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Chairman’s Foreword

Rt Hon Lord McLoughlin CH

When we entered 2020, and I took on the role of Chairman, our sector was at an all-time high, a powerhouse of innovation, creativity and employment.

The British Tourist Authority had just celebrated 50 years of operation and was making ambitious plans for the next half decade with the launch of a new strategy to attract 49 million visits by 2025, with a projected total spend of £35 billion. The industry was on track to achieve this, with a record year anticipated in terms of visits and spend in 2020 and our programme of activity for 2019/20 achieving a 21:1 return on investment.

When COVID-19 arrived on our shores, it hit our industry first and hardest. Successful destinations and businesses across the country saw their cash flow dry up and had to close their doors to visitors. Inbound spend dropped by a staggering 78% in 2020, compared to the previous year, and domestic spend by 63% — resulting in an estimated loss to the economy of £285 million per day from tourism.

The sector faced an unprecedented challenge. The Government’s support measures, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the VAT cut for hospitality businesses, and the business rates holiday were a lifeline helping many businesses survive and keeping people in jobs. As the months went on and pubs, hotels, attractions and events remained closed or found social distancing meant they could not open economically; cash reserves began to run dry.

VisitBritain/VisitEngland responded by refocusing as an organisation, rallying behind the industry and directing efforts where we could deliver the most value to the sector. We stepped up our support for businesses and destinations – from providing consumer insight and actionable data, to facilitating industry and Government dialogues and developing reassurance schemes. When possible we ran marketing campaigns to build demand, developing assets that could be shared across the industry. And now as businesses start to reopen and we hope for a better summer and autumn I appreciate this was only the beginning. There is much more to do as the industry starts to rebuild.

The Government’s planned Tourism Recovery Plan will be a welcome and important step in the road to recovery – recognising the economic potential of our sector, setting out a clear policy direction for the future and outlining the ambitions for domestic and international tourism. By working together to drive demand and build back visitor spend as quickly as possible, we can emerge from the pandemic a more resilient, more sustainable, more inclusive, and more innovative industry.

Tourism has a proven track record as a growth sector. Worth £127 billion to the economy, the industry is the UK’s third largest service export and provides jobs for more than 3.1 million people. As a sector, we have a lot of experience in levelling up, supporting local economies in every part of Britain.

I have seen the sector’s ability not only to adapt during this crisis, but also to show the heart of hospitality – from accommodation providers taking in NHS staff after long shifts and conference and events venues opening as Nightingale hospitals, to museums uploading their collections to the web to help parents with home schooling.

“I have seen the sector’s ability not only to adapt during this crisis, but also to show the heart of hospitality.”
“After a year of digital connection and missed experiences, we cannot underestimate the immense social value that our industry will impart over the coming months. It will be key to reviving the spirits of the nation.”

While the road to where we are today has been tough, there are some reasons for optimism. We have seen the nations of the UK all take steps to reopen domestic tourism and while currently limited, international travel has also re-started once again.

Many people will now be travelling to reconnect with family and friends. They may even have been encouraged to book their first domestic holiday in years. After a year of digital connection and missed experiences, we cannot underestimate the immense social value that our industry will impart over the coming months. It will be key to reviving the spirits of the nation.

Our priorities for the year ahead are clear: to aid the recovery of both domestic and international tourism; stimulate demand; encourage businesses to build back better by providing support and guidance; and champion tourism across the UK Government, enabling the policy support that will ensure tourism thrives.

We know that there is plenty of pent-up demand from people around the world to get travelling again. We want to make sure they choose Britain, whether it is as a place to do business, to site their convention or to explore our spectacular country on holiday. We want to make sure that people continue to make Britain their destination of choice year after year.

Our international competitors have been readying their battle strategies to compete for the return of international tourists. Nevertheless, we have a lot on our side.

“Not only are our nations rich in culture, heritage and experiences that are unique to the UK, but the major events taking place here next year are set to be significant tourism draws. The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and Festival UK 2022 all present opportunities to promote Britain on the world stage.”

Our business events sector has to be firing on all cylinders to make a success of these events and ensure they demonstrate why businesses and organisations should choose Britain as host for their next meeting or conference. With the aim to become the ‘World’s Meeting Place’, we will be promoting the desirability of our already strong events offer in order to support the recovery of the wider sector.

Our bid for the forthcoming spending review will build on the successful projects we have already been running and the opportunities that lay before us.

