



Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

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Developing a Strategic Marketing Proposition for Lancashire

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Executive Summary

This report provides the Board with an update 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 The delivery of strategic marketing activities for the LEP continues with outputs being generated by both of the agencies appointed in June 2015; Thinking Place and SKV Communications.
- 1.2 Thinking Place were appointed to lead on the development of a compelling Lancashire narrative, setting out a strong proposition and identity and a clear sense of purpose and place for the county whilst generating the endorsement and support required for this from the private sector.



- 1.3 SKV Communications were appointed to deliver an initial 12-month media and communications campaign to increase awareness of the Lancashire offer amongst key stakeholders and business audiences.

2. Objectives of the Work

- 2.1 In summary, the key objectives of the project 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; and
- 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. Activity update regarding the development of the Lancashire Economic Narrative

- 3.1 On 9th February at the final steering group meeting, Thinking Place presented the visual identity for both the Lancashire brand and the Lancashire Ambassadors initiative to the group who approved the creative treatment. Whilst the creative work was visually impressive on a presentation screen it was agreed that further development needed to be undertaken to identify how this would work practically through day to day marketing activity and in promotional collateral.
- 3.2 The steering group also approved the outline proposal for a corporate partners' scheme, with work now ongoing to define the strongest possible proposition for launch. UCLan have offered to host the launch event which is due to be mid-June based on the ideal venue being available.



- 3.3 Thinking Place has also issued the first draft of the Lancashire story to be used in Lancashire's place marketing activity and the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire is now working on incorporating the supporting economic detail by sector into this. The story will also include key business case studies to reinforce the private sector engagement as part of this process. The steering group also approved that the Marketing Lancashire Board, chaired by Tony Attard, would now act as the "Place Board" and be guardians and champions of the Lancashire story and brand.
- 3.4 For improved efficiencies it has been agreed with Thinking Place that a local Lancashire creative agency will now take the visual identity concepts forward, producing brand guidelines and a toolkit for the Lancashire storybook and ambassador launch.

4. Activity update - SKV Communications

Media and Communications Update - February and March

- 4.1 SKV has initiated a number of major PR projects since February across local, regional and national media, building on their previous successful media engagement work on behalf of the LEP and partners.
- 4.2 At the heart of this work has been the shaping and delivery of key messages linked to the LEP's economic vision and strategic priorities across all media activity including local, regional and national.
- 4.3 This consistent 'drum beat' approach has yielded not only a steady increase in media coverage but it has also consistently reinforced the LEP's achievements and helped to raise awareness and clarity of its objectives going forward.
- 4.4 In parallel this work has conveyed that within Lancashire positive things 'are happening' and this is helping set up potential national media pitches. This includes, for example, media coverage focussing on an aerospace/AEM boom in the county and Lancashire's importance with in the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

Communications Highlights

Lancashire's Role in the North

- 4.5 SKV secured interviews with the *Financial Times'* Northern Correspondent, Andy Bounds, with both Edwin Booth and Jennifer Mein. This was presented as an opportunity to not only source some potential comment for a forthcoming FT report on the North but also to ensure the FT's correspondent is familiar with Lancashire's current economic position, priorities and aspirations.



- 4.6 As a result of this interview, Jenny Mein was quoted in the *Financial Times* about Lancashire being a key player in the Northern Powerhouse with the FT describing the county as having “one of the world’s biggest aerospace clusters”.

Transport Prospectus Launch

- 4.7 A second major project was the launch of the Transport Prospectus. SKV had already undertaken the draft narrative around this piece which became Jenny Mein’s introduction within the Prospectus, and these same key messages - about how transport and other infrastructure were part of the LEP’s integrated economic strategy - were replayed through all subsequent press activity and media briefings.
- 4.8 The involvement and support of David Brown, Chair of Transport for the North who was photographed with Jenny Mein at the launch of the Prospectus, further helped give weight to the media coverage.
- 4.9 The Transport Prospectus story generated over 15 pieces of media coverage, including national hits in local government and transport media such as *Adjacent Government* and *Highways Industry*. The transport story also appeared on BBC online, and Jenny was interviewed on BBC Radio Lancashire’s breakfast show. Post-interview the transport story and soundbites were also then used throughout the day on BBC Radio Lancashire’s hourly news bulletins.
- 4.10 BBC online also posted a link to the Prospectus and a link to the LEP’s website. In terms of Search Engine Optimisation the BBC is recognised by the likes of Google as one of the most authoritative websites in the world, and therefore such links have incredibly high value with regards to boosting page rankings and appearing in organic search results.

Business Engagement

Insider’s Business of Lancashire Conference

- 4.11 This burst of high profile and high volume media activity and frequent Lancashire/LEP positive positioning during February and March was consolidated with *Insider* magazine’s Business of Lancashire Conference at Ribby Hall on 18th March.
- 4.12 As the LEP was the lead sponsor for the event, the Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire was closely involved with the themes, panellists and invitees managing to secure speakers which *Insider* had themselves had not previously been able to engage with.



