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 Cunnigham 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.