Tourism is a critical industry for our country – delivering jobs and economic growth across the nations and regions, strengthening Britain’s place on the world stage, and providing valuable opportunities for us to create important memories with loved ones. This past year has been challenging to say the least, but I am optimistic about the future.

I would like to thank my fellow board members who have welcomed me into the role, as well as those that joined the board alongside me in 2020 including Carol Hui, Karin Sheppard, Peter Gowers, Robin Frewer and Nick de Bois the new Chair of the VisitEngland Advisory Board.

I want to thank and recognise Sally Balcombe for her leadership as Chief Executive, and everyone in the VisitBritain/VisitEngland team across the world for their work this year, often in difficult circumstances.

Finally, I would like to thank the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden CBE MP, the Tourism Minister, Nigel Huddleston MP and the team at DCMS who have been passionate advocates for tourism throughout the pandemic.

The VisitBritain/VisitEngland team and I look forward to working with you, to cement the recovery and the future of one of this country’s greatest industries.

Patrick McLoughlin
RT Hon Lord McLoughlin CH
Chairman, British Tourist Authority
Chief Executive’s Statement

Sally Balcombe

At the start of 2019, our industry was thriving. Tourism was Britain’s seventh largest export industry, worth £127 billion to the UK economy and accounted for more than 3.1 million jobs.

We were lucky enough to have secured a sector deal for tourism – the first of its kind — and launched a five-year strategy with a clear mission — To make tourism one of the most successful and productive sectors for the UK economy. Our work in 2019 provided us with a good foundation in which we can learn from, build upon and flex to fit with the current climate. We focused on five priority areas that aligned with our strategy for growth:

• To build tourism’s value across the nations and regions and deliver on our targets with GREAT funding.
• To sustain the legacy of the Discover England Fund and amplify England activity.
• To advise on tourism growth, resilience and productivity.
• To deepen and integrate our partnership activity across our public diplomacy partners, strategic partners, B2B, B2C and brand – to leverage reach, innovation and value.
• To embed business events activity to deliver wins across the UK.

Thanks to this focus, we were making real in-roads in the delivery of the strategy, with our activity for that financial year achieving an additional £793 million in visitor spend for the economy — which means that every £1 that the Government invested in us, we delivered £21 to the British economy.

Furthermore, we leveraged Government investment by attracting £7.7 million of private sector investment in cash and in-kind and raised our own revenue through the VisitBritain Shop, with £1.2 million in net profit being reinvested in marketing Britain around the world.

This last year, however, has been a completely different picture, with tourism being one of the first and hardest hit sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also realised that the pandemic was an extraordinary event that would need an extraordinary response from us. So we refocused our teams to ensure that everyone understood their role and that our efforts were focused on the areas where we would add the most value.

We set out four clear priorities:

1. **Staff welfare.** Our staff are our most important asset, and we reap the benefits of their creativity and passionate commitment in our work. We needed to ensure they felt supported through all the changes to the way we worked and in the continued uncertainties of our time and that we emerged strengthened as a global team.

2. **Government advisory.** We have a statutory role to advise Government and provide the data and insight that feeds into policy making. We needed to be clear on the impact on the industry and which Government interventions would make a difference.

“We knew we had a vital role to play in supporting tourism through the pandemic to ensure that the industry is best placed to start recovery in 2021.”
3. Industry support and recovery. Through advice sessions and webinars we ran a programme to help the industry build the skills it would need to come through recovery. Our marketing activity ensured that we were keeping the aspiration of a trip to Britain alive in international audiences and encouraging Brits to holiday at home and explore more of their local areas when this was possible.

4. Business continuity and transformation. To compete in a digital world we need to keep our key systems and data management updated and relevant to our core activities. We have also ensured that all our procurement has followed strict Government compliance rules.

“As we see the green shoots of recovery with the roadmap for coming out of lockdown and a successful vaccination programme, we want to ensure we build on the lessons we have learnt during the pandemic.”

With a tight single-year financial settlement we will continue to be focused in our activity — driving immediate tourism recovery through building back visitor spend as quickly as possible and supporting the industry.

We know that inbound tourism is an extremely competitive global industry and we are going to need to be out there competing for visitors and ready to sell Britain. There is a need to boost consumer confidence both domestically and internationally and to support our industry, ready to welcome back visitors as soon as the time is right. Therefore, VisitBritain and VisitEngland will be focussing on distinct areas to not only drive demand, but also boost supply.

