier 1 organisations. ASTAC will ensure courses are relevant to the needs of the region and develop innovative training and educational needs.

ASTAC will provide the base at the heart of the cluster to successfully transform skills provision and ensure the effective transition of TRL5 innovations into operational efficiency. The productivity per employee in the aerospace sector at Prestwick exceeds the national average but must improve further if Scotland is to remain competitive against lower-cost nations. By focusing on innovation in the training process to increase productivity per employee, Prestwick and Scotland will continue to outperform competing locations in attracting work packages.

Locating ASTAC at Prestwick Airport provides easy access to the cluster by adding capacity, as well as trainees and STEM students. Ayrshire College, as a key partner, will provide not only the experience to lead on workforce provision and innovation in the training process, but also the foundations of a sustainable business model.

Projected Benefits

£11.7m

projected net
additional operational
GVA improvements
for the Ayrshire Region
over a 25 year span

1500

visitors to the STEM
training facility

2000

square meters of
development space
unlocked

1500

new Jobs created
inclusive of 61
construction jobs
created

Next steps

The year 2025/26 will focus on the final version and endorsement of the OBC, followed by the development of the FBC.

*budget subject to change as per approval of review | reset proposals

Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- Evolved project proposal is in development

MAY 2024

- Work is ongoing with Ayrshire College through their partnership support on the project.

JUN 2024

- Work on the Outline Business Case is underway.

NOV 2024

- SG Travelling Cabinet takes place at Ayrshire College and ASTAC is highlighted

JAN 2025

- ASTAC draft OBC is approved at SAC Cabinet.

FEB 2025

- ASTAC draft OBC is submitted to Government.

"The ASTAC project will fill the gap and provision of wrap-a-round support between Industry workforce development and latter-stage Innovation. Delivering support in both process innovation, application of new technologies and innovation in aerospace training. Positioning ASTAC at the heart of the aerospace cluster utilising digital technologies will allow ASTAC to respond quickly and flexibly to evolving workforce and training requirements.

Working in partnership with Ayrshire College and NMIS will ensure that ASTAC is both aligned to skills needs driven by innovation and the ability to rapidly develop and deploy the necessary training. This will require evidence through industrial engagement and skills gaps surveys, these will inform the final business case."

Derek Johnstone, ASTAC Project Lead





Prestwick Infrastructure Roads



Phase: Change Management

Budget: £17m*

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Development OBC

Progress Update

The original AGD Roads project was developed in conjunction with the creation of the new Spaceport and the plan to develop new commercial space to the north side of runway A at Prestwick Airport. As reported in the last report, projects have been rescope and are in their reset phase - including the Prestwick Roads project. Whilst a commercial build at this north side location remains an ambition for the Aerospace and Space programme, a new requirement for roads improvement at Prestwick has emerged to support the growth opportunity resulting from the surge in demand for MRO activity.

Approximately 80% of MRO activities at Prestwick takes place to the south of runway A. All of these MRO companies are predicting significant growth in the next 3-5 years, with two larger-sized organisations each predicting an additional 450 - 500 staff requirement within this period alone.

This opportunity for growth at Prestwick is interlinked to the access of the area via the trunk roads and local access routes. This requirement for additional staff will inevitably increase road traffic to the area. The expansion of the Prestwick Aerospace Cluster is interlinked to the access of the area via the trunk roads and local access routes. In addition, the location of the new ASTAC facility in the heart of the cluster will place an additional burden on roads, due to the footfall of students and staff.

AGD funds will unlock the delivery of transport infrastructure which currently has no committed funding or route to delivery.

As shown in the timeline, the Roads project has been focussed on adapting the project in alignment with the Prestwick Proposition. The changes proposed are currently under consideration with UK and Scottish Governments.

Projected Benefits

5

new or upgraded
roundabouts

16

kilometres of new or
upgraded footpath/
cycleways

3

kilometres of new
or upgraded roads/
junctions

10%

increase of commuters
on public transport

Next steps

Design work is set to be carried out once the change proposal has been approved. This includes a request to change the budget which will allow for clarity of specific activities within an enhanced budget envelope. Key sites have been short-listed, and further consultation will take place with Transport Scotland to fully inform final design(s)

*budget subject to change as per approval of review | reset proposals

Project Journey Highlights

MAY 2024

- Change management process begins as part of the Prestwick Proposition
- The STAG report is completed, and used to inform further developments

AUG 2024

- The OBC is in development

NOV 2024

- A meeting to discuss the evolved Prestwick Roads proposal is arranged with Transport Scotland, UK and Scottish Governments.

