



## **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; and
- (iv) Note that the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire, as the LEP's Media Communications and PR lead, continues 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**

Further to the special LEP Board Meeting in October and the last steering group meeting where the 'story' for Lancashire was presented, Thinking Place have been creating a visual identity and visual language to illustrate this story to work alongside the new photography. The visual identity will act like a logo and the visual language is a unique approach that will encourage partners and stakeholders to use the Lancashire brand in their communications. There will be a brand identity for Lancashire, Marketing Lancashire, Visit Lancashire, Lancashire Leaders (corporate ambassador programme) and a 'stamp' that will indicate products that are created and made in the county. The concepts were presented to the Chair and Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire on January 21st and will now be presented to the Steering Group on February 9th for sign off.

To successfully share the Lancashire story with those audiences that matter and to raise the profile of the new brand will require as many businesses and organisations as possible to 'tell and sell' the story. Hence, why a county wide ambassador approach is being developed that will result in a Lancashire Leaders scheme (for corporate stakeholders); a Lancashire Ambassadors scheme (for celebrities and alumni of the county) working alongside the existing Leisure Membership scheme (for the visitor economy).

Thinking Place are developing the proposition for the Ambassadors programme which is also designed to generate an income stream to support the marketing of Lancashire in future events and activity. The proposition will be shared with the steering group on February 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Lancashire story and ambassador approach will be launched during w/c April 25th to those that have been engaged in the process of creating the narrative and other key organisations from both within and outside the county. An activity plan is being developed that will outline how the Lancashire story and the brand will be communicated. A critical part of this is an examination of national and international events where Lancashire needs to have a presence to market the opportunities it has for investment and sectoral development e.g. Paris Air Show, International Festival of Business, MIPIM UK etc.



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

### 5.1 Media and Communications

SKV has continued to take a highly proactive approach to media engagement on behalf of the LEP and is continuing to communicate a very positive, confident and upbeat message in all activity. To date every LEP PR story drafted and pitched to media by SKV has enjoyed media exposure. In addition SKV has been liaising closely with a wide range of partners to ensure the LEP's message (and due credit) is conveyed in stories not generated or issued by the LEP itself.

Further, following on from the success of working with Graham Cowley to fulfil some media opportunities with business media, for example, the Insider, SKV have also been broadening the 'voice' of the LEP by working with other directors and key partners including Mike Damms, Jim Carter and Dr Michele Lawty-Jones.

Recent stories in local and regional media, featuring the inclusion of LEP key messages, photographs, quotes and/or positive references from partners include;

- Insider magazine's Northern Powerhouse Round Table (ft Graham Cowley)
- Broughton Bypass – appointment of contractors
- Training 2000 - advanced manufacturing centre in Blackburn
- New Marine Engineering Centre at Fleetwood
- UKTI international aerospace trade mission/BAE tour
- Mike Damms in-depth first-person article for The Lancashire Telegraph about East Lancashire
- Combined Authority consultation
- Boost's £7.8m new funding
- Grants for SMEs affected by flooding
- Tony Attard's appointment as Chair of Marketing Lancashire
- Broughton Bypass - ground breaking
- £2m new engineering facilities at Nelson and Colne College
- UCLan's £200m contribution to the local economy

Other communications activity/stories in the pipeline include;

- Insider magazine's Central Lancashire Review (mid-Feb)
- TfL's Transport Prospectus launch (date TBC)
- Lancashire Business View – Edwin Booth interview and front cover on behalf of LEP (Feb/March issue)
- Planning decision on Energy HQ (February)
- Edwin Booth attending Northern Powerhouse Conference, Manchester Central (February 26<sup>th</sup>). EB taking part in wealth creator panel and James Wharton also due to attend
- Appointment of agent at the Lancashire Enterprise Zone (Samlesbury)
- Column on business growth for Manchester Metropolitan University's business magazine Impact



The above spread of stories also reflect that the LEP's role is increasingly aligned with a number of key economic themes, investments and initiatives. These include education and skills, transport and infrastructure, Northern Powerhouse/devolution and business support.

Furthermore more partners are contacting the LEP (unprompted) to ask for support, guidance, quotes and other input on stories that they 'own' themselves.

## 5.2 National Media Opportunities

Having initially focussed on building a good relationship with the local and regional media together with securing a regular stream of positive news coverage in all key local and regional titles, SKV has now been tasked with taking the Lancashire and LEP message to a wider audience nationally.

