

Events Industry Board Minutes
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

4th October 2018

Attendees

Michael Hirst (Chair)
Karoline Andrew (Minutes)
Paul Bush - VisitScotland
Joss Croft - DIT
Tracey Halliwell - London & Partners
Simon Hughes (delayed) - Independent
Jennifer Jenkins - EVCOM
Kerrin MacPhie- VisitBritain
Gill Manley - Celtic Manor
Giles Smith - DCMS
Sarah Wright - Independent
Robert Wright - Davies Tanner (observer)
Heledd Williams - VisitWales

Apologies: Chris Skeith (AEO), Mike Rusbridge (Independent), Kate Nicholls (UKHospitality)

1. **Welcome and Presentation by Celtic Manor on the new ICC Wales Exhibition Space**

Michael welcomed Members and thanked Celtic Manor for hosting the meeting. He acknowledged Nick De Bois's good work on the Board and wished him well in his new role at DExEu.

Gill provided an overview of the history for Celtic Manor to the present day:

- Best Hotel at the Meetings & Incentive Travel awards for 8 years in a row
- 65% of the population live within 2 hours of Newport and the removal of the bridge toll is expected to benefit the area greatly.
- New conference centre opening July 2019
- Looking to create a festival like atmosphere for official opening, targeting 40 associations (including attendees partners and children)
- UKSpace will be the first event to be held in the facility with approx. 1,500 delegates
- £80m to build, partnerships with local universities, business and industry.
- Sense of place very important - Owner insists on having as much Welsh produce available for delegates/visitors and to weave this into all they do.

2. **Previous Minutes**

Amendments:

- Simon Hughes needs to be listed as attending last meeting
- Bullet point 4 should read 'Culture Diary' not 'Virtual Diary'

Otherwise agreed.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

4. **Matters Arising**

1. Progress of new Cross-Government Working Group

- a. General and Festival 2022
 - i. Giles updated on new Secretary of State (SoS), that he is on record as saying tourism is one of his top priorities.
 - ii. Festival of Britain for 2022 - can't give further details just yet. Wants to ensure there is a BVE angle - potentially big opportunity for sector. DCMS leading - programme needs to be across nations. Potentially similar modelling to City of Culture.
 - b. Update on Web Summit,
 - i. Giles updated that UK lost out to Lisbon, however was an extremely informative exercise.
 - c. Feedback on Action Plan
 - i. Giles thanked everyone for contributions. Making changes, will then look at seeking Cross Government clearance. View to publish in next couple of month. Cross Government working group will be formalised using Action Plan as a vehicle. Intention to be UK wide initiative, specific points may need to be a nation by nation approach. **ACTION: Please forward any further comments to DCMS.**
 - ii. Paul would like clarification - UK wide approach but mentions of Devolved Administrations (DA) 'to be consulted'. Plan a bit 'woolly' for DAs compared to recent Sport strategy which is very tight and clear. Happy for information to sit in main body of document just needs to be stronger. Feels DA relationship with DCMS very good. **ACTION: Giles to look at clarifying comments and improving drafting of wording.**
2. Industrial Strategy/Sector Deal update
- a. Giles explained SoS wants to understand fully and make it as strong as possible. Connectivity to be put back on the agenda including transport, telecoms/digital.
 - b. If we don't get a clear answer, advice to Ministers will be to remove the proposed Sector Deal from process and take forward as many initiatives in the proposal as we can with Cross Government working.
 - c. Michael said BVE aspect strong. Tourism Alliance starting on Green Paper consulting industry in order to compile evidence of opportunities for sector to take in coming years.
 - d. Giles explained the model of sector deals is open to all, many sectors submitted proposals and many may not get a deal. Change of Ministers has also held things up. BEIS SoS supportive.
3. DMOs and Major events Roundtables
- a. Michael explained he understands this is one of Ellen's first tasks when she gets back, looking not only at core cities but smaller locations as well, potentially November but depends how quickly it can be mobilised.

Business incentives post-Brexit

Michael set out 'Pillars' for consideration:

- TOMS - Make case for complete revamp of TOMS which is a European scheme. Seen as quite injurious for sector.
- Business VAT reclaim - Make it easier for business visitors to reclaim VAT on accommodation.
- Theatre tax - Allowance given to live shows (theatre/film/tv) to claim allowance on production costs. Possibility of scope to extend to live events?
- Capital allowances for investment in event venue infrastructure - Accelerate them and create higher investments.
- State aid - Role of state aid in bidding for events. (Can consider further after Brexit)
- Christmas Party Exemption - Annual staff allowance of £150 to companies to host Christmas parties. To cover travel, accommodation/food etc. should be increased.

Giles gave strong counsel to narrow down to 1 or 2 options at most and make evidence base as persuasive as possible. State Aid - not sure addressing this would be the best sell. TOMS is on Government radar.

