

News Release

For immediate release.

MORE SUPPORT NEEDED IN GOVERNMENTS TOURISM POLICY Business Visits & Events Require Greater Focus

London 7th March 2011: Whilst welcoming the Government's new Tourism Policy and its focus on treating Tourism as a key priority economic sector, the Business Visits & Events Partnership believes much more needs to be done to recognise the role that business events play in communicating and showcasing Britain's excellence in innovation, creativity, research and enterprise and in driving large volumes of visitor traffic.

Much of the new Policy proposals, announced by the Government on Friday, will have a positive impact on business visitors and their experience. There are also significant opportunities for the new industry-led Destination Management and Marketing bodies to prioritise high spending and high yielding business visitors and events that can help shape destinations and create inward investment and regeneration.

The Policy document notes that the UK currently has a relatively low share of the international conference and exhibition market having failed to make the top ten countries for international meetings, ranking 11th with 3% of the global market. The report says that this comparatively low ranking is principally driven by Britain's lack of world class conference and exhibition venues, but that with large scale investment in new and improved and expanded venues plus a more professional marketing approach the situation is starting to change and Britain's international rankings are improving.

Michael Hirst, Chairman of the Partnership said, "We agree that large scale investment needs to continue, but such expenditures require government incentives to make them happen faster. Equally assistance for event bids to bring more international events to Britain needs active Ministerial support across Whitehall together with other subvention provision, as is common in competitor countries, if Britain is to continue to improve its international ranking."

He added, "Following VisitBritain's withdrawal of support from the business tourism sector, the Minister for Tourism has indicated his intention to carry out a review of exactly what the

business events sector in Britain needs to advance its competitive position and enable a more effective response to business event promotion. I hope this can take place quickly. The industry is eager to work with the government to ensure the specific needs of the business tourism and events sector are met so it can fulfill its potential to contribute substantially to Britain's export led recovery"

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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.

Notes to Editors

Further information, including images and interviews, available from Davies Tanner on 44 (0)1892 619100