



## **Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited**

**Private and Confidential: NO**

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### **Marketing and Communications Activity Update Report**

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#### **Executive Summary**

This report provides the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board with an update on marketing and communications activity which has been delivered between April 2018 and June 2018.

#### **Recommendation**

The LEP Board is asked to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

### **Background and Advice**

This period has included extensive activity in partnership with other organisations, including local authorities and central government, which has continued to position the LEP as a key facilitator of growth and investment in the county.

The LEP's reputation in delivering skills and employment provision was also further enhanced with the respective launches of the Digital Skills Partnership and the Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Toolkit.

Preparation work with regard to projects such as the AMRC NW, the refreshed Strategic Economic Plan and the Lancashire Innovation Strategy has also been undertaken.

There have also been some recent issue management requirements linked to the Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone and the demise of LearnDirect.

### **Skills & Employment**

20<sup>th</sup> April 2018 saw the official launch of Lancashire's Digital Skills Partnership – the first of its kind in the UK – as part of the Lancashire Digital Skills Summit.



Working with the Skills & Employment Hub, SKV liaised with key partners (including DCMS Google and Innovate UK) and co-ordinated a joint press release for the announcement.

Extensive local and regional coverage was secured as a result, with LEP (and supportive partner) quotes highlighting the LEP's commitment to investing in skills and how digital was one of the priority sectors for the county going forward.

Early May saw another skills and employment event – the launch of the LMI Toolkit and a celebration of the Enterprise Adviser Network.

A key part of this story was the data held within the Toolkit.

The research indicated that Lancashire was out performing the North West region across a number of employment metrics, and that growth in high value jobs was projected to continue. Challenges and barriers to delivering such growth were also highlighted.

These facts and figures were combined with achievements of the Adviser Network to create a press release about Lancashire's positive direction of travel in terms of growth.

The story enjoyed good local and regional coverage, including an extensive piece within the Lancashire Telegraph.

### **Growth Deal**

Growth Deal investment continued to drive positive coverage for the LEP in this period.

Continuing investments in Preston City Centre to improve transport and public realm enjoyed coverage in local press, while new tenants at Burnley's Vision Park made regional business and property news (including a credit to the Growth Deal).

Continuing improvements to Blackpool, part-funded by the LEP's Growth Deal, also received extensive local coverage. Projects cited included progress on the town centre's tram extension, the ongoing bridge improvement works, and Blackpool Housing Company's conversion of old hotel stock into residential accommodation.

Another major Growth Deal announcement was the confirmation of a £4.9m investment into two major infrastructure schemes in Padiham which would help improve flood defences and enable new commercial and residential developments to move forward in the area as a result.

SKV worked closely with Burnley Council to ensure the LEP's role in awarding the funding was prominent in any publicity, and a quote from Graham Cowley referencing LEP investment in the North- West Burnley Growth Corridor scheme to leverage future economic growth was included in the Council's press release.

The subsequent media coverage was very positive, and the LEP's facilitating role was central in all reporting.



Working with Graham Cowley and Kathryn Molloy, SKV also recently compiled and circulated a 9-month Growth Deal coverage report to all local communication teams who are involved in Growth Deal schemes.

A covering note thanking partners for their support - highlighting the collective positive impact that references to Growth Deal in their own local PR pieces was having on the overall fund messaging - was also included.

This exercise was undertaken strategically (in part) to secure the continued buy-in from local partners to promote the Growth Deal as an enabling fund driven by the LEP, and to reinforce the message that it is also a core element of the Government's Northern Powerhouse strategy.

### **Health & Life Sciences**

SKV secured an opportunity with Lancashire Business View to comment on the role of life sciences and health in the county's economy and how this linked to the government's Industrial Strategy.

SKV combined employment and skills data from the new LMI Toolkit with case studies and evidence from the draft Innovation Strategy. In addition, SKV referenced the planned expansion of UCLan's health courses at the new Burnley campus and the fact the LEP had funded the Health Innovation Campus at Lancaster University through the Growth Deal.

