

**MINUTES OF THE 435th MEETING OF BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY**

**HELD AT 10:00 ON TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017 AT**

**VISITBRITAIN, 1 VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON SW1H 0ET**

**Present:** Steve Ridgway, CBE (Chairman)  
Denis Wormwell  
John Lindquist  
Angela Bray  
Ian McCaig  
Dame Judith Macgregor  
Margaret Llewellyn OBE (via conference call)  
Laura Clayton  
Lord Thurso

**In Attendance:** Sally Balcombe  
Hazel Cunningham  
Lola Moses, Secretary to the Board  
Patricia Yates, Director Strategy & Communications (for items 5, 7 & 14)  
Andrew Stokes, England Director (for items 8, 9 & 11)  
Carol Dray, Commercial Director (for items 6 & 7)  
Robin Johnson, Europe Director (for items 7 & 9)  
Clare Mullin (for item 7)

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

1. The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting. Members joined the Chairman in congratulating Dame Judith Macgregor, who had been appointed to the Board for a term of three years.
  
2. The Chairman updated the Board on recent developments impacting tourism, the Board noted the following:-
  - (i) Recruitment had commenced for the remaining Board vacancy and interviews are expected to commence in January 2018.
  - (ii) The Chairman updated Members on the Industrial Strategy, it was noted that a further update would be provided by Patricia Yates under agenda item 5.
  - (iii) Dan Fara would be shadowing Lola Moses at Board meetings with a view to deputising future boards in her absence.

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

3. The Minutes of the BTA Board meeting held on 28 September 2017 were approved, subject to minor amendments.
4. There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

### **Agenda Item 3: Apologies**

5. The Board has received apologies from Kevin Murphy, Katy Best and Giles Smith (Laura Clayton attended in place of Giles Smith).

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

6. There were no declarations of interest.

## **STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND OUTLOOK**

### **Agenda Item 5: Political/Tourism Affairs**

7. Patricia Yates provided the Board with a verbal update on recent political developments impacting tourism, the following points were highlighted:
  - (i) A tourism sector deal is supported by the Government, it was noted that tourism may be included in a sector deal in 2018.
  - (ii) Members noted the impact that a tourism sector deal would have on the economy.
  - (iii) Members noted the benefits that further economic engagement would bring with regard to trade deals.

### **Agenda Items 6, 7, 8 and 9: Strategy & Business Planning**

8. The paper for the Competitor Insights on Business Events was circulated ahead of the Board and Carol Dray held a presentation covering revenue generation. The Board noted key points on:-
  - (i) The BTA's plans to upscale, grow and diversify.
  - (ii) How strategic partnerships with non-tourism partners could enhance the BTA's revenue.
  - (iii) Proposed changes in products and services.
9. The Board discussed the opportunity for the BTA to act in a consultant capacity and to provide advisory work which would add value to the BTA's existing services. The Board considered the options available and discussed the possibility of a new entity to achieve this. The Board agreed that this venture should be further investigated as a strategic opportunity and would be subject to further approval by the Board.

10. Robin Johnson provided an update on BV&E to the Board, the following points were discussed:
  - (i) The current business events landscape.
  - (ii) Opportunities on increasing the UK's involvement in hosting business events.
  - (iii) The involvement with local authorities for business visits.
11. Sally Balcombe presented the Business Plan for 2018/2019 by making reference to the papers circulated before the Board meeting. The Board noted that a further Business Plan would be presented at a later Board meeting.
12. The Board agreed with the proposed direction of travel for 2018/2019.

## **PERFORMANCE & OUTLOOK**

### **Agenda Items 10 and 11: Review of Dashboard and CEO's Report**

13. Sally Balcombe took the Board through the dashboard. The following points were noted:-
  - (i) The challenges for the BTA in the delivery of tourism growth due to the overall targets and funding available.
  - (ii) The DEF Platform Alpha procurement was making good progress.
  - (iii) The GREAT and #OMGB marketing campaigns would transition to a new creative approach from April 2018 which was likely to increase the ROI.
  - (iv) Government published the Industrial Strategy White Paper on 27 November 2017 and Tourism was recognised as a key industry.

## **ENGLAND**

14. Andrew Stokes provided a progress update on the BTA's 2017/2018 action plan highlighting the following areas:-
  - (i) Quality Scheme – AA performance and delivery model.
  - (ii) DEF Online Pilot Platform progress.
  - (iii) DEF 2.

### **Agenda Item 12: State of the Market Snapshot**

15. The Board was updated on the state of the market and the paper circulated prior to the meeting was taken as read.

## **TOURISM AFFAIRS**

### **Agenda Item 13 and 14: Tourism Trends**

16. Richard Nicholls provided an update to the Board with reference to the Tourism Trends paper circulated before the meeting, it was noted that:
- (i) IPS visits went up by 8% year to date whereas IPS spending increased by 10% year to date.
  - (ii) Flights bookings data suggested that arrivals were up in both September and October by 4%.
  - (iii) Sterling had fallen slightly from its September highs and was now 7% up against the US dollar year on year, though remains historically weak.
  - (iv) In the first seven months of 2017 overnight tourism fell by 2%, though spending rose by 4%.
  - (v) The volume of day trips taken in England fell back by 4% in the year to September, with a similar level of decline in the “core activity” subset of daytrips.
  - (vi) Across the wider economy, business confidence remained relatively low, down from the spike in confidence recorded in early summer.

## **CORPORATE MATTERS**

### **Agenda Item 15: Pensions Update**

17. Hazel Cunningham provided an update to the Board in relation to the Pension Scheme changes in 2017. The Board noted that a further update and a paper for decision would be provided at the January Board meeting.

### **Agenda Item 16: Any Other Business**

18. The Board was presented with the Corporate Risk Register and John Lindquist suggested listing the DEF Platform on the register.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

19. To be held on Thursday 25 January 2018.

20. Without there being any further business to discuss, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 14:35.