- 4.13 The result was a highly positive and upbeat event, introduced by Edwin Booth, and one which featured a range of senior LEP/LCC colleagues on various panels together with influential public and private sector partners and businesses.
- 4.14 Over 150 delegates attended the event and all had been 'vetted' by *Insider* to ensure the most important/influential business leaders had been drawn from across Lancashire.
- 4.15 *Insider* has already run a number of positive stories online, and the event will be the focus of a special Lancashire Regional Review in its May issue.

Business Desk's Big Manufacturing Debate

- 4.16 SKV secured a place for Mike Damms to take part in a special *Business Desk* discussion panel, hosted at Graham & Brown, on the importance of manufacturing. Mike appeared on behalf of the LEP and the East Lancashire Chamber, and was alongside representatives from the CBI and UKTI.
- 4.17 Mike took the opportunity to articulate to over 100 manufacturing delegates a wide range of key messages about how the LEP was seeking to develop and build on Lancashire's strong manufacturing heritage and offer going forward, including specific reference to the skills agenda.

Other LEP-led positive media coverage and activity (February – March)

- Exclusive Edwin Booth first person column for *Lancashire Evening Post* - reinforcing LEP progress messages.
- *Insider Magazine* Central Lancashire review featuring extensive Jim Carter comment - reinforcing City Deal success message.
- *Insider Magazine* Northern Powerhouse feature with Graham Cowley referencing aerospace key message.
- UCLan Engineering Centre announcement - reinforcing AEM and Skills messages.
- Enterprise Zone progress update on Blackpool (part of a Mark Menzies MP interview with Blackpool Gazette) - reinforcing integrated EZ strategy message.
- Northcote Café at Blackburn Cathedral announcement - reinforcing Growth Deal success messages.
- Blackpool & The Fylde College Energy HQ announcement - reinforcing Airport EZ, energy sector specialism and skills messages.
- Lancashire Hotspots City Deal event with *Lancashire Business View* - reinforcing significance of City Deal project.
- Lancaster Innovation Campus announcement - jobs, skills and innovation messages.



- Growth Deal 1st year anniversary - highlighting progress and delivery of investment.
- Boost Phase 2 partners announced - reiterating LEP's commitment to supporting SMEs and highlighting the success of securing further Boost funding.

Other LEP/partner stories crediting LEP's role in making positive impact

- Training 2000 Cyber Security Centre announcement.
- STEM subject skills event at Nelson and Colne College.
- Marine Engineering Centre groundworks announcement.
- Contractor appointed for M55 road scheme.
- Ian Duncan Smith visit to Runshaw Science, Engineering and Innovation Centre.
- Apprenticeship Levy briefing at Stanley House.
- Marketing Lancashire chair Tony Attard discussing the creation of a new Lancashire narrative.
- Rosebud hits £7m investment.
- Manchester Metropolitan University 'Impact' magazine feature on Lancashire SME business support.

Other communications activity/stories in the pipeline:

- Aerospace/AEM - Lancashire AEM 'boom' package being developed with NWAA to pitch to national press pre-Farnborough. Pitch to *Financial Times* for forthcoming Business in the North feature including possible Edwin Booth interview - building on previous engagement with Andy Bounds.
- *Insider* Lancashire Regional Review – conference write up, focus on LEP progress with Edwin Booth comment, and positive SME case studies (published in May).
- Soft launch of Blackpool Airport EZ.
- Potential Lancashire involvement in the International Festival of Business (SKV in contact with IFB organisers who have invited LEP representative to special Downtown/IFB dinner on April 7th).
- Lancashire Skills strategy PR activity.
- Enterprise advisors and call for business to get involved.
- New Lancashire narrative PR activity.
- Lancashire Ambassadors' PR activity.
- Farnborough Airshow PR activity.

Digital Communications

- The Lancashire Business Brief (LBB) continues to be published weekly and includes a synopsis of positive economic stories drawn from local media sources, the LEP's website news pages and other online sources. Now has



over 860 subscribers – with an extra 50 subscribers signing up in the last two months.

- The LEP twitter account (@lancslep) continues to regularly tweet positive LEP news, promote links to key stories and retweet partner news on a daily basis. It now has over 400 followers, 178 having been added in last two months.
- This period has also seen the reach of LEP tweets increase by 50%, with some individual tweets have been seen more than 3,000 times.
- One of the main drivers is to add new followers and increase shares/likes/re-tweets, with SKV live tweeting from events. Recent examples include The Business Desk's Manufacturing Debate at Graham & Brown (featuring Mike Damms as panellist), the LBV Hotspots event covering the City Deal, and the Insider 'Business of Lancashire' conference at Ribby Hall.
- Two more editions of the Lancashire Link have been published since the last Board meeting. The monthly e-newsletter contains a selection of key LEP stories, a LEP board member editorial column and a Lancashire 'business of the month' feature. It now has over 880 subscribers. Work will begin on the fourth edition shortly.
- www.lancashirelep.co.uk's news pages are being kept regularly up to date with strategically important stories and delivering key messages. The City Deal Invest pages have been updated with new copy and videos.
- During February the LEP website has received its highest ever number of views with 14,662 total page views and 10,192 unique page views.