

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Board  
Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020 – 8am**

**Present:** Angie Robinson (“AR”) (Chair)  
Joe Manning (“JM”)  
**Marketing Cheshire  
Directors** Steven Broomhead (“SB”)  
Adrian Bull (“AB”)  
Andy Lyon (“AL”) – part meeting  
David Walker (“DW”)  
Eleanor Underhill (“EU”)  
Mark Goldsmith (“MG”)  
Sarah Callander-Beckett (“SCB”)  
Rupert Collis (“RC”)  
Gemma Davies (“GD”)

**In Attendance:** Trevor Brocklebank (“TB”) (observer)- part meeting  
Philip Cox (“PC”) (observer)  
Nicola Said (“NS”) – part meeting

**Apologies:** Clare Hayward (“CH”)

**1. Opening by the Chairman and Welcome**

AR thanked the board for joining the call and welcomed Gemma Davies, Cheshire West and Chester Council to her first Board meeting. AR also advised that Trevor Brocklebank, Deputy Chair of the LEP will be joining the meeting after the Chair recruitment discussion

AR congratulated Professor Steven Broomhead on his MBE

AR advised that it was also Adrian’s last meeting and thanked Adrian for his commitment to the board and for his support as Deputy Chair

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Please advise Sharon of any changes to your Declarations of Interest

**3. Minutes and Actions from the last Meeting**

The Board confirmed that the minutes from the meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 were correct and AR signed them accordingly

AR confirmed that a communication had been sent out to Board members regarding recruitment for the role of Chair and a discussion around this follows in the next agenda item

**4. Board Matters**

AR advised that following discussions a paper was circulated to board members putting forward Trevor Brocklebank as the preferred candidate to take over the role of Chair of Marketing Cheshire. It was felt that Trevor’s appointment would strengthen the relationship between MC and the LEP.

All board members present unanimously agreed to the appointment of Trevor Brocklebank as Chair of Marketing Cheshire, and to advise the LEP accordingly.

## 5. Board Briefing Note / CEO Report

JM referred Board members to the report circulated within the Board pack and highlighted the key areas for discussion at today's Board meeting

- JM referred to the current economic picture and the challenges in Chester and Warrington due to Covid-19 and the rise in unemployment in the area particularly in the hospitality industry.
- We did see an increase in consumer demand in the Summer and a number of sectors in C&W are doing well including the logistics, life sciences and chemicals industry
- Warrington Town deal has gone through and this will be important for promoting the visitor economy, culture, and heritage in Warrington
- The paper refers to Covid19 rates still rising in the Northwest, however since writing the paper the rates have now started to flatline and even drop in areas such as Warrington and there is good news around the development of a vaccine.
- Covid-19 response work undertaken by MC includes: -
  - Strong collaborative work with the LEP particularly on the jobs and skills agenda
  - Working with University of Chester on the Accelerate programme
  - Business support – we continue to hold webinars, keeping businesses updated on the help that is available to them
  - Rolled out £1M support fund programme to help businesses hardest hit by the pandemic
  - We can turn this around campaign, the communications are now based around promoting shop local and we continue to work with the business support districts to tailor the campaign around changing restrictions
- Place Marketing work has not progressed as quickly as hoped due to current circumstances, but we have had conversations on how we make sure it builds on the distinctive strengths within C&W
- We are working on a new approach to inward investment and growth of existing businesses to interlink with place marketing work
- We are working on refreshing the destination management plan and are working with the cultural economy in partnership with the local authorities and cultural businesses
- There is a need to find time to review the strategic direction of MC and to look at our priorities going into the next year

AR welcomed Trevor Brocklebank and congratulated him on being appointed Chair of MC

SB stated that the LEP and Marketing Cheshire have done a really good job in response to COVID-19 and with the recovery plan. When considering the bigger picture, the LAs have also put in a lot of financial support which has gone to the hospitality industry as well as other sectors. The Business Improvement Districts and DCMS have also supported businesses and visitor attractions and sporting clubs. Ongoing partnership will be important.

JM reiterated SB's point regarding the importance of partnership working and collaboration with the Business Improvement Districts

MG advised of the footfall survey carried out in Cheshire East in October via mobile phone signals, footfall is down in most areas, however, footfall in Macclesfield and some of the smaller secondary towns remains high, showing that people are shopping local. Knutsford council are launching their own local currency, this could be rolled out to other councils

Referring to the Warrington Town bid and Chester activity EU questioned on how we could best serve the whole area allocating our efforts across the different towns we serve.

