



Board Papers

Thursday 7th September 2023

Agenda

Virtual Board Meeting

Thursday 7th September 2023– 8am

[Click here to join the meeting](#) Meeting ID: 367 494 897 230 Passcode: ssmkji

Or call in (audio only) [+44 161 250 8784,,568680492#](#)

Time	Item	Lead	Reference
08:00am	1 Welcome and Apologies	TB	
08:05am	2 Declarations of Interest	TB	
08:10am	3 Minutes and matters arising from Board Meeting held on 18 th May 2023	TB	
08:15am	4 Board Matters - LEP transition - Recruitment update	TB PC PC	
08:25am	5 CEO Report - Marketing Delivery Plan - LVEP Growth Plan & DMP - Insight and Data	DC LH KB KB	(Board Paper 261) (Appendix 1)
09:30am	6 Company Finances - 2023/2024 Q1 Financial Report - 2022/2023 Statutory Accounts	IB IB	
09:45am	7 A.O.B		
10:00am	8 Close		

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board, held via Microsoft Teams
On Thursday 18th May 2023 – 8am**

Present: Trevor Brocklebank – Chair (“TB”)
Eleanor Underhill (“EU”)
**Marketing Cheshire
Directors** Sarah Callander-Beckett (“SCB”)
Steven Broomhead (“SB”)
David Walker (“DW”)
Tracey O’Keefe (“TO”)
Rob McKay (“RM”)
Philip Cox (“PC”)
Ian Brooks (“IB”)

In Attendance: Diane Cunningham (“DC”)
Sharon Pond (minute taker)

Apologies: Rob Charnley (“RC”)
Jamie Christon (“JC”)
Mark Goldsmith (“MG”)
Peter Mearns (“PM”)

- **Opening by the Chairman and Welcome**

TB welcomed Board members and thanked them for joining the meeting. It was confirmed that apologies had been received from RC, JC, MG and PM.

TB welcomed Diane Cunningham to her first Board meeting, Diane advised that she leads the Oneday team who are covering the CEO and Head of Marketing Roles. Diane is assisted by Rob March who undertakes the day-to-day management of the MC Team, Keith Blundell who is a tourism specialist working on the TBid and the Visitor Information Review, Matt Bell and Matt Roche.

- **Declarations of Interest**

TB asked Board members to advise of any declarations of interest.

- **Minutes and Actions from the last Meeting**

The Board confirmed that the minutes from the meeting on the 1st February were correct.

It was confirmed that the actions from the previous meeting have been dealt with.

- **Recruitment update**

TB advised that the recruitment of the Managing Director role has been temporarily delayed due to the uncertainties around what the role will be going forward and in what structure it will exist. As soon as we have further clarity on this, we will resume the recruitment for this role. The recruitment for the Head of Marketing vacancy is progressing as a permanent role and interviews are taking place on Friday 19th May.

- **Business Overview and LEP Transition**

TB advised that conversations are taking place at both LEP and MC levels. A Task and Finish group has been set up to ensure that the directors' recommendations and views are fed into the process to inform decisions for MC.

SB confirmed that the recent local election results in Cheshire meant a continuation, and therefore relative stability, in the running of those local authorities.

SB stated he would like to see MC remain as a sub-regional structure beyond April 2024, continuing to support and serve the visitor and hospitality sectors and with a degree of independent operational freedom.

DW advised that the Audit Group met on the 26th April and one of the outcomes of that meeting was to ensure that the board have a voice in the processes going forward. The audit group had discussed the risks associated with income and stressed the need for a clear business plan to ensure financial sustainability.

TO stated that we as board of directors of MC have a separate set of duties to ensure the business is moving forward. There is a need to retain a degree of independent thinking albeit that MC is a subsidiary of the LEP. It is a different business and need to ensure how, in the absence of an MD, we are maintaining our key relationships, developing partnership and commercial income and supporting staff.

SCB emphasised that the MC team have really stepped up and are doing a fantastic job so their contribution going forward will be really important.

DC advised that Oneday have been commissioned to look at the future options for MC. This work commenced last week and involves looking at structures. There are 130 DMO organisations across the country and 5 have been chosen for an in-depth review which are Manchester, Liverpool, North Wales Tourism, York and Yorkshire Coastal Bid. Alongside this Oneday will also review the successful LVEP DMOs. The report will look at the structures and legal entities of the organisations along with income structures, Board composition and membership. The report will not cover HR or legal aspects of implementation, so it will be important for this work to link into the governance work being undertaken by Ian Books.

