

## Events Industry Board (EIB)

Meeting Minutes – Friday 6 September, 2019

100 Parliament Street, London, SW1A 2BQ

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**Attendees:** Michael Hirst (Chair)  
Simon Blake (DCMS)  
Madeleine Burns (Department for International Trade, for Conrad Bird)  
Tracy Halliwell  
Ciaran Hayes (Department for Exiting the European Union)  
Rob Holt  
Jenny Jenkins  
Kerrin MacPhie (via teleconference)  
David Martin (DCMS)  
Sheila Pardoe (DCMS; minutes)  
Mike Rusbridge  
Giles Smith (DCMS)  
Naomi Waite (via teleconference) Robert Wright Sarah Wright  
Kerrin MacPhie (via teleconference)

**Apologies:** Paul Bush, Simon Hughes, Leigh Jagger, Chris Skeith, Sarah Wright, Robert Wright

**Absent:** Kate Nicholls

### Summary of Actions arising from the meeting

#### *Actions to EIB members*

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>EU Exit:</b> Members to cascade information, when shared by UK Government officials, through their channels to industry partners and overseas organisations, where relevant, including the 'Get Ready for Brexit' page at: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/get-ready-brexit-check">https://www.gov.uk/get-ready-brexit-check</a> ; and advice for entering the UK after Brexit: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visiting-the-uk-after-brexit">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visiting-the-uk-after-brexit</a>	-Immediately and ongoing.  -Members to share interim feedback with UK Government officials.  -Members to report back at 10 December, EIB meeting.
<b>Communications (regular):</b> Members to communicate industry success to their communication channels, including	-Ongoing.  -Members to begin sharing information to UK Government officials.

UK Government officials (e.g. BVEP, Davies Tanner, VisitBritain).	-Members to report back at 10 December, EIB meeting.
<b>Infrastructure taskforce report:</b> Members to be prepared to offer advice to UK Government based on their reading of the final report (to be circulated imminently).	-10 December EIB meeting (or earlier, via email to UK Government officials and Chris Skeith).

*Actions to VisitBritain*

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>EU Exit:</b>  VisitBritain to continue to share information/conduct marketing with domestic and international audiences.  VisitBritain to continue to attend fortnightly EU Exit meetings with DCMS tourism policy officials.	-Ongoing.
<b>Pipeline:</b>  VisitBritain to continue developing a pipeline of events for the UK and advise on a 'top list' for the UK Government to consider supporting. This top list sits outside of events that are supported through BEGP.	-For completion in December 2019.
<b>Communications (regular):</b>  VisitBritain to communicate industry success to UK Government officials, which can be shared with industry through VisitBritain PR teams, social channels and digital platforms (via current public relations channels - e.g. BVEP, Davies Tanner).	-Ongoing.  -To review at 10th December EIB meeting.

*Actions to UK Government officials*

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<p><b>EU Exit:</b></p> <p>DCMS officials to share relevant EU Exit material with members, including opportunities for industry to engage with the UK Government.</p>	<p>-Imminently and ongoing.</p>
<p><b>DIT engagement:</b></p> <p>DCMS officials to establish regular engagement with DIT, and VisitBritain, where appropriate, encouraging increased collaboration on the events industry agenda.</p>	<p>-Ongoing.</p>
<p><b>VisitBritain Pipeline:</b></p> <p>DCMS officials to be prepared to review 'top 20' list and work with Other Government Departments, as appropriate.</p>	<p>-To report back following delivery of Pipeline (expected December 2019).</p>
<p><b>Communications (general):</b></p> <p>DCMS officials to continue to work with the Chair and members to raise awareness of the work of the EIB, including the 2nd proposed Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel (expected December) and the publication of the Taskforce reports.</p>	<p>-Ongoing.</p> <p>-To report on progress at the 10th December EIB meeting.</p>
<p><b>Event venue broadband connectivity competition:</b></p> <p>a) DCMS officials to update members on current up-take of the Event Venue broadband connectivity competition; b) to update members on trends and up-take once competition closes; and, c) to review it at December's EIB meeting.</p>	<p>-Imminently.</p> <p>-Late October - summary of results to members following competition close.</p> <p>-10 December - brief summary and opportunity for members to advise.</p>

