

**Paper for: The LEP Board**

**Title: Charity of the Year 2020-21**

**Date: 19th February 2019**

**Strategic Purpose: Supporting Inclusivity**

**Resource Implications: Staff time**

**Board: For Decision – To agree the Charity of the Year**

**Introduction**

Over the course of the past few weeks we have sought expressions of interest for the LEP’s Charity of the Year and been delighted by the response. 15 very worthy and highly respected organisations have either put themselves forward or been suggested. To be considered as our Charity, the organisation must meet the following criteria:

* A constituted Charity with an established Board and registered with the UK Charities Commission
* Delivering a benefit directly to the communities of Cheshire and Warrington
* Deliver services that benefit the whole of Cheshire and Warrington
* Deliver a benefit that contributes to [**Cheshire & Warrington LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan**](http://www.871candwep.co.uk/strategic-economic-plan/), particularly in relation to ‘creating great places to live and an excellent quality of life’.
* Be in a position to engage with the Cheshire & Warrington LEP throughout the year to maximise the partnership.

**Shortlisting**

All the organisations meet the criteria for constitution, so the evaluation has been done on the remaining four attributes. This assessment tends to favour those charities whose work aligns most closely with the LEP’s role in economic development, increasingly with consideration for sustainability and inclusive growth, rather than those organisations performing excellent work in areas of health and palliative support. On this basis, six charities have been short listed and a short summary about each charity, largely provided by them, is below. Details of the other charities which expressed interest are provided in appendix 1.

**Short list**

**Young Enterprise**

Young Enterprise is the largest national enterprise charity. It believes that the potential of the UK’s young people is unlimited, and an academic education on its own is not enough. As a national charity it seeks to motivate young people to succeed in the changing world of work by equipping them with the work skills, knowledge and confidence they need.

Delivering a benefit directly to the communities of Cheshire and Warrington Our Fiver and Tenner Challenges, Company and Start Up Programmes, inspire and empower 2000+ local students across 30 schools, colleges and the University of Chester to set up and run an enterprise. The flagship Company Programme supports 14-18yr olds to set up and run a real business, develop key employability and digital skills, consider a broader and more ambitious range of future education, career and life options, helping schools meet their requirements to deliver career guidance. Programmes provide trained local volunteer Business Adviser mentors for each student company, sharing their experience, advice and guidance. The winner of the North West Regional Final for 2019 was a Cheshire and Warrington student company, as was the HE Start Up Programme competition UK Final winner. The Goat Tree from the University of Chester.

Young Enterprise programmes are open to all young people within formal and informal education settings, delivering measurable impact and benefits for all.

The charity would welcome the opportunity to engage with the LEP and can provide opportunities for LEP colleagues and partners to:

• volunteer and guide teenage entrepreneurs as Company Programme Business Advisers

• joining judging panels at Dragons Dens and C+W school and university Finals

• raise aspirations and signpost pathways on our “Learn to Earn” one day careers programme

• help us identify more alumni in C&W, like Ed Snelson to inspire and retain more young talent

YE can raise awareness of the LEP’s work and aims with teachers, SLT’s, parents and students. Working with over 3000 young people in Cheshire and Warrington each academic year, Young Enterprise supports the creation of a talent pipeline for LEP employer partners.

**Cheshire Dance: (Registered Charity: 1020584)**

With a commitment to excellence, inclusion and diversity, Cheshire Dance creates opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to access dance and to benefit from its transformative power. A charity founded in 1976, over the past four decades it has enabled hundreds of thousands of people across Cheshire West and Cheshire East to experience the wide ranging benefits of dance, and has enticed diverse people from all walks of life to learn from, participate in and enjoy this transformational art form – regardless of age, ability or disability.

Working principally with young people, older adults, those living with challenging health conditions and those with disabilities – including profound and multiple learning difficulties – the organisation and its team is committed to enriching lives, particularly across protected characteristic groups. In fact, 85% of those which Cheshire Dance engages with form part of priority groups. Working with those who often face specific access issues and inequality of opportunity, Cheshire Dance makes dance accessible to everyone.

Its flagship event, Now Northwich – an international dance and street arts festival that takes place in October – sees circa 27,000 people come together from diverse backgrounds for a free day of dance and arts engagement. Not only does this event cater to all ages and members of the family, but in line with Cheshire Dance’s value and practise, it is fully inclusive with a complete accessibility programme to cater to disabilities and other limitations.

