

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Board  
Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 8am**

**Present:** Trevor Brocklebank – Chair (“TB”)  
Joe Manning (“JM”)  
**Marketing Cheshire  
Directors** Mark Goldsmith (“MG”)  
David Walker (“DW”)  
Andy Lyon (“AL”)  
Eleanor Underhill (“EU”)  
Sarah Callander-Beckett (“SCB”)  
Rob McKay (“RM”)  
Gemma Davies (“GD”)  
Steven Broomhead (“SB”)  
Peter Mearns (“PM”)

**In Attendance:** Nicola Said (“NS”)  
Ian Brooks (“IB”)  
Sharon Pond (minute taker)

**Apologies:** Philip Cox (“PC”) (observer)  
Tracey O’Keefe (“TO”)  
Jamie Christon (“JC”)

- **Opening by the Chairman and Welcome**

TB thanked the board for joining the call and welcomed Board members to the meeting.

- **Declarations of Interest**

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

- **Minutes and Actions from the last Meeting**

The Board confirmed that the minutes from the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 were correct.

It was confirmed that the actions from the previous meeting have been dealt with.

- **Board Matters**

**Reappointment of Directors**

TB confirmed that the reappointment of David Walker and Eleanor Underhill to the Board of MC was approved by the LEP board for an additional 3-year term.

JM advised that in order to be compliant with the Articles of Association an additional Director is required for Marketing Chester. JM /IB to discuss with Jamie Christon to ascertain if he would be willing to take on this role.

**Action  
JM/IB**

- **Board Briefing Note / CEO Report**

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

- The STEAM data has now been received and highlights the overall fall in value of the visitor economy in the past year and reduction of visitors to the area, emphasising the importance of our recovery work in this area.
- Tour of Britain was a great success, and we need to ensure we build on these events across our region.
- We have come to an agreement with Cheshire Life to continue to provide features for the magazine for an additional year. If board members have ideas for themes, please advise JM
- Work is taking place to review the travel trade industry and meetings have taken place with Liverpool Airport and the train companies to look at ways to attract additional visitors to the region from different areas including Ireland.
- Destination Cheshire meeting took place this week looking at a pitch for creating a family friendly destination.
- First stage of Destination Chester Designed by Nature events took place during half term with very positive feedback.
- The VIC had its best footfall week in October half term showing significant recovery, not quite back to 2019 levels but we are starting to see a slow increase in international visitors

### Comments from Board

It was advised that the Destination Cheshire meeting was very well attended, and we have a consultant working on a brief for the family market 'our family welcomes your family.' The next steps will be to look at data and intelligence to inform the work and start work on the creative brief for the campaign.

AL enquired whether it would be possible to share the full STEAM data to allow for further interrogation. JM/NS will investigate if this is possible and report back to the board.

**Action**  
**JM/NS**

It was questioned that with regard to the Tour of Britain should MC take on more of a coordination role to ensure we get the most out of the event. Also, Pete Waterman is very keen to hold his 'Making Tracks' event at the Cathedral again next year, it would be good if we could support this event.

JM to liaise with SB re contact for creating an oversight group for the Tour of Britain event.

**Action**  
**SB/JM**

TB advised that new branding has been produced for the LEP and MC which simplifies the offer but allows us to communicate better with our core audiences. The new website is now live, and the AGM Video is a strong tool for promoting Cheshire and will be circulated to the Board after the meeting.

- **DMO Review**

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

- The DMO review is an independent review commissioned by government but is not yet government policy. The spending review did not provide any further detail as to whether government will adopt or fund these recommendations. We are unlikely to have any further information until after Christmas.
- Government is aware that in terms of delivery we need to make plans and assumptions for our budgets.
- The content of review takes a very comprehensive look at tourism policy and the role of DMOs and stresses that DMOs can take a key role in government policies, such as Levelling Up.

