



## **Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited**

**Private and Confidential: No**

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### **Developing a Strategic Marketing Proposition for Lancashire**

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#### **Executive Summary**

This report updates the Board on the development of a marketing strategy for the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

#### **Recommendation**

The LEP Board is asked to:

- (i) Note and comment on the contents of this report;
- (ii) Approve the proposed approach to continuing to develop a strategic marketing proposition for Lancashire, as set out in this report;
- (iii) Delegate authority to Lancashire County Council's Director of Economic Development and the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire to progress with the outputs required from this project;
- iv) Note and welcome the recent appointment of Mr Tony Attard OBE, Group Chief Executive of Panaz Ltd, as the new Chair of Marketing Lancashire as set out in 4.3 of this report
- (v) Approve the funding proposal, as set out in 5.10 of this report, regarding the City Deal Marketing and Communications Strategy; and
- (vi) Approve the confirmation of the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire as the LEP's Media Communications and PR lead as set out in 5.23 of this report and to continue to provide regular updates to the LEP Board on the work programmes and outputs of the appointed consultants.



## Background and Advice

### 1. Context

- 1.1 At the meeting of the LEP Board in March 2015, approval was given to progress with the procurement of a strategic marketing tender that was split into two key elements;
- i) The requirement for the development of a compelling Lancashire story, or economic narrative, that clearly sets out a strong identity and a clear sense of purpose and place. This will underpin future place marketing and positioning by the LEP and also secure the support of its key partners, including Marketing Lancashire, who will find it sufficiently engaging to be able to deploy in support of their own activities. It will also be effective in generating the endorsement and support of the private sector.
  - ii) The requirement for an initial 12-month media and communications campaign, as part of an overarching strategy, to increase awareness of the Lancashire offer with key stakeholders and business sectors by employing a range of communication approaches, especially digital channels, appropriate to key target audiences.

### 2. Objectives of the Work

- 2.1 In summary, the key objectives of the commission are to:
- Improve the positioning of Lancashire in a national context and the LEP and Lancashire in a regional context.
  - Establish a strong and clear economic identity for Lancashire that highlights key attributes and benefits by sector.
  - Identify key stakeholders and opinion formers regionally and nationally and transform them into supporters and influencers of the Lancashire brand.
  - Stimulate interest, enquiries and subsequent inward investment enquiries to Lancashire.
  - Raise the profile of strategic investment opportunities which flow through the LEP.
  - Identify the key achievements and messages that best portray the Lancashire 'story' through a multi-channel approach to target audiences.



- Develop engagement and closer working relationships with the private sector in communicating a united and proud Lancashire that has a confident and ambitious voice.
- Identify a suite of marketing collateral and opportunities to showcase the Lancashire 'story' regionally and nationally.
- Develop a LEP media and communications strategy, which will review current communication activities and assets, including the LEP's website and use of digital media to reach key target audiences, with an initial programme of media and communications activity.

### **3. Budgets**

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Board in June, Directors agreed to the appointment of two agencies; Thinking Place and SKV Communications. The total budget for the term of the contracts, exclusive of VAT, but inclusive of all fees, disbursements, and other expenses is £56,250 for Thinking Place and £66,000 for SKV Communications. Thinking Place will focus on creating the Lancashire Story and SKV Communications will develop the media and communications strategy.
- 3.2 A considerable amount of progress has made on both elements of the project which is detailed within this report.

### **4. Activity and outputs since the appointment of Thinking Place**

- 4.1 Thinking Place, were appointed in June to develop and deliver the Lancashire economic narrative or 'story'. A key element of this piece of work, as highlighted by the LEP Board, was to have an understanding of what makes Lancashire distinctive and what or who are its key assets. This was carried out by engaging with both the public and private sector through 70+ public stakeholder one-to-one conversations, 9 sector focus groups, 5 workshops, an online survey and a considerable amount of desk research.
- 4.2 The evidence, key emerging themes, common considerations and next stages of activity for the Lancashire story were presented to the Steering Group on 25<sup>th</sup> September and on October 12<sup>th</sup> with approval gained to progress to the next stages which include the creation of the visual identity, the development of a Lancashire Ambassador programme and for the Marketing Lancashire Board to take the role of the Place Board.
- 4.3 A new Chair of Marketing Lancashire has recently been appointed; Mr Tony Attard OBE, Group Chief Executive of Burnley based Panaz Ltd. Mr Attard brings extensive business experience and credibility to the role and is an active supporter of raising the profile of Lancashire as a place for business and investment and as a centre of innovation excellence on a national and international scale.



- 4.4 A separate presentation was given by the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire and Thinking Place at a special LEP Board meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> October to update the Board on progress so far and to highlight the subsequent activity being worked on to achieve the objectives of this part of the strategic marketing project. The focus now is to complete the 'storybook'/economic narrative, the visual identity and brand guidelines and the Lancashire Leaders Ambassador Programme by early February and present this to the steering group. A full launch of the Lancashire 'story' and the Ambassadors Programme is planned for March.
- 4.5 A meeting took place on November 9<sup>th</sup> with Thinking Place and SKV Communications to share the research and findings from the public and private sector engagement activity so that this could strengthen SKV's focus on key sectors linked to the emerging themes.

