

**Tourism Team (English Tourist Board Consultation)  
Department for Culture Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street,  
London SW1Y 5DH**

**11 October 2012**

## **Consultation on the Future of the English Tourist Board Tourism Alliance Submission**

The Tourism Alliance was established in 2001 as the voice of the UK tourism industry. It comprises 50 tourism-related trade associations and destination management organisations that together represent some 200,000 business of all sizes throughout the UK (see Appendix 1 for a list of member organisations). The Tourism Alliance's mandate is to work with government on issues relevant to the growth and development of tourism and its contribution to the economy. We are therefore responding to this consultation in that capacity.

### **1. Introduction**

The Tourism Alliance is very supportive of the Government's view that the Board of the English Tourist Board (ETB) reflect, and be responsive to, the views and interests of the English tourism industry. This is a very reasonable position considering that ETB was established in order to help support the growth and development of the domestic tourism industry in England.

There is also a need to ensure that, with increasing requirements for ETB to gain match-funding from the industry in order to undertake marketing activities, that the principle of public sector funding provided through Grant-In-Aid from Government is used for the benefit of all tourism businesses, and not just ETB's commercial partners, is retained.

However, while the Tourism Alliance supports industry appointments to ETB's Board, we have fundamental concerns regarding the proposed changes to the way in which these appointments are made.

### **2. Concerns Regarding Proposals on the Election of ETB Board Members**

There are two main problems that the Tourism Alliance has identified in the consultation's proposals to have three or four ETB Board Members elected by the Destination Management Organisation Forum. These are:

#### **a. Representation**

The Tourism Alliance believes that if private sector representation on the ETB Board is to come from a single organisation as proposed, that organisation needs to be able to demonstrate that it truly nationwide in its coverage and truly representation of the English tourism industry as a whole.

At the moment the DMO Forum has around 46 member organisations out of approximately 175 organisations that undertake destination marketing and/or management functions. The reason for the low level of membership of the DMO Forum compared to the overall number of organisations that undertake destination management activities is due to the requirement that, to be a DMO Forum member, the private sector must have majority of the voting seats on the DMO's board.

This means that a very large number of DMOs that are run by councils are excluded from DMO Forum membership. As a result, the DMO Forum only represents around 26% of all DMOs and large regions of the England, such as Yorkshire (where Welcome to Yorkshire is not eligible for DMO Forum membership) would be unable to have a representative elected to the ETB Board in Future.

The Tourism Alliance contends that having an organisation that represents only a quarter of all DMOs controlling the election of members to the ETB Board, which is accountable to all English tourism businesses, is therefore undemocratic.

Indeed, the Tourism Alliance could mount a cogent argument that, with 52 members that account for around 200,000 businesses throughout the UK and no restrictions on the membership of private and public sector organisations, it is considerably more representative of the tourism industry in England than the DMO Forum and should therefore be responsible for the election of industry representation to the ETB Board.

#### **b. Conflict of Interest**

The ETB is, and will continue to be, a NDPB. It is funded by the Government, through DCMS to undertake activities specified in the Annual Funding Agreement and to achieve targets set by Government. As such, it is accountable to the Minister and ultimately, Parliament, where it has to lay its Annual Report each year.

To help ETB undertake its functions and reach the targets set in the funding agreement, the Minister appoints individuals to the Board that s/he considers have the requisite skills and experience. These Board members can be appointed and dismissed at the Minister's discretion. As such, there is a clear line of accountability for both the organisation and the ETB Board through to Government.

The proposal in the consultation document (especially if 4 board members are elected through the DMO Forum) effectively cedes control of the ETB Board to a third party organisation that may, or may not, share the view of the Minister and Parliament as to the organisation's priorities.

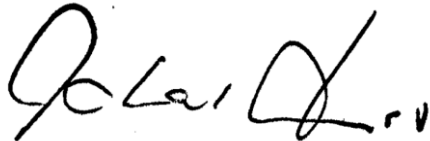
With no ability on the Minister's behalf to approve or dismiss appointments made by the DMO Forum, ETB could, at some time, find itself of acting counter to the will of Parliament. This is an untenable situation for an NDPB.

### **3. Summary**

As mentioned at the outset, the Tourism Alliance agrees with the central tenet of the proposals of the consultation document – that the 3-4 people should be appointed to the ETB to represent the interests of the English tourism industry. At the moment there are seven representatives of the industry on the VisitEngland Board, of which three represent the destinations and four represent the businesses. We believe that this

adequate representation and, apart from formalising this representation, we believe that the status-quo should be retained.

We trust that this adequately presents the position of the Tourism Alliance in regard to the future composition of the ETB Board. If you would like any further information on the studies mentioned in this submission or would like to clarify any of the issues raised, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or our Policy Director, Kurt Janson.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Hirst', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Hirst MBE  
Chairman

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## **Appendix 1: Tourism Alliance Members**

ABTA  
ALVA  
ANTOR  
Association for Tourism in Higher Education  
BALPPA  
Bed & Breakfast Association  
Brighton and Hove Tourism Alliance  
British Beer & Pub Association  
British Destinations  
British Educational Travel Association  
British Holiday & Home Parks Association  
British Hospitality Association  
British Marine Federation  
Business in Sport & Leisure  
Business Visits & Events Partnership  
Camping & Caravanning Club  
Confederation of Passenger Transport  
Country Land and Business Association  
Cumbria Tourism  
EASCO  
English UK  
English Historic Towns Forum  
European Tour Operators Association  
Farm Stay UK  
Group Business Travel Forum  
Heritage Railway Association  
Historic Houses Association  
Historic Royal Palaces  
Holiday Centres Association  
Hoseasons  
Institute of Tourism Guiding  
London and Partners  
Marketing Manchester  
Mersey Partnership  
National Caravan Council  
National Trust  
New Forest Tourism  
Outdoor Industries Association  
Resort Development Organisation  
South West Tourism Alliance  
The Caravan Club  
The Tourism Society  
Tourism for All  
Tourism South East  
UKInbound  
Visit Cornwall  
Visit Kent  
Visit Wiltshire  
Visitor Attractions Group  
Welcome to Yorkshire

### **Observers**

Local Government Association  
VisitBritain  
VisitEngland