"Improving the road infrastructure around Prestwick is absolutely critical to unlocking the full potential of the aerospace cluster."

Efficient transport links not only support the movement of goods and personnel but also make the area more attractive for inward investment.

Enhanced connectivity will reduce congestion, improve journey times, and support the daily operations of high-value manufacturing and engineering firms predominantly within the aerospace industry.

Just as importantly, integrating active travel routes, such as safe cycling and walking paths, will promote healthier lifestyles, reduce carbon emissions, and help create a more sustainable and accessible environment for the workforce and wider community."

Jane Corrie, Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance | 2025



Energy, Circular Economy and Environment Programme



Development

- Community Renewable Energy (CoRE)
- Hunterston Strategic Development Area
- International Marine Science and Environmental Centre (IMSE)

Delivery

Complete

This programme will unlock the benefits of developing low carbon energy technologies and solutions. Ayrshire's location and natural resources offer the potential to create new jobs, reduce carbon emissions and contribute to achieving net zero by 2045.



Community Renewable Energy (CoRE)



Phase: Development - FBC Phase 1

Budget: £24.5m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Delivery - Phase 1

Progress Update

The Community Renewable Energy (CoRE) project showcases how a green recovery can transform our rural towns and villages and make our communities better connected, healthier and improve the standard of living through a just transition, whilst supporting the creation of long-term sustainable jobs. CoRE will act as a catalyst to stimulate inclusive growth and community wealth building, whilst providing a pipeline of education and training to help make Ayrshire a vibrant and attractive place to live, therefore addressing the root causes of deprivation, fuel poverty and de-population within our communities.



Community Renewable Energy Project

This year has seen significant progress in the full business case development for Phase 1 of the project, which is expected to enter into delivery in the coming year. Anticipated approval of the FBC will give the green light for six pathfinder projects to commence:

- Retrofit of housing at Meager Court in Barshare, Cumnock to reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions
- Large scale 'net zero' transition for Rankinston, including renewable energy generation, district heating, housing retrofit and sustainable transport initiatives
- Community electric car club project with Coalfields Community Transport Inclusive e-bike club in Cumnock
- Equiflex Flexible Energy project to shift energy consumption from peak to off-peak times when electricity is cheaper
- Provision of professional technical advice and support to access the Scottish Government's Community Energy Renewables (CARES) funding scheme, to help more groups implement decarbonisation and insulation measures.

Projected Benefits

£12.7m

projected net additional GVA improvements for the Ayrshire Region over a 25 year span

1

upgraded roads/junctions to unlock economic growth and opportunity

127

households experiencing a reduction in fuel poverty through housing retrofit improvements and heat decarbonisation

267

jobs supported through the delivery of CoRE

Next steps

The FBC is set to be submitted in June 2025, and it is hoped that delivery of Phase 1 can commence in Autumn 2025.

Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- Ongoing work with partners to further scope and develop the phased approach to the CoRE programme

NOV 2024

- Change management request progressed, requesting approval to phased approach to business case and delivery of the project

DEC 2024

- Change management request approved by the UK and Scottish Governments

FEB 2025

- Change Management Request approved by the Ayrshire Economic Joint Committee

MAR 2025

- The proposal for the Demonstrator Projects is approved at the EAC Cabinet

External Investment

CoRE has built strong partnership with wide range of expert and stakeholder groups who have informed the development process of the project:



Through these partnerships and strong project development carried out over the last year, CoRE has managed to attract an additional £928k of external investment to strengthen project delivery and the benefits associated.

"This is a significant milestone for the CoRE project and I can't wait to see how these projects help to transform energy in some of our most deprived communities over the coming year."

Eddie Fraser, East Ayrshire Council Chief Executive



Hunterston Strategic Development Area



Phase: Development - OBC

Budget: £12m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Development - OBC

Progress Update

Hunterston is a strategic site within Scotland's Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4), offering a unique industrial capacity associated with strategic infrastructure such as rail; utilities; and grid connections; deep water marine access and proximity to key academic research and innovation resources across the Ayrshire region and beyond.

