

MEMBERS:

- Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
- Association for Conferences and Events
- Association for Events Management Education
- British Association of Conference Destinations
- British Hospitality Association
- Conference Centres of Excellence
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport
- Eventia
- Events Industry Alliance
- Events Industry Forum
- Hotel Booking Agents Association
- International Congress & Convention Association
- Meetings Industry Association
- Meetings Professionals International
- National Outdoors Events Association
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- UK Trade & Investment
- Venue Masters
- VisitBritain
- Visit London
- VisitScotland
- Visit Wales

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PRESS RELEASE

EVENTS ARE A KEY PART OF VISITBRITAIN'S FRAMEWORK STRATEGY

New three year strategy to capitalise on key events and business opportunities.

Hard on the heels of the announcement during January's National Tourism Summit, held in Liverpool, of the importance of Events in driving the visitor economy comes further evidence of how business, cultural and sporting events will be an integral part in maximising the prospects for growth in British tourism, bringing new business, foreign earnings, international visitors and increased value of inbound visitor spend and increased investment to all parts of the UK.

Setting out its plans to achieve the full potential of the visitor economy, VisitBritain's British Tourism Framework Review identifies as a clear enduring strength the fact that "Britain has one of Europe's most successful event industries". It states that, "Our events and meetings industry is globally competitive and our range of venues includes some of the world's most famous and admired buildings"

It argues that these venues need to be supplemented with more new, purpose-built conference, exhibition and meeting venues, especially in London so that Britain can remain internationally competitive.

The report also highlights Britain's London and regional theatres and festivals as having significant international profiles and making important contributions to attracting international audiences. The success of festivals like Edinburgh and its Fringe Festival, T in the Park, Glastonbury, Llangollen International Eisteddfod, Manchester International Festival and the literature festivals of Cheltenham and Hay-On-Wye are some of those cited for enhancing their destination profiles.

Britain's world-class sporting venues, facilities and events are also evidenced as part of the opportunity to showcase 21st century Britain to a generation of travellers in an increasingly competitive international market.

In welcoming the Review, Michael Hirst, Chairman of the Business Visits & Events Partnership said, "It is encouraging to see that the Partnership's submission that Events should play a pre-eminent role in the way in which Britain's tourism is developed and marketed has been listened to. The Partnership has long campaigned that Events are a key part of driving visitor traffic. In the current challenging economic times their tactical use to fill destinations should be fully exploited."

He added, "We are already talking to Government, VisitBritain and Partners For England to see how we can ensure events have a key role within the Place Making Charter for Destination Management. We look forward to seeing the detail of VisitBritain's strategy as to how business visits, events and festivals can play their part in achieving the full potential of the visitor economy."

ENDS

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Note to editors:

- **The Business Visits and Events Partnership's** aim is to lead the way in supporting a competitive, high quality and more profitable business visits and events sector in Britain. The Partnership seeks to provide a cohesive industry voice and will work with VisitBritain and other government departments and agencies to influence and develop policies and practices favourable to the growth of tourism, trade and creative enterprise from business visits and events.
- The **Business Visits and Events Partnership** has the support of the leading trade organisations and government agencies with an interest in conferences, meetings, exhibitions, trade fairs, incentive travel, corporate hospitality, and business, sporting, cultural and festival events.
- Business travel is worth **over £22 billion** in terms of its wider economic impact through associated visitor expenditure on travel, entertainment, shopping, pre and post conference tours etc.) In addition the value of business transacted at trade events is estimated to generate in excess of **£100 billion** a year.
- The 2007 IPS figures for inbound business visits and spend indicate over **8.8 million visitors spending £4.5 billion**.
- Business visits in 2008 generated 109% more spending in real terms than in 1979 (leisure increase 18%).
- **The sector generates 27% of all overseas visitors and 28% of inbound tourism earnings.**
- Business visits and events create high quality, year round employment opportunities accounting for some **530,000 jobs** directly and indirectly.
- **Around 80 million people attend 1.5 million** conferences and meetings annually.
- **Business visitors spend on average £126 per day** – nearly 78% more than the daily rate of that spent by the leisure traveller, with attendees at exhibitions spending 150% more than the leisure traveller.
- **450 major Events take place in the UK annually contributing more than £1 billion**
- **6,500 events** are listed on VisitEngland's National Tourism Open Network with **4,500** different web entries ranging from the Edinburgh Festival to community events.
- **Corporate Hospitality** which is a major beneficiary from events is estimated to worth £1 billion a year.
- For further information on Business Visits and Events, please refer to the website: www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com