

**Events Industry Board**  
**Department for International Trade, 3 Whitehall Place, London**

**18 January 2018**

Attending: Nick de Bois (chair)  
Ellen Mackrill (minutes)  
Laura Clayton  
Joss Croft  
Michelle Daniel  
Stephen Darke  
Tracy Halliwell  
Michael Hirst  
Simon Hughes  
Jennifer Jenkins  
Robin Johnson  
Lowri Jones  
Mike Rusbridge  
Chris Skeith  
Anita Thandi  
Naomi Waite

Apologies: Paul Bush, Rob Holt, Ufi Ibrahim, Kerrin MacPhie, Sarah Wright

**Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the members, noting that the Board composition had changed since the previous meeting and that the focus of the meeting would be on the Action Plan and working groups.

**Minutes of the last meeting**

The board cleared the previous minutes with no revisions.

Rob Holt had advised that some items were not included in the previous minutes and these points were drawn to the attention of the Chairman who re-assured him that all matters are being followed up, of which some would be covered at this meeting.

**Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising raised

### **New Board Composition**

Nick de Bois noted the change in Board membership and welcomed the new members, Jennifer Jenkins, representing EVCOM and Sarah Wright, an independent member noting where their interests will be of benefit to the Board.

Simon Hughes, previously representing EVCOM would now be an independent member.

Nick de Bois thanked the retiring members, Willie Whitehorn and Martin Lewis, for their contributions

Nick de Bois outlined the change in Ministers at DCMS, and noted the support received by the outgoing Minister, before reading a message of support for the Board from the new Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Michael Ellis MP. The interests in digital, skills and apprenticeships of the new Secretary of State, Matt Hancock MP were noted as potentially being of benefit to the Board in pursuing its agenda.

### **Board's Priorities for 2018**

Nick de Bois noted that the Board reviewed their work at the previous meeting, and had made good progress in ensuring the industry was on the radar of Government – noting that never had the events and exhibitions sector gained so much government interest, however the board needed to ensure that wider engagement with the events sector should be developed and the government support should become visible to the private sector. He noted the need to construct Working Groups which will be led by Board members with membership drawn from across the wider industry.

### **DCMS Priorities and Action Plan**

Ellen Mackrill introduced the DCMS proposed Action Plan and outlined the requirement to publish the recommendations in early summer.

The Board discussed the plan and advised that:

- There needs to be more of a link between the Action Plan and Industrial Strategy / proposed Tourism Sector Deal
- The Action Plan should note priorities for the sector, including skills. Where these will not be taken forward by the action plan, e.g. skills/Brexit, other potential means for taking these actions should be highlighted (e.g. skills through the tourism sector deal).
- Where appropriate, the EIB Working Groups would comment and advise on the plan ahead of publication
- It was acknowledged that the Action Plan will be a living document - with periodical updates on progress and amendments as required. The board would feed into this plan on that basis.

- The board noted that it was important to develop a coherent and integrated approach with UK destinations, emphasising collaboration across all suppliers / sectors involved in hosting events
- The Board noted the importance of ensuring the Action Plan was not England centric, whilst recognising the different responsibilities within the devolved regions, such as skills. Separate discussions would be help with the devolved Nations to ensure the Action Plan embraced their concerns and priorities.

### **DIT Priorities**

Joss Croft outlined DIT's priorities, which include focusing on the **Attract, Create, Grow** vision for events and trade fairs. He also outlined a new Cross-Whitehall Group on events which will incorporate officials from across a number of departments.

This was welcomed by the board.

The Board then discussed the update and noted that:

- It's important to ensure there's no duplication between the work of the Cross-Whitehall group and the Events Industry Board, and the Action Plan / DIT vision. The terms of reference would need to be clear.
- Events Industry Board should emphasise its strength including a focus on bringing the industry together
- The Action Plan and DIT vision where appropriate should be explicit on existing events - and how we can grow these / ensure they stay in the UK
- The board noted that the sector was consistently keen to input where they believed there was "low hanging fruit" for internationalising events and that this should be acted upon as part of the DIT plan.

