

News Release

Meetings & Events Manifesto for Britain Officially Launched - MPs receive personal copy of document

London 16th June 2010: The first Meetings & Events Manifesto for Britain, created by a dedicated Government Affairs Group within the Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP), was officially launched last night at a briefing of leading industry figures. The event was hosted by De Vere Venues at their Holborn Bars venue in London.

The 12 page manifesto document, sponsored by ICC Excel London, and created after extensive consultation with all major UK industry trade associations and professional bodies, sets out 10 Reasons why Meetings & Events are important to Britain, along with nine separate areas of policy, designed to achieve the overall manifesto objective, which is; **'To make Britain the natural destination choice and an international hub for all sectors of the events industry.'**

The manifesto document has now been personally sent to 350 MP's, specifically selected for the relevance of events within their particular constituencies, along with key Government Ministers and Officials and a further 50 members of the House of Lords. The manifesto will be presented again at the House of Commons on 20th October, during National Meetings Week, where all MP's are being invited to attend a reception and presentation on the sector.

Commenting on the launch, Chair of the BVEP, Michael Hirst OBE said; "The launch of this Manifesto is one of the most significant events for our industry, and begins the process of ensuring this vital sector achieves the voice it so critically needs."

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About the Business Visits & Events Partnership

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 works 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 and with 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.

Members of the BVEP include;

- **Association of British Professional Conference Organisers**
- **Association for Conferences and Events**
- **Association for Events Management Education**
- **Conference Centres of Excellence**
- **Department for Culture, Media & Sport**
- **Eventia**
- **Events Industry Alliance**
- **Events Industry Forum**
- **Hotel Booking Agents Association**
- **International Congress & Convention Association**
- **International Special Events Society**
- **Meet England**
- **Meetings Industry Association**
- **Meeting Professionals International**
- **National Outdoors Events Association**
- **Northern Ireland Tourist Board**
- **Site Global**
- **UK Inbound**
- **UK Trade & Investment**
- **VisitBritain**
- **Visit London**
- **VisitScotland**
- **Visit Wales**

www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com

Notes

For further information, including a digital copy of the Manifesto, please contact;

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Presentation notes from the launch are attached to this release.

Meetings & Events Manifesto Speakers Presentations

Michael Hirst OBE
Chair
Business Visits & Events Partnership

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Business Visits & Events Partnership, I am delighted to welcome you to the launch of the first 'Manifesto for Meetings & Events' and to a celebration of a decade of leading the way in supporting a competitive, high quality and more profitable business visits and events sector in Britain.

Firstly, let me begin by thanking De Vere Venues, who are kindly and generously hosting our Manifesto launch here in the magnificent surroundings of Holborn Bars. It is greatly appreciated.

Yes it's 10 year birthday greetings for the Partnership, formed at the onset of the new millennium, as the Business Tourism Partnership, representing then the interests of conferences, meetings, exhibitions, trade fairs, incentive travel and outdoor events and further extending its scope three years ago to include the interests of cultural, music and artistic events, great sporting occasions and festivals.

10 years in which the sector has doubled in value, grown faster than most other sectors and shown considerable resilience during the recent downturn

And despite those that suggest the industry hasn't got its act together, over the last decade the industry's leading organisations, both trade representatives and government agencies, have worked in partnership, to provide a powerful and cohesive industry voice, to influence and develop policies and practices from which the Meetings and Events sector can benefit in growing the visitor economy, trade and creative enterprise.

Meetings and Events are the 21st century drivers of the visitor economy. They have the power to shape a political agenda, transform a destination and they can and should be used as strategic tools for economic and social development.

So in presenting to you and the new parliamentarians and other influencers 'A Meetings and Events Manifesto for Britain' in the Partnership's 10th year, let me give you 10 great reasons why Meetings and Events are of critical importance to Britain;

1. The industry is worth close to £25 billions
2. Britain is acknowledged as a world leader, not only by events held here but the talent of our organisers to stage events overseas.

3. The sector generates employment – around 530,00 directly
4. The workforce is diverse and highly skilled.
5. 8 million international visitors buying over £100 billion of goods.
6. 25,000 businesses depend upon the vibrancy of the sector.
7. New infrastructure is developed through the industry's activities.
8. Events benefit local culture and the Nation's heritage.
9. Britain is entering a golden era of sporting festivals, including the 2012 Games, 2014 Commonwealth Games, 2015 Rugby World Cup, and, who knows, possible the Football World Cup in 2018, further positioning the UK as a major events destination.
10. Meetings and Events have a positive impact on community well-being, education, social diversity and civic pride.

