

Events Industry Board Minutes
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

21 May 2018

Attendees

Michael Hirst (chair)
Ellen Mackrill (minutes)
Jim Cathcart (representing UK Hospitality)
Laura Clayton
Joss Croft
Jennifer Jenkins
Tracy Halliwell
Rob Holt (via teleconference)
Kerrin MacPhie
Chris Skeith
Giles Smith
Sarah Wright
Robert Wright (observer)

Apologies: Nick de Bois, Paul Bush, Naomi Waite and Mike Rusbridge

Welcome

Michael Hirst welcomed the Board members to the meeting, and introduced UKHospitality as a new member following the merger of the British Hospitality Association with the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers. The Association would be represented at future meetings by its CEO, Kate Nicholls.

Previous minutes

The previous minutes were cleared with no revisions

Declarations of Interest

Michael noted that Nick de Bois is now a minority shareholder in Rapiergroup Ltd the holding company of Rapier Design Ltd which trades as Rapiergroup.

No members had any other declarations of interest

Matters Arising

Giles Smith updated the Board on what DCMS has been focusing on since the previous meeting. This includes working across Whitehall to pull together a bid for Web Summit,

which will be submitted next week. Giles also informed the Board that a new cross-Government group will be set up to drive forward the Business Visits and Events Action Plan, and build on the learnings from Web Summit.

Joss Croft updated the Board on DIT's Single Departmental Plan and Export Strategy, which includes the winning of major events.

The Board discussed the updates and noted that:

- Creating a joint London / VB / Government team has been a good experience
- Web Summit was initially on VB's Gold Trophy list.
- It was noted that events which produced Direct foreign Investment were a high priority.
- The case for of VAT rebates on accommodation and travel for international business visitors travelling to the UK for export purposes was discussed as part of the current consultation on VAT & APD for Northern Ireland, although it is understood from Treasury Officials that the consultation has a wider remit across Britain. It was felt there was much merit in developing such a case.

Working Groups Progress

Sarah Wright updated the Board on the Skills, Talent and Human Resources working group. She noted that there was a broad scope of work, which will need to be narrowed down. Focus at the moment is on assessing the current situation and speaking to industry.

The Board discussed the update and noted that:

- There should be a link up with UK Hospitality who are looking at skills through the proposed Sector Deal
- Discussions should take place with devolved nations, although solutions might be different
- Additional Industry representatives were to be added and suggested were invited including those from the creative production agencies represented by Evcom.

Chris Skeith updated the Board on the Infrastructure Group and outlined the four areas they will be focusing on: current infrastructure and occupancy; transport and rail; digital including mobile coverage; and understanding investment.

The Board discussed the update and noted that:

- Connectivity is no longer included within the Tourism Sector Deal, however solving the final mile is crucial to events
- DIT are looking at regions who have failed to attract investment and helping to increase their profile

Action:

- Chris Skeith to confirm with Rob Holt who from Wales can represent the group

The possibility of a media release to highlight the remit and work programme of the Working Groups was mentioned and Robert Wright asked to consider this.

VisitBritain Update

Kerrin MacPhie updated the Board on what VisitBritain has been working on, including MeetGB, finalising the evaluation on previous work and relooking at Events Support Programme which was to be retitled “Winning Events Programme”. KM also informed the Board on the intention to run workshops across the country on attracting business events and they are starting to map the current capacity.

The Board discussed the update and noted that:

- It’s important to ensure that it’s clear what is a UK solution, and what is England only. There are often common problems but not common solutions.
- The learnings from DIT’s work on Dubai 2020 can be passed on.
- Research by VB in conjunction with Skift had led to the publication of a report on “How UK Cities Excel at Hosting Conferences in Advanced and Creative Industries”.

Industrial Strategy Update

Giles Smith updated the Board on the Industrial Strategy and noted that work is taking place on Tourism Action Zones, and business events could form part of these.

The Board discussed the update and noted that:

- There is another version of the industrial strategy aimed at international audiences, which can be found [here](#).
- A number of other Sector Deals have elements of Business Events in them. Giles advised that DCMS was analysing other bids to ensure that potential opportunities were identified.
- The Creative Industries bid had been announced and it was noted there were some synergies within this sector deal of which the events industry might take advantage.

Action: DCMS to consider how business visits and events fits into other Sector Deals, and link up with Creative Industries team. This to be a topic for a future meeting.

Any Other Business

Roundtable on Outdoor Events - proposed date is 25 June, with attendees from culture, music and sport sectors. The key areas for discussion are competitiveness and how more international visitors and business can be attracted to these events.

DMO roundtable will be organised probably in the Autumn.

A short note on working group progress could go out next month

There is an APPG for Events and reception planned on 25 October, as well as events in Wales and Scotland in September / October.

Rob Holt asked for separate discussions with DCMS on the remit of the Board in respect of its Britain wide responsibilities and the application of within the devolved administrations.

An update on the Border Force pilot was requested, however unfortunately this did not take place due to lack of take up by attendees of BETT.

(Subsequent to the meeting the question of proactively focussing support on existing events which can be helped to become more international was raised with a request this be prioritised).

Action – *(Discussions with AEO event organisers and VisitBritain to be facilitated).*

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 28th September 14:00-1600, at DCMS