

MEMBERSHIP

- 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
- European Federation of Professional Conference Organisers
- Events Industry Alliance
- Events Industry Forum
- Hotel Booking Agents Association
- International Congress & Convention Association
- International Special Events Society
- Meet England
- Meetings Industry Association
- Meetings Professionals International
- National Outdoors Events Association
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- Site Global
- UK Inbound
- UK Trade & Investment
- VisitBritain
- Visit London
- VisitScotland
- Visit Wales

c/o VisitBritain
1 Palace Street
London
SW1E 5HE

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7578 1036
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7578 1001
E-mail: bv&ep@visitbritain.org



3rd March 2011

Minister questioned about business tourism cuts

3 March 2011: John Penrose, Minister for Tourism has been questioned about the wisdom of VisitBritain's cuts to its support for business events.

Both at the opening ceremony of the Discovery Workshop on Monday, the 28th February, at which over 100 buyers of Events in Britain were present and at a Conservative Party Seminar on Tourism on Wednesday, the 2nd March, he was asked whether the withdrawal of VisitBritain from promoting international conferences, trade shows and business visits from its London and 21 overseas offices ran counter to the Prime Minister's declared intention that "Britain's missions overseas should step up their economic development role to boost an export led recovery".

The Minister responded to say that VisitBritain would still support bids to attract international business events and it was his intention to carry out a review of exactly what the business events sector in Britain needed to advance its competitive position and enable a more effective response to business event promotion. This would be done in conjunction with discussions with other government departments and UKTI to ensure that the sectors ability to generate exports was at the forefront of such considerations.

Michael Hirst, Chairman of the Business Visits & Events Partnership, who confronted the Minister, said, *"It is far from certain how VisitBritain's continuing support for the sector will be managed. I have met with Sandie Dawe, VisitBritain's Chief Executive and am promised a response shortly to clarify how the reduced level of business tourism support will affect the services VisitBritain currently provides to the sector"*.

He added, *"It is clear however that much of the current work will need to be taken on by other agencies, including VisitEngland, which is consulting on its new strategy for business tourism and other National bodies, like VisitScotland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Visit Wales and UKTI. The industry will need to take a far more proactive position to marketing and promotion in a co-ordinated approach to replace the lack of a Britain wide presence from VisitBritain"*.

Hirst promised that the Business Visits & Events Partnership would continue to press the Minister on support for the sector and said, *"It makes no sense at all that VisitBritain should be closing its business visits and events department and withdrawing from the globally competitive business tourism market, which currently generates nearly 30% of all inbound tourism earnings?"*

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www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com

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;

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- VisitScotland
- Visit Wales

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For further information and interviews please contact;

Michael Hirst OBE, Chairman BVEP T: 020 8950 8071

Alex Stronghill at Davies Tanner

T: 01892 619100 E: alex.stronghill@daviestanner.co.uk