### **Proposed Working Groups**

Nick de Bois ran through the suggested Working Groups and asked Board members to comment on whether the priorities were right, or if some areas had been missed.

The Board discussed the proposals and noted that:

- There had been previous work on competitiveness, and there was little more that a new working group would be able to add at the current point as many of the issues had been considered in the action plan. It was agreed that the Board should continue to have a watching brief over the implementation of the proposals on competitiveness and Mike Rusbridge and Tracy Halliwell would undertake this.
- The Board should have a role in monitoring the implementation of the proposals that impact upon the Events Sector in the proposed Tourism Sector Deal. The extent of this role would be determined once the precise nature of the Sector Deal is known.
- Infrastructure - Understanding venue capacity, occupancy, spare capacity, regional spread, connectivity and transport is an essential part of targeting new international

business as well as growing existing activities. VisitBritain is leading on research in this area which presently is confined to England's needs due to being funded by VisitEngland. It was agreed this exercise needed to be Britain wide and discussions would be held with the devolved Nations to see how this could be achieved and that this should form one of the working groups.

- Skills and resources are of critical importance and future needs, in a post Brexit environment need to be considered by a working group- It was noted that the Hospitality and Creative Industries had already done a lot of work on scoping this issue, both of which have impacts on providing event services. It was agreed that there would be a working group established on this.
- VisitBritain already co-ordinates destination marketing initiatives across Britain. It was considered appropriate that the existing forums which include the National Tourist Boards and London and Partners continue to engage and both feed into these forums the board advice and report back to the board on progress. A further discussion ensued on Destination Management and the need for the board to engage further on this important issue together with other stakeholders to create a more effective whole destination approach to welcoming delegates and facilitating services to them be included in this work. This would mean highlighting best practice and engaging with other service providers – hotels, transport providers, retail, and municipal services – as necessary. Further details on how the board could play an active role in this process would be tabled shortly.
- The Outdoor Events Sector (music, sport, cultural) had requested that their interests be represented through the Board. Given the Board's remit was essentially to increase the value of holding international events in Britain, a roundtable with representatives from the outdoor events sector would be held to determine whether there were worthwhile benefits from looking at business opportunities which could be optimised from their events. Depending on the outcome of such a meeting it would be determined if and how such work might be integrated into the work of the Board.
- As part of the work undertaken by working groups, Industry will provide Government with best practice examples for destination management, as well as three pieces of evidence where the events industry sector state current regulations can make the UK less competitive for events:
  - Reductions in VAT/APD for business delegates
  - Visa regulations giving examples of where the imposition of visas has impeded attendance at events.
  - Planning regulations, giving examples of where planning regulations have restricted the provision of new and extended venue and other related infrastructure.

- A roundtable for event buyers, hosted by a Minister, should be held to coincide with MeetGB. DCMS and VisitBritain to liaise on this and involve DIT as appropriate.

The Board agreed the final working groups as:

- Infrastructure
- Industrial Strategy (dependent on the approval of the proposed Tourism Sector Deal)
- Talent, Skills and Human Resources

The Board also noted the need to become more proactive in its role supporting the Event Support Programme.

The following Board members expressed an interest in supporting the Working Groups:

- Chris Skeith - Infrastructure and Event Support Programme / Ministerial Support and overseas exports
- Jennifer Jenkins - Event Support Programme / Ministerial Support and overseas exports
- Sarah Wrights interest in talent, skill and Human resources was registered in her absence

### **Any Other Business**

No members had any other business so the Chair closed the meeting

### **Actions**

- Members let Ellen Mackrill know of their interest in Working Groups
- Members to feed back any comments on the proposals in the Action Plan
- Set up a roundtable with the outdoor events industry
- Roundtable with Event Buyers to be set up during MeetGB