



Board Papers

Thursday 6th May 2021

Agenda

Virtual Board Meeting

Thursday 6th May 2021– 8am

Please join via Teams video conference

[Click here to join the meeting](#) or [+44 161 250 8784,445223228#](tel:+441612508784445223228)

Time	Item	Lead	Reference
08:00am	1 Welcome and Apologies	TB	
08:05am	2 Declarations of Interest	TB	
08:10am	3 Minutes and matters arising from Board Meeting held on 11 th February 2021	TB	
08:20am	4 Board Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review from Strategy Day • The Purpose Pyramid 	TB	(Board Paper 231) (Board Paper 232)
08:40am	5 Chief Executive Report/Briefing note	JM	(Board Paper 233)
08:55am	6 DMO Review position paper	JM	(Board Paper 234)
09:15am	7 Destination Chester and Cheshire	Jamie Christon	
09:30am	8 Company Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020/2021 Q4 Financial Report • Budget 2021/22 	DW/JM	
09:50am	9 A.O.B		
10:00am	10 Close		

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Board
Thursday 11th February 2021 – 8am**

Present: Trevor Brocklebank (“TB”) (Chair)
Joe Manning (“JM”)
Marketing Cheshire Steven Broomhead (“SB”)
Directors Andy Lyon (“AL”)
David Walker (“DW”)
Eleanor Underhill (“EU”)
Mark Goldsmith (“MG”)
Sarah Callander-Beckett (“SCB”)
Rupert Collis (“RC”)
Gemma Davies (“GD”)

In Attendance: Philip Cox (“PC”) (observer)
Nicola Said (“NS”)
Juliette Littleton (“JL”)

Apologies: Clare Hayward (“CH”)

1. Opening by the Chairman and Welcome

TB thanked the board for joining the call and welcomed Juliette Littleton, Finance Manager to her first Board meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

TB asked Board members to advise of any declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and Actions from the last Meeting

The Board confirmed that the minutes from the meeting on the 12th November 2020 were correct.

TB confirmed that the actions related to the letter to Debbie Bland and the circulation of Audit meeting minutes had been actioned. The points relating to the budget and cost review will be addressed in the finance section of today’s meeting.

4. Chair Introduction

TB advised that we need to develop a clear strategy for the organisation and for Cheshire as we come out of the pandemic. It is our responsibility to look at the medium and long-term priorities as well as the immediate recovery following the pandemic. The hospitality and retail industries have been particularly hard hit and it is important that we focus on getting these businesses back up and running.

PC advised that the LEP are putting together a recovery and delivery plan which will go out to consultation to a wide range of stakeholders early next month. PC also acknowledged that the retail and hospitality industries have been hit hardest by the pandemic and MC will be critical in getting the hospitality and Visitor Economy up and running again. With a lot of retail businesses being brought online there is a need to review what the city

centres and high streets will look like going forward and where the retail workers are going to find work.

GD referred to the Savills reimagining document and advised that the council are in discussions with the key stakeholders regarding the future of retail and what role the public sector can play in this.

TB stated that with such a broad remit there is a need for the Board to decide what we will deliver on over the next few years. We cannot do everything so should concentrate on one or two things that we can do really well that will make a difference.

It was agreed that the Board should have a strategy day to discuss this further and agree our vision, values and mission once we have recruited our new board members – **action SP to look at potential dates in a month's time.**

Action SP

EU stated that it would be useful in advance of the strategy day to pull together the best practice from other DMOs and Visitor Information Centres to see how they promote themselves. SCB advised VB give a prize for the best VIC in the country therefore could be worthwhile to review what the winners have done - **action JM/NS to review, include international DMOs.**

Action JM/NS

SCB stated that MC will have a very big role to play in the safe reopening of accommodation providers. It was agreed that international holidays may not go ahead this year therefore it will be important to market Cheshire and Warrington as a holiday destination.

To ensure we align our messaging it was questioned whether we have an understanding of what visitors are looking for. NS advised that a trends and sentiments session is taking place on Monday with the DC Network. NS will pull together learnings from this session.

Action NS

EU advised that the NT are almost looking at reverse marketing so that that the NT are not overwhelmed. NS stated that we could make an incremental difference by positioning offers that will not be in as much demand.

SCB stated that as we begin to open up there is an opportunity to dovetail into the LEP's initiative regarding youth employment, as there will be a big requirement for seasonal support.

