

## VisitEngland

### MINUTES OF THE 437<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF VISITENGLAND ADVISORY BOARD ("VEAB") HELD AT 10.30AM ON MONDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019 AT VISITENGLAND 151 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON, SW1W 9SZ,

**Present:** Denis Wormwell, Chairman  
Sally Balcombe  
Patricia Yates  
John Hoy  
Sarah Stewart, OBE  
Fiona Pollard  
Suzanne Bond  
Allan Lambert  
Nigel Halkes

**In Attendance:** Stephen Darke, DCMS  
Hazel Cunningham, Business Services Director  
Andrew Stokes, England Director  
Carol Dray, Commercial Director  
Lyndsey Swift, Head of England Planning and Delivery  
Lola Moses, Secretary to the Board  
Lydia Mwanzia, 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 Lydia Mwanzia was in attendance and would be assisting with the minutes of the meeting.
  - (ii) It was noted that Suzanne Bond's term would expire in March and that it would be her last meeting. The Chairman and members thanked Suzanne for her contribution to the Board.
  - (iii) Sarah Stewart and John Hoy's appointments were due to expire at the end of May 2019.
  - (iv) The 2017/18 Annual Reports and Accounts were due to be signed off imminently.
  - (v) The Board were invited to attend the VisitEngland Excellence Awards ceremony.

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

3. The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th of November 2018 were approved.

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

4. There were no apologies noted.

**Agenda Item 4: Declarations of interest**

5. There were no new declarations of interest.

**Agenda item 5: English Tourism Week**

6. Patricia Yates discussed the paper which had been circulated to the Board ahead of the meeting and highlighted the following:-
- (i) English Tourism Week (ETW) will take place from 30 March to 7 April 2019.
  - (ii) The main campaign aim is to raise the profile of English tourism and build awareness of the value tourism brings to the economy through job creation and income generation and to the nation's quality of life.
  - (iii) ETW kick-starts the season for destinations and tourism businesses.
  - (iv) We involve the public by encouraging local residents to discover the tourism products on their doorstep.
  - (v) Key audiences include decision-makers and influencers, so we engage with politicians at national and local levels as well as the media.

**Agenda item 6: Quality Schemes Contract and future options**

7. 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) Re-tendering all of the Quality Schemes;
  - (ii) Re-tending individual Quality Schemes (or clusters thereof);
  - (iii) Closing down the Quality Schemes; or
  - (iv) Selling the Quality Schemes.
8. The recommendation from the VisitEngland Executive was to pursue option (i) on the basis that it would offer the best opportunity for a seamless continuation of the service. Members also discussed the importance of ascertaining the value of the Quality Schemes should option (iv) above be considered in the future.

**Action:** Stephen Darke, DCMS agreed to liaise with colleagues internally to clarify the process should option (iv) proceed in the future.

**Action:** Andrew Stokes and Hazel Cunningham to review the contract with the AA and to explore the future options further on.

### **Agenda item 7: DEF Update (Discover England Fund)**

9. Andrew Stokes and Lyndsey Turner Swift presented the Board with a detailed update as to how the funds were being allocated for DEF. The progress of the projects were discussed. The Board noted the update on re-profiling, amplification and Quarter 4 activity.
10. Andrew Stokes and Carol Dray updated the Board on the status of the DEF Digital Platform, it was noted that the contract had been approved.

### **Agenda item 8: England Strategy 19/20**

11. The England Strategy was presented by Andrew Stokes and Hazel Cunningham. The integrations between the VisitBritain and VisitEngland market and products were highlighted and discussed in detail. It was noted that Stephen Darke would be meeting with the Secretary of State and would update the VEAB on any feedback.

**Action:** Stephen Darke to update the Board with any feedback following his meeting with the Secretary of State on the England Strategy.

### **Agenda item 9: Spending Review Update**

12. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper on the Spending Review that was circulated prior to the meeting. Members discussed at length the funding required for the Spending Review together with the applicable timetable.

### **Agenda item 10: Industrial Strategy Update**

13. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper on the Tourism Sector Deal that was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the UK Government agreed to formally negotiate a Sector Deal for Tourism in November 2018, with the following elements:-
  - (i) Additional commitment and overview on future hotel investment.
  - (ii) Additional commitment on data sharing.
  - (iii) Additional commitment on the industry's work around skills; and
  - (iv) Additional commitment on making the UK more accessible for disabled and elderly visitors.

### **Agenda item 11: Any other business**

14. The Chairman thanked Suzanne Bond for all of her hard work and contribution to the Board.
15. Stephen Darke from DCMS advised the board that he would not be attending the next meeting and that he would send a colleague to attend on his behalf.
16. There were no items of other business.
17. There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

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

6 June 2019 (10:30 to 14:30).