As Scotland's largest strategic deep-water port with direct rail and grid connections, the site has a critical role in Scotland's Energy, Blue Economy, Offshore Wind and the Circular Economy futures. Investment within Hunterston will utilise these key assets to address larger scale energy and decarbonisation infrastructures associated with marine renewable energy (3rd generation); energy storage and production and circular economy drivers.

Initial investment will act as an enabler to provide commercial space to support blue, green and circular economies activity on-site. These activities align with the Zero Carbon 2045 National Strategy.

The project has experienced key partner and personnel changes which has impacted progress. NAC as lead Authority continues to pursue and investigate relevant interventions for the project to maximise the outcomes and outputs for the region.

Over the last years, Hunterston has welcomed some strategic projects and investment and it is important that the AGD investment aligns and complements the significant growth plans expected on this site:

- **Statkraft**, Europe's largest renewable energy generator, is planning a green hydrogen production and export facility at Hunterston. This facility will use the existing jetty and pipeline infrastructure to export hydrogen in the form of ammonia
- **XLCC** is developing the UK's first undersea energy cable factory at the site, supporting intercontinental renewable energy transmission
- **Highview Power** is building the world's largest Liquid Air Energy Storage (LAES) facility, enhancing grid resilience and energy storage capacity.

Projected Benefits

£200m

of additional
investment including
private sector and any
other leverage

1204

construction jobs
created

Next steps

Further project development will take place, culminating in the Outline Business case and seeking to maximise the benefits from the investment.



Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- Discussions ongoing with key partners to explore opportunities to progress the project approach to the CoRE programme

SEP 2024

- NAC as lead authority provide an update to the Governments on progress and evolving developments

NOV 2024

- Consideration of delivery models and comparable projects from other areas to identity parallels and lessons learned

MAR 2025

- Development of proposal options and progression of independent advice to inform project and business case development.





International Marine Science and Environmental Centre

Phase: Development - OBC

Budget: £15m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Development - OBC

Progress Update

In 2024/25, progress has been made in advancing the vision for the International Marine Science & Environmental (IMSE) Centre, with a strong emphasis on collaborative planning and strategic alignment with key partners. The IMSE project is being designed to harness the combined strengths of industry, academia, and environmental organisations.

This year, efforts have been concentrated on the co-development of detailed plans with stakeholders, laying the groundwork for transformative project that will drive forward marine science, technology, and sustainability.

The IMSE Centre will serve as a catalyst for innovation in marine spatial planning, marine technology, and applied marine sciences, while also fostering education and training opportunities that align with Scotland's Blue Economy ambitions. A key milestone this year has been the partnership with the Field Studies Council (FSC). The FSC brings decades of expertise in environmental education and field-based research. This collaboration is helping to shape IMSE into a dynamic, applied sciences centre that will attract leading academics, researchers, and innovators from across the UK and beyond.

By positioning the Firth of Clyde as a "living laboratory," IMSE will support demonstrator projects and applied research that showcase sustainable marine practices. The centre aims to ensure that the region is internationally recognised as an exemplar in marine sustainability and Blue Economy innovation, contributing to Scotland's national goals for net zero, biodiversity, and inclusive economic growth.



Projected Benefits

Invest

a substantial level of investment in additional research and innovation activities during the operation of the project

150

jobs and training opportunities sustained through delivery of the project.

Next Steps

IMSE is continuing development work through a strong partnership approach, set to maximise investment through a world class facility leading on blue economy innovation, research and demonstrator activities.

Project Journey Highlights

JUL 2024

- Project Partners including the Field Studies Council meet on Cumbrae to progress plans

JAN 2025

- Work begins on the OBC supported by commissioning of specialist consultancy

FEB 2025

- Partnership approaches developed with Field Studies Council and Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)

MAR 2025

- Further site visits to evolve OBC, with anticipated completion in Autumn 2025



Marine protection

One of the best examples of marine protection right here in Ayrshire is the No Take Zone (NTZ) in Lamlash Bay, Arran. It was Scotland's first, set up back in 2008 thanks to years of hard work by the local community and COAST. Spanning 2.67 km², the NTZ prohibits all forms of fishing and marine extraction, allowing ecosystems to recover naturally. Since then, it has shown real results - marine life has bounced back, with species like scallops and lobsters thriving again. It is a great reminder of what can happen when people, science, and policy work together.



IMSE seeks to build on that success by combining local expertise with new research and education to continue to protect our seas and create opportunities for the future.