AL questioned if there is a piece of work, we could do based around promoting C&W as a place to relocate to. There are also concerns that university students will move out of the area to access employment. TB agreed and stated that we need to create opportunities to keep graduates in the area, perhaps look at retraining options to move from retail to hospitality roles.

SCB stated that we have great resource with the Colleges, is there a way we can tie into this to create an online learning short course to get local people trained up to work in the hospitality industry.

AL stated that the FE Colleges will require funding to do this, may cause issues if the course has no qualification at the end of it.

PC and TB agreed to discuss this further outside the meeting.

Action PC/TB

PC sounded a note of caution around advertising Cheshire as a place to relocate to as there is huge sensitivity on building on green field development.

Due to housing numbers and locations conversations need to take place with the 3 local authorities prior to developing a marketing campaign on this.

MG advised that there is a big trend to redevelop office space into smaller flats, this will help regenerate our town centres. There is a huge uncertainty on what will happen next, can we learn from the recovery from the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001.

5. Board Briefing Note / CEO Report

JM referred Board members to the report circulated within the Board pack and highlighted the following key items.

- JM referred board members to letter to the PM appended to the CEO report which outlined our concerns. We are hearing through our networks that businesses are increasingly concerned about the amount of debt they are incurring and not knowing when the revenue will return. Another concern is Mental Health, particularly of business owners due to uncertainty of the tier restrictions changing at short notice and therefore the need to destroy stock.
- There may be an opportunity for MC to provide more support to our networks and to advise them what support is available to them. There is also a need to focus on the positives to build a better future in 2021 and beyond.
- We had some very strong Comms and marketing activity which gained strong coverage including national coverage, around the Christmas period over the shop local campaign.
- We are producing a monthly article for Cheshire Life magazine
- With regard to Destination Chester, Jamie Christon has agreed to be the Chair of the group.
- Operations and staffing, staff have continued to operate flexibly with staff supporting the Growth Hub and the VIC staff developing an online shop and supporting the Heritage Action Zone project.
- We have been looking to support staff wellbeing particularly where childcare requires flexibility.

RC questioned whether the success of the Christmas gift guide could be rolled out to other key events in the year such as Easter. JM advised that we are currently working on Valentine's Day. NS advised that the pandemic has given the opportunity to develop really interesting content and we will continue to build upon this work.

SB referred to the letter to the PM and stated that the timetable for a response will be approx. 3 months. MC needs to be influencer here.

SCB stated that it is essential that we build upon digital expertise, there is a key opportunity here to offer a reduced fee to partners for ongoing recovery marketing and digital messaging will be key to this.

JM advised that part of the work we are doing is to continue to support our partners and we do want to start conversations with partners in the coming months regarding charging membership fees.

EU questioned timing how are we forward planning and preparing content. Have we also looked at active partnerships with other publishers to gain a reciprocal advantage? NS advised that we have guest blogs from local influencers to help promotion. We are working on a 12-month marketing strategy, including promoting Cheshire Day at the end of March. We are also actively promoting pre-booking.

6. 2020/21 Q3 Financial Report

TB introduced DW give an overview of the company finances.

DW thanked SB for joining the Audit Group and for attending the meeting on the 27th January and referred Board member to the minutes from that meeting included within the board pack.

The Audit Group continue to update and monitor the cashflow and reserves situation to ensure we do not put ourselves in a position where we do not have adequate reserves required for wind up costs.

JL referred Board members to the Q3 report included within the board pack and ran through the key elements of the report advising that the Audit Group are comfortable with the reported loss in the current circumstances and that our reserves, which are above our required wind-up costs were sufficient to cover the loss.

EU questioned given that we have the sustainability from the LEP how do the scenarios play through to what our commitments are. JM advised that the LEP and MC invoice against different budget lines. We have a series of complimentary lines against different activities. It is a work in progress, and we hope to create greater transparency going forward.

PC stated that the LEP and MC employees work together as a team and the work of MC within the Growth Hub has been extremely valuable, especially with the need to move quickly to access funding from BEIS.

DW advised that that the Audit Group work very closely with Ian Brooks, Finance and Commercial Director at the LEP and stated that an exercise has taken place to look at the performance of both the LEP and MC individually and the entities together on a joint basis.

TB stated that it is important to have distinction between the financial performance of MC and the LEP. As a Board it is important that we are focussed on the success of MC.

7. Budget 2021/22 Scenarios

AL questioned how realistic it is that MC will achieve commercial income.