Now Northwich attracts visitors from all over the North West of England and is successful in drawing in audiences that do not normally engage with the arts. What’s more, during the event the town itself experiences an increase in footfall by an average of 53%. As such, not only does this event benefit residents of Northwich and visitors to the area, but local businesses and services have confirmed a significant increase in revenue on the day. Now Northwich works toward placing the town firmly on the arts and cultural map.

During the coming year and beyond, Cheshire Dance looks to further strengthen its national specialism in Dance, Health and Wellbeing amongst older people, people with disabilities and young people in early intervention contexts. It will remain committed to contributing to a thriving economy and vibrant and healthy communities through inclusive creative engagement, supporting older people and vulnerable adults to live fulfilled and independent lives, by supporting families to give children the best start in life and young people to gain a creative, personal and social education as they prepare for the world of work.

**Cheshire Community Foundation**

The charity wants Cheshire and Warrington to be a place where, regardless of where they live:

* + People can feel fulfilled and reach their full potential
  + People can achieve economic, social and physical wellbeing
  + Inequalities in life expectancy, health and employment opportunity are reduced
  + People share a strong sense of community
  + Voluntary and community-based activity can thrive and flourish

Cheshire Community Foundation’s (CCF) vision is to work in partnership with the local partners, local businesses and local philanthropists to improve lives and build stronger communities in deprived areas in Cheshire and Warrington by investing in and supporting the community, voluntary and charity sector to:

* + Improve physical and mental health and wellbeing
  + Improve aspirations for the future
  + Improve economic wellbeing
  + Increase community resilience

It aims to make a long-term difference to disadvantaged and vulnerable people through its’ grant-making each year but also to the sustainability of the thriving charitable sector. It is passionate about making an impact now and creating a legacy and permanent source of funding for charities in Cheshire and Warrington that builds a greater capacity to support those in need, long term.

CCF would be delighted to look at ways LEP officers could practically support CCF including; participating in our ‘place-based’ or programme Grant Panels, visiting projects we support to gather evidence of impact, hosting tables and/or speaking at our business events, helping us to educate corporates on how they can best help to improve local quality of life whilst growing their business and the success of the region.

**Cheshire Wildlife Trust (Registered number 214927)** <https://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/>

The Wildlife Trust works across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Stockport, Warrington, Tameside, Trafford and Wirral, and manages more than 40 nature reserves with habitats ranging from grasslands and wet meadows to reedbeds, coastal dunes and woodland. Conservation projects focus on aspects as diverse as restoring traditional wildflower meadows, the re-introduction and protection of species, restoring wetlands, and reinstating local woodlands with lost scenes of traditional English bluebells. Wildlife Trusts will have strong views on HS2 and on development more generally.

**Warrington Youth Club**

The charity was originally set up by a group of mothers who were concerned about their children getting into trouble after school. Based on the ethos of **‘Inspiring Young People to Achieve’**, the charity has developed into the largest youth provision in Warrington, and today works with over 2,500 children and young people.

During our long and rich history of youth work, we have maintained a commitment to support the borough’s most disadvantaged children, young people and families, by providing quality projects and opportunities. As well as universal services, including evening Youth Clubs, a Youth Gym, Holiday Clubs and Outreach, the organisation is proud to offer a range of projects known as our ‘personal development programmes’, which focus on achieving outcomes with the local community’s most vulnerable young people.

Employability projects – including Get a Job (supporting NEET young people aged 16-24 into education and employment) and Able to Manage (1:1 money mentoring and life skills for young people aged 14-19)

**Warrington Disability Partnership - Charity No. 1113597**

Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) is an internationally acclaimed user led pan disability charity. With 29 years’ experience of developing and delivering 28 mobility and independent living services aimed at supporting disabled people and people living with long-term health conditions. These services include Employment, Learning, Equipment Loans, Direct Payments, Accessible Holiday Home, Accessible Narrow Boat, Payroll Services, Personal Health Budgets, Shopmobility, Disability Access and Training, Community Cafe and Lunch Clubs. Several of these services are totally financed from the charity’s own fundraising and corporate donations.

WDP is acknowledged as a leading organisation for community engagement, attending over 150 local events in 2019, the team is committed to partnership working with statutory, private and voluntary sector agencies, regularly initiating projects as a solution to problems. WDP works in collaboration with dozens of organisations across Warrington and Cheshire.

In fitting with Cheshire & Warrington LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan, WDP works tirelessly in partnership with developers in order to influence inclusive designs that help to ‘create great places to live and enhance quality of life’. During the past two decades, WDP has been involved with over £1billion worth of new developments, advising on access and facilities including NHS hospitals and clinics across Warrington and Cheshire, Local Authority premises, Sports Stadiums, Schools and Colleges, Transport facilities and infrastructure, Shopping Centres and Leisure facilities.

