

## Meeting Summary - Cleaner Air for Scotland Governance Group

**Location:** Teleconference  
**Date:** 11 March 2016  
**Time:** 10:00 – 11:30

### Present

Graham Applegate, GA (SEPA)	Martin Marsden, MM (SEPA)
Aileen Brodie, AB (Aberdeen City Council)	Vincent McNally, VM (Glasgow City Council)
Joanna Gardiner, JG (SEPA)	Eleanor Pratt, EP (SEPA/TS)
Colin Gillespie, CG (SEPA)	Colin Ramsay, CR (HPS)
Emilia Hanna, EH (Scottish Environment Link)	Andrew Taylor, AT (Scottish Government)
Drew Hill, DH (Transport Scotland)	Stephen Thomson, ST (Transport Scotland)

### Chair

Stephen Thomson (TS)

### Apologies

Janice Milne, JM (SEPA); Nikola Miller, NM (RTPI); Iris Whyte, IW (Dundee City Council); Rachel Brooks, RB (Dundee City Council)

**Purpose:** Discussion/sign-off of draft CAFS Communications Strategy (CCS)

### 1. Round table introductions

- JG present as representative from CAFS Communications working group.

### 2. Background to development of CAFS Communications Strategy (CCS)

- Comments from CAFS GG members and an example Scottish Government communications strategy were used by ST to develop the template for the draft CCS.
- 2 workshops with communications professionals from Transport Scotland, SEPA, Health Protection Scotland and Scottish Government were held to refine the template to produce the draft CCS version circulated. Sections highlighted in green are still TBC.
- The CCS, which links together the actions committed to in CAFS, and the communications work required to deliver these, is a high level internal strategy document to describe how the organisations involved will work together. It is essentially an agreement of understanding between the key organisations and will provide an overarching point of reference as the more detailed communications plans progress.
- More detail will then be provided in yearly communications plans over the next 5 years, which will detail specific outcomes on a yearly basis. These plans will support the delivery of specific CAFS actions.
- This communications work is being carried out with very limited resources; therefore the strategy must be realistic as to what can be delivered.
- The intention is to confirm each communications plan as close to the start of each financial year as possible.
- The communications plan this year will initially focus on a desk-based review of what is already being done on air quality comms amongst the key organisations, in order to consolidate background information and ensure we know what each organisation is doing. This will be key ensuring we all work together productively. The Comms working group will continue to work together throughout the year to develop communications for delivery during the second half of this financial year 2017/18.

### 3. Group Discussion/Questions on CCS

ST structured the discussion around the main headings of the draft CCS.

- **CAFS Vision, Purpose and Communication Actions**

- General support for the inclusion of the CAFS vision and purpose in this introductory section.
- There were concerns among participants whether explicitly stating the three CAFS communications actions (C1, C2 and C3) may limit the scope of the CCS in the future.
- It was acknowledged that it is quite unusual for a strategy to have explicit communications actions (normally comms is embedded throughout). As this is the case for CAFS they do need to be stated in the CCS, in order to be able to report on delivery. However it was acknowledged that the CCS covers the whole of CAFS, not just the comms actions, and that this should be stated explicitly.

**Action 1: ST/EP/JG to update Paragraph 2, bullet 3 to “Actions stated in CAFS Section 9 regarding communications are as follows but not limited to...”, or similar.**

- **CCS Goal, Aims, Objectives and Guiding Principles**

- It was suggested that one of the CCS objectives should be to ensure understanding of and between the key organisations and their cultures/messages.
- JG responded that this is what CCS objective 4 aims to do, but that this could be made more explicit.

**Action 2: ST/EP/JG to ensure Paragraph 4, objective 4 highlights the need for all key organisations to understand each other and their various ways of working.**

- It was highlighted that the CCS must not have a scatter-gun approach. 2 ‘key areas’ were suggested:
  - 1) Public engagement and influencing behaviour. It was argued that although this is vital, there are others who will do this better than the CAFS GG.
  - 2) Influencing/engaging with national and local politicians and decision makers. This is crucial to developing consensus and action around the air quality issue, and should be considered to be our ‘main job’. The CCS should reflect this, and that the CAFS GG are the right group of organisations to progress this.
- JG suggested that engaging politically is a very specific activity that would be better supported by its own communications plan, however there was broad support amongst the other participants that engaging with politicians and government is fundamental to what CAFS is trying to achieve and should form the basis of the CCS, rather than just an objective within it.
- It was queried whether there is a difference between communication and influencing/engaging/encouraging decisions, and whether this should be made clearer in the CCS? JG responded that these elements can all be considered to form a part of ‘communications’. Good communications result in people reacting to what is being said; if comms are one-way then they are failing.

**Action 3: ALL willing to provide additional suggested wording for paragraph 4 to ST by Fri 18 March to emphasise the importance of engaging with decision makers.**

**Action 4: Alternatively/in addition to the above, ST/EP/JG to ensure paragraph 12 bullet 1 (Government audience) links to paragraph 4 objective 1 to highlight the focus on decision makers.**

- EH felt that the tone of the document is currently too euphemistic, as it refers to ‘poor air quality’ rather than ‘air pollution’, and that this should be adjusted to ensure the CCS honestly communicates the risks, as well as the multiple benefits of cleaner air. **CCS objective 1 could state ‘inform all audiences of the risks associated with air pollution and the benefits of cleaner air, with information delivered...’.**
- AT highlighted that it is important to ensure a balance is struck between over and under-emphasising the issue. Too much focus on the negative impacts of poor air quality can result in people not engaging.
- JG stated that there needs to be a balance between what goes into the strategy, and what is included in the plans. Elements included in the overarching strategy may run the risk of being lost, whereas the communications plans are more focussed on delivery.
- Key is to ensure people have a sense of agency (ownership/engagement/being able to take action); which is well supported through the CAFS communication aim to ‘engaged and empower’ audiences to improve air quality. This resonates with previous Defra research which showed that communicating the negative impacts of air quality does not help if people aren’t empowered to be part of the solution.
- CR highlighted that many of these points have been picked up by Scottish Government’s [ISM behaviour change model](#) which takes Individual, Social (including political) and Material barriers to behaviour change into account.