JM advised that the 2020 budget has been included within the scenarios to show what income we would have expected if it had been a normal year and the other important comparison is to show the level of increase in LEP funding. The breakeven scenario assumes that the Growth Hub income continues.

JM's advice to the Board is that we should pursue commercial income, difficulty is knowing the level of commercial income. We believe this is the right strategic direction to take. In the event that commercial income is not forthcoming we will have to undertake a cost saving exercise at the end of Q1.

NS reiterated the need to pursue commercial income this year, but we need to be prudent on what commercial income we are expecting and to plan commercial activity accordingly. This would include looking at allowing businesses to pay later, reducing the number of guides that are produced. Christmas Market discussions will need to take place with the council before planning in any income from this project.

RC questioned whether we should retain our membership fee levels to ensure the partners value the service provided. NS stated that going forward we will look at our offer to ensure it is relevant and will aim to get back to normal levels in the next financial year.

JM advised that informal conversations have taken place with partners we will continue these conversations once we have agreement from the Board on the budget. In a couple of months we hope to have a clearer picture of the level of demand and ability to pay. Need to be seen to be supporting the sector. We will start to have more structured conversations if the board are supportive.

GD stated that for the partners it is a cashflow problem, we need to be coordinated and agree a timescale with the BID to ensure businesses are not getting asked for funds from several organisations at the same time.

JM/NS advised that we work closely with the BID and are having upfront conversations to ensure that what we are doing is achievable and sensitive at the same time.

TB and JM thanked David and Jules for their hard work particularly to Jules for getting to grip with the finances so quickly.

8. Any Other Business.

NS stated that we are actively promoted National Women’s Day on the 8th March and are looking for short videos and would encourage Eleanor, Sarah and Gemma to enter a video.

SCB stated that the management of the Grant Scheme out to businesses has been really efficient and has been a lifesaver to businesses, therefore commended the Councils for their hard work on this.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on the Thursday 6th May 2021 – via Microsoft Teams

Signature (Trevor Brocklebank, Chair)

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Date

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Marketing Cheshire Board Strategy Session meeting notes
Friday 23rd April 0930-1230

Attendees

Trevor Brocklebank, Chair
Philip Cox
Joe Manning
Nicola Said
Eleanor Underhill
Sarah Callander-Beckett
Steven Broomhead
Mark Goldsmith
Gemma Davies
Rob McKay
Tracey O'Keefe
Peter Mearns
Jamie Christon

Apologies

Andy Lyon
Rupert Collis
David Walker
Clare Hayward

This note is intended to only provide a very high-level summary of the discussion held. It also includes a summary of actions and next steps.

Outline of the day

Trevor welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised of the purpose of today's session which is to look at what we are going to do to make a difference and make the most of the expertise we have on the Board.

Introducing the Team

JM updated on the role of MC and offered reflections on 2020, including a changed role in response to Covid19 pandemic and LEP merger.

Comments from Board

- We discussed the wide range of MC work and our approach to programme management. A traffic light system for managing short, medium, and long-term projects was proposed.
- We discussed the need to keep the business model under review due to the uncertainty created by both the DMO and LEP reviews, and potential impact on future funding.
- The Destination Chester work was discussed. CW&C is providing the funding for events and marketing in Summer / Autumn 2021. The Chester project will be a model for work that will be rolled out across town within Cheshire West and can also be applied in Cheshire and Warrington through our Destination Cheshire network.
- We discussed how best to position Cheshire and Warrington within the North West. There is a need to consider what we can control and influence.
- We discussed the different roles that MC can play. For example, we have a strong remit to lead the recovery of leisure and hospitality sector, whereas we would play more of a supporting role on town centre work led by BIDs and Councils.

- We also discussed the economy wide role that MC can play in support of an economy wide place marketing agenda. This would include business tourism and promoting Cheshire and Warrington as a great place to live, work, and invest.

Purpose pyramid

TB introduced the purpose pyramid concept used by the LEP and questioned whether we should adopt the LEP vision which would then cascade down to what deliverables we are able to deliver and identify our core capabilities to create clear measurable criteria.

It was agreed that there is a need for us to create a realistic strategy of where we would like MC to be positioned in future years. A 3–4-year strategy but recognising it may need to change depending on the outcome of the LEP and DMO reviews, and that we have a critical short-term role to play in the recovery of the visitor economy due to the impact of the Covid19 pandemic.

Next steps

- JM/TB/NS to start to populate the pyramid for discussion at the next board meeting, to be developed in parallel to the DMO review.

