

Minutes of Meeting of the VisitScotland Board held on 8 November 2018

Present:	John Thurso (Chairman) Anne Anderson Caroline Roxburgh Carolyn Jameson Rebecca Brooks Calum Ross
In attendance:	Malcolm Roughead (Chief Executive) Paul Bush (Director of Events) Vicki Miller (Director of Marketing, Digital & Global Brand) Ken Neilson (Director of Corporate Services) Riddell Graham (Director of Industry and Destination Development) Erica Reid (Board Observer) Neil Brownlee (Head of Business Events) Meike van Krimpen (Digital Media Assistant Manager)
Apologies:	Stephen Hagan Cathy Craig
Minutes:	Pat Aitken

INTRODUCTIONS

1. The Chairman welcomed Board members to the meeting.

The Chairman duly noted the attendance of Erica Reid at this Board meeting and throughout 2019. Board advised that Erica will be acting as Board Observer as part of Scottish Government initiative to encourage women onto public sector boards.

2. The Chairman also introduced Pat Aitken as Minutes Secretary and Meike van Krimpen who is currently work-shadowing Vicki Miller.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2018

3. K Neilson requested that the wording in para 32 be changed from “what had previously been advised” to “what had previously been insisted”.

4. The above being noted the minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 September 2018 were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

5. No conflicts of interest were noted.

MATTERS ARISING

6. The Chairman noted that December Matters Arising would be carried forward to January Board meeting. **ACTION: December Matters Arising to be carried forward to January meeting.**
7. The Chairman advised that there would be a new structure for future Board meeting agendas and outlined reasoning supporting the change.
8. C Jameson requested a presentation on Thistle Industry Panel to be brought to a future Board meeting and this was agreed. **ACTION: Thistle Industry Panel presentation to be brought forward to future Board meeting.**
9. C Roxburgh requested guidance on position of VisitScotland in relation to Tourism Levy. Noted that Chief Executive was attending a series of Scottish Government stakeholder meetings on this subject.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL – BUSINESS EVENTS

10. N Brownlee noted that, as paper suggested, we are looking to present to the Board a direction of travel for Business Events.
11. Advised that Business Events is one of the areas where we can, by our actions, make changes and that VisitScotland is looking to move from “tourism model” to “policy model” although BREXIT and funding outlined as the main obstacles.
12. Business Events are classified as Conference and Meetings; Associations; Exhibitions. Department are dedicated to business tourism as a core activity. Outlined National Bid Fund sector mechanism to meetings and referred to several events which can be linked to sector.
13. What do we want to do – reposition business events; change focus from secondary to primary outcomes; roll out 5-year line of business events; we want to be the national agency resource for business events and we want to be a strategy leader.
14. Implications - consultation/endorsement/education/engagement/processes/budget/industry – key stakeholders.

15. Budget – within 2 years bid fund will expire. Next steps to drive skills (economic and social) through business events.
16. Questioned if VisitScotland would be the first to go in this direction or if other countries used this model. Scotland is one of the smaller nations but Germany has a similar model as does Ireland, Singapore, Canada and Australia. Scotland would be playing catch-up but we are at the forefront in certain areas.
17. A meeting had been held with CEOs of SEC/EICC and AECC and Universities are on Board.
18. Funding for the initiative has not been allocated and the organisation would look to cover through Grant in Aid. Direction would be part of the Good to Great to World Class initiative and once agreed would be part of Strategy Framework.
19. Initiative to be brought to the attention of the Cabinet Secretary and funding to be raised.
20. Board members backed proposal and felt that organisation has to decide and agree way forward to ensure we work together with key industry stakeholders.
21. Chairman thanked Neil for the presentation and noted discussions held – as with all initiatives there are risks. **ACTION: Business Events Direction of Travel to be brought back to future meeting.**

SCOTLAND IS NOW

22. V Miller updated the meeting on Brand Scotland and recapped on Marketing and Digital Directorate.
23. **Brand Scotland** - advised that despite business case there is no update; we are giving Scottish Government a solution and we are in a position of waiting to hear as to whether funding will be forthcoming.
24. Board felt the situation was frustrating and asked if there would be an end date – advised that it was likely that a decision would be given at same time as VisitScotland's core funding announcement (December).
25. A wide range of discussion took place and meeting advised that a presentation had been given to D McKay and that VS Chair had raised at last Convention of Highlands and Islands meeting. VS currently doing majority of work and Board asked if there was anything we can do with STA?
26. The Chair requested that Board comes back to this discussion at a future meeting. **ACTION: Further discussion to be held at a future meeting.**