As a result, the LEP can expect positive PR coverage in a Lancashire Business View forthcoming health and life sciences feature. Approved messaging around health innovation and life sciences which previously was missing from the wider Lancashire economic narrative has also been developed.

### **New LEP Directors**

In early June SKV worked with LEP officers to draft a media announcement regarding the LEP expanding its board.

This highlighted how the LEP was increasing its capacity in general, and further that it was seeking individuals with specific sector experience aligned to several key LEP economic priorities.

Key messages regarding the achievements of the LEP thus far, and the county's future opportunities, were also embedded in the press release (and in quotes from Edwin Booth).

The story was subsequently targeted at specific local and regional business media – coverage to date has been very positive with articles included in the Lancashire Evening Telegraph and Lancashire Evening Post amongst others.



## **Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund (NPIF)**

SKV continues to be the PR interface between the British Business Bank (BBB) and Lancashire regarding any NPIF activity.

Following a media handling issue regarding the promotion of a successful Lancashire investment (with Preston-based technology firm eOrigen), SKV is now working with BBB with regard to a tightening of BBB's PR protocols.

## **Issues Management**

This period saw several sensitive stories appear which required careful management.

One was the announcement of off-site ecological mitigation for the Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone, which will ensure that ground-nesting skylarks and lapwings are protected and is a required planning condition which must be met by Lancashire County Council. The focus on the media coverage was on the cost of relocation of the species at a cost of £500,000 - which the local press used to replay historic and inaccurate messages regarding development progress at Samlesbury.

However, upon contacting central government for comment for a follow up piece, the subsequent local story ran with the positive headline 'Ministers say Lancashire Enterprise Zone is on track' and highlighted the government's backing for the Samlesbury Aerospace EZ.

Another issue in this period was the well-publicised demise of the Learndirect service which delivered several programmes on behalf of the Skills and Employment Hub.

This angle was picked up on by some local media and it was agreed the Skills Hub should comment to reassure partners and end-users about the continuity of provision.

Subsequently a statement was drafted, which while acknowledging that there could be a potential gap in provision as a result of the Learndirect situation, the piece also clearly communicated that the LEP/Skills Hub were proactively working with the ESFA to try and ensure continuity of the services affected.

The statement later appeared in full in Lancashire Business View as part of a fair and balanced report on Learndirect ceasing to deliver some Lancashire services.

## **Development of the LEP's new websites**

The Lancashire Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Cluster (LAMEC) website has been launched, also including the launch of four individual websites for the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone, Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone and Warton Aviation Enterprise Zone.

Work is ongoing with 3Man Factory, Marketing Lancashire and LEP officers to produce copy for the new LEP website and the 'Invest in Lancashire' website.



It is anticipated that these websites will be ready for review and testing in July with a proposed launch in September. It is proposed that previews of the sites are shared with Board Directors by email for review and comment before their launch.

### **Forthcoming PR Opportunities**

- AMRC funding announcement (meeting to discuss strategy and protocols held at AMRC in Sheffield on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018)
- EZ Cluster prospectus launch and promotion
- Hillhouse EZ Eastern Gateway access road – start on site
- Launch of new 'Invest in Lancashire' brand and web platform
- Farnborough Airshow (16-19 July, 2018)
- Preston Station economic impact report – TBC
- Transport for the North post-consultation report activity
- SEP refresh – on-going
- Publication of Lancashire's Local Industrial Strategy – on-going

### **Growth Deal Milestones:**

- East Lancashire Cycleway milestones - Weavers Wheel – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Bacup 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018 with SKV investigating potential PR opportunities/angles with Jake Berry's office based around start of the Tour de France on same date as the Bacup event
- Preston Western Distributor progress
- Further Health Innovation Campus milestones
- Young Farmers Leadership Academy at Myerscough 1st Anniversary (September 2018)
- New facilities at Northlight
- Burnley Vision Park new tenant announcements

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A