Priorities

- Number one priority should be re energise the leisure, tourism & hospitality industry to help them get back up and running.
- Replicate Destination Chester model across Cheshire and Warrington.
- Deliver LEP brand, marketing, and PR to deliver economy wide impact and ensure we are delivering Government's agenda and Plan for Growth.
- Have a further Board strategy session to develop our longer-term strategy to roll out in approx. as economy and policy environment is clearer.
- Keep close to DMO and LEP review as they develop recommendations over coming months.
- Need to start to progress the clarity on Cheshire brand and messaging.

Working together as a Board

Going forward we will continue to hold Board meetings virtually and then combine this with face-to-face strategy sessions. There is a possibility we will need additional meetings scheduling while we get our strategy in place. The aim going forward will be to meet bi-monthly. – **SP to review existing dates**

It was agreed that we will be putting out a press release to publicise the recruitment of the new board members once Purdah restrictions allow.

ENDS

Marketing Cheshire pyramid

Our purpose

To lead the sustainable growth of the C&W economy through a powerful partnership between the private, public and third sector.

Our vision

To be the UK's healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy.

Our principles / values

We are ambitious, collaborative, objective, connected and we listen and make things happen.

Our strategy summary

Lead the sustainable growth of visitor, leisure, and hospitality economy; and position C&W as a great place to live, work, meet, study, and invest.

Our deliverables

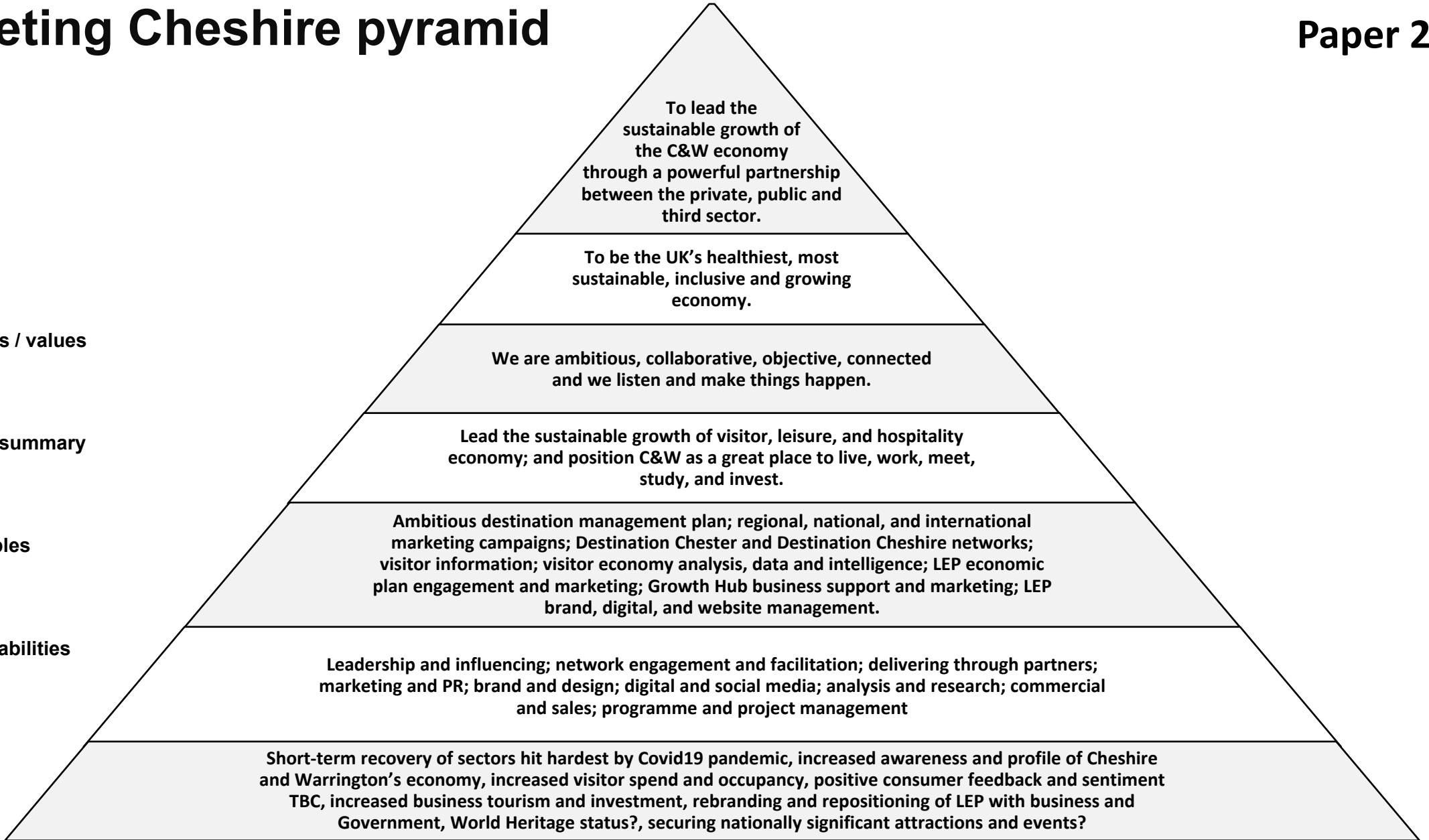
Ambitious destination management plan; regional, national, and international marketing campaigns; Destination Chester and Destination Cheshire networks; visitor information; visitor economy analysis, data and intelligence; LEP economic plan engagement and marketing; Growth Hub business support and marketing; LEP brand, digital, and website management.

