

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board  
Rookery Hall, Nantwich – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

<b>Present:</b>	Angie Robinson (“AR”) (Chair) Mark Livesey (“ML”)
<b>Marketing Cheshire Directors</b>	Adrian Bull (“AB”) Andy Lyon (“AL”) Rupert Collis (“RC”) David Walker (“DW”) Eleanor Underhill (“EU”) Mark Goldsmith (“MG”) Sarah Callander-Beckett (“SCB”)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Philip Cox (“PC”) (observer) Andy Farrall (“AF”) (observer) Catherine Walker – part meeting Fiona Bebbington – part meeting Sharon Pond (Minute Taker) (SP)– MC
<b>Apologies:</b>	Christine Gaskell (“CG”) Amanda Newman (“AN”) Steven Broomhead (“SB”) Lisa Harris (“LH”)

**Opening by the Chairman and Welcome**

The Chair declared the meeting open and took the Chair, welcoming Board members to the meeting.

AR welcomed new Board members Cllr Mark Goldsmith, representing Cheshire East Council and Sarah Callander-Beckett, to their first Board Meeting, and Andy Farrall who is attending the meeting as an observer ahead of taking over as acting CEO.

AR also welcomed Catherine Walker, Director of Marketing and Communications at the LEP who will along with Adrian Bull be presenting on Place Marketing.

AR also Welcomed Fiona Bebbington, Business Tourism Manager at Marketing Cheshire who will be updating Board Members on MC’s Business Tourism proposal.

AR advised that unfortunately, James Lawton-Hill, Director of Marketing, Optionis, has resigned from the Board following a recent change of employment and that Howard Hopwood had stepped down as an Observer on the Board.

PC confirmed that the LEP will be undertaking a Board recruitment process again in January for LEP and MC board members, this should be concluded by March.

**Presentation from Fiona Bebbington, Business Tourism Manager – Marketing Cheshire**

Fiona ran through her presentation – attached

Fiona advised Board Members that if agreeable she will contact them individually to discuss the Business Tourism project.

AB referred to the Ambassadors slide in the presentation and suggested that it would be beneficial to include the Nuclear Sector in this, particularly with the clean energy focus.

AB also stated that at his time seconded to BEIS he worked with Mission Innovation and that there could be opportunities next year with regard to a series of conferences that they planned to hold around the UK.

AL advised that Professor Tim Wheeler was due to retire as the University of Chester Vice Chancellor shortly and would be replaced by Professor Eunice Simmons, previously from Nottingham Trent University. Eunice has a keen interest in the conference sector with a particular focus on environmental issues.

AL also stressed the need to ensure that organisations such as the Tour Guides, need to have an understanding of the wider picture in the region to ensure consistent messaging.

AR agreed and stated that it was also important to work with the Taxi drivers who could also act as ambassadors for the region.

PC stated the need to align the Business Tourism Strategy with the Local Industrial Strategy, particularly in relation to Life Sciences, high value manufacturing and clean energy.

AR stated that there was a clear need for a strong Convention Bureau and that in addition to the sectors highlighted by PC we should also look out for other opportunities, keeping in mind the limitation we have on venue capacity. Conference decisions are not always made on a mission basis, but can also be based on contacts/links to the area and cost considerations also play a big role.

AR stated that we need to work with the Local Authorities to ensure they have a good understanding of the whole economic benefit conferences bring to the area. The LAs could help with sponsoring a Civic Reception, Support letters or loaning facilities.

AR acknowledged the importance of having an audit trail in place for commission purposes.

AR referred to the Ambassador programme and the need to keep our Ambassadors fully engaged with regular communications.

RC referred to the perception of Cheshire as a rural economy and stated that the agricultural industry aligns with clean energy business, particularly with the focus on climate change.

FB advised that she does have plans to meet with Reaseheath College

EU advised of the need to understand the importance of hinterland, Cheshire is known for its rural enterprise and this attracts visitors to the area.

FB advised that we are looking to include tours in our conference offer, this could also include areas such as Tatton Park etc. this would be offered as a free value

add to the conference offer.

AF stated that conference organisers need to sell the conference to delegates and therefore the conference needs to be located in a place that people want to visit. There is a need to intelligently identify clusters, rural and agriculture will be significant, as will heritage.

PC stated that to be perceived as a rural idyll but still have a thriving business community is very attractive to businesses and people wanting to relocate to the area. The LEP have put £100k aside for marketing each year and perhaps this might be better employed supporting the business tourism agenda, instead of one off events such as MIPIM etc.

All Board Members present fully endorsed the Business Tourism Strategy and AR thanked Fiona for her presentation and invited Fiona back to the February meeting to outline a 3-year strategy for this work.

### **Place Marketing Presentation – Catherine Walker and Adrian Bull**

AB introduced the presentation advising that the Marketing Comms Group have been up and running now for approx. 3 months and have done some really good work in establishing Marketing Cheshire as the lead body for marketing and comms for the LEP. Work on branding had paused while the group got the strategy in place.

Catherine ran through the presentation (attached) including the video by Julian Stubbs played at the recent LEP Economic Summit

AR referred to the Cities Branding and questioned how do we make this work for an area (such as Cheshire), what is our halo brand?

CW advised that the brand needs to be authentic and needs to be owned by everyone, therefore stakeholder engagement would be key to making this a success.