To help deliver this amplified message, SKV is developing a number of PR angles and themes to help generate potential national media interest. These include;

- Interview opportunities with Edwin Booth in the Times – to focus on Lancashire and champion the work of the LEP
- Lancashire – the UK's number one centre for aerospace (SKV to work closely with NWA to get updated sector intelligence and identify possible news hooks and look at opportunities offered by Farnborough International Airshow)
- Gain recognition for Lancashire and the LEP as a centre of innovation and excellence linked to advanced manufacturing

## 5.3 Digital Communications

- The Lancashire Business Brief (LBB) continues to be published weekly, a synopsis of positive economic stories drawn from local media sources, the LEP's website news pages and other online sources. The LBB is now firmly established as a comprehensive round-up of Lancashire business news in the county, and has over 800 subscribers, an increase of 29% and an average open rate of 34%.
- The LEP twitter account (@lancslep) launched before Christmas and continues to regularly tweet positive LEP news, promote links to key stories and retweet partner news on a daily basis. With over 200 followers, this figure continues to rise each week and the published tweets have now been seen 25,000 times.
- In December the first issue of *The Lancashire Link*, was published, a monthly e-newsletter containing a selection of key LEP stories, a LEP board member editorial column and a Lancashire 'business of the month' feature. Issue two has now been signed off.
- [www.lancashirelep.co.uk](http://www.lancashirelep.co.uk)'s news pages are being kept regularly up to date with strategically important stories ensuring that key messages are being communicated through all owned LEP channels in a coordinated way.
- In the last month the LEP website has received 11595 page views, 8055 unique page views and an increased dwell time per page.



## 5.4 Other PR Activities & Opportunities

### **Insider Annual Lancashire Business Conference – March 18<sup>th</sup>**

As the LEP is headline sponsor of Insider's annual Lancashire business conference, the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire and SKV have been in negotiations with Insider's commercial, events and editorial teams regarding the format, participants and themes set to be discussed. This was after rejecting Insider's first proposed schedule which did not allow sufficient opportunities to highlight the work of the LEP and many of Lancashire's positive messages.

A revised schedule has been drafted to incorporate sessions on SMEs, innovation and enterprise; how Lancashire's integrated transport strategy is aligned to increased home builds and job creation; maintaining Lancashire's number 1 position in aerospace and advanced manufacturing; education and skills. Confirmed speaker/panellists so far; Edwin Booth, Chair of the LEP, David Bailey Chief Executive NWAA, Tony Attard, Group Chief Executive Panaz Textiles, Kevin Duffy Managing Partner RSM with further invitations to Andrew Graham, Chief Executive Graham and Brown, Ilyas Munshi Finance Director at Eurogarages, Bev Robinson Principal and Chief Executive of Blackpool and the Fylde College and other senior business leaders.

### **Lancashire Hot Spots Event – City Deal 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

The Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal will be showcased at a Lancashire Business View breakfast event on Tue 23 February 2016 at Bartle Hall Hotel, 8 – 10am.

The theme of the event is 'What opportunities will the City Deal create in terms of skills, investment and collaboration?' It will be a question time-style panel featuring leading business and public sector guests with an audience of around 100 delegates. The aim of the event is to ensure local businesses know about the opportunities City Deal is bringing, to generate confidence in to the area, to advise those businesses on how to be ready to benefit from the City Deal, and to encourage businesses to leave the event as advocates for the growth that the City Deal is creating.

The panel will include; Jim Carter, LEP Board Director and Chair City Deal and panellists from UCLan, Virgin Trains. Moore and Smalley, Tile Master Adhesives and Waitrose.

### **Business Desk's Manufacturing Debate – March 1st**

This is a high-level debate about manufacturing at a Blackburn venue featuring national organisations such as the CBI and UKTI, with an audience of businesspeople and stakeholders drawn from across the region. This is a good opportunity to showcase the LEP's work to a key audience and SKV has successfully negotiated with Business Desk to ensure that a LEP representative is on the panel. Mike Damms has now been confirmed.



### **Promotional LEP/Lancashire Film**

One of the communication tools being considered for the Insider conference is a short, creative and engaging film which captures much of what Lancashire/the LEP has to offer, including successes, achievements and potential. The Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire has met with Paper Films, which specialise in inward investment videos, and is discussing a potential treatment for a Lancashire film which can also be re-cut/re-purposed for other events and promoted online. Paper Films also produced the Lancashire/LEP video for the Paris Air show in 2015.

### **Meetings and Outreach**

SKV and the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire met with Marketing Lancashire board member and Manchester International Festival (MIF) Managing Director Christine Cort to update on progress. Ms Cort offered support as a Lancashire Ambassador, as well as MIF twitter follows and retweets.

The Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire and SKV were due to meet with NW IoD CEO Rachel Smith regarding its Lancashire policy agenda but the meeting was postponed by Ms Smith due to ill-health, and is now to be rearranged.

SKV are meeting with the North West Aerospace Alliance on January 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the aerospace piece and Farnborough Airshow opportunities and also with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, to discuss closer communications between BwD and the LEP (at BwD's request).

## **5.5 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 The City Deal pages on the LEP's website are a key resource for many stakeholders including partners and media. SKV is currently undertaking a major redraft of all City Deal key messages to be featured on the LEP website so the content has a more business focus.

## **6 Forward planning and overarching PR strategy**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Work is also underway to identify key messages regarding the LEP's achievements that can be communicated with the LEP Board and via the LEP's





distribution channels as well as external partners such as SKV, the Insider, Lancashire Business View, the Guardian, SMEs, etc.

- 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 now focus on securing national coverage for Lancashire/LEP to continue raise profile and encourage interest and enquiries.