## **5. Activity and outputs since the appointment of SKV Communications**

- 5.1 SKV Communications were appointed in June and since then they have been working closely with the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire, the Director of Economic Development, the Head of LEP Co-ordination and Development, the Head of Strategic Development, the Head of Business Growth and the Head of Communications at Lancashire County Council to fully immerse themselves in the LEP's key initiatives, projects and objectives.

### *Media and Communications*

- 5.2 SKV has taken a very proactive role in media engagement on behalf of the LEP working closely with local, regional and national media which has resulted in a tangible shift in attitude towards the LEP and to its more proactive approach.
- 5.3 LEP recent media highlights also include the positive inclusion of LEP key messages, photographs and quotes in a number of press stories in regional media, including:
- Blackpool Airport EZ announcement;
  - Hillhouse EZ announcement;
  - Sir Howard Bernstein Lancashire Economy lunch;
  - Lancashire leading the way on more new home starts within the North West in the last quarter; and
  - Runshaw College's new £6.2m science facility.
- 5.4 In addition to reporting on the key role the LEP is playing in delivering or supporting these projects and schemes, there has also been additional LEP reports/special media features. For example:



- The Times Super North 2-page feature in October focusing on the Advanced Manufacturing sector in Lancashire which incorporated comment from the LEP Chairman and LCC's Head of Business Growth and Innovation and testimonials from Panaz Textiles and Victrex;
- Insider's 'Made in Lancashire' feature in October, in which LEP Board Director Graham Cowley was quoted on behalf of the LEP;
- Insider's East Lancashire Review in October in which LEP Board Director Mike Damms was quoted on the LEP's positive progress;
- Insider's Lancashire Manufacturing Report November, in which Mike Damms was quoted extensively on behalf of the LEP;
- Lancashire Business View Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Report in November, which included extensive quotes from the LEP Chairman regarding the Warton Enterprise Zone;
- Place North West Enterprise Zone Review in November in which the LEP supplied updated information for inclusion in the feature; and
- Commercial Property Magazine's 2-page feature in November.

5.5 Other communications activity and media stories in the pipeline include;

- the launch of the new £2m extension at Nelson and Colne College;
- the proposed Ministerial visit on January 11<sup>th</sup> for the Broughton Bypass ground-breaking ceremony;
- the launch of the Training 2000 £1m advanced engineering centre; and
- a PR plan for both the Lancashire Skills strategy and the Transport for Lancashire prospectus.

*City Deal*

5.6 The Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire has been working with the City Deal Communications team and a new marketing and communications strategy has been produced by the Programme Director.

5.7 The focus of the new marketing and communications strategy remains on continuing to convey City Deal messages at a local level with a move towards promoting the outputs, benefits, scale and ambition of the project at a national and international level in 2016. The strategy and its supporting action plan are aligned to the LEP's strategic marketing work.

5.8 A local partner contribution of £36k has been proposed to support this work.

5.9 In the LEP's 2014-15 Core Funding application, £25k was included to support specific marketing and communications activity to promote the City Deal. It was intended that this funding would support partners to raise the profile of this key LEP initiative amongst regional and national investors, developers and house-builders, using a wide range of communication and media channels. The £25k was identified on the basis that it would be matched by City Deal partners.



5.10 It is requested that this funding is now made available to City Deal partners to support the implementation of the City Deal's new marketing and communications strategy. The Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire will continue to work with the City Deal team to ensure is deployed effectively and leverages investment from others.

#### *Digital Communications*

5.11 The Lancashire Business Brief (LBB) is an e-newsletter which was launched mid-August and is distributed to the LEP's contact database. The newsletter has an average open rate of 34%. The LBB is a compilation of weekly positive economic and regeneration stories pulled from the across Lancashire and the North West's online news outlets. The LBB is now available as a sign up on the LEP website.

5.12 Feedback to date from businesses and partners has been very positive and the brief is also proving to be a very effective communications vehicle as it showcases the range and scale of private and public sector economic activity taking place across the County each week.

5.13 The Lancashire Business Brief is now hosted on the LEP's website with an online version viewable in the news area. Activity is focused on increasing the number of contacts registered on the LEP's database. Sign-ups to the database have increased by 28% since August.

#### *The LEP Website*

5.14 Page views, unique visits and dwell time on the LEP's website has increased respectively by 50%, 51% and 9% since August. All communications, media and PR activity now signposts to the LEP web address and all LEP PR stories are now uploaded onto the website.

5.15 Next steps include 'refreshing' some of the LEP's website copy, including descriptors and a clearer call to action linked to key strategic messages, the Lancashire 'story' as well as the most visited pages, for example, the LEP Board pages.