JM advised that we need to take a hard look at our budget for next year to make sure we can deliver on our strategic priorities. We will report back to the board to identify our strategic intent and agree whether we are set up financially to deliver on these objectives

**Action  
JM/NS**

JM confirmed that there is more work to do to understand the data behind where our tourist areas are. It was suggested that we could develop an environmental scan document to underpin our business planning.

GD advised that with regard to the wider place activity outside Chester there is data gathering we need to do around the towns, CW&C have carried out a study and have come up with a framework with key principles that will be adopted locally. This study will be in the public domain next week and will be shared with MC.

GD advised that grants are live this week and CW&C are currently dealing with a huge amount of applications. The challenge is that not all businesses will be eligible for these grants. CW&C do, however, have the ARG grant and need to discuss use of this grant collectively across the sub region.

PC stated that MC has a much wider role to play above being the DMO for Cheshire and Warrington, however, emphasised the importance of tourism within the place marketing work. The Increased integration between MC and the LEP will mean additional funding for MC from the LEP.

SCB stated that it is really important that we acknowledge success of the proactive messaging undertaken by MC over the past months, one of the key things this will have achieved is to maintain the loyalty of MC members who may have otherwise fallen away.

TB advised it is a huge privilege to be asked to Chair the board of MC and thanked Angie for her role as Chair. TB stated he is very passionate about Cheshire and Warrington and is very keen to hear from Board members. Trevor stated that he will make sure we have a clear strategy going forward as we have a critical role to play in C&W to lead the place agenda

## **6. 2020/21 Q2 Financial Report**

### **AR introduced DW to report on the company finances**

DW advised the Board that our Finance Manager, Debbie Bland, has made the decision to leave the company following a period of ill health. DW stated that DB has done a fantastic job and wanted to extend thanks on behalf of the Board to DB for her hard work and commitment, particularly in this difficult time. **SP to write a letter from Board to thank Debbie**

**Action SP**

DW advised that DB is currently helping our Temp Finance Manager, to produce the management accounts.

As DB is leaving the business, we are required to change the signatories on the bank mandate, removing DB and appointing Joe Manning and Nicola Said as signatories. The resolution to change the signatories on the Bank Mandate was approved unanimously by the Board

As a result of DB's absence the audit group at their meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> October were only able to review draft financial statements for Q2. These figures were restated upon DB's return to the business. To avoid confusion the minutes from this audit meeting were not circulated with the pack. It was agreed that these minutes can now be distributed to board members for review

**Action SP**

DW referred Board members to the Q2 report included within the board pack and ran through the key elements of the report advising that the Audit Committee 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 this loss.

DW reiterated AR's thanks to AB who has also served on the Audit Group, DW thanked AB for a brilliant job working on the Audit committee and stated that we are now looking for 2 new members to join the audit committee. JM confirmed he has approached members of the board regarding joining the audit committee

**Action SP  
to send  
invites**

SB volunteered to join the Audit Committee.

DW advised that we will be asking Juliette to conduct a detailed review of our costs and to produce a 7 plus 5 reforecast including a review of our wind-up costs. This works should be completed within the next month.

**Action JL**

There has also been a realignment of the work of MC employees, transferring 2 partnership roles temporarily to work in the Growth Hub therefore these employee costs will be covered by the LEP

## **7. Cashflow**

JM advised that it is now unlikely we will be bringing in commercial income in Q4, due to Tier 2/3 restrictions and national lockdown. Looking at the first quarter of next year one of our assumptions is to introduce commercial partnership income, we will have to assess as a Board if this is the right thing to do. If we do not, we will have to look at different income sources or bring forward cost reductions.

NS advised that we have extended the cash flow report to cover the first quarter of 2021/22 and have released ringfenced money for MIPIM to cover COVID-19 response and recovery work in this financial year

Full payment of all deferred VAT is included within this year's cashflow

Conservative estimates for activity within the cash flow, with the intention to go out for partnership income in Feb / March, 50% of what is achieved in a normal year.

We anticipate that we will be able to apply for further grant funding from Government in the final quarter.

Assumed LEP income the same as this year, however this could be increased and we will work closely with the LEP to streamline business planning and management account for the next financial year.

NS advised that the core income refers to income from the LEP

JM confirmed that we will be reviewing income sources and costs. We will clearly identify options and funding streams going forward, to ensure clear transparency for the Board in both strategy and budget setting.

**8. Any Other Business.**

Angie thanked the Board for their support over the years and to Joe and Sharon for their support and to the wider MC team for all their hard work and support

**Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on the Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – via Microsoft Teams

Signature (Angie Robinson, Chair)

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Date

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