PC advised that in terms of the legal decision-making process, as the LEP is the sole member of MC it places MC into the remit of the Local Authorities.

It was requested that the board have the opportunity to review the options and legal advice before the report is circulated outside of the organisation. It would also be beneficial to have an understanding of the outcome of the Local Authority meeting on the 2nd June.

SB reassured Board members that there is no appetite for Marketing Cheshire to be divided between the 3 Local Authorities.

IB confirmed that the MC Directors have a fiduciary duty to Marketing Cheshire, independent of the LEP, and advised that he has commissioned Mills & Reeve (the LEP's retained lawyers) and will include Marketing Cheshire in the scoping arrangement. Risks and issues associated with the transfer will be included in this scoping exercise.

TUPE rules will be triggered should the activities move into the Local Authorities, and this will mean that staff roles associated with these activities will be protected.

IB agreed to share the MC relevant parts of the report with the Board once the updated draft is available. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for this report to be linked with the work Oneday is undertaking.

Action IB

PC advised that there are added complications with the LEP transfer due to the assets owned by the company. It is a company Limited by Guarantee so with few means to distribute them to the LA. There may be a need to continue the LEP as a legal entity, under a different name, to address the net asset position.

SB voiced concerns on the number of hotels being used to house Asylum seekers and requested a report on the number of businesses in the area that are being used in this way as this will have a negative effect on our business tourism work. **DC to review report from Stoke on Trent City Council.**

Action DC

It was agreed that the MC Board would meet again early June and early July – **SP to look at dates.**

Action SP

TB advised that our purpose, what we are constituted to ensure we are delivering, is detailed in the articles of association and is legally binding. TB requested that Board members review these articles. **SP to circulate to Board for review.**

Action SP

TB stated that we are here to ensure our members' interests are being represented, the LEP is the only member of CWTB, therefore legally that is our obligation.

TB emphasised that there is a sense of urgency to maintain the momentum across Marketing Cheshire. How this process impacts our partners, and our external relationships is fundamental so will be a key focus for us.

TO – advised that it would be helpful to have a plan that sets out what we are doing over the next 12 months. **SP to circulate current delivery plan.**

Action SP

TB updated on discussions from the recent Task and Finish Group as follows: -

- MC has two primary functions, the visitor economy and the place marketing work. Place marketing is part of the LEP and economic strategy and is guided by the local authorities. The visitor economy orientates towards the private sector and benefits from being kept outside the local authorities, subject to funding. The data intelligence sits across both areas.
- A business voice in local planning and priorities is expected to continue via an independent business board with Clare Hayward becoming chair of this group and sitting on the Leaders and Chief Executives Group (LACE).
- The LEP has over the last decade brought huge economic investment to the area, facilitated sub-regional programmes such as the Pledge, Growth Hub, Destination Chester and Destination Cheshire.

Board members wishing to join the task and finish group to advise TB.

- **CEO Report**

DC referred Board members to the report circulated within the Board pack and highlighted the following key items: -

- Achievement of the LVEP status, there is also a national group being formed and VE have asked if they can have an observer on the board going forward.
- TBid is with Cheshire West and Chester to consider next steps.
- Destination Chester Showcase taking place 20th June.
- The Science Corridor launch on the 13th September.
- Keith is working on the short term let's review.

- The Visitor Information review included within the pack will go out to tender shortly.

Board members requested that going forward the following should be included within the board pack.

- Additional VE information for the wider Cheshire and Warrington area. It was questioned how we would measure how well Cheshire is doing outside Chester.
- TO asked whether future reports could link into the different lines of income to give a better understanding of trends and where extra focus is required.

Comments from Board

- It was questioned that with regard to the Partnership rate card what the pricing structure was based on and whether it is too low. It was advised that the sales team are finding the renewals quite challenging. **DC to discuss with the team and report back.**
- The need for a dynamic marketing plan detailing what we can offer partners was highlighted and it was suggested that the Destination Cheshire Group could help create this strategy. EU advised that the larger partners have their own marketing teams therefore the marketing may need to be targeted at the smaller partners, but this could be something that the new Head of Marketing can review once in post.

Action DC

- **Company Finances**

TB introduced IB to give an overview of the company finances.

IB referred Board members to the current YTD report included within the board pack advising that the operating result is better than budgeted returning a small deficit. The VIC performed very well in Q4 with an additional onetime ticket commission benefit. The operating reserves remain above the minimum required level. IB ran through the key elements of the report noting that the Audit Committee are comfortable with the cash position and use of reserves.

