

## **Events Industry Board (EIB)**

Meeting Minutes – Friday 31 May, 2019

Chancellor's Room, 100 Parliament Street, London, SW1A 2BQ

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### **Attendees**

Attending: Michael Hirst (Chair)  
Paul Bush  
Tracy Halliwell  
Rob Holt  
Simon Hughes  
Jenny Jenkins  
Fiona Macdonald (via teleconference)  
David Martin (DCMS)  
Stephen McGowan (Department for International Trade)  
Sheila Pardoe (minutes)  
Mike Rusbridge  
Giles Smith (DCMS)  
Naomi Waite (via teleconference)  
Robert Wright  
Sarah Wright

Apologies: Kerrin MacPhie, Kate Nicholls, Chris Skeith

### **Introduction**

Michael Hirst opened the meeting and introduced Sheila Pardoe to her first EIB meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No members had any declarations of interest to make.

### **Approval of the minutes of last meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019**

The previous minutes were cleared with no revisions.

### **Matters arising**

Giles Smith updated the Board on the new Minister, Rebecca Pow MP, Taunton Deane. He acknowledged that a letter had been sent to the Minister, on behalf of the Board, outlining EIB priorities and said that the new Minister would be introduced to her Ministerial portfolio of Arts, Heritage and Tourism by officials imminently.

Giles Smith reminded members of the role of the Board, which is to offer constructive challenge and advice to the UK Government on business events policy and issues. This is reflected in the new Terms of Reference, which have been uploaded onto gov.uk since the last EIB meeting.

## **Substantive items and papers for discussion**

### **a) UK Events Industry Board Draft Talent Taskforce Skills Report**

- Michael Hirst thanked Sarah Wright and her team for preparing the Talent Taskforce Report and noted its draft completion as a significant achievement.
- Sarah Wright introduced the report as a draft and noted that her presentation would focus on the 5 recommendations within the report for UK Government.
- Sarah Wright outlined the first recommendation, which is for the UK Government to develop specific Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes for the industry to assist with data collection. David Martin explained that the UN sets high-level aggregates but that beneath that national Governments have some leeway. He said there are opportunities to influence the SIC codes at the moment, but that the SOC codes had just gone through an update round. Members agreed that a change was necessary and DCMS promised to update the Board at the next meeting once they had investigated the issue further. **Action:** David Martin and Sheila Pardoe to continue to explore opportunities.
- Sarah Wright outlined the second recommendation, which is to support and help seed fund the set-up of an independent Event Skills Body. Members discussed what body – new or existing – might be appropriate. Giles Smith noted how this recommendation might be related to some commitments scheduled for inclusion in the proposed Tourism Sector Deal, currently under negotiation [update: *the Tourism Sector Deal was published on 28 June, 2019*], and that Members were encouraged to consider whether those potential opportunities would be appropriate. Members agreed that it would still be efficient to cooperate with a body (or bodies) that currently exist. Members also agreed that further engagement with relevant organisations would be beneficial. Members also discussed one particular body, which currently exists, and offered benefits and weaknesses to potentially using this body for this purpose.
- Sarah Wright outlined the third recommendation, which is for the UK Government to provide expertise/support to promote the industry as a desirable career path to future proof skills in the industry and remain competitive. Members agreed and disagreed with different approaches and

Giles Smith outlined how items in the proposed Tourism Sector Deal might support this recommendation if the deal is approved and if members agree.

- Sarah Wright outlined the fourth recommendation, which is to drive formal engagement for the events industry with Creative Industries and other sectors to drive the skills agenda. Michael Hirst acknowledged that the Events Industry and Creative Industries have recognised their potential areas of alignment in the past and asked DCMS officials to invite a member of the Creative Industries team to the 6<sup>th</sup> September EIB meeting. **Action:** Sheila Pardoe to invite Creative Industries officials to September EIB meeting.
- Sarah Wright outlined the fifth recommendation to UK Government, which is to support the development of apprenticeship levels 4-8. Members agreed with the recommendation. Giles Smith noted that apprenticeships are on the DCMS agenda.
- Michael Hirst invited Sarah Wright to provide a brief note on the paper which would be shared with the Business Visits and Events Partnership ahead of their next meeting on 17 June.