Our core capabilities

Leadership and influencing; network engagement and facilitation; delivering through partners; marketing and PR; brand and design; digital and social media; analysis and research; commercial and sales; programme and project management

Outcomes

Short-term recovery of sectors hit hardest by Covid19 pandemic, increased awareness and profile of Cheshire and Warrington's economy, increased visitor spend and occupancy, positive consumer feedback and sentiment TBC, increased business tourism and investment, rebranding and repositioning of LEP with business and Government, World Heritage status?, securing nationally significant attractions and events?



6th May 2021

Chief Executive update

Paper 233

1. Summary of economic picture

The re-opening of non-essential retail, visitor attractions, and self-catering accommodation seems to have gone very well. Retailers seem happy with levels of spend, along with a level of footfall that meant that risks to Covid infection rates were kept to a minimum. Many attractions were sold out throughout the Easter holiday week - "like a bank holiday everyday" - and our hotels and self-catering providers reporting positive forward bookings, particularly on weekends. There are also positive examples of diversification and growth amongst our outdoor attractions, from Cheshire Outdoors to Ness Gardens. We continue to engage with those businesses that have been unable to reopen yet and those operators and supply chains that are more limited by ongoing Covid19 restrictions, such as events and weddings providers.

2. Communications and marketing

Marketing Cheshire was successful at getting Cheshire and Warrington's retail and visitor attractions into the media, with BBC Breakfast running a feature on Chester and Granada reporting from Bewilderwood, one of the new attractions that opened for the first time on the 12th of April. We also issued a press release that included quotes from Bewilderwood, Gulliver's World, and Forest Holidays. Our attractions, such as Chester Zoo, also had extensive regional and national coverage. We have used our destination website to include self-catering and camping content, al fresco dining options, and dedicated blog and social media content and are supporting this with a continued national PR strategy to profile the destination. Our partnership with Cheshire Life is allowing us to profile the destination monthly to a local and regional audience.

Cheshire Day took place on the 30th March 2021, this was a social media celebration of Cheshire & Warrington. Over 1800 businesses, visitors and residents posted on Instagram and twitter using the hashtag #CheshireDay. Tweets were both local and international, with messages from Japan, USA and Canada with a total reach of over 14 million. Sentiment was overwhelmingly positive, people are looking forward to exploring the region again, to experience what we have to offer, and businesses are looking forward to welcoming people back.

Destination Chester has agreed a programme of activity with Cheshire West and Chester for Summer 2021. We are developing our wider programme to promote Cheshire and Warrington. As part of this we have adapted our destination brand, focusing on the '&' of our offer to attract specific demographics with tailored propositions. We want to support the industry and are keen to assist in driving leisure visits where business tourism and weddings will not be able to drive the usual levels of business.

We continue to support the LEP, Growth Hub and Pledge with marketing delivery and are in the final stages of the new corporate brand and website which will give us a stronger platform to present the LEP in a more cohesive way.

More detail on our PR coverage is included in Annex A.

3. Economic response and recovery

DCMS has announced a review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs). This is led by Nick de Bois, Chair of Visit England. The review will report by September 2021 and will make recommendations on: DMO structures and funding to deliver Covid-19 recovery; the role of DMOs alongside existing local structures, including Mayoral Combined Authorities, local authorities, and LEPS; and how DMOs should best work with Visit England, Visit Britain and DCMS. The review is currently in the evidence gathering stage, with initial responses required by the end of April 2021. Marketing Cheshire is engaging our local authority partners and wider private sector networks to provide our views to Government. We are also providing input on the Cheshire and Warrington model to the LEP review. We have prepared a summary note and have used this to inform our engagement with our local authority teams and wider partner network.