Comments from Board

It was questioned why the income received from the LEP has been reduced. IB advised that the income from the LEP is to undertake marketing on behalf of the LEP. As the LEP has lost some of the Growth Hub marketing funding post covid this in turn has reduced the marketing monies provided to MC from the LEP.

There are also management charges to MC from the LEP for Finance, IT services and HR.

It was requested that IB report on the legal and financial implications at the June meeting. **Action IB**

Action IB

The need to have a long-term business plan interlocked with the finances was emphasised.

TB congratulated the team on the finance report.

- **Any Other Business**

It was advised that Brendan Flanagan, Tatton Park, who has sat on a lot of Local Authority Boards is retiring at the end of June and it was questioned if there a process in place where his contribution can be recognised. **PC to review options.**

Action PC

RM advised that he has a potential sponsor for the Awards. **PC to discuss with RM.**

It was questioned what the rationale is behind the awards being a not-for-profit event. It was suggested that the awards should come under commercial income and be part of our business planning going forward.

Action PC/RM

TB requested that Board members advise of their input into the future of MC.

TB thanked the directors who attended the MC awards, the event really highlighted what great work being carried out across Cheshire and the impressive accolades in Warrington and it is important that we increase attendances at future events.

Future Board Meetings

Thursday 7th Sept 2023

Thursday 16th Nov 2023

Thursday 14 December 2023

Signature (Trevor Brocklebank, Chair)

.....

Date

7th September 2023

Paper 261

CEO update

1. Introduction

This is the second board report from Oneday Regeneration who were appointed to cover the CEO and Head of Marketing & PR roles while recruitment was underway. The contract was due to conclude in September however an extension has been agreed with a redirected focus which is detailed further in this report and will be expanded on in the board meeting.

Liam Hartzenberg will provide an overview at the board meeting against the delivery plan.

2. Visitor economy summary

The board specifically requested data on the Cheshire & Warrington Region in future reports. We have sourced data for Warrington in relation to their footfall and the STR reports breakdown data for each of the sub regions (for occupancy).

2.1 Footfall / visitor numbers

Chester

Footfall in Chester in June was more than 1.7 million, almost 30% up on May visitor numbers while year-on-year visitor numbers are 1.9% up (2022 to 2023) with total visitors in the first half of 2023 (to 30 June) being more than 8 million.

The busiest day in Chester recently was Saturday 1 July with 92,201 visitors and The Cross continues to be the location with the highest number of visitors accounting for 50% of total footfall. Saturday remains the busiest day.

In line with other locations, Chester is yet to recover to 2019 (pre-covid) levels and while visitor numbers are growing they remain 11% below 2019. Full footfall data can be accessed on Chester BID's website [here](#).

Warrington

Warrington held a summer extravaganza over the weekend of 28-29 July centred on Time Square and the town centre, generating its highest ever footfall at 9,295 (from 6,770 in 2022).

Also in July, Warrington Market had its highest ever footfall (w/c 17 July) with 31,860 visitors, a 3,000 increase on the record set the previous week. *(This is outside the period of the board report but relevant in the context of wider data.)*

We have established that Warrington BID has footfall data and we will include this in our reporting going forward.

Cheshire East

We have requested information from Cheshire East BIDs as to the type of data they have available. We understand that there may be footfall data available for Macclesfield and Wilmslow via their BIDs and for Crewe via Cheshire East but we have not seen it at this point.

Comparisons

- North & Yorkshire are showing the same increase in visitor numbers as Cheshire (1.9%) while their total visitor numbers also remain below 2019 levels
- Liverpool (2022) visitor numbers are approximately 15% below 2019 although 2023 is expected to show an increase due to Eurovision hosting.

2.2 Occupancy

Hotel occupancy has increased (June 2023-22) across all Cheshire areas and among competitors with Cheshire West+ seeing the largest year-on-year increase at 6.4% (almost double Liverpool) and Warrington having the lowest at 0.6% however, Warrington has also lost hotel rooms to the Home Office. Additional revenue (food and drink and spend outside the room rate) has also increased. Year-to-date data also shows the same upwards trend.

2.3 Tourist trip / stays away from home intentions

Visit England's Domestic Sentiment Reports (May – July 2023)

The perception of the cost of living crisis remained stable in July and domestic overnight trip intention remained steady at 75%, although slightly down from the April 2023 peak of 77%.