Our VisitBritain activity will focus on re-stimulating international demand to convert visitors who are most likely to visit in 2021/22. VisitEngland will focus on supporting England’s tourism industry to recover and re-stimulate domestic demand. Together we will continue to bid for and win events for England and for Britain; deliver on our statutory duty to advise on tourism; continue to be the authority on tourism; provide expert advice to industry and to Government; and focus on the implementation of our people strategy and delivery of our digital transformation programme.

“There is much still to be done but I and the team are clear in our commitment to the industry and to rebuilding a resilient and sustainable sector.”

To close, I would like to thank the former Chair of the BTA Board, Steve Ridgway CBE, and the former Chair of the VisitEngland Advisory Board, Denis Wormwell, for their support, leadership and guidance throughout 2019/20, along with our Directors and the whole team, past and present, for making VisitBritain/VisitEngland a world-leading tourist board and a positive place to work. I wish Steve and Denis all the best for their future endeavours.

And finally, I would like to thank the new Chairs, Rt Hon Lord McLoughlin CH, Chair of the BTA and Nick de Bois, Chair of the VisitEngland Advisory Board and our Board members, the team at VisitBritain/VisitEngland, our sponsoring department at DCMS and the Ministers for their support, and the Chair and Board for their continued guidance.

Sally Balcombe
Chief Executive, VisitBritain/VisitEngland
In 2019, the UK tourism industry was thriving. As Britain’s third largest export industry, the tourism sector contributed £127 billion to Britain’s economy, around 9% GDP.

Since 2010 it had been the fastest growing sector when it comes to employment, accounting for over three million jobs.

The sector was projected to grow 3.8% a year by 2025 — faster than the digital industry, and was one of a select number of industries supported with a tailored sector deal in 2019, recognising its importance to the economy.

Inbound tourism was setting new records with inbound visitors spending £28.4 billion in 2019, up 7% on inbound spending in 2018. Visits were also up (1%) in 2019, with 40.9 million visits to the UK recorded — just short of the record-holder in 2017.

Domestic tourism in 2019 was also strong, seeing a return to normal following the weakened 2018 — a year beset by bad weather that affected the number of holidays taken. The total number of domestic overnight trips taken in England increased 1.7% to 99.1 million with British residents spending £19.5 billion.
Tourism performance pre-COVID-19

- 3rd largest export industry in Britain
- £127 billion worth to the UK economy
- Accounted for 3.1 million jobs
- £19.5 billion spent on domestic overnight trips in 2019
- 40.9 million visits to the UK in 2019
- £28.4 billion inbound visitor spend in the UK in 2019 (Record breaking!)
- 99.1 million domestic overnight trips to England in 2019
At the start of 2019, we launched a new five-year strategy with a clear mission - To make tourism one of the most successful and productive sectors for the UK economy.

In 2019/20, our activity achieved an additional £793 million in visitor spend for the economy, which means that every £1 that the Government invested in us we delivered £21 to the British economy. We leveraged Government investment by attracting £7.7 million of private sector investment in cash and in-kind and raised our own revenue through the VisitBritain Shop, with £1.2 million in net profit being reinvested into marketing Britain around the world.
Our impact in 2019/20

£793 million
additional visitor spend generated as a result of our activities in 19/20

For every £1 invested in us, a visitor spent £21 in the UK

Our Business Events Growth Programme achieved an estimated ROI of 27:1 on the grants it issued to grow international business events held in the UK.

£7.7 million
in cash and marketing in-kind support

The VisitBritain Shop generated £1.2 million gross profit

Our international and domestic England activity reached 75 million users through Instagram and 55.5 million users through Facebook

£1.2 million
gross profit
Working in partnership to support the industry through COVID-19

In 2020, the world was struck by the global pandemic, COVID-19, with tourism being one of the first and hardest hit sectors.

International travel was brought to a standstill for much of the year and into 2021 with travel bans and quarantine measures put in place against the UK, and by the UK, for most of our major markets.

We also saw sharp losses in domestic tourism. With millions of jobs and local economies depending on tourism right across the country and with national/local restrictions and lockdowns, businesses in the sector have lost months of trading, with many struggling to survive.

As the national tourism agency, we have had a vital role to play in supporting tourism through the pandemic and ensuring that the industry is best placed to start recovery in 2021.
Over the last year, we re-focused and reprioritised all of our activity to cover four key areas:

1. **Staff welfare**
   Our people are our most valued and important asset and our priority through this crisis has been supporting and enabling our staff through all the changes to the way we worked and in the continued uncertainties of our time so that we emerged strengthened as a global team.

