

## Events Industry Board (EIB)

Meeting Minutes - Wednesday 29 January, 2020  
151 Victoria Street, London

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**Attendees:** Michael Hirst OBE (Chair)  
Jack Karet (GREAT / Department for International Trade, for Conrad Bird)  
Claire Fennelow  
Tracy Halliwell  
Simon Hughes  
Jenny Jenkins  
Kerrin MacPhie (VisitBritain)  
David Martin (DCMS)  
Kate Nichols  
Sheila Pardoe (DCMS; minutes)  
Mike Rusbridge  
Chris Skeith  
Giles Smith (DCMS)  
Naomi Waite (via teleconference)  
Heledd Williams (for Rob Holt)  
Sarah Wright (via teleconference)  
Robert Wright

**Apologies:** Paul Bush

### Summary of Actions arising from the meeting

#### Actions to EIB members

Action Item	Timeframe
Members to provide additional recommendations / points via email to Sheila Pardoe for consideration regarding the future policy direction to DCMS officials.	Friday, 14 February, 2020

#### Actions to DCMS officials

Action Item	Timeframe
DCMS officials to set a new, earlier EIB meeting date.  <i>*Please note, the 4th May meeting will now not be held. We will aim to set new EIB dates once direction on next steps is secured.</i>	The next EIB meeting is Monday, 30th March (100 Parliament Street, London).
DCMS officials to prepare a paper for the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism based on the 29 January EIB discussion and seeking direction on next steps from	Imminent.

the Minister.

Based on the Minister's direction, DCMS officials to prepare a paper for the 30th March EIB meeting, setting out more detailed options for members to consider.

#### **Actions to VisitBritain officials**

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
VisitBritain to circulate the invitation and details of MeetGB (22-24 April, Newport) to EIB members, which Kerrin MacPhie encouraged members to attend and see the event in action.	As soon as available.

#### **Introduction**

The Chair introduced the meeting and noted apologies for absence. He welcomed the new Board member, Claire Fennelow (Executive Director, EVCOM). He also welcomed Jack Karet (Chief Partnerships Office, GREAT) and Heledd Williams who attended on behalf of Rob Holt. The Chair also noted that Paul Bush had sent apologies.

#### **Declarations of interest**

No members had any declarations of interest to make.

#### **Approval of minutes from last meeting - 6 September, 2019**

The previous Minutes were cleared with no revisions.

#### **Updates from UK government officials**

##### *a) Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport*

- Giles Smith acknowledged that the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Helen Whately had wanted to attend the 29 January EIB meeting; he noted that she had to send apologies after being asked to deputise for the Secretary of State at an event in Manchester.
- He noted that a Ministerial reshuffle is expected in February, though said that the date was not known. Giles Smith said that a Budget would be announced on 11 March. He also said that officials were expecting a Spending Review in the summer and would update members when possible. He said that the EIB meeting would help advise officials on what we may consider for business events in the potential upcoming Spending Review.
- He reminded members that the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) Report had been published that week and encouraged members to continue to provide feedback so that DCMS officials could include these points for consideration in ongoing discussions.

- Finally, Giles Smith invited members, ahead of the substantive discussion, to consider how the business tourism agenda may fit with the levelling-up agenda and other emerging UK government priorities post-election.

b) *GREAT*

- Jack Karet reminded members that the GREAT campaign is a global mechanism to demonstrate the UK's soft power. He welcomed new areas for where GREAT can highlight where the UK is world-leading. He said that the Business Events Growth Programme (BEGP) fund was a core part of the GREAT offer.

c) *VisitBritain*

- Kerrin MacPhie reported that relationships were being developed with key Department for International Trade (DIT) teams and that it was a step in the right direction for raising awareness about the inward trade and investment opportunities that international business events offer.
- She gave an update on the VisitBritain pipeline, including the number of events, opportunities and potential Return on Investment (ROI) from these opportunities. She also reported what key sectors are emerging for international business events globally and in the UK.
- Kerrin MacPhie presented key achievements and the ROI from the Business Events Growth Programme (BEGP) evaluation from Financial Year One (2016-2017) and Financial Year Two (2017-2018). She noted that Year 3 and Year 4 would be evaluated soon and that they would look different to Year 2.
- She said that brand awareness was one priority for the VisitBritain business events team and part of this was working on a new digital strategy, including launching [eventsaregreat.com](https://eventsaregreat.com).
- Kerrin MacPhie invited members to attend and see the MeetGB event in action. She noted that the annual event, which is 1-2-1 meetings with buyers/suppliers is taking place at ICC Wales on 22 - 24 April. **ACTION:** Kerrin MacPhie to send event details / event invitation as soon as it is available.

### **Substantive items & papers for discussion**

a) For consideration - the future of business events policy - DCMS

- Michael Hirst invited Sheila Pardoe to present the main paper for discussion. The aim of the paper was to focus the discussion on practical advice for officials to consider in any future business tourism policy.
- Sheila Pardoe said that officials had summarised the feedback and advice gathered from industry leaders since the publication of the UK Government's International Business Events Action Plan last June and that the paper was the result of that advice.
- She said that the purpose of the paper was to focus the meeting's discussion on practical steps that members advised the UK government to take ahead of the potential Spending Review in the summer. She noted that the contents of the paper did not reflect current UK government policy and that any decisions would need to be presented to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism.

- Sheila Pardoe asked each member to advise on which option(s), if any, they preferred and why. This led to a productive discussion where options were weighed against opportunities and challenges for the events industry.
- Key points included:
  - That members agreed that VisitBritain was delivering commendable value for money through the BEGP and its other representative activities at trade fairs and international gatherings, though many members said that more could be done with greater resourcing for VisitBritain;
  - That members agreed the need for a clear, joined-up mandate which focused on government advocacy and cross-government working. This led to a discussion about whether or not this approach could be supported within existing structures or new structures;
  - Several members recommended that more work could be done to focus on attracting, growing, creating and retaining events; and,
  - Members agreed that there could be a more competitive tax policy to facilitate the growth of business events, and they asked officials to consider options.
- Sheila Pardoe also asked members to consider which Action Plan commitment areas, if any, could be better supported. Members generally agreed that government advocacy and government coordination were critical to success.
- The role of the board going forward was also discussed and members agreed and disagreed with potential outcomes. Members also discussed whether a change in policy may necessitate a change in the structure and/or focus of the EIB.
- Sheila Pardoe closed the discussion and noted that while there were many useful views for consideration, and would take time to 'untangle' consensus, there were also a few common themes.
- She noted that the next step was to analyse the advice provided and seek direction from the Minister. Further steps to take would be considered at the next EIB meeting [scheduled after the January meeting for Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March).
- Giles Smith thanked members for their contributions and said that they would be helpful for considering approaches ahead of the likely Spending Review in the summer.

### **Any Other Business**

Additional items were not raised.

### **Close**

Michael Hirst closed the meeting; he noted the next EIB meeting date. Mike Rusbridge suggested that the Board meet earlier to aid in the development of any potential future policy, so as to better line-up with likely timings for the Spending Review.

The next EIB meeting date is: **Monday, 30th March at 10:30am - 12:00pm**. It will take place at **DCMS, 100 Parliament Street, London**.