

# MINUTES OF THE 434<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY

HELD AT 10:30 ON THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017 AT

VISITBRITAIN, 1 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON SW1P 3BT

**Present:** Steve Ridgway, CBE  
Denis Wormwell  
John Lindquist  
Katy Best  
Angela Bray  
Ian McCaig  
Margaret Llewellyn OBE  
Giles Smith  
Kevin Murphy

**In Attendance:** Sally Balcombe  
Hazel Cunningham  
Lola Moses, Secretary to the Board  
Patricia Yates, Director Strategy & Communications (for item 9)  
Andrew Stokes, England Director (for item 12 and 13)  
Carol Dray, Commercial Director (for item 13)  
Clare Mullin, Marketing Director (for item 11)

## **Agenda item 1: Chairman's Update and Introduction**

1. The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting. There were apologies from Lord Thurso.
2. The Chairman updated the Board on recent developments impacting tourism. It was noted that the Minister for Tourism would be attending the BTA's Annual Review launch in October.
3. The Board noted that there would be a joint strategy day with BTA Board and VEAB members on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 between 9:30 to 14:30.

## **Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the Last Meeting**

4. The Minutes of the BTA Board meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 were approved, subject to minor amendments.
5. Patricia Yates updated the Board on the GBTS/TNS contract for statutory data. It was noted that the data was now up to date and that Lola Moses, BTA's General Counsel would be liaising with TNS to resolve the issue concerning the previous under delivery.

There were no further matters arising.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Declarations of interest/Conflicts**

6. It was noted that Margaret Llewellyn OBE had been appointed as the Chair of the Wales Route Supervisory Board for Network Rail in Wales.

#### **STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND OUTLOOK**

##### **Agenda Item 5: Review of Dashboard**

7. Sally Balcombe referred the Board to the dashboard which was tabled at the meeting. The Board noted the RAG status of the BTA's corporate objectives. It was noted that:-
  - (i) Targets - BTA were yet to receive targets from DCMS.
  - (ii) The domestic campaign had been launched - the Board noted that the campaign was presented at the June Board meeting.
  - (iii) Delivery of the Discover England fund – members noted that good progress had been made. Year 1 projects had spent £3.6m of the total grant amount of £3.9m and a decision on successful Year 2 projects had completed.
  - (iv) Partner relationships - it was noted that the partnership with AA and BA was very strong.
  - (v) Building the skills and capabilities of staff – members noted that progress had been made at director level but that there were still challenges in recruiting key posts in Australia, India, and Korea.

##### **Agenda Item 7: State of the Market**

8. Sally Balcombe tabled the State of the Market Snapshot – September 2017 paper and provided the Board with an overview of the recent competitive activity. The following points were highlighted: -
  - (i) AtoutFrance and the German National Tourist Board were continuing with their partnership for another 3 years. It was noted that Lufthansa and Air France were the aviation partners for this partnership.
  - (ii) France - Île-de-France region reported +15% growth in international arrivals following a difficult 2016 and the implementation of a recovery strategy. It was noted that Paris had won the 2024 Olympics, citing London as a good example of building tourism success following the 2012 Games.
  - (iii) Germany - 2017's #GermanySimplyInspiring overarching campaign has rolled out in 10 key markets.

- (iv) Ireland – It was noted that inbound visits were up 3% in January-July, and 1% down in July, dragged down by weak numbers from the UK.
- (v) Italyis - the main sponsor of World Travel Market 2017, which will give the country widespread exposure at the event.
- (vi) Spain – it was noted that Turespanahas released a major new campaign “Spain is part of you!” aimed at increasing knowledge and to strengthen the positioning of its tourism brand. The intention is to reach more than 500 million people.
- (vii) USA - overseas visits declined 8% in Q1; Forward Keys analysis suggests that this weakness has continued throughout 2017 so far.

### **Agenda Item 8: Tourism Trends**

- 9. Sally Balcombe referred to the Tourism Trends paper which was circulated prior to the Board as a paper for information, the paper was taken as read.