- In July, 50% of UK adults stated that the 'worst is still to come' with regards to the cost of living crisis (49% in June / 49% in May / 54% in April). This is stable compared to June and May which were the lowest recorded.
- The next 12 month's trip intentions:
 - for domestic overnights are higher than the same time last year, although the gap is beginning to close: 75% July 2023 v 72% July 2022.
 - for overseas trips is 56% (down from high of 58% in May) and on par with July last year (55%).
- In comparison to the past 12 months, in July 2023, 36% are more likely to choose domestic trips in preference to overseas.
- South West, Yorkshire & Humber and the South East were the most popular destination for domestic trips in the past three months. The main purpose was for holiday/leisure.
- Reasons for trips away from home include:
 - 'trying local food and drink' followed by 'walking, hiking or rambling' (in both July September and in October and December)
 - 'to get away from it all and have a rest' (July and September)
 - 'family time or time with my partner' (October and November)

2.4 Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Status and engagement with Visit Britain

We formally launched our LVEP status at Crewe Hall on the 5 July. The event was attended by over 80 visitor economy contacts from Cheshire & Warrington and delegates heard updates from Richard Toomer, Tourism Alliance and Nicola Said, Visit England.

The Growth Action Plan has been submitted to Visit England and it is being used as a model for the other regional leads as best practice. There will be a presentation from Keith Blundell, Oneday tourism lead, at the board meeting. It is due to be signed off in the coming weeks and the next quarterly review is due in September.

A presentation will be given to the board by Keith Blundell on both the LVEP Growth Plan and the Destination Management Plan (DMP).

3. Chester Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

April to June 2023 saw overall VIC sales increase by over 19% compared to the same period last year. Highlights included book sales, which have increased by 41% by these being sold as an add-on product to tours. A 'How to Play Chess' book has also been added to support the chess sets available for use in the VIC's outdoor seating area. In addition, some guides have been translated into Spanish and Mandarin, increasing sales to non-English speakers and more translations of high selling guides would be welcome.

The range of guided walking tours on offer at the VIC continues to expand, with four new themed tours being added to the options available during the last quarter. These new tours are Edwardian Lady Tours, Chester: Welsh Connections; Overleigh Cemetery Tour and Heart of Chester.

The VIC is strongly positioned as the tour hub for the city and sales of walking tours have doubled compared to the second quarter of 2022. The VIC are seeing visitors who are staying longer in Chester (beyond a day trip) and therefore have time to include more tours. Print has been produced showing all of the tours and they are bookable in advance, further increasing bookings.

The VIC supported the Active Travel event, acting as the guided tour hub for the festival which enabled them to promote all the tours taking place over the weekend.

The VIC again supported the Chester Heritage Festival, acting as ticket hub. A member of the VIC team also delivered a sold-out history talk as part of the festival.

3.1 Visitor Information Review

TEAM Tourism Consulting were appointed to deliver the review and have begun their work programme. Stakeholder consultation has taken place, both online and in person during a visit in early August. The onsite consumer survey and mystery shop are also underway and a wider stakeholder survey (online) has been developed. The next phase includes the best practice review and the development of an options report for the end of September and project completion is expected at the end of October

4. Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID)

The TBID report and analysis was presented to Destination Chester in July. A newly formed steering group held its first meeting on 17 August. The process of appointing consultants for the second phase study is subject to confirmation of funding (UKSPF) from CWaC which has been allocated but not formally awarded.

5. Communications and Marketing

5.1 Campaigns

We are running our Spring/Summer Chester campaign which has seen 25–34-year-olds being the top performing age range (from online visitor data) with landing pages on the website for five key themes – Heritage (most popular), Culture, Foodies, Adventure and The Rows. Geo-targeted paid social ads have been driving traffic to VisitChester.com

Our campaign 'Our Family Welcomes Your Family' has continued over the summer focusing on Summer Holidays, Live Music Events and Festivals.

We recently published a [Cheshire Day report](#) which was delivered to the Destination Chester Group. The report highlighted the success of the campaign, stories and reels and laid the foundation for the development of a Cheshire Narrative. A Cheshire Day 2024 steering group and planning session is being planned.

The closing date for the Cheshire Awards 2024 was 1 September and the team have been encouraging entries from local companies who have not previously taken part.

5.2 Digital (website and social media)

Website visitors have arrived from Google, direct to the site and from Facebook. Chester content continues to be the most viewed however, what's on is the third most viewed page which showcases events Cheshire-wide.

We have generated a number of blog posts focusing on summer, half term/holidays and Cheshire Farm Stays and rural escapes across the region and this views of this content are 5% up on last year.