Tourism Programme

Tourism is a key sector in Ayrshire and this programme will build on and strengthen the existing tourism offer to make the region a highly desirable place to visit and live, work and invest in.



Development

- Marine Tourism

Delivery

- The Great Harbour,
Irvine Harbourside

Complete



Marine Tourism



Phase: Development - FBC Phase 1

Budget: £9.5m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Delivery - Phase 1

Progress Update

The Marine Tourism Programme is a place-based tourism programme with 2 component projects at the Isle of Cumbrae and Arran in North Ayrshire. The programme will construct step-ashore marine infrastructure. The Cumbrae Project will create a transit marina at Millport and the Arran Project will create pontoons at key sites as a first phase of a longer term ambition to develop a marina at Arran.

Marine infrastructure supports tourism, businesses and communities, and improves marine access and transport. This generates new jobs, skills and training opportunities. Marine environmental stewardship, and active marine leisure and sports build strong and sustainable wellbeing economies. The programme will stimulate and lever further investment into Ayrshire's marine tourism and the blue economy sectors.

The last year saw the Millport Flood Prevention Scheme breakwater completed which has allowed for marina proposals to be progressed for Cumbrae. Most recently, the Marine Tourism Programme Business Case was approved by the Scottish Government in March 2025. This secured the programme to enable the Cumbrae and Arran Projects to progress to the next stages of development.

The achievement of Business Case milestones have increased the confidence of the sector that essential infrastructure investment at key strategic sites is advancing. The Scottish Government's backing of the Programme and commitment to the islands is benefiting communities to be ambitious and seek wider opportunities levered by the AGD. This increases participation in the projects where local people and stakeholders have influenced the Programme design and the economic outcomes required to achieve strong, resilient islands that drive sustainable growth through wellbeing economies fit for people, place and purpose.

Projected Benefits

110

marina/pontoons/
new berths created
through the Marine
Tourism programme

67k

increase in
overnight visitor
numbers per year

101

jobs supported through
the programme
including new jobs
created and temporary
construction jobs

33k

increase in day visitor
numbers per year

Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- The Millport Flood Prevention Scheme breakwater is complete, enabling marina proposals to be progressed for Cumbrae
- Soft market testing takes place for Cumbrae marina

NOV 2024

- The Marine Tourism Programme Business Case is submitted to the Scottish Government

DEC 2024

- Final updates made to the programme business case, Cumbrae OBC in development

MAR 2025

- The Marine Tourism Programme Business Case was approved by the Scottish Government

Positive steps forward

Following endorsement of the programme business case and progression of project plans for the Cumbrae project, Graham Wallace, Millport Pier & Harbour User Group spokesperson stated:

"Millport has needed modern step-ashore marina facilities for a long time and we are pleased that the Scottish Government and Ayrshire Growth Deal has recognised the economic benefits of a marina for Great Cumbrae. The marina in Millport will be a great attraction to the wider boating community of the Firth of Clyde and breathe new life into the Millport Harbour area and help transform the town."

Next Steps

The Cumbrae Project Outline Business Case is being reviewed with the Scottish Government and the Arran Outline Business Case is in development for submission in late-2025. Stakeholder engagement with communities and regulatory bodies will conclude the marina detail design and operator lease stages that will lead to the main contractor procurement for Full Business Case submission. The Arran Project will secure the sites, land and sea, to establish a network of step-ashore pontoon facilities, develop community-led operations and advance marine planning and consenting. This will take Arran through the Outline Business Case process and initiate Full Business Case stages of work.

By mid-2026 the Programme will prepare for a wider conversation with the Clyde marine sector to maximise the Programme benefits and opportunities across the region that will identify skills and training, supply-chains, marketing and collaborative activities required to drive regional benefits and sector growth.





The Great Harbour



Phase: Delivery - Phase 1

Budget: £14m

Delivery duration: 6 Years

Next Stage: Development - Phase 2

Progress Update

This year, the Great Harbour project celebrated a significant milestone following endorsement of its Coastal Hub (Phase 1) Full Business Case in November 2024, as construction work began on site. A ground breaking ceremony took place in February to mark the occasion and work to transform Irvine's Harbourside area is well underway.

The Great Harbour is a key tourism led regeneration, place making and destination development project for Irvine and the wider Ayrshire Coast with £14m committed from the AGD to a phased programme of works which will lead the physical transformation of the wider location, create capacity to support community participation and commercial opportunities.