<p><b>Creative Industries engagement:</b></p> <p>Tourism officials and Creative Industries officials to work together to: connect the EIB with the Creative Industries Council; facilitate a meeting between the EIB and the Advertising Association; issue a call, through the Creative Industries Council, across all Creative Industries sectors, to identify upcoming opportunities that may not already be mapped; and, connect Sarah Wright with appropriate Creative Industries skills and talent contacts and explore overlap in SIC and SOC codes.</p>	<p>-Ahead of 10 December EIB meeting in order to report back on progress.</p>
<p><b>Other Actions:</b></p> <p>Sheila Pardoe to seek support from Paul Bush in inviting a Scottish Government official to present at a future EIB meeting;</p> <p>DCMS officials to work with DCMS Ministers to prepare a letter which members can share and which DCMS officials can offer DMO contacts.</p>	<p>-Ongoing/urgent.</p>

## **Introduction**

The Chair introduced the meeting and noted apologies for absence. He welcomed new members, both of whom sent apologies: Leigh Jagger (CEO Evcom) and Conrad Bird (Director, Marketing and Campaigns, Department for International Trade). Michael Hirst also welcomed Jenny Jenkins, now attending as an independent member following her retirement from Evcom.

## **Declarations of interest**

No members had any declarations of interest to make.

## **Approval of minutes from last meeting - 31 May 2019**

The previous Minutes were cleared with no revisions.

## Substantive items & papers for discussion

### *a) Ministerial & departmental updates - Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport*

- Giles Smith updated members on the new Minister.
- *Helen Whately, Faversham and Mid Kent, is now the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism. To date, Tourism officials have briefed the new Minister on broad tourism policy priorities and are working to secure an introduction meeting between her and Michael Hirst as well as confirming whether she is available to attend The Business of Events and to chair the forthcoming Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel (scheduled for 4 December)..*
- International Business Events Action Plan: Giles Smith thanked members for their input which informed the UK's International Business Events Action Plan, published in June 2019.
- Tourism Sector Deal: Giles Smith noted that Ministers and officials are committed to moving forward and noted the Next Steps Conference in Birmingham on 18 September 2019.
- Event venue competition: Giles Smith reminded members that one of the Tourism Sector Deal commitments, the £250,000 event venue broadband competition to improve digital infrastructure to successful applicants across the UK, launched and would be open until Friday, 27 September 2019.
- Members asked what the uptake was for the competition and whether trends on which venues were applying, were emerging. **ACTION:** DCMS officials to update members on uptake to date and results when the competition closes; DCMS officials to provide a short summary of competition results at the December EIB meeting.
- *To date, four event venues have applied to the competition and a fifth event venue has expressed interest in applying. Tourism officials worked with industry earlier this month to further promote the competition and officials encouraged members to share the link to the competition with their channels to encourage additional applications. Following recent advice that Tourism officials presented to the Minister, we will maintain the current competition deadline and run a new event venue competition for smaller venues should there be funding leftover.*
- Spending Round: Giles Smith noted that the UK Government's Spending Round announcements took place on 4th September;

### *b) Ministerial & departmental updates - Department for International Trade*

- Madeleine Burns noted her attendance at the GREAT Programme Board on 26 June 2019 and that officials and then DIT Secretary of State, Liam Fox, were impressed with VisitBritain's work, which was presented to the board by Kerrin MacPhie; she noted that the presentation highlighted the need for greater engagement from DIT with DCMS and the industry.

- She said that an action from the GREAT Programme Board meeting to VisitBritain had been a review of the infrastructure challenges in the UK, which would be presented at the next GREAT Programme Board meeting [*tentatively scheduled for November*]; Michael Hirst reminded Madeleine Burns that the EIB has an Infrastructure and Connectivity Taskforce and that the final report from the work would be presented at the December EIB meeting.
- Rob Holt asked to clarify whether the infrastructure review from the GREAT Programme Board was UK-wide and Kerrin MacPhie confirmed that the review is UK-wide (e.g. includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales).
- Madeleine Burns provided updates on the Spending Round from DIT, announcing that while a roll-over for GREAT has been widely reported, we would need to await details of what may be allocated to the Business Events Growth Programme and of the funding commitment overall. She noted that there is a developing and renewed interest in major international events from DIT.
- Michael Hirst encouraged more engagement from DIT on this agenda and noted previous positive engagement between former Ministers Michael Ellis (DCMS) and Baroness Fairhead (DIT).