#### *The LEP Newsletter*

5.16 Whilst the Lancashire Business Brief is primarily focused on promoting private sector and third-party news a new monthly LEP newsletter is to be launched in the shortly. The current working title for the newsletter is "The Link".

5.17 "The Link" will be dedicated to the LEP and its key partner, promoting key economic initiatives and project news, introducing LEP Board Directors and showcasing key businesses across Lancashire. It will complement (not compete with) the Lancashire Business Brief weekly bulletin.



5.18 The first edition will include coverage of the recent UKTI visit to Samlesbury the City Deal Investor and Developer Forum and the announcements of the Blackpool Airport and Hillhouse Enterprise Zones.

#### *Twitter*

5.19 The LEP twitter account was launched on November 11<sup>th</sup> @lancslep. SKV have researched and captured the Twitter account details of the County's "top 250" influencers and will conduct a phased 'follow and engage' strategy to raise awareness of the LEP Twitter feed.

5.20 Tweets primarily consist of highlighting similar positive economic stories as featured in the Lancashire Business Brief, partner news/events and LEP specific content with 2-4 tweets being broadcast per day with approximately 80 tweets and retweets so far. As of 8<sup>th</sup> November the account has 125 followers, with 8,433 tweet impressions and 891 visits to the LEP profile.

5.21 If anyone chooses to try and engage with the LEP (or potentially LCC or other LEP aligned partners) via twitter to raise a particular issue, grievance or personal matter then such exchanges will be referred to the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire.

#### *Interview and Comment requests*

5.22 The LEP has had several requests for comment or for inclusion in various media which have not all been able to be fulfilled due to availability, relevance or timing. Some of these include the following;

- The Guardian - LEP comment on East Lancashire and devolution;
- The Sunday Times - LEP comment on Preston's prosperity;
- Lancashire Business View - request for exclusive interview with Edwin Booth for January front cover
- Blackpool Gazette - LEP comment on future of Blackpool Airport one year on from closure; and
- Insider magazine - LEP comment about new office developments in Blackburn.

5.23 The fact that the LEP is being approached more and more for comment signifies that there has been a step change in the LEP being viewed as much more media friendly, public facing and 'accessible'. The Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire leads this co-ordinated approach to the LEP's media communications and PR activity, managing both appointed agencies whilst collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to maximise opportunities and to deliver a return on the LEP's investment.





### *Forthcoming events*

5.24 With the strategic marketing activity now well underway, the plan is to raise the LEP's profile even further in 2016, with several events being planned and considered including;

- Lancashire Business View City Deal "Hotspot" event 23<sup>rd</sup> February Bartle Hall;
- Northern Powerhouse Conference, Manchester Central 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> February 2016;
- Lancashire/LEP Insider event 18<sup>th</sup> March;
- ResPublica "Finding True North" Conference with Greg Clark 18<sup>th</sup> March;
- International Festival of Business June 2016;
- Paris Air show June 2016; and
- MIPIM UK October 2016.

5.25 Attendance, hosting or playing a key role at these events not only highlights the work of the LEP but reinforces Lancashire's position at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse by evidencing the importance of Lancashire's economic assets, its ambitious growth plans and strategic infrastructure projects that can support the delivery of pan-Northern economic priorities.

5.26 Other LEP related activity that has taken place during October and November has included a hosted visit of the DCLG Enterprise Zones' representative to the Blackpool Airport site, a hosted UKTI delegation to Samlesbury and the City Deal Investor and Developer Forum.

### *Forward planning and overarching PR strategy*

5.27 The activity included in this report demonstrates that both the LEP and Lancashire's profile continue to be raised, conveying progress so far as well as the scale of ambition. There is still more to be done but there is an evident step change in the LEP's communications activity.

5.28 A "Mapping of Lancashire" project is currently underway which details over 150 LEP projects/initiatives. This will be included in a master database with geographical, sector and chronological tags and combined with the LEP's key strategic messages and areas of focus.

5.29 Work is also underway to determine regular communications to the LEP Board, including a monthly progress update and a bi-monthly media/PR report which will be incorporated into a standing item Marketing and Communications Board Report. A draft of the monthly update will be circulated for feedback.





- Collectively all of the above activity has demonstrated to partners, media and external audiences that there is a great deal happening in Lancashire and that the LEP is proactive in its approach;
- There are also a number of initiatives and projects underway which will increase the coverage of the Lancashire success story so far and, more importantly, articulate the opportunity that Lancashire offers regarding inward investment;
- A more sophisticated, crafted and strategic approach to how the work of the LEP is articulated is already making an impact and there has been a tangible shift towards a more confident, proactive and positive positioning which has already yielded results through PR activity, face-to-face engagement and other communications activities;
- Building on this, SKV will continue to work through the LEP's (and the county's) wide range of strategic economic priorities, projects, plans and aspirations across different sectors and localities, reworking them into more digestible communications across digital, media and other PR channels;