

## CONFIDENTIAL

### **MINUTES OF THE 448<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE VISITENGLAND ADVISORY BOARD (VEAB) HELD ON TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 10:00AM AT VISITBRITAIN/VISITENGLAND, 3 GROSVENOR GARDENS, VICTORIA, LONDON SW1W 0BD**

**Present:** Nick De Bois, Chairman  
Sarah Fowler, Board Member  
Nigel Halkes, Board Member  
Allan Lambert, Board Member  
David Martin, DCMS  
Fiona Pollard, Board Member  
Nadine Thomson, Board Member  
Dr Andy Wood OBE DL, Board Member

**In Attendance:** Sally Balcombe, Chief Executive / BTA Accounting Officer  
Henry Bankes, General Counsel and Company Secretary  
Dame Judith Macgregor, Interim BTA Chair  
Robin Johnson, England Director  
Peter Mills, Business Services Director  
Andrew Stokes, England Director  
Lyndsey Turner-Swift, Head of England Planning and Delivery  
Patricia Yates, Director of Strategy & Communications  
Dale Rustige, Governance Executive (minutes)

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

1. The Chairman welcomed members and attendees to the meeting. It was noted that this was the first meeting that has been held in person since the COVID pandemic.
2. Dame Judith Macgregor, Interim BTA Chair, was welcomed and was attending the meeting as an observer. She noted that she valued the VEAB's role in providing guidance and input to the BTA Board.

#### **Agenda Item 2: Apologies**

3. There were no apologies to note.

#### **Agenda Item 3: Declarations of Interest**

4. There were no new declarations of interest for noting.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Last Meeting**

5. The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were approved.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Matters Arising / Action Tracker**

6. There were no matters arising to note.

## **Agenda Item 6: Political Update**

### 7. Spending Review

The Board received a verbal update from Patricia Yates and the following key points were noted:

- 7.1. The BTA's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) bid had been submitted to Treasury on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- 7.2. The bid was aligned with both the Government and DCMS priorities and included key areas such as business events, transformation, Data Hub, sustainability, including the Government's estates priority to move public body offices outside of London.
- 7.3. There has been an increase in the ask for the capital budget - £7m over 3 years. The ask for transformation has also been increased to £2.6m. There should also be an increase with the GREAT budget, however the focus of this will mainly be on international campaigns.
- 7.4. A bid has been put forward linked to the recommendations set forth in the DMO review report.
- 7.5. The outcome of the CSR bid will be announced at the end October 2021.

### 8. Public Bodies Review

- 8.1. The Board was provided a brief update regarding the ALB review process that the BTA will be undergoing. This forms part of the Government priority to review ALBs every 3 years. The scope of the review will cover the main areas such as governance, accountability, efficacy, compliance, including the BTA's statutory function.

## **Agenda Item 7: Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) Review Update**

### 9. Implications for VisitEngland

The Chairman provided a verbal update and the following key points were noted:

- 9.1. The DMO review is an opportunity to bring coherence and strategy in the DMO landscape. It offers a chance to help further develop the growth of domestic tourism.
- 9.2. During the review, a large range of stakeholders were engaged and involved, such as DMOs, regional representatives, and large and small businesses. The sentiments from those engaged indicate that the review has been seen as an opportunity rather than a threat. However, it was noted that it would be unavoidable that the proposed recommendations will not satisfy everyone.
- 9.3. One of the key recommendations put forward from the review was to have an accreditation process in place for DMOs, with tiered categories for those that were effectively performing.
- 9.4. Accountability was a key theme within the recommendations and this would be something that VisitEngland will play a role in, to lead the governance and accreditation process for DMOs.
- 9.5. Funding from the government would be essential to take the proposals in the report forward. DCMS has noted that the government seemed to take the recommendations positively, particularly on the funding piece.

## **Agenda Item 8: Activity**

### 10. England Domestic Marketing

- 10.1. The Board noted the paper and took this as read.

### 11. Tourism Recovery Plan Deliverables

The Board noted the paper and took this as read.

### 11.1. The National Lottery Days Out Campaign

The Board received a presentation from Robin Johnson and the following key points were noted:

- 11.1.1. This Voucher Scheme is a Tourism Recovery Plan initiative brokered by DCMS with The National Lottery to support the recovery of UK tourism businesses.
- 11.1.2. There is a total of £10m being invested: £1.74m campaign, £260,000 development and £8m pot for consumer vouchers. The aim of the campaign is to stimulate demand for off-season visits to UK attractions (through the campaign period October 2021 to March 2022).
- 11.1.3. The vouchers would be used and spent by customers on attractions, theme parks, zoos, aquariums, tours and excursions.
- 11.1.4. Product launch will be in October 2021.

### 11.2. Domestic BritRail Pass

The Board received a brief update regarding the campaign and the following key points were noted:

- 11.2.1. The development of a new domestic tourism product, the Domestic Rail Pass, has been proposed by DCMS as part of the Tourism Recovery Plan.
- 11.2.2. The pass will likely be modelled on an existing rail product and sold through the VisitBritain online shop. The pass would ideally provide customers freedom to travel anywhere in England, Scotland and Wales flexibly over a fixed period of time.

### 11.3. We're Good to Go Review

- 11.3.1. The Board noted the paper and took this as read. Andrew Stokes provided a verbal update. To date the We're Good To Go scheme has received 50,576 applications, with 5,812 WTTC Safe Travels logo downloaded.
- 11.3.2. It was noted that the platform will be kept operational to ensure that the BTA maintains its relationships built through the COVID recovery work. Actions would commence from mid-September 2021 to start the full closure of the system with all participants being informed by December 2021.
- 11.3.3. **ACTION: The Board noted that there are some key learnings that would be taken away from the campaign. It asked for a report to be presented at a future meeting. (Owner: Andrew Stokes)**

## **Agenda Item 9: TXGB Update**

- 12. The Board received a verbal update from Andrew Stokes. An agreement had been reached with the supplier, Rainmaker Solutions. A variation to the contract has been agreed, with the BTA to provide funding for a further two-plus years. The funding model will be dependent on profits from the platform and will vary depending on performance. The agreement also includes some enhancements to the platform and work on system integrations. It was noted that the VEAB would be kept up-to-date regarding the performance of the platform and status of the funding.
- 13. **ACTION: It was agreed that TXGB would be brought back on the agenda at a future meeting (Owner: Andrew Stokes)**

## **Agenda Item 10: Any Other Business**

- 14. The Board had a discussion regarding items that it would like to see at future meetings and during the upcoming Joint Strategy Day in October 2021, which both the BTA Board and VEAB members will be attending. The key points noted were as follows:
  - 14.1. Identify strategic issues within the BTA and VisitEngland's priorities that the VEAB can provide valued input on.
  - 14.2. For the VEAB to look at operational activity during meetings, however high-level summaries of particular areas would be more useful.

- 14.3. Areas suggested for the Strategy Day agenda included: advising the sector, domestic tourism agenda and raising the profile, digital skills, changes to the DMO landscape, levelling up the skills of the hospitality industry.
15. The Board noted that Peter Mills will be leaving the BTA and this will be his last meeting on the VEAB. The Board thanked him for all his efforts and hard work, and wished him all the best.

**Agenda Item 11: Date of Next Meeting**

16. The dates of the next meeting will be:
- 16.1. Joint BTA Board/VEAB Strategy Day – Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (10.00am)
- 16.2. VEAB Meeting – Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 (10:30am)

**Agenda Item 12: Meeting Close**

17. The meeting was closed at 2:00pm.