

VisitEngland

MINUTES OF THE 436th MEETING OF VISITENGLAND ADVISORY BOARD ("VEAB") HELD AT 10.30AM ON THURSDAY 29th OF NOVEMBER 2018 AT VISITENGLAND 151 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON SW1W 9SZ

Present:

Denis Wormwell, Chairman
Sally Balcombe
John Hoy
Sarah Stewart, OBE
Fiona Pollard
Suzanne Bond
Allan Lambert
Nigel Halkes

In Attendance:

Stephen Darke, DCMS
Hazel Cunningham, Business Services Director
Lola Moses, Secretary to the Board
Andrew Stokes, England Director
Carol Dray, Commercial Director
Humphrey Walwyn (for agenda item 7)
James Chapman (for agenda item 7)
Tim Holt (for agenda item 8)

Agenda item 1: Chair's Update and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting and welcomed them to the new offices at 151 Buckingham Palace Road.

The Chairman updated the Board on the following matters:

- (i) BTA Annual Review and Strategy Day took place; sessions were held on stakeholder involvement with DEF stakeholders;
- (ii) Various events attended by Chairman including the Nottingham Awards.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2018 were approved.

Agenda Item 3: Apologies

No apologies were received.

Agenda Item 4: Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

Agenda item 5: Update on Joint Strategy Day

Sally Balcombe presented the Board with an oral update, the following points were noted:

- a. The Joint Strategy Day was a success, the right level of discussions was held for strategy and productive action points followed up. The focus of the strategy was what the BTA would do in a “new world” of an industrial strategy being announced. The news that the government is negotiating and considering an industrial strategy will accelerate the strategy plan.
- b. Upcoming work within the following months for the industrial strategy was discussed by the Board together with the government’s desire to have the industry come forward with offers around skills for the industrial strategy plan. It was also noted that government want to have more information and that it is interested in commitment from the private sector for matching investments.
- c. Patricia Yates noted that the government’s plan would make it easier to attract commitments from the private sector and to develop a plan that looks at skills and careers within the sector, to deliver careers rather than just deliver jobs. As part of the discussion various sectors and topics were considered such as accessibility, AI and data, clean growth, ageing society and the future of mobility.
- d. The spending review is now likely to take place mid-2019 and, if based on a sector deal, VE’s ask would be strengthened.
- e. A discussion was held on how the VEAB members could support the sector deal.
- f. A discussion was held on productivity. During consultations ministers noted that the tourism sector was different from other sectors and that measurements were not as straightforward as they were in other sectors such as manufacturing. It was noted that tourism directly supported other sectors through productivity and that many other sectors are dependent on tourism.
- g. The next steps in negotiations for a sector deal were discussed and an overall timeline of negotiations was considered by the Board.
- h. Brexit was also discussed, there was internal planning ongoing with Brexit risk registers and a team led by Europe Director Robin Johnson monitoring developments. It was noted that Brexit was a risk but also an opportunity and that a contingency fund was retained. Depending on what was to happen there might be a real opportunity to drive domestic tourism. On the other hand, a concern was expressed about the high value of inbound tourism at stake – European tourism would be affected, however optimism maintained given the government’s recent news of a visa free agreement with Europe.

Agenda item 6: Political/Tourism Affairs

Patricia Yates provided the Board with a verbal update on political developments:

- Soft power: Post-Brexit strategy response would be circulated to Board and it was noted that tourism carried a lot of the soft power messaging. VE was working with external brands and considered various channels to send messages for various age groups.

Agenda item 7: DEF Update

Andrew Stokes circulated papers to the Board and Humphrey Walwyn and James Chapman held a presentation noting the following points:

- VE commissioned SQW in July 2016 to conduct an on-going evaluation of DEF.
- There had been considerable change in the programme and therefore in the evaluation approach since DEF's inception.
- The update presented to the Board was based on the draft interim report of December 2018 and it covered an overview of the changes to the DEF programme, the criteria for success of Year 1 projects, an evaluation overview of round 1 pilots and the core framework for evaluation.
- It was noted that twenty Year 1 projects had been evaluated and a report of how they delivered against the core framework metrics was produced.
- The interim report also contained key learnings and actions following DEF Year 1 and an interim assessment of strategic and complementary activities.
- The next steps in the DEF evaluation were (i) a report in December 2018 for Year 2; (ii) a report in December 2019 for Year 3; and (iii) a final evaluation report in 2020.

DEF Rollover

Andrew Stokes provided the Board with a verbal update on the rollover of DEF and discussed timings and upcoming steps, highlighting how rollovers and amplifications affect current DEF projects. Initial conversations were being held with parties involved in current projects. The Board noted a focus should be made on Germany, USA and Canada for upcoming projects.

DEF Platform

The DEF Platform was going through the procurement process. Delays were noted due to new contract framework provided by DCMS and the procurement process. Work was ongoing and the teams were still heading for the mid-December deadline.

Agenda item 8: Domestic Campaign – Microgapping

Tim Holt referred the Board to the paper circulated prior to the meeting, the following main points were noted:

- The challenge presented was that people aged 16 to 34 took almost 1.4 million fewer holidays at home in 2016 compared to a decade ago.
- The aim of this campaign was to bring generation Y “home” by educating them on the geography and competitive tourism product available in the UK.
- The Board was presented with the strategy of the campaign, its target audience and the issues it is trying to solve. The presentation also included a promotional video and pictures that were being used as part of the campaign.

- Lastly, it was noted that the ambition was to start a trend, to re-invent the short break mentality and work with the industry to adopt this by (i) DMO engagement; (ii) industry engagement; and (iii) rail company on-boarding.

Agenda item 9: Business Planning and Budget Update

Hazel Cunningham set out the focus of the business planning for 2019 onwards and noted that the draft paper for the direction of travel would be circulated to the BTA Board the following week. It was noted that the focus of the paper was to look at the DEF and anticipate a rollover, as well as the DEF Platform.

High level principles would be presented at the BTA Board to approve the steering of the budget and another review would be brought to the BTA Board in January 2019 with approval to be sought in March 2019.

Agenda item 10: Any other business

VE quality schemes were discussed. The current agreement with AA was considered and given that we are only one year away from the end of the contract it was agreed that it should be an agenda item at the next VEAB.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Agenda item 11: Date of Next Meeting

11 March 2019 (10:30 to 14:30)

Chairman's Signature

Original Signed