4. Operations and staffing

We had a positive Board strategy session on the 23rd of April to discuss future strategy and short-term priorities. We will be following up on actions in due course.

We have engaged with our partner networks and have had strong support for renewing partnership in 2021/22. We have revised our rate card to issue to partners and will emphasise that we want to provide a flexible approach to support businesses to recover throughout 2021.

We have agreed to continue the secondment of Marketing Cheshire staff into the Growth Hub for 2020/21. This allows us to improve our business support and provides opportunities for ongoing professional development. We also have two staff members returning from maternity leave in May.

The Visitor Information Centre in Chester reopened on the 12th of April. City guiding and sightseeing will return from May. Most of the VIC visitors have been locals although there have been some limited visitors from across the North West and North Wales. The VIC also reported some limited retail sales.

5. Board recruitment

I am delighted to welcome four new members to the Marketing Cheshire board. Jamie Christon, Rob McKay, Peter Mearns, and Tracey O'Keefe were all successful in our recent recruitment round and will be bringing a wealth of experience to Marketing Cheshire. I would also like to formally thank Rupert Collis, who has stepped down from the Marketing Cheshire board to take up a position on the LEP board.

Joe Manning, Marketing Cheshire, 28/04/21

Earned Media Coverage



 Sunday Express

221k
Impact



 The Guardian

24m
Impact



 Mail Online

12m
Impact

OCTOBER 2020 – MARCH 2021

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/our-first-canal-boat-adventure-in-cheshire-ld32rw93l>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/apr/24/10-great-british-walking-trails-where-you-wont-see-another-soul>

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/travel/uk-ireland/top-40-uk-attractions-brits-23833716>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/lists/last-minute-holidays-can-still-book-early-may-bank-holiday/>

<https://girlabout.co.uk/best-uk-holiday-destinations-ideas-activities-2021/>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/family-holidays/great-british-getaways-10-peak-district-holidays-book-now-sell/>

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-half-term-survival-guide-p23r9qj0r>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/mar/30/10-of-the-best-new-uk-attractions-to-visit-in-2021>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/united-kingdom/articles/uk-holiday-calendar-great-breaks-next-six-months-autumn-winter/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/oct/18/blaze-of-glory-20-of-the-best-autumn-gardens-in-the-uk>

<https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/travel/25-experiences-gift-christmas-2021-spa-days-glamping-789809>

<https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1370326/uk-holiday-roman-sites-uk-bath-spa-hadrians-wall-top>

<https://www.warringtonguardian.co.uk/news/18811060.covid-tier-2-family-things-half-term-near-warrington/>

VISIT

CHESTER &
CHESHIRE

Earned Media Coverage

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/united-kingdom/articles/uk-holiday-calendar-great-breaks-next-six-months-autumn-winter/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/oct/18/blaze-of-glory-20-of-the-best-autumn-gardens-in-the-uk>

<https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/travel/25-experiences-gift-christmas-2021-spa-days-glamping-789809>

<https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1370326/uk-holiday-roman-sites-uk-bath-spa-hadrians-wall-top>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/oct/26/20-of-the-uk-best-christmas-winter-light-trails>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/dec/08/the-travel-travellers-christmas-gift-guide>

<https://www.cheshire-live.co.uk/whats-on/food-drink-news/seven-places-ice-cream-cheshire-19135327>

<https://www.warringtonguardian.co.uk/news/18811060.covid-tier-2-family-things-half-term-near-warrington/>

<https://www.cheshire-live.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/festive-plans-cheshire-post-lockdown-19240773>

<https://www.cheshire-live.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/five-things-coming-cheshire-2021-19306769>

<https://www.silk1069.com/news/local-news/whats-new-in-cheshire-for-2021/>

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-9039057/Eleven-best-NEW-places-stay-England-2021-Cornwall-Cheshire-London.html

<https://www.cheshire-live.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/72-cheshire-based-gifts-last-19475617>

<https://www.cheshire-live.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/festive-plans-cheshire-post-lockdown-19240773>

<https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/18853342.chester-christmas-market-will-not-take-place-town-hall/>