Having the support of Cheshire & Warrington LEP would spread the word of our charitable status, which would open doors for them to start positive conversations with new partners and advocates; those who can unlock crucial funding to enable them to do more of what they do best for the future of our planet and for the generations who will inherit it.

WDP works closely with local and regional employers, providing information, advice and guidance on all disability matters including; recruitment and retention of disabled staff, Disability Awareness training for managers and staff, Disability Access and Facilities Audits and support with applications for the DWP’s Disability Confident scheme. Current partners include United Utilities, Spire Hospitals, Proximo, LiveWire and NHS Trusts.

**Staff Views**

A draft of this paper was shared with staff to give them an opportunity to express a view if they had one. Young Enterprise received some support, but there was also a recognition that this is a national rather than regional charity. CCF and Warrington Disability Partnership are also known to some members.

**Ian Brooks, Finance and Commercial Director**

**February 2020**

**Appendix 1 – Other nominations**

**Cheshire Connect (Registered number 1153334)** - <https://www.cheshireconnect.org>

* Connects and enables charities across Cheshire to reach more people and have greater impact. They do this by connecting the skills from the local business sector, offered for free, to charities and not for profit organisations across the region. By helping businesses and not for profit organisations work together, exchanging skills and volunteering their time, they are making a real difference to communities across Cheshire. We also work directly with Chief Executives of Cheshire charities, providing them with opportunities to develop their skills which in turn benefits the charities they work for. With our support the charities and not for profit organisations we work with are able to reach more people, increase their effectiveness and drastically improve their impact.

**Home Start Cheshire (Registered number 1112270)** <https://homestartcheshire.org.uk>

* Recruits and trains volunteers from all of Cheshire *(currently excluding Chester & Ellesmere Port)* to support and assist parents and families through difficult times of their lives*.* An appropriate volunteer is then carefully matched to a family.  All of the families we support must have at least one child under five.  The volunteer visits the family in their own home once a week.  Families tell us what a huge difference it makes to their lives to have that support at a time of need, often describing our volunteers as “a ray of sunshine” or a “life-line”.

[**Active Cheshire**](http://www.activecheshire.org/) **(Registered number 701764)** <https://www.activecheshire.org/>

* Charity and social enterprise established by local partners to improve the health and wellbeing of local people in Cheshire and Warrington through increased, sustainable physical activity. As the lead body for physical activity and sport in Cheshire and Warrington, it is our job to **engage, educate, enable, inspire and influence** the local community, as well as a wide range of organisations, stakeholders and partners – locally, nationally and even globally to change the habits, attitudes and behaviours of an increasingly inactive society through multiple creative interventions helping bridge health inequalities in our sub-region. Active Cheshire’s strategy includes five pillars that help us shape our daily work:
* Active Kids – Starting life well and encouraging a daily active lifestyle.
* Active Workplace - Increasing the health and productivity of existing and prospective employees.
* Active Design - Building physical activity into the design of homes, towns and major infrastructure to encourage movement and play.
* Active Minds - Improving mental health and quality of life to prevent and alleviate mental illness through physical activity.
* Activators - Educating and empowering community leaders, allied health professionals and frontline community workers to promote active lifestyles.

**Cheshire Down's Syndrome Support Group (Registered number 1146127)** <http://www.cheshiredownssyndrome.com/>

* A small, yet well-known, charity based in Northwich that currently support over 170 people with Down’s syndrome and their families in Cheshire.  The charity was established in 2007 by local mums who all had babies with Down’s and it has grown from there and is entirely self-funded and reliant on support from families and volunteers.  Our charity motto is 'unlocking the potential of children with Down's syndrome' and we work with families, educators and health professionals to provide valuable support and opportunities.
* In addition, we arrange activities and days out so that parents/carers and siblings can also get the support they need and to encourage an active social scene for our fabulous youngsters. Some examples of our regular groups include a Down's syndrome football team, DS Dance and Cheeky Monkey pre-school sessions.

**Space4autism (Registered number 11461860)** <http://space4autism.com/>

* Space4Autism was set up by a group of parents in 2005 and we now provide help and support to over 3000 members living with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. It operates primarily in Macclesfield and East Cheshire. It holds regular meetings for parents, carers and all age groups of people on the autistic spectrum and also run a range of clubs for all ages using ASC trained staff. Some of the other services we offer include a wide range of courses, special events, days out and drop-in sessions.

