

## VisitEngland

### MINUTES OF THE 429th MEETING OF VISITENGLAND ADVISORY BOARD (VE AB) HELD AT 10.30AM ON WEDNESDAY, 24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017 AT VISITENGLAND, SANCTUARY BUILDINGS, GREAT SMITH STREET, LONDON SW1P 3BT

**Present:** Denis Wormwell (Chairman)  
Sally Balcombe  
Nigel Halkes  
John Hoy  
Sarah Stewart, OBE  
Suzanne Bond

**In Attendance:** Giles Smith, DCMS  
Stephen Darke, DCMS  
Hazel Cunningham, Business Services Director  
Andrew Stokes, England Director  
Carol Dray, Commercial Director (via video conference)  
Tristan Gadsby the CEO of Alliants (via video conference)  
Clare Mullin, Marketing Director  
Lola Moses, Secretary to the Board

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

1. The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting. Stephen Darke (DCMS) was in attendance as an observer, it was noted that he will attend future Board meetings in the absence of Giles Smith (DCMS).
2. The Board congratulated Sarah Stewart following her reappointment to the Board.
3. The Chairman reported on the governance review which was carried out with Sally Balcombe the Chief Executive of VisitBritain and Steve Ridgway the Chairman of the BTA Board in conjunction with Stanton Marris. The following points were noted:-
  - (i) The VEAB and BTA Board would continue to operate at a strategic level delegating detailed work to the executives or committees.
  - (ii) A joint meeting of the VEAB and BTA Board would occur at least once a year to discuss strategy, likely to be each October.
  - (iii) The running order of the BTA Board meeting would no longer segregate the England only items prior to the Britain items and would instead be incorporated into the substantive agenda enabling all BTA Board members to be present throughout, other than in the case of a conflict of interest where members would be recused.
  - (iv) The focus for the Board will be on the England Action Plan.

- (v) Board papers will now take the form of decks.
- 4. The Chairman commented on the vacancies on the VEAB, it was noted that following Purdah work would commence on the recruitment process.
- 5. There were no new declarations of interest.

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

- 6. Subject to minor amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017 were approved.  
There were no matters arising.

### **England Action Plan (EAP)**

### **Agenda Item 5: Update on 2017/18 Action Plan**

- 7. Andrew Stokes updated the Board on the progress of the Action Plan. It was noted that the EAP will be a standing item on the VEAB agenda.
- 8. Andrew Stokes referred the Board to the DEF paper circulated prior to the meeting, the following points were noted:-
  - (i) £3.6m has been spent on projects in Year 1.
  - (ii) £450,000 of research has been commissioned to date.
  - (iii) £505,000 has been granted as Seed and Bridge Funding to support the creation of innovation and effective projects in Years 2 and 3.
  - (iv) £13m is to be allocated to large scale projects in Years 2 and 3.
- 9. On the Business Support Review it was noted that prior to the September Board meeting, two representatives of the VEAB would be part of a working group. John Hoy and Sarah Stewart agreed to join the working group.
- 10. Andrew Stokes advised the Board of the support for Product Development and Distribution being provided by the Commercial team. It was noted that the deep dive session would follow expanding on this area.
- 11. The Board discussed the importance of considering a DEF 2.

**Action: Andrew Stokes/ Secretary to circulate funding profile for the £40m to Board members.**

### **Deep Dive Session**

### **Introduction to Distribution Strategy & Distribution Platform**

- 12. Sally Balcombe introduced the Board to the Deep Dive Session and Tristan Gadsby the CEO of Alliants, who has assisted VisitEngland and VisitBritain with the Distribution Strategy & Distribution Platform. It was noted that Tristan Gadsby's background included consulting and technology services for top travel and retail distributors.

13. Carol Dray and Tristan Gadsby took the Board through the presentation. The following matters were noted as key components of the platform:-
- (i) To allow consumers to be presented with bookable itineraries and recommendations based on local knowledge to inspire new and repeat visitors and to enable online ticket reservations.
  - (ii) Promoting destinations to tourists who might otherwise not leave London.
  - (iii) Generating a variety of travel related content.
  - (iv) Functionality that enables distributors to upload, create and modify digital content.
14. The Board appreciated the benefits of having a common platform for customers to access content and products from suppliers and distributors. It was noted that a pilot would be beneficial to demonstrate the value of the digital platform for future funding. The Board noted that the costs for funding a pilot would be significant and directed that the team to consider the proposal for the pilot further and to bring the matter to the September Board.

**Action: Carol Dray and Andrew Stokes to bring the DEF platform back to the September Board.**

#### **Agenda item 6: Quality Schemes Update**

15. The Board noted the paper provided by Hazel Cunningham. The following points were highlighted: -
- (i) The contract between BTA and the AA was finalised at the beginning of April.
  - (ii) The transition plan is working successfully.
  - (iii) A joint Strategy Board had been established.

#### **Agenda item 8: Domestic Campaign**

16. The Board received a detailed presentation from Clare Mullin on the Domestic Marketing Campaign. The Marketing Plan expounded upon the Marketing Strategy for 2017. The key areas included the target audiences, the marketing channels that would be pursued, the approach to content creation and the allocation of funding.

17. The Board received the presentation for information.

#### **Any Other Business**

There being no other business the Chairman called the meeting to a close.

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

Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017.