2. **Government advisory**
   We have a statutory role to advise Government and provide the data and insight that feeds into policy making. We needed to be clear on the impact on the industry and which Government interventions would make a difference.

3. **Industry support and recovery**
   Through advice sessions and webinars we ran a programme to help the industry build the skills it would need to come through recovery. Our marketing activity ensured that we were keeping the aspiration of a trip to Britain alive in international audiences and encouraging Brits to holiday at home and explore more of their local areas when the time was right.

4. **Business continuity and transformation**
   To compete in a digital world we need to keep our key systems and data management updated and relevant to our core activities. We have also ensured that all our procurement has followed strict Government compliance rules.
Our people are our most valued and important asset and our priority through this crisis has been supporting and enabling our staff through all the changes to the way we worked and in the continued uncertainties of our time so that we emerged strengthened as a global team.

Our people vision is to build a passionate and empowered team, supported by an inclusive and fun community. This year we developed a new people strategy, which makes a long-term commitment to creating a culture that prioritises and supports our people globally, ensuring our organisation lives up to its brand promise and is a great place to work. The strategy is future-facing and identifies four goals:

- motivate our teams
- increase our supply of talent
- foster inspirational, confident, empowering leadership
- embed diversity and inclusion in everything we do.

As part of our ongoing commitment to looking after staff mental health and wellbeing, we launched a new Wellbeing hub on our Intranet along with a Wellbeing Pledge – promising that as an organisation and as individuals working together, we will ensure that health and wellbeing is central to all that we do.

In our mission to support and represent diversity and inclusion across the organisation, we formed networks to offer guidance, support and education on specific topics that impact our employees. Many staff have stepped forward to participate in the seven now established networks covering LGBTQIA+, Racial & Ethnic Equality, Disability & Accessibility, Fair Treatment, Gender Parity, Religion & Faith, Youth Engagement & Youth Board.

As a result of taking these proactive steps, our staff surveys have shown engagement scores are increasing, surpassing the Civil Service People Survey benchmark in each area of the survey.
We have a statutory role to advise Government and provide the data and insight that feeds into policy making. We needed to be clear on the impact on the industry and which Government interventions would make a difference.

To ensure the industry spoke with one voice, we hosted round tables and gathered valuable input from the sector on the areas where Government support was needed, making sure that they were clearly articulated.

We gave evidence early on the impact of COVID-19 to the DCMS Select Committee and continued to keep tourism on Government’s agenda through virtual engagement with MPs and Ministers. We advised on the industry and provided evidence and briefings on the real-time impact on the sector for parliamentary debates, policy papers and other Government strategy including Government’s Integrated Review on Foreign Policy and the Home Office 2025 Border Strategy Review.

The Tourism Industry Emergency Response group (TIER) was activated at the beginning of the pandemic in January 2020, to discuss issues facing the tourism industry, help shape government support for tourism businesses at this crucial time, as well as look at longer-term recovery.

Comprising of tourism industry associations and organisations, as well as relevant government departments, the group has been meeting regularly and has been:

- Monitoring impact on tourism, hospitality and event businesses and destinations
- Providing evidence of the issues facing the industry
- Feeding in support requirements for businesses and identifying where there may be gaps
- Sharing evidence of the issues facing the industry and business impact
- Advising on requirements for re-opening and looking at ways to extend the season

We have closely monitored the impact of COVID-19 and kept the industry informed on the latest relevant Government guidance and information affecting the tourism sector.

**260**

Daily email updates sent to TIER members and DMOs

**36**

TIER meetings held

**225,925**

COVID-19 page views — most visited page on industry website in 2020

**67**

67 special industry bulletins — average open rate of 36%
Government advisory

We have issued daily status updates and guidance updates throughout the pandemic with our industry website, social media and e-communications programme acting as the go-to source of truth.

English Tourism Week 2020 (ETW2020), our annual campaign championing the English tourism sector and raising awareness of the quality, wealth and value on offer around the country, trended on Twitter and generated widespread media coverage. 35 MPs, including the Tourism Minister, Culture Minister, Agriculture Minister, Shadow DCMS Secretary, Shadow Tourism Minister and Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, took to social media to share messages of support for the industry, under the #EnglishTourismWeek20 hashtag.