6th May 2021

Destination Management Review

Cheshire and Warrington – Briefing and Position Paper

Paper 234

Summary of DCMS review of Destination Management Organisation

- DCMS has announced a review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), this is led by Nick de Bois, Chair of Visit England
- The review will **report by September 2021** and will make recommendations on:
 - DMO structures and funding to deliver Covid-19 recovery.
 - The role of DMOs alongside existing local structures, including Mayoral Combined Authorities, local authorities, and LEPS.
 - How DMOs should best work with Visit England, Visit Britain and DCMS, as well as other Government departments and agencies where relevant.
- The review is currently in the evidence gathering stage, with initial responses required by the end of **April 2021**.
 - Nick de Bois and his team at DCMS are hosting roundtables and meetings with a wide range of stakeholders.
 - All DMOs have been asked to submit evidence on current operating models to Government.
 - DCMS has also invited views through a 25-question open survey.
- The April deadline is the first round of DCMS evidence gathering. We will continue to engage our public and private sector networks during 2021/22 to provide ongoing feedback to Government and ensure that Marketing Cheshire is able to best deliver local economic priorities.

Marketing Cheshire headline position

- We regard ourselves as a **strategic Destination Management Organisation (DMO)** that can operate at scale for the visitor economy in our heritage city, towns, and rural areas; we are aligned with Cheshire and Warrington’s functional economic geography; and aligned with the institutional boundaries of our three unitary local authorities and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Marketing Cheshire is part of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP.
- Marketing Cheshire’s **strategic role includes:**

- Promotion of the visitor economy to create jobs and sustainable economic growth. This includes tourism, leisure, hospitality, and retail businesses.
 - Helping to make Cheshire and Warrington a great place to live and work.
 - Providing sector leadership and business support, including with the Growth Hub.
 - Leading on business tourism and place marketing.
- We partner flexibly across **geographical boundaries** whether that is with North Wales, the Peak District, or with Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester.
- We believe Government should work with industry to develop a **visitor economy recovery plan**. This should acknowledge the importance of both domestic and international tourism and set the framework for tailored local destination management plans developed by DMOs with businesses and communities.
- To help deliver the **visitor economy recovery plan** Government should provide DMOs with core funding linked to specific policy outcomes, such as levelling up or job creation. This would ensure DMOs are able to focus on delivery rather than limited funding bids. This would deliver better value for money, particularly when Government funding leverages additional funds secured from local partners in the public and private sector.
- DMOs also have a critical role to play in **place marketing, including business tourism and inward investment**. Marketing Cheshire have been working closely with the LEP and local authorities to strengthen our local propositions and ensure that Cheshire and Warrington are regarded as a great place to live, work, and meet. This will be critical to the growth of priority sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, energy, life sciences, as well as the recovery of our towns and rural areas.
- We believe that a new **national DMO network** should be established to share best practice and market intelligence between Government, government agencies, and local areas. This could be modelled on similar structures, for example the LEP Network, and could be chaired by Visit England. It should facilitate further regional collaboration.
- We hugely value our **business partnerships** and as part of the LEP we work increasingly closely with other local organisations, such as Business Improvement Districts. We intend to strengthen these partnerships during 2021/22 through our Destination Chester and Destination Cheshire networks.
- Finally, we think that the **integration of Marketing Cheshire with the LEP** provides an exemplar model of local partnership working. As a result of our merger, we have been able to increase local business engagement, strengthen economic strategy, and streamline project delivery, particularly on business support. This proved critical during our response to the Covid19 pandemic and the LEP has also focused on the importance of the visitor economy in the draft Cheshire and Warrington economic recovery plan.
- Marketing Cheshire is a **private company limited by guarantee**, with the sole member being the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. It has an independent board of directors, chaired by the vice chair of the LEP and with representation from local visitor attractions, the hospitality sector, cultural sector, wider business community, and local authorities.

Value of Tourism and Hospitality to the UK's Visitor Economy

- The tourism and hospitality sector in the UK accounts for 7% of GDP and 11% of all jobs. It is the UK's third-largest employer, supporting 3.2 million people as well as 1.5 million in the supply chain.
- The sector generates £130 billion in turnover a year and contributes approximately £39 billion in tax a year.
- Pre- Covid-19, the hospitality industry was growing at a rate of 4.5% (compared to 1% growth in the wider economy) and creating 1 in 6 net new jobs.

