

CONFIDENTIAL

**MINUTES OF THE 445TH MEETING OF THE VISITENGLAND ADVISORY BOARD (VEAB)
HELD ON TUESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 9.30AM VIA TELECONFERENCE**

- Present:** Nick De Bois, Chairman
Sarah Fowler, Board Member
Nigel Halkes, Board Member
Allan Lambert, Board Member
Fiona Pollard, Board Member
Nadine Thomson, Board Member
Dr Andy Wood OBE DL, Board Member
- In Attendance:** Sally Balcombe, Chief Executive / BTA Accounting Officer
Peter Mills, Business Services Director
Andrew Stokes, England Director
Henry Bankes, General Counsel and Company Secretary
Patricia Yates, Director of Strategy & Communications
Lyndsey Turner-Swift, Head of England Planning and Delivery
Dale Rustige, Governance Executive (minutes)
- Apologies:** Stephen Darke, Head of Tourism Affairs, DCMS

Agenda item 1: Chair's Update and Introduction

1. The Chairman welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Apologies

2. The Board noted apologies from Stephen Darke.

Agenda Item 3: Declarations of Interest

3. There were no new declarations of interest for noting.

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Last Meeting

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2020 were approved.

Agenda item 5: Matters Arising / Action Tracker

5. There were no matters arising raised.

Agenda Item 6: VisitEngland Activity Update

6. The paper was noted by the Board and taken as read. Andrew Stokes provided a verbal update on the key points.
7. The 'We're Good To Go' (WGTG) campaign has progressed positively. Spot checks have been undertaken, including investigations into issues or complaints reported. A few of the challenges noted from the feedback provided regarding

WGTG mainly related to keeping up with the high hygiene and cleaning standards. Participants of WGTG would be offered an opportunity to get involved in TXGB.

8. TXGB has over 10,000 bookable products available on the platform. VB/VE has an arrangement with Ticketmasters for them to sell Rugby World Cup match-day packages through TXGB.
9. The Board received a verbal update from Lyndsey-Turner Swift regarding the DMO Emergency Funding. Funding has been awarded to eight DMOs. Further support had been offered by the VisitEngland team by allocating a senior manager to work closely with these DMOs on developing sustainability plans. It was decided that names of DMOs that have been awarded funding would not be publicised due to reputational risk.
10. Key business events activities in the year so far included the MeetGB Virtual in June 2020, including MeetEngland which made a first appearance at The Meetings Show Virtual in October 2020. Further exposure for MeetEngland included engaging as the official buyer and visitor registration sponsor of the IBTM World conference in December 2020; this global trade show attracts a worldwide audience of up to 1,200 hosted buyers, plus visitors.
11. The Board received a highlight of the marketing campaigns launched this year. The 'Escape the Everyday' campaign was underway. The post-lockdown key communication messaging would have a focus on short breaks in the UK being safe and enjoyable, and a chance to escape the everyday. Funding would be offered to DMOs for the delivery of local marketing activities aligned with the 'Escape the Everyday' campaign.
12. Covid-19 continued to have an impact on the Year 5 approach to the Discover England Fund (DEF) and contingency planning has been key for the delivery of core activities. £2.3m of the £5.5m DEF budget had been repurposed to support DMOs and communications efforts through the pandemic. A revised approach has been agreed with DCMS and Treasury, which is based on up-weighting activity that supports the domestic market across Grant Funding and VB/VE Central Marketing and Distribution. The focus would be on increasing the viability of products domestically to build a base, which could be used to amplify internationally when markets re-open.
13. The Board noted that sustainable tourism was a key area and VB/VE would be looking at how it can support the industry in positioning Britain as a sustainable destination. A key aspect would be how sustainability can be balanced without damaging Britain's tourism offering.

Agenda item 7: Any Other Business

14. The Board noted that there has been some phenomenal work undertaken by the VB and VE teams during the past several months, particularly during the current challenging circumstances.

Agenda item 8: Date of Next Meeting

15. The date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 16th March 2021

Agenda item 9: Meeting Close

16. The meeting was closed at 10:30am. The VisitEngland Strategy Session was to follow at 11.00am.