Our research has proved an invaluable source of data, used widely across the industry and Government, with regular domestic and international consumer sentiment and the economic impact modelling feeding into both the Global Travel Taskforce report and the DCMS-led Tourism Recovery Plan.

We continued to make the case for tourism through the submission of an ambitious funding bid to Government as part of the Spending Review. It was a tough spending round across Government and we were pleased to have secured a small additional uplift.

Reached
3.3million
through 1.3k+
#EnglishTourismWeek20 tweets.

277+
ETW2020 media stories

Total reach: 18M+
Value £368k

Over 17k
new industry newsletter subscriptions

150+% increase
Industry support and recovery

Through advice sessions and webinars we ran a programme to help the industry build the skills it would need to come through recovery. Our marketing activity ensured that we were keeping the aspiration of a trip to Britain alive in international audiences and encouraging Brits to holiday at home and explore more of their local areas when the time was right.

Supporting the industry at a time of crisis

We have stepped up our business support activity to build skills in the SME sector through guidance on the Business Advice Hub. Our series of Business Recovery webinars, on topics such as ‘destination marketing’ and ‘getting your business visible on Google’, along with our market update webinars, provided practical insights, tips and guidance. 91% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that they found the sessions useful.

Our consumer sentiment research showed us that there was considerable reluctance from the public to start going out again, so we developed a UK-wide industry standard and consumer mark “We’re Good to Go”. Launched in June 2020 in collaboration with the national tourist organisations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and working closely with industry bodies and DMOs, over 46,000 businesses across the UK registered for the scheme.

Recognised by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) as meeting its international global standardised health and hygiene protocols and for its role in supporting the recovery of the UK tourism sector, tourism businesses in the UK registered to the scheme are eligible for the international ‘Safe Travels’ stamp.

We continued to help connect small businesses to global distributors through our B2B platform, Tourism Exchange GB (TXGB). Niche UK distributors including Away with the Kids, Cool Places and Not in the Guide Books have also joined the network along with over 50 DMOs, giving tourism businesses the ability to connect easily with over 130 distributors.

More than 75 DMOs have worked in partnership across projects to continue to develop a domestic offer through the final year of the Discover England Fund. The projects, which have now created over 750 bookable tourism products over five years, spent the last year focusing on the domestic market and getting ‘bookable’ year-round activities, experiences and attractions ready for visitors to explore more of England when the time is right.

We also provided support through three new funding schemes to DMOs who were particularly hard hit by the pandemic - the £1.3m Destination Management Resilience Scheme, the £1million DMO Financial Emergency Assistance Fund and an ‘Escape the Everyday’ Marketing Recovery Fund.

7,685 attendees at domestic business recovery webinars

46,775 UK businesses registered for globally recognised We’re Good to Go industry mark

10,379 PDF downloads

130+ distributors signed up to TXGB

Over 381,797 Business Advice hub page views - up 155%
Inspiring domestic visitors in a time of uncertainty

Amidst the uncertainty faced by the tourism industry, there has been a wealth of heart-warming tales of businesses innovating and supporting their communities, from gin distillers making free hand sanitiser, to museums offering virtual tours of their collections. As part of our marketing response, we uncovered and shared those stories across our channels to keep the country front of mind for when travel could resume.

In support of the industry opening back up in summer 2020, we ran the ‘Know Before You Go’ campaign, as part of the UK Government’s Enjoy Summer Safely campaign. To support tourism businesses and reassure visitors, people were encouraged to check ahead to find out what was safe to do and when.

This was followed by our £5 million UK-wide domestic marketing campaign, ‘Escape the Everyday’, which saw tourism businesses join a collective message to inspire visitors to travel and enjoy the country’s amazing tourism offer for the year ahead. A lockdown edition, ‘Escape the Everyday at Home’, was later launched to inspire visitors to discover and explore our nations and regions from home, keeping Britain top of visitors’ minds for when travel would be possible again. It also included a “support local” message. The paid campaign reached 73% of the UK population, with 81% expressing a desire to take a UK trip.

Meanwhile, working with Channel 4 on the ‘Mission: Accessible’ social media series, we highlighted the country’s accessible tourism offer to inspire future bookings. The BAFTA-nominated series achieved nearly 11 million views, with the Brighton episode receiving the highest number of engagements out of all of Channel 4’s branded content on Facebook.
Keeping Britain top of mind for international travellers

In international markets we have used social media to connect with audiences and developed content that inspires with reasons to travel to Britain. Our ‘always on’ approach to marketing has seen us share the best of our culture, countryside, cities and virtual visitor attractions as well as engaged prospective visitors through film and TV, music, heritage, literature, gardens and British food and drink.