### **Agenda Item 9: Political/Tourism Affairs**

- 10. Patricia Yates referred to the Political Engagement paper which was circulated prior to the Board as a paper for information. The Board noted the BTA's engagement with Ministers and across various departments in fulfilling its statutory role.
- 11. The Board noted that Number 10 had requested for Tracey Edginton, Head of Media to lead on communications in the Caribbean during the recovery period following Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.
- 12. The BTA had been invited to a dinner hosted by the British Hospitality Association. It was noted that this could be an opportunity for tourism to attract foreign direct investment (“FDI”).
- 13. The Chairman updated the Board on the Industrial Strategy, the progress made on the Tourism Sector Deal was noted. The Chairman referred to the paper circulated prior to the meeting, the following matters were highlighted:-
  - (i) The Tourism Sector Deal bid was presented to the Tourism Industry Council on 27th September 2017.
  - (ii) It was noted that a sector deal could double the value of tourism in a decade, for 2017 tourism was estimated to be worth £126.9bn to the UK economy.
  - (iii) Members noted that compared to other sectors seeking deals that tourism could grow faster than others.
  - (iv) It was recognised that the tourism sector was a strong source of economic growth and job creation for the UK economy.

- (v) Core areas included productivity and connectivity which would result in driving greater visits from more markets, increasing the season length and improving business visits and events.

## **CORPORATE MATTERS**

### **Agenda item 10: Pensions Update**

- 14. Hazel Cunningham updated the Board on the pensions matter and recapped on the proposal being implemented. The Board noted that good progress was being made and that the BTA were on track with the timeframes which would include consultation with staff.

**Action: Hazel Cunningham will provide a verbal update on the outcome of the pension consultation with staff at the December Board.**

### **Procurement Freedoms**

- 15. Giles Smith confirmed that the BTA had been granted Procurement Freedoms from Government Framework. It was noted that the BTA would receive written confirmation on the Freedoms from DCMS imminently.

## **BRITAIN**

### **Agenda Item 11: VisitBritain Marketing Campaign Update**

- 16. The Board received a presentation from Clare Mullin on VisitBritain's marketing campaign. The Board noted the key steps and the launch of the campaign. It was observed that the campaign would be consistent across all markets.

## **ENGLAND**

### **Agenda Item 12: Discover England Fund update**

- 17. Andrew Stokes provided the Board with a verbal update on the Discover England Fund. It was noted that 19 projects had been awarded funding this year. A further year of one year test and learn projects would run. It was noted that there would be an awards panel this week to review four large scale bids which would be over £1m each.
- 18. The Board discussed the re-profiling of DEF, which was ongoing with DCMS. It was noted that DEF was originally configured over three years, however, the decision as to whether DEF could be re-profiled over four years was expected to be made by the end of October 2017.

### **Agenda Item 13: DEF Platform**

- 19. The Board received a presentation from Andrew Stokes on the DEF platform which had been enhanced following the last Board meeting. Board members discussed the risks and benefits

associated with the proposition in the context of the Discovery England Fund. Board members expressed a range of views on this project.

20. The Board engaged in a detailed discussion and evaluation of the proposition and resolved that it approved the recommendation of VisitEngland's Advisory Board to commence the procurement process in relation to the alpha phase for the single technology platform ("Platform").
21. It was noted that the alpha phase shall:
  - (i) Test the ability of the Platform to maximize the reuse of technology across the Discover England Fund ("DEF") bids.
  - (ii) Reduce the risks associated with technology development.
  - (iii) Explore and understand the future potential across the regions of England.
22. The Board noted that the procurement process shall identify whether the intended Platform could be delivered by existing commercially available solutions in a timely and cost efficient manner.

#### **PAPERS FOR INFORMATION**

23. The Board approved the papers provided for information to be taken as read.

#### **Any Other Business**

24. None.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

25. To be held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017.