Michael supported this, TOMS is EU directive so hard to do anything about, might be able to look at after Brexit. Theatre tax needs more research and needs argument to be made how business events are an extension of live performance - could it also apply to exhibitions? HMRC seem interested about VAT reclaim. David Bennett, who has represented many trade bodies already on TOMS, has agreed to help. Steer away from Corporate/employment tax as this is being dealt with by other industry bodies.

Joss suggested that board needs to decide if UK is competitive already and whether more elements of the event could be reclaimed or by delegates.

Sarah would like to make sure EIB linked in with the Package Travel Directive work. Industry operates by packaging but PTD very restrictive.

Jennifer explained there was a connection between Theatre Tax and proprietary event tax, narrow focus and targeted, could potentially aid subvention.

Kerrin said this was one of the key reasons some associations won't come to events here.

ACTION: Jennifer to write a short note detailing her idea.

Simon suggested starting with narrow focus might be best approach, affect small amount of industry but then might be easier to get past officials. Might not be as immediate impact as TOMS but in 2 or 3 years could be different.

ACTION: Board to submit any ideas from business members/partners.

6. Brexit Issues

Sarah explained she is working with Jennifer and her survey on skills as well as working with roundtable. Could get back to Board in a few weeks with results but would need to be verified.

Tracey advised that a few associations have stopped assessing the UK as a destination until certain questions about post-Brexit have been answered.

Kerrin advised VB have had questions about Visas, no loss of business but industry need reassurance. Perception of visa change when people have been refused.

Tracey was only aware of 1 event that wouldn't bring their event to the UK as needed to be hosted in an EU city for funding. Long haul markets over performing. French and German markets significantly more impacted, Germans in particular are actively trying not to place events in the UK as feel they have been snubbed (anecdotal evidence). Would normally have 30/40 German events in London but nothing confirmed yet this year.

Jennifer told the Board they have seen a sharp rise in temporary contracts, feels this is concerning trend.

ACTION: Giles told the Board that if situation changes, any trends noted, please feed into DCMS, always looking for Intel.

Sarah said there were concerns about low-skilled/low paid market, particularly rigging/technical posts

Simon said supply side is where biggest impact will be felt on the venue side (facilities management predominantly EU nationals)

7. Status of DCMS Action Plan, DITs Single Departmental Plan and Export Strategy

Joss explained DIT objectives now set. Export Strategy available on Gov.uk - BVE supports DIT export strategy. Recommended reading the International Industrial Strategy. DIT need resource to work with DCMS to create support and leverage trade and investment opportunities.

Need measurements of the trade and investment off the back of BVEs (were previously using delegate/visitor spend). Detailing of questions - is an investment made because of the show? 6 months down the line? Is that too early? Suggests picking a specific sector/market to demonstrate the benefits and then roll it out further. **ACTION: Joss to circulate DIT objectives after meeting.**

8. Working Group progress

Talent

- Sarah detailed the survey, 180 responses initially, 238 after a push.
- Jennifer felt quite joined up themes which was good.
- Sarah explained the group is looking at international offers, HR processes, international competitiveness specifically against US and Germany, running round tables.
- Next steps - deep dive analysis of results. To look at creative services and hospitality and what key interdependencies are.
- Michael said some issues need to be solved by industry itself, however need to bring things to Minister's they can do something about.
- Sarah gave brief rundown of results so far.
- Michael said it would be interesting to see if skills deficiency or resource efficiency or neither or both.
- Sarah wants to produce final report by end of Feb. **ACTION: to keep Board advised about timeline**
- Michael advised no deadlines fixed, next EIB meeting end of Jan then May. Could look at pushing meeting back a few weeks to fit in with report.

Transport/connectivity

- Tracey explained venue and capacity project ongoing (VB mapping venues and occupancies). The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry has also done a report on worldwide venue space. Reports may change policy direction for what events to pursue. Work on transport/rail infrastructure and future investment ongoing. No date for completion of the working group report yet.

9. VisitBritain update and Business Events Growth Programme(BEGP)

Kerrin gave a brief update on progress of BEGP.

ACTION: Attach Kerrin's update paper to minutes.

Joss advised DIT also provide grants to help international businesses to attend international events.

10. AOB

Board structure and chairing replacement.

- Giles is grateful to Michael for stepping in as interim Chair. New appointment will ultimately be a Ministerial decision. Once nominations received will then get steer from Minister. First indication is that he would like someone from industry not Government or the Visits.
- Michael has already indicated his interest. Room to increase size of board too. Possibly by two additional members. Creative Industries - could look for someone from industry, working in the creative side of things. .
- Sarah asked if Board is representative of the industry as some have mentioned this.
- Jennifer feels Board is missing business representation, perhaps one or 2 of them.
- Michael suggested Mike Rusbridge is one such person, with industry experience but also provides an independent perspective. Possibility to identify other leading player in exhibition sector.
- Consideration could also be given to someone with complementary experience from another industry sector.
- Jennifer asked if they could find someone who straddles tourism and events?
Missing an employer in the industry.

ACTION: Submit any nominations for either Chair or Board Members to Ellen by 19th November.