Social media content has resulted in: Facebook: 273 shares, 1K reactions, 168 comments and Pinterest: 428 pins

5.3 PR & Media coverage

Coverage was achieved via Traveltappers across 27 articles in print and online.

NB: Macclesfield has featured in the press during August having been ranked in Rightmove's Happy at Home Index with articles in [Manchester Evening News](#) and [Great British Life](#). (*not generated by Traveltappers*).

5.4 Science Corridor

Registration has opened for the Science Corridor launch event, scheduled to take place at Chester Zoo on 13 September. All board members have received their invitation via Sharon Pond. We have 87 registered to attend and we will continue to promote the event via email and social media. Board members are encouraged to talk about the event and launch among their networks and further information can be seen [here](#).

6. Partnerships

We held a Marketing Cheshire Conference on 5 July at Crewe Hall with over 80 delegates in attendance. The event was a celebration and update on our LVEP status (see 2.4) and included updates on activity past and present. We have received positive feedback from those who attended and it provided a great opportunity for Visitor Economy businesses to network. A series of partner events have been scheduled for the rest of the year and into next including an accessibility and sustainability conference in February 2024.

Planning is underway for the LEP Annual Economic Conference taking place at Jodrell Bank on 18 October.

102 partners to date have renewed their partnership amounting to £54,151 against a target of £70,000. Of this, £35,000 has been received and all partners have been invoiced to March 2024.

We have welcomed new partnerships this last quarter, with Wychwood Park Hotel and Macdonald Blossoms and Craxton Wood joining too. However, both the Ice Cream Farm and CWaC have not renewed.

6.1 Destination Chester

Colin Potts from The University of Chester has been elected as the new chair of this group. Colin's first task is to elect a vice chair and to review the Terms of Reference to gain agreement from the group. An initial meeting took place on 25 August to hear how he wished to take the group forward and the next meeting is taking place on 12 September.

6.2 Destination Cheshire

The group last met on 4 May and an update was included in the previous board report. The next meeting will take place on 3 October.

6.3 Cheshire Events and Festivals Group

An events calendar has been completed and is live on the website. A digital version can be found [here](#). The next meeting takes place on 4 October.

6.4 Travel Trade and Business Tourism and Events update

The team hosted a Travel Trade and Business Tourism meeting for delegates, to understand the market and how we can best support venues moving forward. The group were updated on activity to date supported by Marketing Cheshire for the two sectors and there was also discussion at venue level on challenges and successes with reaching the markets.

There is an appetite to attend trade shows for both sectors, representing the destination, however there was feedback that this may be challenging for group-based hotels since they may be forced to use budget to attend with their counterparts. Details to be circulated amongst the group regarding options and costs, so it can be discussed at venue level and fed back to the group. The group are also keen to meet regularly to maintain momentum and dialogue around support in promoting the destination for travel trade and business visits and events.

7. Research and Intelligence

7.1 Destination research

Marketing Cheshire would like to obtain real-time data insights from businesses to help us shape our short term and long-term strategies and feedback to government on how businesses are doing. Asking specifically, where business are located, we will be able to analyse responses by local authority area. [A survey](#) has been sent to all partners and non-partners and we hope to have a good sample of data by September. We are also working with GTS to gather footfall and visitor numbers from our key events and attractions.

7.2 Insight and performance

We are reviewing the data and insight part of our work in preparation for the new Destination Management Plan on which work starts in September. This will involve establishing a number of indicators which will be tracked over time and, where possible, benchmarked against comparable destinations.

Visit England are establishing a forum of LVEPs to look at standardising indicators and benchmarking across all organisations who have achieved the status and this should also unlock access to data that we currently don't have.

Appendix 1 provides an outline of proposals which will be discussed at the board and an example infographic.

8. Other matters

8.1 Recruitment

The Managing Director role went live during August. Interviews are planned to take place w/c 9 October with the expectation that a successful candidate can start in January 2024.

Tom Holmes has resigned and Liam is considering the resource needed going forward.

8.2 Oneday progress and extension

Appendix 2 shows progress against the initial brief which covered the period March to September 2023.

An extension has been agreed for Oneday to continue until early December 2023 to enable there to be a smooth handover to a new CEO/Managing Director. The extended period will focus on stakeholder management with an approach developed to meet regularly with key partners across Marketing Cheshire, including board members to ensure communications are aligned, concerns and ideas shared directly with Marketing Cheshire and information captured to support the new Managing Director. This will be expanded on at the board meeting.

