

## **CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LEP**

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

**JANUARY 2023**

#### Summary

1. I hope colleagues had an excellent Christmas and New Year. Notwithstanding the Christmas break, there is a lot to report this month, in particular on senior staffing, additional money for Skills Bootcamps and work we are doing to promote C&W as a great place to live, work, invest, study and visit.

#### Senior Staffing

2. I hope that Board members have all seen the note I circulated on 9 January explaining that with both Joe Manning and Nicola Said leaving us between now and the middle of March, we are taking the opportunity to re-jig job descriptions to create a full time Managing Director for Marketing Cheshire supported by a Marketing Manager post. These changes will allow us to strengthen Marketing Cheshire, broadening its remit and reinforcing its role as a key driver of the LEP's programme alongside maintaining its focus on the visitor economy.
3. Like Joe, the Managing Director will be a key member of the LEP's senior leadership team but will have less capacity than to lead on some of the policy work for which Joe has been responsible, such as on innovation or for the LAs on devolution. We will be putting some interim arrangements in place to cover that work over the next few months with the aim of making a permanent appointment later in the year. We will also be making interim arrangements to cover the Marketing Cheshire posts whilst their recruitment is underway.

#### NP11

4. As Board members are aware, we are the accountable body for the NP11 group of Northern Powerhouse LEPs and the legal employer of its staff. I am delighted to let you know that the chairs of the other Northern LEPs have asked Clare to become NP11's deputy chair. Following the Levelling Up White Paper, Ministers are reviewing the role of NP11 and have asked it to broaden the membership of its board. Clare will be playing a leading role alongside Sir Roger Marsh, NP11's Chair, in discussions with elected leaders and other stakeholders across the North and with Ministers to agree the organisation's new role and structure.

#### Skills Bootcamps

5. I am also very pleased to let you know that DfE have told us that we will be given an extra £380k to spend on Skills Bootcamps this year and will be granted £1.2 million for 2024/5. We have already invited bids from the providers of the current programme to use the additional money for this year to extra places in their existing Bootcamps, but are also having discussions with DfE about the conditions attached to this year's grant. We received notification of the additional funding at around 5pm on 22 December and have been told by

DfE that it must be spent by 31 March. This is an exceptionally challenging deadline and we are therefore discussing with them whether we can get some flexibility around the deadline so that we can ensure that the money is successfully spent.

#### Office Accommodation and Staff Ts & Cs

6. With the completion of our own LEP review we have now signed a contract to undertake the office refurbishment programme that I covered in my report last month. Once complete the refurbishment will provide us with excellent quality space enabling the staff team to collaborate very effectively together and provide really good accommodation of Board and other meetings, including proper hybrid meeting facilities. Alongside this we are also starting a consultation with the staff team on creating a single set of terms and conditions to replace the separate Ts & Cs that we currently have for Marketing Cheshire and the LEP. This will enable us to realise our “one team” ambition, creating a truly flexible team able to work together across the whole of the LEPs agenda.

#### Promoting Cheshire and Warrington

7. We have a number of pieces of work underway to promote C&W as a great place to live, work, invest and visit:
  - We are shaping a relaunch of the Cheshire Science Corridor ahead of a business event in June. This will include a refreshed narrative, identification of key individuals working in the Science Corridor to be part of the promotion, brand development and ambassador engagement.
  - Marketing Cheshire, working closely with John Adlen, the LA Growth Directors and local businesses is taking the lead on developing the sub-region’s promotional programme for UKREiif – the UK version of the MIPIM conference that we used to attend each Spring in Cannes.
  - We are also working on capitalising on some major events for the visitor economy, including the Eurovision Song Contest and the Open Golf Championship at Hoylake.

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