

**Events Industry Board**  
**Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 100 Parliament Street**

**1 February 2019**

Attending: Michael Hirst (Chair)  
Ellen Mackrill (minutes)  
Rachael Farrington  
Tracy Halliwell  
Tim Jenkins  
Kerrin MacPhie  
Stephen McGowan  
Kate Nicholls  
Mike Rusbridge  
Chris Skeith  
Naomi Waite (via teleconference)  
Heledd Williams  
Sarah Wright

Apologies: Paul Bush, Rob Holt, Simon Hughes, Jenny Jenkins, Robert Wright

**Welcome**

Michael Hirst opened the meeting and thanked members for their support since his appointment as Chair.

**Declarations of interest**

No members had any declarations of interest to make.

**Approval of the minutes of last meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

The previous minutes were cleared with no revisions

**Matters Arising**

**a) Status of Action Plan**

Giles Smith updated the Board on the status of the International Business Events Action Plan, which is likely to be folded in with the proposed tourism sector deal and thanked members for their comments and contributions so far.

**b) DIT Objectives**

Stephen McGowan updated the Board on DIT's priorities and confirmed that the Action Plan will be a cross-Government document. Giles noted that the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism has written to Baroness Fairhead, the Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion to ask for her support in supporting business events.

**Action: EM to circulate current draft of the Action Plan to members with the minutes.**

**c) Business Events Growth Programme**

Kerrin MacPhie updated the Board on the Business Events Growth Programme, including discussions on whether to amend the minimum and maximum funding limits for bidding from the fund. The Board discussed what the funding should focus on, and agreed that its objective should be to bring in more international delegates.

**Action: Kerrin to circulate rest of update to the team.**

**Action: Michael Hirst to facilitate discussions on identifying a number of existing events that would take place over the next 4/5 years which could be included in a "messaging campaign" to highlight "A global era of GREAT business events across Britain"**

**Action: Michael to meet with Conrad Bird from the GREAT programme.**

**Board's Focus, industry representation and communication**

Michael Hirst outlined the discussions he'd had with Board members on the remit of the Board, and that he would look to set up an industry panel of industry leaders for informal discussions.

The Board discussed the update and agreed that:

- We need to improve communication to the industry on what the Board's doing
- Web Summit highlighted how Government and industry can work together to put together a good bid.
- The new Terms of Reference need to be clearer, and include a summary paragraph on its purpose

**Action: Ellen to circulate proposed list to the Board**

**Action: All to send any further suggested changes from the circulated list to Ellen.**

**Action: Action: Ellen to update ToR**

**Action: DCMS to develop comms plan, and update website to ensure consistent message**

**Industrial Strategy**

Giles Smith and Tim Jenkins updated the Board on the current work taking place on the Tourism Sector Detail, and outlined the four key asks - connectivity, productivity, Tourism

Action Zones and Skills - as well as highlighting the need for more commitments from businesses on accessibility, data sharing and increasing accommodation capacity.

The Board discussed the update and agreed that:

- The industry has a lot of data already, so could be case of highlighting it
- The Board's Talent Taskforce should feed into Kate Nicholls' working group on skills

**Action: Chris Skeith to share link for UFI report with Tim Jenkins**

**Action: Tim Jenkins to share Sector Deal briefing note with the Board**

### **Feedback from members on the current state of trading and Brexit**

Michael Hirst asked Board members to give a short update on the level of performance, and whether Brexit was having an effect.

The Board noted that:

- Trading is generally good at the moment and the Brexit effect appears very marginal.
- There is some nervousness around Brexit and the current uncertainty
- London is doing well, but European business is more difficult. European companies and associations could well move their European regional business post Brexit, leaving Britain with domestic events only.
- Despite this there is increased investment within the industry
- As bookings take place so far in advance it may be that we don't notice the effect until 2021 onwards.

### **Working Group progress**

#### **a) Talent Taskforce**

Sarah Wright updated the Board on the work of the Talent Taskforce, noting that they'd had 254 responses to the survey and that a majority reported a shortage of skills. The main recommendation would be the setting up of a "skills board" by the Industry, which would review how best to fill the skill gaps identified in the research. Questions were raised about resources and delivery of any new initiative. It was noted several of the skills identified were service by other skills bodies in other sectors. The importance of government setting up appropriate SIC & SOC codes to be able to properly analyse the industry's workforce was emphasised. However it was noted this was a longer term objective.

**Action: Sarah to speak to Kate Nicholls about feeding into the Sector Deal work**

#### **b) Infrastructure Taskforce**

Chris Skeith updated the Board on the work of the Infrastructure Taskforce, noting that it is hard to get a clear picture of occupancy as venues are unwilling to share and that market forces will determine if new venues are needed. He welcomed the work on which VisitBritain are embarked to look at venue capacity and occupancy to identify opportunities for additional business. The Taskforce are feeding into DCMS work on connectivity, and doing some research on the amount of EU funding.

### **Any Other Business**

Ellen informed the Board that she was leaving DCMS, and that this will be her final Board meeting.

The next meeting will be arranged for May.