

## VisitEngland

### MINUTES OF THE 438<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF VISITENGLAND ADVISORY BOARD ("VEAB") HELD AT 10.30AM ON THURSDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019 AT VISITENGLAND 151 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON SW1W 9SZ

**Present:** Denis Wormwell, Chairman  
Sally Balcombe  
John Hoy  
Patricia Yates  
Carol Dray  
Robin Johnson  
Shane Crockett  
Fiona Pollard  
Allan Lambert  
Nigel Halkes

**In Attendance:** Hazel Cunningham, Business Services Director  
David Martin (DCMS)  
Clare Mullin, Marketing Director (for agenda item 6)  
Andrew Stokes, England Director  
Lyndsey Swift (for agenda item 8)  
Lola Moses, Secretary to the Board  
Rukshana Rahman, Senior Paralegal

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

1. The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting.
2. The Chairman updated the Board on the following matters:
  - (i) It was noted that Rukshana Rahman was in attendance and would be assisting with the minutes of the meeting.
  - (ii) It was noted that Sarah Stewart and John Hoy had agreed to extend their terms until 31 October 2019. The Chairman and members thanked Sarah and John for their contribution to the Board.
  - (iii) It was noted that recruitment for the Board positions will commence imminently and that the closing date for applications would be 31 July 2019, with interviews scheduled to be held on 1, 2 and 8 October 2019.

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

3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2019 were approved.
4. The Board noted that there were two action points outstanding from the previous meeting that would be carried forward to the next meeting for updates:

- (i) **Action:** Stephen Darke, DCMS agreed to liaise with colleagues internally to clarify the process should option (iv) proceed in the future.
- (ii) **Action:** Andrew Stokes and Hazel Cunningham to review the contract with the AA and to explore the future options further on.

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

- 5. The Board noted apologies from Sarah Stewart and Stephen Darke.

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

- 6. There were no new declarations of interest.

### **Agenda Item 5: CEO/ Political Update**

- 7. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper providing an update on the Airbnb partnership that was circulated prior to the meeting. The Board was informed of the rationale for the organisation's partnership with Airbnb and emphasised that the usual procurement process was followed. It was noted that:
  - (iii) Substantial positive feedback had been received on the Airbnb partnership. The Board was informed that the initial feedback indicated that the organisation made the right decision to partner with Airbnb. It was highlighted that the partnership was in relation to experiences and accommodation. Airbnb had delivered well and the partnership has been working positively for both parties.
  - (iv) It was noted that DCMS understood the benefits to consumers.
- 8. Patricia Yates provided a verbal update on the political situation in the UK and its potential impact on the organisation.
- 9. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper on the Spending Review circulated prior to the meeting. Members discussed at length the funding required for the Spending Review and the potential challenges.
- 10. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper on English Tourism Week that was circulated prior to the meeting and this was taken as read. It was noted that a review into English Tourism Week was underway in order to assess the following:
  - (v) aims and objectives in relation to English Tourism Week and how this would fit with VisitEngland's role as a voice for England;
  - (vi) who the audience should be;
  - (vii) decide how best to leverage supporters;
  - (viii) what the timing should be; and
  - (ix) appoint the English Tourism Week Advisory Panel and Chair.
- 11. Members discussed the timings for English Tourism Week 2020.
- 12. Patricia Yates provided the Board with a verbal update on the Sector Deal. It was noted that the formal engagement process was underway.

### **Agenda item 6: Domestic Campaigns**

13. Clare Mullin referred the Board to the paper on England marketing and highlighted the following marketing priorities for England for 2019/20:
  - (i) there would be a focus on the strategy for England as distinct from the strategy for Britain and consequently a domestic marketing team would be established with its own marketing strategy;
  - (ii) the microgapping campaign would continue. The achievements of the campaign were noted;
  - (iii) summer EU campaign targeting European Buzzseekers; and
  - (iv) family domestic campaign.
14. Robin Johnson referred the Board to the Brexit and Domestic Implication paper that was circulated prior to the meeting, which was taken as read, and presented the item.

### **Agenda item 7: Quality Scheme Procurement**

15. Andrew Stokes and Hazel Cunningham referred Members to the paper that was circulated prior to the Board meeting. Members discussed at length the performance of the Quality Schemes contract together with future options. The following options were discussed:
  - (i) closing down the Quality Schemes;
  - (ii) re-tendering the Quality Schemes;
  - (iii) selling the Quality Schemes;
  - (iv) extending the current contract for one year; and
  - (v) innovating the Quality Schemes.
16. The recommendation from the VisitEngland Executive was to pursue option (iv) on the basis that it would offer the best opportunity for a seamless continuation of the service. Members also discussed the significance of ascertaining the value of the Quality Schemes should option (v) above be considered in the future.

### **Agenda item 8: DEF (Discover England Fund)**

17. Lyndsey Swift and Carol Dray presented the Board with a detailed update as to how funds were being allocated for DEF. The Board noted the update on amplification and re-profiling projects together with Quarter 3 activity and Year 4 priorities. The progress of the projects was discussed.
18. Shane Crockett updated the Board on the Tourism Exchange GB (TXGB) Platform. The Board was referred to the paper circulated prior to the meeting. The Board discussed the advantages of the TXGB Platform at length. The following main points were noted:
  - (i) the Platform was up and ready;
  - (ii) TXGB is a business-to-business digital platform connecting tourism suppliers in England to distributors around the world;

- (iii) the purpose of the Platform was to provide access to customers via global distribution channels and TXGB would allow suppliers to reach new customers. It was noted that similar platforms had been successful in other countries, such as, Indonesia and Australia; and
- (iv) the process by which suppliers get on the TXGB Platform were explained together with the benefits for suppliers and distributors.

The Board thanked Shane Corkett for his presentation.

#### **Agenda item 9: Business Events**

- 19. Robin Johnson referred members to the England Business Events Strategy Update paper that was circulated prior to the Board meeting. The Board noted an update on how Business Events would support the British Tourist Authority's corporate strategy and how the strategy would be delivered.

#### **Agenda item 10: Statutory Research**

- 20. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper that was circulated prior to the Board meeting. There was a discussion in relation to the data analysis for SME companies, such as, Expedia and Airbnb. It was noted that the focus should be on tourism zones and anticipating challenges.

#### **Agenda item 11: AOB**

- 21. It was noted that sustainability relating to the tourism sector would be an area of focus for the Board.
- 22. There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

#### **Agenda item 12: Date of Next Meeting**

- 23. The date of the next meeting on 12 September 2019 (10:30-14:30) was noted.