The Manifesto contains the key areas where the Partnership believes more active support for the Industry will make Britain the natural destination choice and international hub for all sectors of the events industry. These are:

1. Greater recognition of the contribution the sector makes to tourism, trade and cultural enterprise.
2. More support for National, Regional and local bodies to promote business visits and events.
3. More government involvement in the process of attracting events to Britain.
4. Ensuring that the benefits to the Sector from the 2012 London Olympics are fully optimised.
5. The encouragement of high operating standards and the development of sector quality, skills and qualifications.
6. More balanced regulation and greater co-ordination across government departments in setting policies for the sector.
7. Fair fiscal and taxation which will encourage growth and ensure sector businesses enjoy greater competitiveness.
8. Improvement to infrastructure and transport.
9. Better research.

All these areas are outlined in the Manifesto with specific and detailed measures the industry believes need to be taken to realise its full potential.

What happens now? This Manifesto is being sent to Ministers, new Parliamentarians and Government Department Officials. With it goes an invitation to attend a reception, sponsored by the Confex Group at the House of Commons on Wednesday, the 20th October 2010, during National Meetings and Events Week.

There will also be an invitation for interest in a new All Parliamentary Group for the Events Sector which will be established under the auspices of the Event Industry Forum with support from the Partnership.

Meetings with the new Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Jeremy Hunt, the new Minister for Tourism, John Penrose and the new Minister for Culture and Creative Industries, Ed Vaizey have all been sought to discuss the Manifesto. The Partnership already holds bi-lateral meetings with DCMS Officials.

This Manifesto shows that the Meetings and Events Industry can work together for its common good. It shows just how important the sector is in showcasing the excellence of Britain's creative talents and how Events can shape Britain's future, provide an iconic focus for the visitor economy and be significant drivers of national and regional performance, of physical and social regeneration and cultural development.

I want to thank Brian Kirsh, Head of the Partnership's Regulation Sub-Committee from Eventia, together with Peter Ducker from HBAA and James Rees from ICCA, Robert Wright of Davies Tanner, Nathan Alemany and Simon Mills, who is by no means last as he's shortly to tell you more about National Meetings and Events Week, for compiling the Manifesto.

And finally, I would like to thank James Rees and the team at Excel London for their sponsorship and support of the Manifesto, and wish them every success with the official opening next week of ICC London Excel; London's first International Convention Centre. A perfect and fitting example of how meetings and events can make a significant and positive contribution to our business landscape.

Simon.....

Simon Mills
Head of Business Visits & Events
VisitBritain

Thank you Michael, and again welcome everyone.

Whilst this evening is mainly about the launch of the Manifesto, it is also the perfect opportunity for me to tell you about our plans for this year's National Meetings Week.

National Meetings Week 2009 was the most successful in its history. Last year, using our campaign theme of **Keep Britain Talking**, we reached over 17 million people globally through our media and online activity. We generated nearly £1 million of media coverage, including 15 feature length radio interviews and over two hours of video coverage. Our digital reach achieved over 71 million unique users; the best on line reach ever and we had our largest national and regional reach to date.

Our aim is to build on this again this year and to make National Meetings Week 2010 the most successful ever, as we edge closer to London 2012

As with the BVEP, National Meetings Week will celebrate its 10th Anniversary this year as the campaign again looks to increase awareness and appreciation of the meetings and events industry in front of both government and wider business audiences.

As meetings and events continue to face a number of challenges, the campaign promises some of the most wide reaching activity to date. Under the stewardship of VisitBritain, and with the support of our many industry associations and corporate partners and supporters, the focus week will take place from 18th – 25th October 2010.

This year we are looking to expand our campaign to include, as with the Manifesto, every aspect of the UK's diverse meetings and events sector, and, as with previous years, our primary objective is to promote the importance of face to face communication in all its forms, and to underline the incredible variety of economic, cultural and social benefits our industry delivers to this country;

Already we have an impressive line up of activities taking place during National Meetings Week;

- On the first day, we have the Meetings Industry Marketing Awards, which take place at the Park Plaza Riverbank, and which will recognise and celebrate the industry's marketing abilities and creativity.
- On the 20th and 21st October, the Showman's Show takes place at the Newbury Showground.
- And again on the 20th October, we have our first reception at the House of Commons, where we have invited the entire new intake of MP's, along with key Ministers and Officials, to join us for drinks and a presentation on the sector. And I would like to thank Duncan Reid and the team at Confex Group for generously sponsoring this event.
- And finally, on the 22nd the Meetings Industry Association celebrates its own very special 21st Birthday. Happy Birthday Jane!!

In addition, we will use National Meetings Week to provide the industry with an opportunity to promote its own products and services and to package up deals and offers that can be used to drive additional business and generate revenue directly. We will also, as part of VisitBritain's wider remit, look to specifically target inbound business, using our strong value message as a clear call to action.

National Meetings Week has become part of the landscape in recent years, and we're looking to raise the game again this year.

It is the perfect platform for the industry to come together as one and use the campaign as an opportunity to talk positively about the meetings and events sector, to raise awareness of the great work we do and galvanise support from every corner of business.

The 2010 Campaign manual will be distributed shortly, and I look forward to sharing our further plans with you over the coming weeks.