In key markets, we have worked closely with the travel trade using the opportunity to tell them more about British product so that they are ready to promote Britain when borders open. Our annual flagship event, ExploreGB, went virtual this year. Taking place in March 2021, it brought together more than 350 buyers from 20 countries to connect online and do business with over 350 UK tourism industry suppliers. Buyers and international journalists attended webinars to know more about Britain and media interviews with our CEO and Chairman resulted in more than 50 stories in global media.

UK suppliers also met virtually with VisitBritain in-market experts as part of VisitBritain International Business Exchange (VIBE).

We have continued to leverage our partnerships working with the Travel Leaders Network to keep Britain front of mind in the US, and with SpiceJet in India on their new Delhi-London route. With film and TV being powerful motivators for travel with almost a third of potential visitors to the UK keen to visit places ‘seen-on-screen’, we worked with partners in the US to promote the Netflix series Bridgerton, with themed tour packages and itineraries for eager fans of the show. Meanwhile, in Brazil, we worked with EntertainmentOne, using Peppa Pig as a hook to promote family attractions in Britain.
Supporting Business Events

The business events sector has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, with much of the industry on pause since March 2020. To show unity, understanding and camaraderie to the international business events community, we released an animated video letter of support in April 2020, which was amplified by the UK business events industry to reach over 158,000 international event professionals, with more than 33,000 views.

We quickly moved our major event, MeetGB online, pioneering online events. Run over two days in June 2020 for European and American buyers it allowed 67 UK destinations to connect with 362 buyers and 283 trade visitors through over 1,200 one to one video meetings.

This was followed in February 2021 by MeetEngland Virtual, connecting Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) buyers from Europe and North America with destinations across England.

Meanwhile, we launched a refreshed brand in October to inspire meeting and events planners to reimagine creatively the future of business events in the UK. Events are GREAT 'Events. Reimagined', launched at The Meetings Show in October 2020. Our new campaign achieved over 13,500 impressions across The Meetings Show channels and through the course of the event, we had one-to-one video meetings with 34 international events organisers to discuss future business.

The following month, we extended the reach of the campaign, launching our England edition at the international virtual exhibition IBTM World which was attended by over 8.6k event professionals and decision-makers. On our 'virtual stand', we held 55 one-to-one video meetings with international event planners and decision-makers to promote England, as well as supported 14 English destinations who also exhibited at the event.

Events reimagined campaign achieved:

- **Events are Great edition:**
  - 2.3 million campaign impressions
  - 1.2 million video views

MeetEngland edition:

- **20.4 million campaign impressions**
- **265k video views**

COVID-19 response: Open letter of support campaign

- **158k event professionals reached**
To compete in a digital world we need to keep our key systems and data management updated and relevant to our core activities. We have also ensured that all our procurement has followed strict Government compliance rules.

This year, we kick-started an ambitious programme to improve the way we work, communicate and collaborate. Bringing together a wide range of projects and programmes, we will significantly improve our day-to-day work and the way we do things as an organisation.

We are currently investing in an overhaul of our existing tools and systems to build a giant toolkit of support for staff on the everyday, unseen operations that underpin our mission to build back tourism. These include new or improved systems for finance, procurement, HR, travel and expenses, data strategy, contract management and more.

The developments we are making to our CRM system will improve our customer facing digital offer and ensure our internal systems will be more efficient and effective.

It will also help us communicate better with our customers and share information with each other.

Upcoming new digital platforms, which are not only easier to use internally, will transform how we promote Britain and England, support our industry and generate retail revenue.

Smarter technology and streamlined processes will help us to save time and make policy compliance as easy as possible, ensuring we spend public money wisely.

Furthermore, our adherence to our compliance obligations as an arm’s length body is so important to us we are ensuring it is fully embedded in everything we do.
Driving tourism recovery

Our strategy and priorities for 2021/22

Our role in 2021/22 is to drive immediate tourism recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by building back visitor spend as quickly as possible and supporting the industry.

We know that inbound tourism is an extremely competitive global industry and we are going to need to be out there competing for visitors and ready to sell Britain.

There is a need to boost consumer confidence both domestically and internationally and to support our industry, ready to welcome back visitors as soon as the time is right.

