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To the attention of The Rt. Hon. Michelle Donelan MP

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street,
London SW1A 2BQ
E: secretary.statesoffice@dcms.gov.uk

10th October 2022,

Dear Secretary of State,

I write on behalf of the Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP), representing the UK Events Industry, to warmly congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State at DCMS.

You will find this part of your Department's portfolio to be a hidden gem in delivering on your Government's core aim of growing the UK economy.

Events drive half the spend in the total visitor economy. Business events generate trade, exports, inward investment, regeneration, and innovation as well as providing a showcase for Britain on the global stage. This is the result of the UK having resilient, highly innovative, world-class conference and exhibitions sectors that attract international travellers to UK conventions and trade fairs. Additionally outdoor cultural, leisure and festival events play a pivotal role in creating an aspirational society. They enhance local economic activity and social opportunities, deliver community wellbeing, regional growth, and strong place-making solutions.

There is strong recognition that events play a critical part in the Tourism Recovery Plan. This sets out new initiatives that will improve the already strong offer of the UK as a world destination of choice for meetings, conferences, and exhibitions, so that it can retain its unrivalled position as the world's meeting place. To this end the Tourism Industry Council has established an Events Industry Board Working Group which is working on measures that will re-build business, currently estimated to be worth £50 billion in visitor spend back to pre-pandemic levels of over £70 billion. Added to these figures are conservative estimates of at least £165 billion of trade transactions at UK events. Included in such measures are a strong focus on events that can support events in the Government's target economic sectors.

The Industry strongly believes there are significant untapped opportunities which would support the Government's objectives for the growth of the economy, if the Events sector was given a more strategic role in the delivery and implementation of government policies. This does require more consolidation of resource across DCMS and other Government Departments, as several including, BEIS, DIT, and the Cabinet Office together with arms-length agencies such as the Arts Council, UK Sport and VisitBritain are key stakeholders in this process too. Such a review may well help the current process of securing further government efficiencies.

Representatives of the BVEP hope to have an opportunity to meet with you to discuss how the opportunities from events can be even more greatly leveraged to support the government's agenda. In the meantime the Industry looks forward to working closely with the new Tourism Minister, Lord Kamall, and his team.

I would mention in closing how tremendously supportive your DCMS team have been, during a period of great uncertainty for the Industry over the last eighteen months.

I wish you every success in your new role.

Kindest regards,

Michael Hirst OBE

BVEP Lead – Advocacy & Government Relations



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About the BVEP

The Business Visits and Events Partnership's (BVEP) vision is to support sustainable growth for the UK's £70 billion UK Events Industry. BVEP's mission is to support growth across the entire sector via advocacy, networking, collaboration, and a collective voice.

BVEP's objectives are to:

- Operate an umbrella organisation to represent, promote and further the interest of member organisations involved in the United Kingdom Events Industry
- Advance the interests, standing, quality, sustainability, and growth of the United Kingdom Events' Industry
- Seek greater collaboration across the Events' Industry sectors on common issues
- Forge close links with Government departments, including devolved Governments where possible via representation that can influence favourable policies towards the Industry. In particular, maintain strong relationships with key sponsoring departments, DCMS, DIT and BEIS
- Seek a stronger link with the Creative Industries and other related sectors
- Encourage joint events
- Increase the focus on professionalism and skills development.

BVEP PARTNERS

Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO)
Association for Events Management Education (AEME)
beam (formerly HBAA)
Business Travel Association (BTA)
Core Cities
Events Industry Alliance (EIA)
Events Industry Forum (EIF)
Event Marketing Association (EMA)
Event & Visual Communication Association (EVCOM)
International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA)
London & Partners
Meet in Ireland
Meetings Industry Association (MIA)
Meetings Professionals International UK & Ireland (MPI)
National Outdoors Events Association (NOEA)
Production Services Association (PSA)
Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)
Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA)
Tourism Northern Ireland
Unique Venues of London (UVL)
VisitBritain/VisitEngland
VisitScotland
Visit Wales.

Supporting Government Bodies

Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)
Department for International Trade (DIT).