[The DExEU official needed to postpone their presentation to later in the meeting; the Chair turned to Agenda item 10].

*c) Stakeholder engagement - discussion of findings from EIB roundtables*

- Members discussed the paper: 'Events Industry Board Roundtables - highlights and key themes', which was prepared by Sheila Pardoe and circulated ahead of the meeting.
- Jennifer Jenkins recommended that inbound and outbound trade (European and global) was discussed as an urgent topic at the next Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel; Mike Rusbridge noted that key themes noted in the paper were similar to key themes discussed across previous years; he noted that there is enthusiasm from industry to move forward but said there are also frustrations due to the slow pace of progress, in particular from the UK Government.
- Tracy Halliwell recommended that industry leaders (including EIB members) should see events such as roundtables as an opportunity to communicate industry success, noting that the Web Summit bid was a good example of how the Board and Government came together, but that the success of a strong collaborative effort was not widely shared. Members agreed that more proactive communication would be welcome and valuable. **ACTION:** Members to communicate industry success to their communication channels, including UK Government officials (e.g. BVEP, Davies Tanner, VisitBritain).
- David Martin acknowledged that DCMS officials are aware of frustrations, including the slow pace of progress; he added that there is the continued challenge of

uncertainty and asked members to provide advice on whether the Action Plan would go far enough to improve UK competitiveness.

- Madeleine Burns suggested that the board consider Visit Scotland's approach; Michael Hirst noted that Paul Bush had agreed to invite an official to present on the policy at a future EIB meeting. **ACTION:** Sheila Pardoe to seek support from Paul Bush in inviting a Scottish Government official to present at a future EIB meeting.
- Mike Rusbridge requested that the EIB minutes be action-driven, focusing on a greater definition of commitments against timeframes and tracking progress. Members advised that a helpful step for the UK Government to take is for officials to identify the top 20 events that it may be interested in bidding for and hosting and share this information with industry, **ACTION:** DCMS officials to work with VisitBritain and DIT to ensure Pipeline is delivered (expected December 2019) and informs next steps.

*d) Departmental updates, Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU)*

- Ciaran Hayes, Deputy Director, Borders, Revenue & Welfare in DExEU said that the UK Government is focused on preparations for a No Deal scenario. Ciaran asked members if the information that the UK Government is producing is useful/relevant and whether there are information gaps.
- He encouraged members to share the UK Government's "Get Ready for Brexit" website with their channels. The page can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/get-ready-brexite-check>.
- Members shared concerns that EU exit may damage the event industry's reputation and create negative, global perceptions about the UK that could deter - and was impacting - event organisers from bringing their events to the UK.
- Members raised that during the World Travel Market event in November, 32,000 delegates, including senior officials, would be visiting the UK and that it was a critical event for UK Government (e.g. the Home Office) to get right; members said that ensuring an efficient and positive experience was critical to how the UK was perceived internationally, in particular for its ability to host large international events.
- Mike Rusbridge advised that while larger organisations have capacity to complete contingency planning for various EU exit scenarios, fragmentation across the industry means that organisations do not always share information; he advised that it would be useful to have companies and other relevant groups meet to share what they have planned and for the UK Government to provide clarity on solutions to EU exit. Members agreed that it is currently challenging to access needed information from the UK Government on EU exit. **ACTION:** DCMS officials to share relevant EU Exit material with members, including opportunities for industry to engage with the UK Government.

- Members agreed that much of what needed to be done was ‘myth bust’ challenges which could help offer needed business confidence to UK organisations and global businesses.
- Giles Smith said that he agreed and was keen to see more positive messaging and business confidence being built via VisitBritain’s marketing work overseas; he reminded members that DCMS officials have a fortnightly meeting with VisitBritain to discuss EU exit alongside Other Government Departments; he said he recognised that information was not always reaching audiences, and that it would be reviewed at the next fortnightly meeting.
- Ciaran Hayes said that feedback from members echoed issues across various industries; he said he recognised that communications from the UK Government did not always reach intended audiences and that information could be clearer, including what substantive changes the end of free movement would have - although he said these changes were not dramatic in terms of EU citizens visiting the UK.
- Ciaran noted that the Home Office should be providing clear information soon.  
**ACTION:** DCMS officials to share with members when available.