Our focus

VisitBritain

Our focus for VisitBritain will be on the demand-side, re-stimulating international demand with a tight focus on converting visitors who are most likely to visit in 2021/22.

VisitEngland

For VisitEngland, our focus will be on both the supply and the demand-side, supporting England’s tourism industry to recover and re-stimulate domestic demand.

Areas of focus that are common to both VisitBritain and VisitEngland include:

VisitBritain

The need to bid for and win events for England and for Britain. Business events have been particularly hard hit. Large events have been fully on pause since March 2020, so it is crucial we support the sector and drive demand.

VisitEngland

We have a statutory duty to advise on tourism. We will continue to be the authority on tourism, providing expert advice to industry and to Government.
Our four corporate priorities for 2021/22

1. Re-stimulate domestic and international demand to drive immediate visitor spend as quickly as possible.

2. Support the English tourism industry so that SMEs and DMOs/CVBs are ready to welcome back visitors.

3. Be the authority on tourism, advising industry and government so they can make informed decisions.

4. Deliver transformation so that we can be a more effective organisation with the right culture, skills, capabilities, tools and systems and can deliver a better experience for our staff and customers.
1 Re-stimulate international and domestic demand

OUR GOAL
To drive immediate visitor spend as quickly as possible.

By adopting a conversion strategy using our expertise and robust data we will identify and target the best prospect audiences and pivot to where the greatest opportunities for Britain and England lie.

We will do this through:

Tactical marketing to convert potential international and domestic leisure visitors
We will focus on fewer and deeper commercial partnerships. On the international front this will be supported by B2B work to influence the international industry so they are prepared to sell Britain and “switch back on”.

Being a trusted voice on the latest information affecting travel
This will provide consumers with the knowledge and confidence to book.

Strategic alignment with Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
To amplify our impact, we will align activity where it makes sense to do so and work together on Britain’s soft power and brand.

Winning Business Events
Our focus will be on securing high profile international business event wins linked to priority sectors for the UK government and driving demand for shorter lead-time events, corporate meetings and incentives.

England Marketing
In addition to delivering tactical marketing activity, VisitEngland will develop England’s brand and positioning over the course of the year, collaborating with industry. We will also inform VisitBritain on the marketing of England internationally, providing guidance on what / when to promote.
2 Supporting the English tourism industry

OUR GOAL
To work with SMEs and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs)/Convention & Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) to ensure that these key players in the tourism landscape are ready to welcome back visitors.

We will do this through:

Supporting SMEs to rebuild and recover to ensure a sustainable and resilient future
We will develop and market an integrated, structured, but flexible approach that plugs critical skills gaps, solving problems for SMEs. Building on our expertise and knowledge, training and development opportunities will continue to be offered.

Product Bookability and Distribution
To increasing bookability and diversify distribution channels for English tourism product, the TXGB platform will be fully utilized and existing product will be embedded across our activity, both domestically and internationally.

Stewarding the Landscape
We will support the strategic development of DMOs, establish a clear objective-focused relationship to support recovery nationally and locally and build on our support offer and sharing expertise and best practice.

Business Events
A support offer provided to the business events industry in England, as well as recovery opportunities through owned, earned and paid channels for key players including DMOs and CVBs.
3  Be the authority on tourism

OUR GOAL
To continue to provide well-evidenced advice to help tourism stakeholders make informed decisions – whether that be government on policy or an SME on its investment decisions.

We will do this through:

Advising Government on tourism policy
We will provide expertise and insight to our sponsor department, DCMS and keep tourism high on the political agenda, acting as the interlocutor between industry and Government.

Data
The provision of timely, accurate and relevant data and insight will continue to be critical to inform internal decision-making and for external stakeholders next year given market conditions.

Industry and media communications
Chance to maintain the corporate website as a "source of truth" for the UK tourism sector will be complemented by proactive communication to industry stakeholders and press.
Delivering the People Strategy

The implementation of our new People Strategy will build a passionate and empowered team, supported by an inclusive and fun community.

Delivering Digital Transformation

By developing our customer-facing digital offer, we will improve our customer communications, and ensure we meet their expectations and remain relevant and competitive. Transformation will also improve our internal systems in line with compliance and public spend processes.

Delivering the Retail Strategy

By realising our retail vision of becoming the trusted place for people around the world to discover and buy experiences to enrich their trip to Britain, we will provide a route to market for the UK tourism industry, with any profit being reinvested into the marketing of Britain as a tourism destination.