PC stated that we have a lack of skilled young people therefore it is important that this messaging resonates to this demographic to encourage them to want to live and work in Cheshire

AR suggested that we should ask recruitment consultants for feedback on what potential employees thought about Cheshire.

PC stated that there seemed to be a trend to move away from out of town business parks in favour of city centre business hubs.

AR and the Board thanked Catherine for her presentation

Catherine and Fiona left the meeting

### **Declaration of Interest**

The Chair noted that general declarations of interest had been entered into the Register for Directors and requested that Board members review the document

and advise of any alterations, particularly new Board members.

Action SP

It was agreed that SP would recirculate the declarations of interest to board members to update if required

### **Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May and Matters Arising.**

The Board confirmed, that the minutes from the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were correct, and the Chair signed them accordingly.

### **Matters Arising**

ML confirmed that the contract with Warrington BC had been agreed and was now awaiting final sign off by Warrington's Finance Director.

ML confirmed that the Task and Finish Group has been created and the work of that group was presented by Adrian and Catherine earlier in the meeting during the Place Marketing update.

### **CEO Report**

ML ran through the report and highlighted the following key points: -

- The merger has gone through seamlessly and Marketing Cheshire was in a very good financial position. At the beginning of the year we started off with a predicted deficit and are now looking at a predicted surplus of approx. £26k by year end. This was based on modest assumptions and the business was likely to do better.
- Our marketing delivery work for the LEP had increased significantly, as a result the SLA had increased in value.
- Work was already underway to integrate the Amazed by Science activity into the LEP's Pledge initiative. This would ensure the sustainability of this activity going forward.
- The LEP had agreed to fund a cultural strategy for the region which would enable the sub-region to develop; a place based strategy that would link into the Local Industrial Strategy and would position the region well to respond to Art Council England's 10 year strategy which was due to be published shortly.
- MC income, which had previously been heavily reliant on grant funded projects, was much better balanced and the most recent reforecast showed that the contribution of grants to the business was no more than 10%. Going forward, any project-based work could be seen as a bonus, rather than necessity.
- Work was also underway to tailor marketing packages to specific needs of partners, as opposed to generic packages which had developed from the project work.
- The Christmas market had sold out and was due to be erected in the coming week.
- We have been offered a seat on the CH1Bid Board for the new CEO. The Bid have requested a seat on the MC board – this will have to be reviewed within the LEP Board recruitment process.

It was stated that there are still issues with Chester closing at 5pm, Isabel, VIC

Manager, has offered to meet with the Bid to report on her experience with the VIC late opening.

AL stated that it would be important to ensure consistent messaging to the wider public if we could encourage people to support an evening economy in Chester. The indoor market was already opening late and we should ensure the local communities were aware.

SCB enquired if there are many international visitors to the Christmas market, ML advised that visitors are largely domestic, however last year the Chester Christmas market got into the top 10 UK Christmas Markets and we expected to attract a wider audience this year.

AL enquired whether it would be possible to do some research engaging with the younger audience around the visitor and local economy, to ensure that they knew what was available to them in the local area. ML advised that this is something the Pledge could include as part of its awareness raising activities.

PC highlighted the possibilities of working with other towns in Cheshire on their Christmas Market offer

AR stated that there is a large initial monetary outlay to setting up a Christmas market and a human resource structure would have to be put in place to run it

AF questioned whether it is MC's remit to run markets and that we could offer support to others who already have an up and running Christmas market

ML stated that there are great food and beverage producers in Cheshire and perhaps going forward we could create a 'Foodie' month across the market towns across the region during the summer. This would mean the chalets owned by Marketing Cheshire were not used just once a year.

It was suggested that we should invite Isabel Robertson, VIC Manager to present at the next Board meeting and to also showcase the VIC retail offer. ML also confirmed that he has put Isabel on a permanent contract of employment with MC.

SCB confirmed that there are only 3 VIC's across Cheshire – Chester, Congleton and Macclesfield

The issues around this year's MC awards ceremony were discussed and the need to reinvent next year's event to include a Cheshire theme.

ML advised that MIPIM planning is progressing well and we have several sponsors already signed up.

### **Statutory Accounts 2018/2019**

DW updated Board members on the CWTB's financial position at the year end and advised that the Statutory accounts have been approved by the Audit Committee and moved for the Board to approve and sign the accounts.

The Board Members present approved the Management letter, the Audit Representation letter and the Audited accounts for 2018/19 for CWTB.

The Chair and ML accordingly signed the accounts to be filed at Companies

**Action ML**

House.

EU suggested it would be beneficial for Board members to have an understanding of the detail behind the income. AR advised that Debbie Bland, Finance Manager would be happy to meet board members individually to go through this, if required.

**A.O.B**

PC ran through the arrangements for the LEP / MC away day on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> November

AR advised that ML will be leaving MC on the 29<sup>th</sup> November and thanked ML for the great work he has done to take MC forward.

AR informed board members that the CEO recruitment process is progressing well, the closing date for applications is the 18<sup>th</sup> November. The recruitment panel will consist of Angie, Christine and Philip.

ML advised that with regard to the HR review REMCO will be meeting at the end of November to discuss the proposal around the MC and LEP structure and correct any anomalies. Ian Brooks will also be reviewing the staff development processes.

**Close**

**Board Dates**

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020  
Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

All Board meetings start at 8.00am

Signature (Angie Robinson - Chair)

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Date

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