Value of Tourism and Hospitality to Cheshire and Warrington's Economy

- The value of the Visitor Economy in Cheshire and Warrington is £3.8billion, having grown steadily over the 10 years from £2billion in 2009, and the area welcomed 65million visitors in 2019.
- Approximately 45,000 people are employed in the Visitor Economy in Cheshire and Warrington. The Visitor Economy also supports jobs through wider supply chains, and this is particularly important for our towns and economy in rural areas.
- Cheshire and Warrington have key tourism assets such as Chester Zoo, the most visited paid for attraction outside of London with 2million visitors in 2019 and Jodrell Bank, the most recent UK World Heritage Site.

Future delivery opportunities

- Recognition that **destinations such as Cheshire and Warrington have a major role in both domestic and international tourism recovery and can help the Government achieve its ambitions for levelling up for our heritage City, towns, and rural areas.** There are also opportunities to better leverage Cheshire and Warrington as a location for inward investment and business tourism following the pandemic.
- That Marketing Cheshire should be included in a **network of Strategic DMOs** to work in conjunction with VisitEngland, VisitBritain and other Government funded programmes which impact on the Visitor Economy, supported with core funding to deliver activities, including the following:
 - o Lead sub-regional **destination management plan**, in collaboration with local authorities and businesses to ensure a coordinated approach to destination development and marketing.
 - o Deliver **business advice and support**, start-ups, and growth through the LEP, Growth Hub, and in partnership with local authorities. Dependent on the scope of this work, DCMS may also decide to agree a framework jointly with BEIS and DIT.
 - o Marketing Cheshire is also working with local partners in the public and private sector to develop our plans to promote Cheshire & Warrington's approach to **place marketing**. Linked to this, leading a focused strategy on **business tourism** connected to priority economic sectors can assist in the UK's strategy around global Britain and Net Zero. For example, Marketing Cheshire successfully secured an international Renewable and Clean Hydrogen conference because of the leading role the sub-

region is taking in the field. Bringing sector specific conferences and associations to an area can play an active role in investment and the DMO role in driving this needs to be considered.

- Support DMOs to develop real time **local data dashboards** with market analysis, insights, and industry intelligence. This would be hugely valuable for local businesses and Government policy makers. This work requires additional Government funding to be sustainable and successful and will allow us to track Covid19 recovery.
- Continue to lead **domestic and local visitor economy marketing** and media activity and provision of visitor information. This will align with national priorities and campaigns to achieve best return on investment, whilst also emphasising our key local assets in our heritage city, towns, and rural areas, as well as propositions developed with England's Historic Cities.
- Continue to coordinate and deliver **international marketing**, whilst also looking at opportunities to partner across a wider geography in the North-West, North Wales, Peak District and Shropshire, and aligned with key visitor gateways such as Manchester Airport and the Port of Liverpool.
- Recommendations will need to be accompanied by **core budget resource with a multi-year commitment**. There is currently a market failure in the provision of destination management and marketing as no single business will benefit from the activity. The other issue is that the lack of Government funding alongside constrained local authority budgets means that DMOs are focused on financial sustainability and revenue generation activity rather than their core purpose of destination management and market.
- Continue to **communicate regularly** to all relevant local businesses, local authorities, and the LEP, including providing the secretariat to our independently chaired Destination Chester and Destination Cheshire networks.
- Use **local market intelligence** to create medium to long-term destination strategy for the growth of the visitor economy, whether it is by expansion of existing attractions or hospitality venues or by supporting new investors. There are a lot of best practice examples of how Marketing Cheshire has done this and as such the role could be formalised and evaluated more effectively.
- Working across Government departments to **better support businesses**, Marketing Cheshire could support coordination of all aspects of the visitor economy across the sub-region, including partnering with relevant support programmes funded across relevant government departments eg BEIS, DEFRA, ACE, etc. In previous years Marketing Cheshire has delivered grant schemes on behalf of national schemes, for example Foot and Mouth recovery.

Further considerations

- Learnings might be taken from other Government departments where **local delivery is core funded** and supported within the framework of a national programme. DIT and BEIS already contract with local delivery organisations to core fund account management and business support. For example, BEIS core funds 38 local Business Growth Hubs, based on the size of the local business population, in addition to discretionary funding for specific project delivery.

- Marketing Cheshire could support **skills, innovation and digitalisation** in the visitor economy through local delivery of national initiatives. This would be in line with the priorities of the Tourism Sector Deal and is particularly important to post-Covid-19 recovery.
- DMO's could place a more active supporting role in promoting local **town centre and high street recovery**, particularly in terms of the role of the tourism and hospitality sector in contributing to vibrant and sustainable economy and communities.