**Clatterbridge Cancer Charity (**1051727)

Operating from 18 sites across Merseyside and Cheshire, the charity supports over 30,000 patients per year at its cancer hospitals. Approximately 5,000-6,000 of those patients come from the Cheshire and Warrington area.

**North West Cancer Research**

North West Cancer Research (NWCR) is a small, independent charity dedicated to putting our region’s cancer needs first, funding pioneering research to tackle the cause, improve the care and find the cure for cancer. We fight the types of cancer that affect people living across North West England and North Wales the most.

we would like to use our year as the LEP’s charity to connect with businesses locally and involve them in championing our important local work and the local cancer issues highlighted above. We would be in a position to engage with the LEP throughout to maximise the partnership with; o Promotion of our partnership across social media channels, reaching 7,000 followers and an in-depth article’s in our ‘In Touch’ Magazine which reaches 14,000 supporters across our region and beyond. A full-page advert in the magazine. o A full-page advert in the Wirral Bazaar Brochure- distributed to 3,000 attendees (predominantly A.B socio-economic grouping) o Enhanced staff engagement and morale, with direct point of contact relationship with our Corporate Partnerships Manager- engaging staff in the importance and impact of our work.

Other benefits to a relationship with NWCR would be; Potential to Partner with us on our Award-

winning campaigns: o Including our Annual sun safety skin cancer prevention campaign. o Branded features on the LEP on our website, press campaigns and social activity. (We were recently featured on both Granada Reports and North West Tonight). Chance to Sponsor and compete in our calendar of running and challenge events: o Cycle of Hope- 60mile one day cycle- great chance to publicise our relationship and team build, branded jerseys with your Corporate logo. o The Big Jump Skydive- A once in a lifetime experience, raising funds for our life-saving cancer research in your local area. Excellence Awards and Ball (Friday 18September 2020): Celebrating researchers, clinicians, corporate supporters and fundraisers. o Opportunity to take part in event, take a table for use of stakeholder engagement or sponsor an award. Employee Wellness Days: o NWCR can create bespoke presentations and info on cancer prevention for your use. Lab tours of our facilities to see first hand our work. Bespoke fundraising and volunteering: o NWCR can devise fundraising activities to enhance staff /member engagement. o Opportunities for your staff to volunteer at one of our events.

**MHA**

MHA is a leading charity providing care, accommodation and support services for more than 18,000 older people throughout the UK. Our mission is to improve the lives of older people by enabling them to ‘live later life well’. Our history stretches back to over 75 years of caring in the community and reducing loneliness and isolation. We deliver life-enhancing services and community based schemes (Live at Home) to thousands of older people each year, and have a meaningful impact in local communities.

Though a national charity, we have a local focus and offer care and community lead initiatives to local people in and around Cheshire and Warrington. These can only be delivered through local fundraising, partnerships and community engagement. Our Ellesmere Port, Neston and Macclesfield Live at Home schemes is solely dependent on charitable donations and gift-in-kind support and our three care homes and three retirement living initiatives can only offer additional services through an ‘amenity fund’ which enable our members and residents to access services that enhance their time with MHA. We are at the heart of local communities and ensure our members and residents get the best care and wellbeing at every stage of later life.

There are lots of exciting ways to partner with MHA in Cheshire and Warrington, it could be funding or sponsoring our work as well as corporate volunteering within our homes or schemes. We would be delighted to create a partnership that benefits the Cheshire and Warrington LEP, and makes a difference to our members and residents.

In Cheshire and Warrington, MHA cares for and serves over 7481 members and residents through direct care as well as community based services, to enable older people to build resilience in later life. For many of our residents and members, later life can be a time when they are experiencing a greater level of loneliness and isolation. They can be going through family loss, grief or early stages of dementia.

**Chester Zoo** registered charity (number 306077)

The zoo is

* A world leader in conservation breeding and management, working with more than **35,000 animals** across **529 species**, and **1,200 species of plants** at the zoo;
* The most visited wildlife attraction in the UK, and most visited attraction outside of London, with **2m visits in 2019;**
* Directly transferring research at the zoo to over **70 global field projects,** and capacity-building in country;
* Inspiring over **130,000** young people with formal and informal learning experiences every year;

Chester Zoo and Ignite Teaching School Alliance have been working together with schools across the North-west of England, to design whole school curricula centred around taking action for conservation. We have demonstrated the value of embedding conservation themes across the whole curriculum. Through enabling schools to play an active role in addressing real world conservation issues we have seen investment in learning and educational outcomes rise, particularly in our most disadvantaged students. Reluctant writers have written articulately about issues they care about, teachers have reconnected with their love of teaching and school communities have come together to take action to protect the planet.