Diane Cunningham, Oneday Regeneration Ltd for Marketing Cheshire

Appendix 1: Insight & Data

To support the development of the Destination Marketing Plan (DMP) and respond to the desire from partners for more robust data and insight about the region, the team have been reviewing data currently held, additional data they can access and any missing areas which could provide further insight.

While some of this data has always been provided, it has been in the form of a lengthy narrative, reducing its chance of being read. The intention is to develop this data into an infographic-style dashboard which can be updated monthly. Many other DMOs and BIDs produce data in a similar format for their partners and/or levy payers.

Recommendations for changing the data set include:

- Moving from quarterly STR data to the 'year to date' as, from April onwards, this represents more robust information that is less exposed to one off events or changes.
- Expanding the STR sample to reflect changes in the accommodation supply (as the sample is bespoke it does not automatically update).
- Changing from the Manchester STR comparator to another more relevant destination
- Consider adding to the available data e.g. Transparent/Air DNA for self-catering and Visa for consumer information (subject to budget and potentially in partnership with Visit England).
- Potential increased frequency of key attractions data (currently annual and received six to seven months after year end)
- Adding other areas of Cheshire to the (published) footfall data for Chester City Centre

In the board meeting, we would like to hear from board members as to the data your organisation would find useful or that you believe Marketing Cheshire partners will benefit from receiving.

Attachments:

Draft infographic

Example infographic formats: [Visit Britain](#) and [North Yorks Moors National Park](#)

Cheshire Performance

STEAM Economic Impact

2021 **£2.72bn**

2019 **£3.85bn**

Hotel Occupancy

Cheshire & Warrington - Jan-May 2023 (vs 2022)



Occupancy



ADR

^4.5%

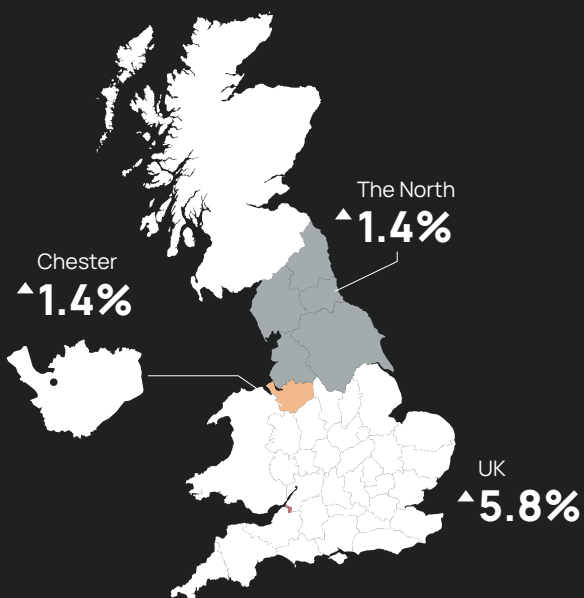
^4.5%

Length of Stay (2021 vs. 2019)

^1.5% Length of stay up by 1.5%

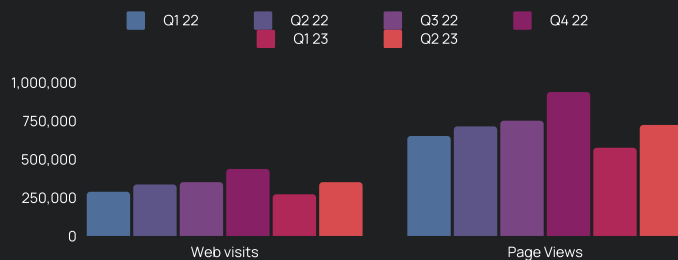
^9% Staying visitors as % of whole

Chester City Centre Footfall (vs 2022)



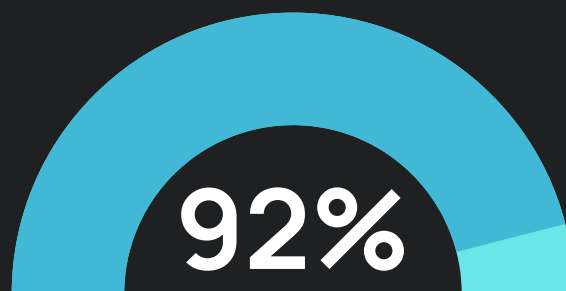
Marketing Cheshire Performance

Visit Cheshire Website Visitors



Web visits now improved on 2022 after a Q1 fall

Partnership Renewals



VIC Income April - June 2023



^19%

Income vs April - June 2022

Social Media



99,000

Total social following

^5%

6-month increase

PR (Q1 & 2 2023)



47

Articles (print & online)

15.5M

Audience (79% Online)

Appendix 1: Insight & Data

An alternative CEO Report

This summary is for discussion at the board as to the content that the board wish to see going forward and the format in which is it received.