- The Review recommends a three-tier approach that acknowledges that DMOs exist in various formats.
- There are eight actions that put the visitor economy at the heart of levelling up, regional growth, and creating sustainable and inclusive places. These recommendations build on the discussions we have had at previous Board meetings regarding our future strategic direction.
- We do need to give thought to Tier two and three with regard to further formalising our work with Destination Chester and Cheshire.

### **Next steps**

- Marketing Cheshire positions itself as a Tier-1 'Destination Development Partnership'
- Update our political and officer leadership to take a paper to the sub leaders regional board later this month reflecting views from today's meeting.
- Continue collaboration across northwest, Invite DCMS Secretary of State to the Northwest to assist with our positioning
- Engage actively with our neighbouring counties such as Shropshire, North Wales, and into the Peak District so that we are kept informed on their positioning and priorities.
- Continue the strategic role we play in the wider economy objective set out in the review.

### **Comments from Board Members**

The Board agreed they were supportive of the suggested next steps.

SB questioned whether we should change the name of Marketing Cheshire to the Cheshire Tourist Board. JM advised that the name of DMOs was raised in the report. A conversation will need to take place on what is our core business and on the work we are doing with the LEP. The report does stress the importance of the role of Tourism and the visitor economy in achieving government objectives such as Levelling Up.

EU flagged that Visitor Economy describes a wider offer creating a quality of place. EU also questioned data on size of our visitor economy comparatively in North-West.

SCB asked whether organisations can progress through the tier ranking. JM advised that the report refers to accreditation it is not yet known if you can move up through the tiers. The challenge will be the strategic geography.

RM stated that it is encouraging that the work we conducted on the Purpose Pyramid relates to the report and the set of agreed principles: adaptive, ambitious and collaborative.

AL agreed that with the work we are doing with the LEP puts us in the Tier one category and questioned how the tiers will be funded differently. JM advised that the report looks at a core funding model of approx. £15-20M across England a year relating to a possible £200-£250k per organisation. The hope is that we would secure a funding settlement more than one year.

DW questioned whether we have looked at the business planning and funding. JM will discuss with IB and bring a budget to the board based on what we do know, however will undertake some scenario planning should we achieve tier one looking at parts of the business we would want to grow, including analytical and data capturing. We will have to undertake an implementation stage if we achieve multi-year funding.

**Action  
JM/IB**

IB stated It will be an ongoing evolution for MC and we will have to undertake a planning exercise over the next 3 months to evaluate the activities we are currently

doing against the new strategic position. We will also need to take our stakeholders opinions into consideration.

NS advised that Nick de Bois at a recent conference she attended stated that we need to focus on our destination management role and articulate our role in terms of place shaping working alongside the Local Authorities. Nick does not want the process to be a bidding exercise. DCMS are very supportive of the recommendations in the report but where it sits financially is subject to Departmental planning and allocations.

TB stated that there is a lot of focus on Cheshire and Warrington being a high skill, high salary economy. However, if we are to have a successful tourism sector there is a need to review what type of jobs we create for the area. SCB stressed that we need to communicate the value of a career in the visitor economy, and that there is a real staffing shortage in the hospitality business for these types of roles.

- **Company Finances**

TB introduced IB to give an overview of the company finances.

IB referred Board members to the September YTD report included within the board pack advising that the operating result is slightly ahead of budget and ran through the key elements of the report noting that the Audit Committee are comfortable with the cash position and reserves position. There is scope next year to look at areas of investment using part of the reserves.

The Partnership business has been strong this year, invoiced sales are doing well, the challenge has been in collecting the income from partners, therefore, we are looking at implementing a credit card payment system or subscription model – IB to discuss with JM and NS

**Action IB**

- **Any Other Business.**

JM advised that we have a vacancy on the audit committee if a member of the board would like to join the audit group, please advise JM/DW.

**Next meeting**

Board informal sessions are scheduled to take place on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 4-7pm – further info will be circulated nearer to the dates

**Future Board Meetings – 8am -10am**

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Signature (Trevor Brocklebank, Chair)

.....

Date