**Action 5: CR and EP to circulate information on ISM to JG.**

- **Governance and Audiences**

- Paragraph 6 was queried, whether the CAFS GG will sign off the comms plan itself, or just the priorities within the plan? JG responded that when the draft CCS was written the Terms of Reference for the governance group had yet to be finalised, therefore that section is a little vague. The plans will need to be signed off by the governance group, but the need was highlighted for a single person who can be approached by the Communications working group when agreement is required to move on issues with short time scales.
- CR will be sitting on the Communications working group as the link to the CAFS GG, but indicated he would prefer not to be responsible for signing-off reactive communications issues.

**Action 6: CAFS GG to discuss a nominated person for signing-off reactive communications issues.**

- It was also highlighted that input will be required to develop a communications ‘pack’, with lines to take for each organisation.
- GA supported the idea of lines to take which are broadly aligned, but highlighted that each organisation will have areas where it is not appropriate for them to

comment e.g. SEPA would not comment on health. We will need to ensure organisations don't end up talking out-with their areas of expertise.

- Secretariat for the Communications working group and funding of this role still needs to be confirmed. This perhaps does not need to be explicitly mentioned in the CCS.

**Action 7: ST/EP/JG to remove paragraph 8 – Secretariat.**

- The use of Knowledge Hub for storing/sharing of documents between key organisations still needs to be confirmed.

**Action 8: Communications Working Group to discuss and determine if Knowledge Hub is best option for all organisations involved to access/share documents (paragraph 9).**

- Paragraph 11 (Comms working group chair to liaise with SG to issue instructions to update the Scottish Air Quality website) was discussed. AT stated he will look into this.
- CG suggested that the Scottish AQ website should not be the only portal considered, as it is possible the general public would not engage properly with this site.
- **Less detail could be provided in paragraph 11.**
- Paragraph 12 (audiences) was discussed.
- A number of participants expressed concern that the 'general public' audience is focussed on those living in/near AQMAs, as these often aren't the same people who are either responsible for creating pollution or achieving improvements in air quality.
- Questions were raised regarding the 'business' audience, which is currently focussed on freight and bus operators – it was suggested that there may be others to include here such as businesses with large fleets.
- There was discussion on splitting the 'government' audience into national/regional/local. It was agreed that 'government' functions at national and local levels, but the point was made that some form of 'regional' scale should still be included, to cover organisations such as Regional Travel Partnerships (RTPs) and Strategic Development Planning Authorities (SDPAs).
- It was agreed that paragraph 12 does not necessarily need to include this level of detail on audiences – this could be included in the comms plans instead.

**Action: Paragraph 12 to be rewritten to be simpler, although still needs to define the key audiences and take account of above. ALL willing to provide suggested text to ST by Fri 18 March.**

- **Approach/Key Actions**

- In relation to paragraph 14, bullet 1 ('short term'), number 2 (work with contractor to review/consolidate existing information on the Scottish Air Quality website), it was highlighted that this work has already been carried out as part of the Scottish Air Quality Database project, which will need to be captured in this communications work also.
- Concerns about using the Scottish Air Quality website as the primary repository of communications (paragraph 18) were reiterated, as this is quite a technical website and may not fully engage particularly the general public audiences. It was

acknowledged that this needs further discussion; all the options will be reviewed as part of the desk-based research.

- **Resource**

- The statement that Scottish Government and Transport Scotland are ‘responsible for CAFS delivery’ was queried, and the suggestion made that this should include ‘...in conjunction with the CAFS Governance Group’. It was clarified that Scottish Government and Transport Scotland (as an agency of SG) have reporting lines to ministers, hence this phrasing. It was suggested that this phrase could also be updated to state ‘...are responsible for reporting to ministers on CAFS delivery...’.
- The need to ensure consistency between the CCS and the CAFS governance group terms of reference (still to be finalised) was highlighted.
- It was agreed that while there is value in listing the various organisations and their responsibilities, that there is little need to define the number of days per month that each organisation will commit to this work, provided that the statement is made clearly (as it is in paragraph 7) that there is no new resource being recruited for this work.

**Action: ST/EP/JG to review wording of paragraph 22 table, section on TS and SG responsibilities.**

**Action: ST/EP/JG to remove ‘Days per month’ column from paragraph 22 table.**

- Discussion around paragraph 23 followed. It was suggested that representatives from the car lobby (e.g. AA/RAC/SMMT) and active transport sectors (e.g. Sustrans, Spokes, Pedal on Parliament) be included in the list of organisations which may ‘correspond’ with the Communications working group.
- After further discussion it was agreed that it is better not to detail individual organisations in this section.
- The need to define ‘correspond’ further was agreed. JG clarified that this was about making information available to influencing groups, in order try to make sure they support this work and hopefully bring their own communications into line with it when possible.

**Action: ST/EP/JG to adjust paragraph 23 to define ‘correspond’ further e.g. ‘inform/engage with relevant interested parties when delivering action plans’.**

**Action: ST/EP/JG to adjust paragraph 23 to remove detailed list of organisations.**

- **Evaluation**

- No further comments.

**Action: ALL to provide any additional CCS comments to ST by Friday 18 March.**

4. AOB (none)/Close