

MINUTES OF THE 424th MEETING OF BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY

HELD AT 2.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH 2016 AT

VISITBRITAIN, 20 GREAT SMITH STREET, LONDON SW1P 3BT

Present: Christopher Rodrigues, CBE
Katy Best
Angela Bray
Lise-Anne Boissiere
Penelope, Viscountess Cobham, CBE
John Lindquist
Margaret Llewellyn OBE (via teleconference)
Dr. Michael Cantlay, OBE

Apologies: Ian McCaig
Steve Ridgway, CBE
Kevin Murphy, OBE

In Attendance: Sally Balcombe, Chief Executive
Hazel Cunningham, Director of Business Services
Suneet Joseph, Secretary to the Board
Andrew Stokes, interim England Director
Suzanne Bond, VisitEngland Advisory Board Member (for England Matters)

ENGLAND MATTERS

1. A draft of the Discover England Fund (DEF) paper was tabled for the Board to discuss alongside the draft VisitEngland Action Plan (VE AP). Lise-Anne Boissiere advised the Board that a fuller version of the DEF would be published on the DCMS website for the wider stakeholder community (to inform their understanding of what would be delivered in terms of activities for England). The Board noted that the versions of the VE AP and DEF being discussed at the meeting was prepared for Ministerial sign off purposes only and that fuller, more detailed versions would be presented to the Board for further review, input and approval at the April Board meeting.

2. Sally Balcombe emphasised that the draft of VE AP being put before the Board was an organisational plan not a national plan to illustrate what the vision was for VisitEngland and the specific activities VisitEngland can contribute towards and be accountable for delivering. The Board noted the importance of using the same sources of statistics consistently in the preparation of reports and plans for both Ministers and the wider stakeholder community to avoid any confusion.
3. The Board then discussed ways in which future versions of the DEF and VE AP could be updated to clarify in greater detail the new roles and responsibilities of BTA and VisitEngland together with the new ways of working through both dedicated VisitEngland individuals and shared team resources.
4. It was noted by the Board that in relation to the VE AP, the section relating to SME Engagement should focus on matters that would be of practical value to the SME sector and would benefit from further level of detail and additional data analysis relating to SMEs by volume and value. The Board noted that ultimately, to maximum success for SMEs, many other stakeholders, including DCMS would need to play a proactive part to ensure fullest possible engagement with SMEs.
5. Suzanne Bond left the meeting on completion of Board discussions on England only matters.
6. Margaret Llewellyn (via teleconference), Mike Cantlay and Katy Best joined the meeting for Britain and BTA Corporate Matters.

BRITAIN AND BTA CORPORATE MATTERS

Minutes of the Last Meeting

7. The minutes of the Board meeting held on 26th January 2016 were approved.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

8. There were no matters arising from the Minutes of 26th January 2016.

Declarations of Interest

9. No declarations of interest were made.

State of the Market Snapshot

10. Sally Balcombe introduced a State of the Market Snapshot report highlighting:
 - Increased focus of activity and investment by USA on promoting US- China tourism

11. Sally Balcombe tabled a paper on Priorities & Outcomes for 16/17 to provide the Board with a fuller understanding of key activities being undertaken this FY. There followed a discussion by the Board with particular focus on Business Visits & Events (BV& E) and developing a new Partnerships Strategy to achieve clarity in objectives from working with partners, to better leverage existing partner relationships and maximise *value* (such as data and insights) as well as more traditional benefits from working with partners.
12. In relation to Partnerships Strategy, the Board noted the appointment of Carol Dray, new interim Commercial Director, who would be leading this piece of work. In relation to BV& E, the Board noted the importance of this appointment and the need to appoint at a sufficiently senior level. Sally Balcombe advised that due to available resources, this appointment could not be made at a Director level but that notwithstanding this, the appointment would be sufficiently senior to effectively represent BTA on the Events Industry Board (replacing Joss Croft on his departure from BTA). The Board further noted the importance of greater collaboration between VisitEngland and BTA on BV&E to ensure insights and previous learnings from BV&E were fully shared.

Chief Executive's Report

13. The CEO Report was taken as read by the Board.
14. Katy Best updated the Board about a potential partnership opportunity for BTA to work with Avios. Sally Balcombe agreed to explore this potential opportunity and update the Board on outcomes, if any.

PAPERS FOR DECISION

Outline Business Plan & Budget 2016/17

15. Hazel Cunningham tabled an updated version of the Outline Business Plan & Budget 2016/17 for review and approval by the Board. The Board discussed the paper at length. Sally Balcombe advised that the version tabled before the Board was to seek the Board's endorsement on the overall direction (in terms of vision, focus and outcomes) but that a further, more detailed version would be brought back to the Board at the April Board meeting. Hazel Cunningham noted that in terms of strengthening funding income from partnerships, a balance had to be struck between investment in partnerships versus investment in marketing. The Board discussed the importance to focus on which partnerships would give the most value to the organisation given the existing resource constraints.
17. The Board further noted that given the need to prioritise investment of monies, it was important to be clear about which activities and/or markets would be de-prioritised to meet overall ambitions and objectives for 2016/17. Future version of the Business Plan would identify top priorities and also those activities which would be de-prioritised or stopped altogether. Board members agreed to feedback comments to Hazel Cunningham for consideration and review prior to preparing next version of the Business Plan.

18. The Board **resolved to approve** the Outline Business Plan & Budget 2016/17.
19. Lise Anne Boissiere left the meeting.
20. Joss Croft joined the meeting.

High Level Marketing Plan 2016/17

21. An updated version of the High Level Marketing Plan (HLMP) 2016/17 was tabled to the Board. It was noted that this HLMP was intended to illustrate at a high level what VisitBritain would deliver for England, Wales & Scotland via individual Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) supported by an accompanying Service Level Agreement (SLA), both of which were still under negotiation with strategic partners. A further, more detailed version of the HLMP would be brought back to the Board at the April Board meeting.
22. Katy Best noted that the updated version of the HLMP should include a section on Northern Ireland and related activities. Sally Balcombe noted that the methodology behind the MoUs and SLAs had already been discussed with the strategic partners and agreed. As regards England, England would be consulted in the same way as other strategic partners with equality of treatment. Margaret Llewellyn noted that the Wales team had been working well with the applicable team within BTA re the MoU and SLA with Wales.
23. The Board **resolved to approve** the High Level Marketing Plan 2016/17.

New Organisational Structure & Exit Costs

24. The Board was updated on the new organisational structure and overall exit costs.
25. The Board **resolved to approve** the New Organisational Structure and Exit Costs.

VisitEngland Action Plan

26. The Board **resolved to approve** the VisitEngland Action Plan.

Any Other Business

27. The Chairman expressed thanks to Mike Cantlay for all his valuable contributions and efforts for the Board over the years.

Date of Next Meeting

28. To be held on 28 April 2016