

## Notes from UKEVENTS Advocacy and Government Relations Meeting.

27<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 11.30 – 13.00

**Present:** Michael Hirst (Chair); Paul Black, VisitBritain; Neil Brownlee, VisitScotland; Martin Fullard, TBOE; Peter Heath, PSA; Simon Hughes; UKEVENTS; Kerrin MackPhie, mia; Rachael Parker, EIA; Clive Wratten, BTA;

**Apologies:** Nick Morgan, UKEVENTS; Susan Tanner, NOEA.

### **1. Communication & Engagement with Ministers and Government Departments.**

- a. Letter from interim Minister for Tourism and Science, Innovation & Technology, **Sir John Whittingdale**, followed by meeting with the Minister on 4<sup>th</sup> September attended by Chris Skeith and Michael Hirst.
- b. mia meeting with the Minister for Tourism, **Sir John Whittingdale** covering a wide range of Industry issues.
- c. VisitBritain Ambassador Reception addressed by **Sir John Whittingdale** and attended by DCMS Officials.
- d. Letter of congratulations sent to newly appointed Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, **Thangam Debbonaire, MP**
- e. Meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> June, by LIVE with **Jeff Smith, MP**, Shadow Minister for Tourism
- f. Events Industry Alliance response to the **Business and Trade Committee Export led Growth Inquiry**.
- g. Recruitment of a replacement **DCMS Events Policy Advisor** still underway.
- h. **EIA Manifesto** to be launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> October at a Parliamentary Reception.
- i. EIA contact with **Holly Lynch MP**, Shadow Home Office Minister prior to her change of role.
- j. EIA. to meet with **Dame Caroline Dinenge**, Chair of the CMS Select Committee.
- k. EIA to meet with **Lord Newby**, leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords.
- l. **Lady Victoria Borwick**, newly appointed Chair of the VisitEngland Advisory Board to meet with mia when she visits Liverpool.
- m. BTA in communication with **Kevin Hollinrake MP**, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business) to discuss best practice guide on payments.
- n. BTA in discussion with **Rail ministers and Department of Transport** concerning rail services disruption and impact on business travel due to strike action.
- o. BTA preparing its Manifesto.
- p. Power of Events in contact with **Kemi Badenoch MP**, Secretary of State for Business & Trade about the upcoming schools engagement programme and are in touch with the Social Mobility Commission to assist with the programme.
- q. VisitScotland in constant touch with **Richard Loughhead MSP**, Minister for Small Business, Trade & Innovation, under which event policies fall and include a new National Strategic Review for Events recently published, primarily sporting for 2025-2035.

## 2. Updates from committee members on current active issues to cover:

- a. Despite media reports to the contrary, many **smaller festivals losing money and music and cultural tours struggling** with acute staffing shortages and impacts on mental health.
- b. Strong focus in the meetings market on **sustainability. Bottom line performance appears to be improving.** Growing importance of “Instant Book for small meetings; the latest mia Insights survey is open, closing 6<sup>th</sup> October.
- c. EIA preparing to undertake an **economic impact study into the exhibition and trade shows..** Current information indicated sector value for 2022 at £9.4bn versus £11bn in 2019.
- d. **Good performance in business travel** and outbound yield in September. Aviation at 90% of 2019 levels and rising.
- e. VisitBritain working with Department of Business & Trade and Foreign Office on **international delegations.**
- f. VisitBritain looking at updating the **Daily Delegate Spend survey** last published in 2017 to possibly include trade, social and legacy impacts.