It would be more visual with a consistent layout each meeting to provide a snapshot of results, progress for the period being discussed and end with a few points on the priorities for the next quarter.

The proposal to change the format has arisen from a discussion at the May board meeting. The proposals and discussion should also focus on the paper on Insight and Data included with the board report.

For this month's board meeting, the regular report is also included

Appendix 1: Insight & Data

Visitor Economy

- **Chester:** 30% up on May visitor numbers while year-on-year visitor numbers are 1.9% up bringing H1 2023 visitor numbers to more than 8 million
- **Warrington:** July summer extravaganza generated the highest ever footfall at 9,295
- **Occupancy:** Hotel occupancy has increased across all areas with Cheshire West+ seeing the largest year-on-year increase at 6.4% (almost double Liverpool)
- **Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP):** Launch event at Crewe Hall on 5 July attended by over 80 visitor economy contacts from Cheshire & Warrington
- **Chester Visitor Information Centre (VIC):** VIC sales up by over 19% (Apr-June 2023-22) with strong sales of books and translated material

Strategic projects

- **Visitor Information Review:** TEAM-Tourism's review is underway with an options report due for the end of September and project completion end of October
- **Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID):** A newly formed steering group held its first meeting on 17 August and a process for appointing consultants for the second phase study is being agreed.
- **Science Corridor launch:** 87 registered to attend an event on 13 September
- **LEP Annual Economic Conference:** Taking place at Jodrell Bank on 18 October
- **Data intelligence and insight:** A new approach to provide better insight to partners

Marketing Campaigns and content

- **Spring/Summer campaigns:** generated positive results online in driving traffic to VisitChester.com and contributing to more than 30 media articles including four in The Guardian and Sunday Times showcasing Cheshire
- **Cheshire Day:** a report highlighted the success of the campaign, stories and reels and laid the foundation for the development of a Cheshire Narrative with planning underway for 2024
- **Blog posts:** focusing on summer, half term/holidays and Cheshire Farm Stays and rural escapes across the region have been successful with views of this content up 5% on last year
- **Social media** content has resulted in: Facebook: 273 shares, 1K reactions, 168 comments

Partnerships

Income and renewals

- **Renewals and income:** 102 partners to date have renewed their partnership generating £54,151 against a target of £70,000
- **New partnerships:** Wychwood Park Hotel, Macdonald Blossoms Hotel and Craxton Wood
- **Non renewals:** Ice Cream Farm and CWaC

Partner meetings

- **Destination Chester:** Colin Potts from The University of Chester has been elected as the new chair. The next meetings is on 12 September
- **Destination Cheshire, Events & Festivals Group:** both meeting in September
- **SLAs:** Local authority meetings in September

Resourcing

- **CEO/Managing Director role:** Interviews are planned for w/c 9 October with a planned start date of January 2024
- **Team changes:** Liam Hartzenberg has been appointed as Head of Marketing & PR. Tom Holmes has resigned and Liam is considering the resource needed going forward
- **Oneday progress and extension:** An extension has been agreed for Oneday to continue until early December 2023 The extended period will focus on stakeholder management with an approach developed to meet regularly with key partners across Marketing Cheshire, including board members

Appendix 2: Oneday Interim Support update

Marketing Cheshire project overview March to August 2023

complete/on track

in progress

delayed

Activity	LEP Objective	Targets/more detail	Update	RAG Status
Account Management & Governance	Develop Account Management Partnership system to retain and deepen existing relationships and grow income in line with inflation	* Increase rates by 10% for 2023/24 and retain 90% of 2022/23 partners * Develop a partnership account management system to provide business insight and provide businesses with consumer and destination insight * Identify and recruit larger tourism businesses who are not currently partners to 'fill the gaps'	Led by Ashley with Oneday oversight. Sales data is included in the board report. An revised approach to account management and consumer and destination insight is under discussion for implementation by Dec23	
		LEP reorganisation	Options Appraisal commissioned separately	
		Destination Chester	Revise Terms of Reference and Chair role to support election of a new chair	
		Events & Festivals Network	Steering Group to be established	
		Recruitment	Support recruitment of new Head of Marketing & PR	
Place brand and marketing strategy	Work with Destination Cheshire to develop place brand and associated marketing strategy for Cheshire. Cheshire Day to take place in March 2024. Brand and narrative launch by Summer 2023	* Engage non tourism Businesses in Cheshire Day * Grow Destination Support packages by 10% on 2022/2023 * Ongoing annual partnerships with all the main train operating companies * Develop marketing packages with town councils and BIDs	Led by Liam with Oneday oversight. To be implemented via Liam's agreed objectives. The appointment of a new Head of Marketing has delayed progress	
	Relaunch The Cheshire Science Corridor, attend UKREiiF and deliver launch symposium event in Sept 2023. Recruit 30 Cheshire Science Corridor ambassadors	Science Corridor	Oneday oversight to the team to relaunch The Cheshire Science Corridor - moved back to Sept. UKREiiF successfully attended in May	