The development of the Great Harbour will create a unique coastal destination comprising a number of key assets to attract new visitors to the area and create jobs. It will build on the unique qualities of place, creating a national waterfront destination focussed on a series of activity hubs and dynamic event spaces. These will include heritage, arts, maritime and outdoor active leisure and activity hubs, providing an animated waterfront that connects from town centre to coast. It will unlock a series of secondary development opportunities which will contribute to the creation of a premium regional coastal destination that delivers Community Wealth Building opportunities.



Projected Benefits

8000

square meters of
new or upgraded
public realm space

3

new or upgraded
cycle pathways

245

jobs supported through
the programme
including new jobs
created and temporary
construction jobs

135k

increase in day visitor
numbers per year

Next steps

The next steps include the completion of the Coastal Hub project which is the first Phase of the Great Harbour project and focussed on the Beach Park area, and the development of proposals for the Maritime Mile along the Harbourside.

Project Journey Highlights

APR 2024

- The Great Harbour Master plan was approved by North Ayrshire Councils Planning Committee and is now a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications for the area

JUL 2024

- Great Harbour Coastal Hub works tender published

NOV 2024

- Great Harbour Coastal Hub FBC endorsement by Scottish Governments

JAN 2025

- Construction on site commenced

JAN 2025

- Great Harbour Phase Two: Maritime Mile design tender published

Great Harbour progress

Councillor Tony Gurney, Cabinet Member for Green Environment and Economy said:

"This is an important milestone for this Ayrshire Growth Deal project and we are delighted work has started on the Coastal Hub first phase of the Great Harbour development."

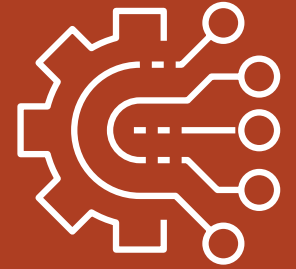
"It is fantastic to see McLaughlin Construction on site now and we are really looking forward to seeing the development take shape over the coming weeks and months."

Following the initial phase, the second phase will deliver the Maritime Mile, featuring a new Marine & Arts Hub with improved waterfront access, event space, and redevelopment of the Harbour Master's Office. The third phase will establish a Maritime Heritage Hub in partnership with the Scottish Maritime Museum and Crown Estate Scotland, enhancing the Harbourside area to boost visitor numbers and engagement with maritime heritage.



Digital Programme

This programme focuses on improving digital infrastructure and skills across the Ayrshire region and using specific AGD project sites as key catalysts.



Development

- Building Digital Capital

Delivery

Complete



Building Digital Capital



Phase: FBC - Phase 1

Budget: £14m

Delivery duration: 4 Years

Next Stage: Delivery - Phase 1

Progress Update

The Building Digital Capital (BDC) programme aims to enhance digital connectivity, infrastructure and skills across Ayrshire to drive economic growth and inclusion.

The project has been developed in response to the subsea cable project not being feasible within the confines of the Ayrshire Growth Deal, and has been devised to meet increasing demand for digital infrastructure development, underpinned by a comprehensive review of options and ongoing discussion with the UK and Scottish Governments, key partners and key stakeholders.

Specifically, the project is aimed at enhancing digital infrastructure and capabilities across the region, reflecting the Deal's original digital infrastructure theme objectives. Key AGD projects are proposed to receive a share of the £14 million Digital allocation (£11 million from the UK Government and £3 million from the Scottish Government). The BDC project is an investment in digital infrastructure in Ayrshire, which will deliver a strategic initiative, designed to address two of Ayrshire's most pressing needs: improving digital connectivity and enhancing the deliverability of key projects within the AGD.

Over the last year, Partners have continued to evolve proposals in response to feedback from the UK and Scottish Governments, as well as receiving broad support from the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board and Joint Committee on the approach proposed in November 2024.

Projected Benefits

Projected benefits will be confirmed, subject to further business case development and economic modelling.