## 3. Active issues

- a) **Changes to business traveller rules and permitted activities.** Awaiting changes.,
- b) **Caravan & tenting permitted developments.** (AEO leading).  
Concerns remain over the 28day rule and impact on licensed Festival sites which are considered to be supporting the commercial holiday sector but not the entertainment and its charitable and voluntary status.
- c) **Protect Duty Bill** considered by Home Affairs Select Committee.  
Issues around practicality of proposals and duplication for large scale events, the most appropriate regulator and who is a responsible person. Uncertainty,as to when legislation will be introduced.
- d) **New event start-ups tax credits.** DCMS unable to provide information relating to the evidence Treasury considered for introduction of the Film & TV Restart scheme. A working group of interested UKEVENTS Partners to be created to consider most appropriate structure to be advocated for a scheme for new events.
- e) EIF working with Leicester City Council to create a **Primary Authority** for the governance of the Purple Guide’s health and safety provisions.
- f) Regulations on the use of **Single Use Plastics** to be introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 to affect packaging of food and beverage products
- g) Consultation on reform of the **Package Travel Regulations** with a closing date of the 12<sup>th</sup> December. Freeing-up of these regulations would benefit event organisers offering admission, travel, accommodation and sightseeing combinations. **Seeking a UKEVENTS Partner to lead on the response to the Consultation.**
- h) NCASS together with other members of Live are writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, prior to the Autumn Budget, **advocating the increase in the VAT starting threshold of £85k.**

## 4. Business of Events Policy Forum update

- a. **2023 UK Policy Forum** will be taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> November at IET, Savoy Place, Westminster during International Trade Week with a strong focus on exports of which international tourism and trade events are a key part. **Nigel Huddleston MP**, Minister of State for International Trade at the Department for Business and Trade has been invited to address the Forum.
- b. A broad cross section of industry representatives, parliamentarians, government officials and invitees from other related industries will attend.

## 5. Tourism Industry Council update

- a. Previous meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023.- Agenda included: North East DDP Pilot and Progress; **Youth & Skills Paper**; Full response by UKEVENTS covering: skills and youth employment; skill shortages; Future Event leaders; Event First Steps; Apprenticeships; Schools Outreach; Careers research; SIC/SOC codes; Diversity, equity and inclusivity;; Further & higher education policies, together with a request that a growth agenda be development to include the role of events in the visitor economy submitted after the meeting.
- b. **Next meeting 11<sup>th</sup> October** – Agenda yet to be circulated.
- c. Meeting scheduled with Karin Shepherd, Chair, to discuss **visitor economy growth agenda and the role events can play in this.**

## 6. APPG activity update

- a. New rules for All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG's) have been introduced with effect 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, to improve transparency and reduce the risk of foreign influence.
- b. The APPG will continue to support the work of The Business of Events, and contribute to its recent industry wide consultation, helping to develop a **new Policy Agenda for the UK events sector.**
- c. **The RT Hon Theresa Villiers MP**, Member of Parliament for Chipping Barnet, remains as the current Chair of the APPG, with support from **Vice Chairs Alex Sobel MP Member of Parliament for Leeds North West, Greg Smith MP Member of Parliament for Buckingham, Chris Green MP Member of Parliament for Bolton West, Rachel Hopkins MP Member of Parliament for Luton South and Mark Menzies MP Member of Parliament for Fylde.**
- d. **Theresa Villiers, Chair of the Group, put a question in the House of Commons about the importance of Events to the development of trade to the Business and Trade Secretary, Kemi Badenoch which was responded to positively.**
- e. To note a new **APPG for Festivals** created by the AIF with support from UKHospitality, **chaired by Giles Watling MP for Clacton on Sea.** The current structure is being reviewed.

## 7. Tourism Alliance update

- a. 19<sup>th</sup> September Tourism Policy Conference.
- b. Key issues: **Tax free shopping; Visa fees increases; Package Travel Regulations; Youth Mobility Scheme; ETA plans and costs** – currently Home office running webinars to explain changes. School Group Travel survey.
- c. Issue of report on impact of **tourism taxes.**

## 8. Other Matters.

- a. Power of Events launching its new **Industry Insights App** with a UK wide tour.

## 9. Date of next meeting – Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – 11.00 -12.30