Activity	LEP Objective	Targets/more detail	Update	RAG Status
Tourism	Deliver the Visitor information review for Cheshire West and Chester by March 2024 and develop recommendations and implementation Plan	VIC Review	TEAM-Tourism appointed and project on track	
		Rural Tourism Packages - Ice Cream Farm. Draft brief for procurement of a consultant to carry out a feasibility study.	Brief complete (with CWAC for sign off on funding)	
	Obtain LVEP status by April 2023 and develop growth plan for Marketing Cheshire as part of MOU with Visit England	* LVEP Accreditation * Growth Plan * DMP	Achieved April23 - Growth Plan complete and to be presented at September board meeting	
Marketing Campaigns	Deliver Destination Campaigns for Chester and Cheshire in partnership with Transport providers and the two networks - Destination Chester and Destination Cheshire. Develop annual plan and grow visits to the website	* Engage non tourism Businesses in Cheshire Day (30th March annually) * Destination Cheshire & Chester Marketing Campaigns	Oversight of team delivery <i>(NB: this now sites with Liam)</i>	
	Deliver Corporate Communications for the LEP working with Social PR, Internal Corporate Communications Group and deliver impactful AGM in Autumn 2023	PR & Comms	Oversight of team delivery <i>(NB: this now sites with Liam)</i>	
Commercial Models	Explore new commercial models for Destination Chester	* Feasibility study for TBID by March 2023 * Shape ongoing development plan for TBID	TBID with CWAC to move to next stage of exploration - on track	
		* Develop interim proposal to Cheshire West and Chester / Chester businesses for 2023-2024 * Identify potential Cheshire ambassadors and shape commercial proposition * Outline Commercial strategy to support 'Best of Cheshire'	Oversight of team delivery <i>(NB: this now sites with Liam)</i> . This is now being developed via a dedicated approach to stakeholder engagement Sept-Dec 23	

Meetings to resource

Meeting	Frequency	RAG Status
Marketing Cheshire Team catch-up (online)	Wednesday - 10-1045am	Ongoing
Marketing Cheshire Team catch-up (in person)	Monthly - 10-11am	Ongoing
Philip 1-1s	Weekly	Ongoing
Trevor 1-1s	Weekly	Paused during July and August
Board meetings	Quarterly and ad hoc in line with LEP restructure	
SLA meetings with three LAs	Quarterly	
Destination Chester	Quarterly	
Destination Cheshire	Quarterly	
Stakeholders 1- 1s	Ad hoc	More than 20 meetings have taken place Mar-Aug 2023

Observations Mar-Aug23

- 1 There is a need for stronger (place) messaging and brand - including defining what the Chester and Cheshire offer is, the key audiences and how the delivery is coordinated across partners and stakeholders
- 2 The customer journey and destination management, in particular gateways, wayfinding and activation both online and offline can be improved - it is currently unclear who is responsible for coordinating this across stakeholders
- 3 Defining who is doing what across the region, Marketing Cheshire, Chester BID, Destination Groups, new emerging groups e.g. GAS, and proposed new structures e.g. TBID to align with the One City Plan approach
- 4 Opportunities to develop the commercial model and reduce dependency on public sector funding would increase the longer term viability of Marketing Cheshire
- 5 Demand from stakeholders and members for increased data and insight
- 6 Stakeholder management needs to be more proactive with structures and processes in place to ensure stakeholders are well informed and engaged, the potential of key stakeholder relationships are maximised and the quieter voices are heard
- 7 Some activities are supplementary e.g. LEP marketing and could these additional services be delivered more efficiently and effectively through third parties, whilst still leading the strategic approach but delivered through others
- 8 There is a risk of alternative organisations becoming more influential, whilst the future of the LEP and Marketing Cheshire is being explored