It is proposed that the following indicators will be utilised:

- **Infrastructure:** Availability of ICT infrastructure that ensures sufficient internet bandwidth for productive digital engagement and inclusive growth
- **Digital Intelligence:** Ability to effectively and safely use digital tools for accessing, managing, and creating information, supporting jobs and entrepreneurship
- **Empowerment:** Use of digital skills to enhance living standards and generate income
- **Employment:** Jobs created or supported by digital skills and technology use, both directly and indirectly



Project Journey Highlights

MAY 2024

- Change management proposals developed and shared with the UK and Scottish Governments for consideration

NOV 2024

- Local AGD Governance bodies approve the change and new project proposals

JAN 2025

- Ongoing development of project in alignment with wider regional digital strategy delivery

Next Steps

Finalisation and approval on the change management and monitoring proposal will allow the project to progress and be embedded into existing business case timescales and delivery plans. We expect the project to be delivered at pace once fully approved, due to its interdependencies within existing AGD projects entering their delivery phases.

BDC programme

The BDC programme is being developed in key alignment with Ayrshire's successful 5GIR project as well as being driven by the aims and vision of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy. Find out more here:



"Ayrshire will be a region where wealth is shared fairly, to enable people of all ages to live full and healthy lives. Our region will be outward looking, attractive to investors and visitors, making a major contribution to Scotland's economic development. We will also prioritise the protection of our natural wealth and culture. This is how our residents, communities, institutions and enterprises will rise to the opportunities and adapt to the challenges of the future."

Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy

The Year Ahead

As the report shows, from April 2024 to March 2025, the Ayrshire Growth Deal has made steady progress across key projects, overcoming a series of significant challenges. Strengthened partnership working has been central to this progress. All Partners recognise the need to deliver at pace to ensure success in the delivery of the Deal, and look forward to pushing further to build on existing collaboration and momentum.

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that key sectors in Ayrshire have seen promising developments, laying the groundwork for future job creation and stronger local economies. Investment in skills and inclusive growth is helping Ayrshire become more competitive and address regional inequalities.

Looking ahead, the AGD remains focused on delivering results, responding to new challenges, and ensuring the region benefits fully from ongoing and future projects. The next year will prioritise the pace of progression, maximising the impact of current investments and strengthening collaboration across all partners.

General Enquiries

For all general enquiries, please contact info@ayrshiregrowthdeal.co.uk

Further information - Social media



AGD website:

www.ayrshiregrowthdeal.co.uk



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Prestwick Roads			
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Ayrshire Manufacturing Innovation Corridor (AMIC)			
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i3 Flexible Space			
International Marine Science & Environment Centre (IMSE)			
Hunterston Strategic Development Area			
Marine Tourism			
Great Harbour			
Working for a Healthy Economy	Pan-Ayrshire		
Ayrshire Skills Fund			
Community Wealth Building			
Building Digital Capital	Pan-Ayrshire	David McDowall	David.McDowall@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Glossary

AGD	Ayrshire Growth Deal	NAC	North Ayrshire Council
AMIC	Ayrshire Manufacturing Investment Corridor	NHS	National Health Service
AREP	Ayrshire Regional Economic Partnership	NMIS	National Manufacturing Institute Scotland
ASIC	Aerospace and Space Innovation Centre	NPF3	Third National Planning Framework
ASIF	Ayrshire Skills Investment Fund	OBC	Outline Business Case
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	PMO	Programme Management Office or AGD
BRP	Benefits Realisation Plan	R&D	Research and Development
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority	RES	Regional Economic Strategy
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	RSIP	Regional Skills Investment Plan
CoRE	Community Renewable Energy project	SAC	South Ayrshire Council
COVID	Coronavirus disease of 2019	SAMH	Scottish Association for Mental Health
CPI	Centre for Process Innovation	SAV	Strategic Added Value
CWB	Community Wealth Building	SDS	Skills Development Scotland
DPMC	Digital Processing Manufacturing Centre	SE	Scottish Enterprise
EAC	East Ayrshire Council	SMAS	Scottish Manufacturing Advisory Service
EASA	European Union Aviation Safety Agency	SPEN	Scottish Power Energy Networks
FBC	Full Business Case	STAG	Scottish Transport Appraisal Guide
GPA	Glasgow Prestwick Airport	STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
IMSE	International Marine Science and Environmental Centre	STPR2	Second Strategic Transport Projects Review
LSO	Launch Service Operator	TACT	The Ayrshire Community Trust
LSP	Launch Service Providers	TRLs	Technology Readiness Levels
MMIC	Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre	TSa	Technology Safeguards Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	UKG	UK Government
MRO	Maintenance, Repair and Operations	UKSA	UK Space Agency