27. **Marketing and Digital Update** – looking at how we can increase our marketing efforts – strategy has not changed and all activity is digitally driven (See/Think/Plan/Do). Conversion has seen a 16% increase on last year.
28. Campaign investment has gone from £7m > £3m; increased fixed costs including T&S; content creation; research has been carried out by Insights department; planning activity outlined.
29. It was felt that organisation has focussed on Scotland is Now and Board need to be updated on core activity.
30. Agreed that further discussion to take place at a future meeting – markets to be highlighted to include France/Germany/China. **ACTION: Further discussion to be held at future meeting**
31. Board agreed that Marketing Strategy to be included in discussion at Board Awayday.
ACTION: Marketing Strategy to be included as item at Board Awayday

INDUSTRY AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

32. **Information Strategy** – Board members were referred to paper submitted and received a verbal update.
33. **Gaelic Language Plan** – meeting noted that this was 3rd iteration of plan and VisitScotland were leading on production of Gaelic Tourism Strategy.
34. The Board were asked to approve the plan which would then be forwarded to Bord na Gaidhlig. The Board formally approved the 3rd iteration of the Gaelic Language Plan. **ACTION: Gaelic Language Plan approved**
35. **VIP+** - the Board were referred to the paper provided and advised that, as part of budget discussion, money had been set aside to expand this programme to ensure it became more meaningful.
36. 7 key areas had been identified to provide focus and support to businesses. Looking at Insights to show businesses what they might get - Comms Plan to be developed and initiative to be reviewed.

CORPORATE SERVICES

37. **Framework Agreement** – Chair asked for Board approval and this was given. **ACTION: The Board approved the Framework Agreement.**
38. **Property** – requested Edinburgh Royal Mile Heads of Terms be approved by Board - approval given. **ACTION: The Board approved the Edinburgh Royal Miles Heads of Terms.**

39. **Procurement:**

(a) Application to tender for Retail – Books and Maps had been put to ARC; agreed by Board.

ACTION: The Board approved the tender.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

40. **Finance Report** – noted.

41. **Key Performance Measures** – noted underspend on Capital; discussions with Scottish Government to be held and Caroline Roxburgh updated the Board.

42. Noted that a request for £3m had been made to rural fund – at moment we are awaiting confirmation of £1m.

43. Board discussed in greater detail – emerging threat highlighted but meeting felt that solutions could be found.

44. Board noted report.

PAPERS FOR NOTING/DISCUSSION

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

45. The Chief Executive introduced a report on activity since the previous Board meeting. He drew particular attention to the following:

(a) Product and Investment detail.

(b) **iCentre Performance:** 8.9% down; 4% volume; spend increased; 15% drop in day trips.

(c) **Staff Engagement Survey** has been circulated and will be reported to Board in early 2019. **ACTION: Staff Engagement Survey to be presented to Board in early 2019**

(d) Highlighted first meeting of **Strategy Industry Group** – business strategy to be compiled; will be brought back to Tourism Leadership Group.

(e) **BREXIT** – VS sponsoring department have organised meetings with stakeholders.

(f) **South of Scotland** – attendance at Strategy Awayday by Chief Executive and Director of Industry and Development. No requirement to develop a business team, initiative has a lot of industry support.

(g) **Tourism Levy** – given political implications the Scottish Government have commenced a nation-wide consultation.

It will therefore be sometime before Scottish Government considers how it might wish to proceed.

Board decision that we would come back to this. **ACTION: Board to address Tourism Levy at a further meeting.**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

46. The Chairman provided an update on his activity since the previous Board meeting.
47. Chair drew particular attention to the VisitBritain Board meeting highlights and development of strategy.

Noted VB to head in strategic direction and to move back into Business Events.

15 sector deals being considered; 18-24 months before anything progresses.

Looking at skills common to UK.

48. Noted attendance at World Travel Market.

49. Held various 1:1 meetings with VS staff.

50. The Board noted the report.

2023 EVENTS

51. Has been moving well and has gone to Cabinet as correspondence only; funding is coming into place; likely to be an appraisal that delivers model mirroring Solheim Cup; will be circulated to Board via email and agreement by Board requested.

SOLHEIM CUP

52. The Director of Events updated the Board:

- Ticket sales are going well and expectation to reach sale of 50,000 by Christmas
- Review to go to ARC and then presented to January Board.
- Focus on risk / no areas of concern

53. Follow up paper to January Board on Solheim Cup and Events **ACTION: To be raised at January Board meeting**

54. The Board had no further questions and noted and approved the report.

INFORMATION PAPERS

55. The following papers were circulated for noting:

- **Events Key Performance Indicators Report** – CE noted tangible benefits; importance of Business Events industry as a whole; given expertise within organisation consideration to be given on how we can make more out of them?

- **Aberdeen Conference Centre** – noted Director of Events is going to Aberdeen every month; a Board meeting to be held in Aberdeen in 2019. **ACTION: Board meeting to be held in Aberdeen during 2019**
- Insights Update
- Communications Report
- Schedule of Forthcoming Activity

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

56. Nothing to note.

ADDENDUM

57. Application to tender for iCentre Design and Build – this was circulated to Board members outwith the meeting structure and subsequently approved. **Action: The Board approved the tender.**