*e) Creative Industries presentation*

- Michael Hirst introduced Simon Blake, Head of Creative Industries, DCMS; he noted that they met in August, alongside DCMS officials (David Martin / Sheila Pardoe) for an introductory meeting about areas of overlap between the events industry and Creative Industries and opportunities for more joined up working.
- Simon Blake provided an introduction to DCMS work with the Creative Industries (presentation pack attached). He noted that the Creative Industries encounters similar challenges to the events industry: access to finance; access to skills and talent; copyright; and, geographic location (London-centric).
- Simon Blake noted that there is a Creative Industries Sector Deal which covers skills; he noted that in terms of Governance, there is the Creative Industries Council which is co-chaired by the DCMS Secretary of State and the Secretary of State of the Department for Energy and Industry Strategy.
- Simon Blake said that there is keen interest from many sectors to become a Creative Industry and that the definition is specific and defined by [Nesta](#); he said that formal recognition of the events industry as a Creative Industry is not likely, but would welcome more joined up working between the two industries where work and objectives overlap.
- Simon Blake highlighted areas where the Creative Industries can work together with the events industry, which raised **ACTION** items:
  - Connecting the EIB with the Creative Industries Council;



- Facilitating a meeting between the EIB and the Advertising Association;
  - Issue a call, through the Creative Industries Council, across all Creative Industries sectors, to identify upcoming opportunities that may not already be mapped; and,
  - Connect Sarah Wright with appropriate Creative Industries skills and talent contacts and explore overlap in SIC and SOC codes.
- Members discussed areas where overlap exists, including corporate communications and film; Jenny Jenkins advised that having the events industry join up with the Creative Industries is about competitiveness and advised that events industry work can be seen as 'industrial theatre' compared to logistics; she noted that the UK's competitive edge is being a leader in delivering industrial theatre. Mike Rusbridge noted that for exhibitions, advertising and marketing is required.

*f) UK Government's Business Events Action Plan - next steps and implementation*

- Members discussed how to retain current events in the current political climate and how to better understand which events may be lost; members noted that in the immediate term, large events are already locked in, but there were challenges with business confidence which may negatively impact business in 12-24 months' time.
- Members noted that industry is working to attract and retain events and that many DMOs were working with business ambassadors; Tracy Halliwell advised that whilst event organisers appear to not be significantly concerned by potential changes due to EU Exit, a more significant challenge may arise if delegates, especially those from the EU, begin to 'panic' about the potential impact of changes (real or perceived); she noted that using the leisure tourism platform to get the message out internationally about visas etc, would help.
- Members also noted other challenges on EU exit and communications: that EU exit messaging is often not reaching SMEs; that there was a risk of losing events which were just about to contract with the UK, because of concerns over EU Exit. Members asked if officials could prepare a generic letter of support which DMOs could use to reassure event organisers as the UK prepared to leave the EU. **ACTION:** DCMS officials to work with DCMS Ministers to prepare a letter which members can share and which DCMS officials can offer DMO contacts.
- Members asked whether there are upcoming events that we could better use to share messages, including IBTM and WTM and different organisers. **ACTION:** VisitBritain to continue to share information/conduct marketing with domestic and international audiences, including at major events.

### **Any Other Business**

- Rob Holt recommended that at future meetings, members and officials review the top 10 actions from the Action Plan against progress.
- Kerrin noted that VisitBritain have officials are attending IMEX America, including the newly renamed Meet England team; she said they are hosting two roundtables with key industry groups.
- Michael Hirst noted that The Business of Events, which is supported by EIB is set to take place in November and that members would receive invitations. He also noted that the Minister is set to attend [*DCMS officials are working to confirm whether the new Minister, Helen Whately, is able to attend*].

### **Close**

Michael Hirst closed the meeting; he noted the **next EIB meeting date**

**– Tuesday, 10th December at 11:00am - DCMS, 100 Parliament Street, London.**