**Action:** Sheila Pardoe to arrange meeting with Michael Hirst, Sarah Wright and David Martin to move items forward.

**b) The future of the Business Events Growth Programme – review of papers:**

- (i) Cambridge Policy Consultants paper, 'The potential impact of Government subvention funding on International Business Events';
  - (ii) The DCMS paper, 'Future Options for the Business Events Growth Programme'.
- David Martin updated the Board on work that has been done to explore whether expanding the Business Events Growth Programme (BEGP) as part of the Department's Spending Review bid would be valuable and that DCMS commissioned research by Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC) on, 'The potential impact of Government subvention funding on International Business Events'. David Martin turned to the paper he prepared for the Board as a result of the findings of the report and outlined the three main avenues for developing the fund. He asked the Board for feedback on what the size of the fund should be.
  - Members considered the report by CPC and debated on its findings, with a range of views expressed. Members also considered the BEGP – how it is currently delivered by VisitBritain, in what contexts the fund is particularly valuable and in which contexts it has limited impact. Members outlined the

need for cross-Whitehall support for business events, in particular from The Department for International Trade.

- Members agreed that while more could be done to improve the current Fund, including the amount available, it was valuable and should be continued. Michael Hirst noted that the discussion on the BEGP would continue at the next EIB meeting and noted the request to have a Scottish Government policy official attend September's meeting and present to the board on Scotland's new policy approach to business events. **ACTION:** Sheila Pardoe to invite relevant Scottish Government policy official to September EIB meeting.

### c) EIB Communications Plan

- Sheila Pardoe updated the Board on the EIB Communications Plan she prepared for the Board, which aimed to address feedback at the 1<sup>st</sup> February Board meeting that the work of the EIB and UK Government could be better communicated to its stakeholders. Sheila Pardoe outlined proposed responsibilities and next steps and asked members for their feedback.
- Members considered the plan and Sheila Pardoe agreed to consider feedback and begin implementation. **Action:** Sheila Pardoe to implement the Communications Plan.

### Updates

- d) Michael Hirst noted that the revised Terms of Reference have been finalised to address the Board's request for clarity and are available on the EIB website.
- e) Michael Hirst updated the Board on the *UK Government's International Business Events Action Plan*. David Martin explained next steps to the Board, which included that it is the intention for the Action Plan to be published alongside the proposed Tourism Sector Deal, currently under negotiation. Members considered commitments and offered feedback, primarily around scaling down the ambition to be more credible. DCMS agreed to consider feedback and apply it in revisions that the document was undergoing.
- f) Michael Hirst updated the Board on the Senior Events Industry Leaders Advisory Panel, which aims to bring senior leaders who work directly in the events industry together to advise the UK Government and the EIB on competitiveness. Michael Hirst explained that the panel's proposed date needed to be changed due to the Ministerial reshuffle. Michael Hirst noted that Sheila Pardoe was working to secure a new date before Summer Recess [*following the meeting, a new date was arranged – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019*].

- g) Stephen McGowan updated the Board on DIT's priorities, including Ministerial changes and other senior leadership changes in the Department. Stephen McGowan agreed to keep DCMS officials informed of updates between this EIB meeting and the next meeting.
- h) Michael Hirst updated the Board on two Roundtables which he chaired recently – one at the MeetGB international buyer's event and a DMO roundtable. He noted that a discussion of key themes would take place at the next EIB meeting and Sheila Pardoe agreed to prepare notes, with themes, to for the Board. **Action:** Sheila Pardoe to share notes ahead of next Board meeting.

#### **Any other business**

- i) Sarah Wright enquired about the publishing process for the Skills Report and David Martin provided clarity.
- j) Michael Hirst asked for DCMS officials to request a letter of the Minister which would thank Sarah Wright and her team for the work on the Talent Taskforce. Report. **Action:** Sheila Pardoe to commission.

#### **Close**

Michael Hirst closes the meeting and notes the **next EIB meeting date – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September**. **Action:** Sheila Pardoe to ensure future meetings do not take place on Fridays.