



# Report to the Tourism Summit

Submission to the  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport

November 2002

## Introduction

This summary report gives details of the areas of focus for the English Tourism Council (ETC) since the last Tourism Summit held in March 2002. The four key themes are:

1. Activity to facilitate the recovery of tourism following the Foot & Mouth Crisis and September 11;
2. Supporting Government in its proposals for modernisation;
3. Delivering national strategies; and,
4. Assisting the regional bodies to deliver the tourism agenda.

### **1. Activity to facilitate the recovery of tourism following the Foot & Mouth Crisis and September 11.**

The 'Your Countryside -You're Welcome' campaign was set up to encourage people back to the countryside after the Foot and Mouth Crisis. The ETC, as a core partner has played a key role in the promotion of this campaign over the last six months.

In April 2002, the ETC set up a team to manage the co-ordination of the UK domestic element of the Million Visitor Campaign, led by the British Tourist Authority. Discussions with tourist board partners confirmed the following objectives with regard to the domestic campaign:

- Activity should focus on overseas visitors as they arrive in the UK and should have the aim of persuading them to travel more widely and potentially to extend their stay;
- Activity should avoid spreading resources thinly by doing a few things really well;
- Activity should build on the work already done by BTA and should have a regional emphasis;
- Activity should pull together the many sources of information available to visitors through linkage and co-ordination.

Four sets of posters promoting the accessibility of 'Hidden Britain' have been produced, advertising sites include London Underground, escalator panels on Heathrow Express, London taxis, and Liverpool and Manchester airports. A 'Welcome to Britain' information pack has been distributed to Tourist Information Centres, and commercial partners, including P&O, Avis, Amex, Meridien Leisure, De Vere, Hilton, Intercontinental, Best Western, Thistle, and Queen's Moat House hotels. A French edition is being distributed at Channel ports. Campaign postcards and bookmarks have been distributed at Heathrow terminals and independent hotels, and all mobile phone users from the BTA target markets will receive a 'Welcome' message when they first switch on their phones on arrival in the UK.

The August results (from analysis of the responses to an incentivised questionnaire) show that 65% of respondents agreed that the Welcome to Britain pack had encouraged them to visit more parts of the UK than they had originally planned and over half said that they want to come back.

An ETC survey of businesses (July 2002) indicates that:

- 68% of companies consider that their business has already recovered from the impacts of the Foot & Mouth Crisis and the terrorist attacks of 11 September.

The United Kingdom Tourism Survey supports this analysis:

Period	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Expenditure (£ millions) * excludes inflation
Jan – July 2001	69.2	210.0	10,336
Jan – July 2002	76.2	228.6	11,540
% Change 2002 v 2001	10 %	9 %	12 % *

Source: United Kingdom Tourism Survey 2002

## 2. Supporting Government in its proposals for modernisation

The Hartwell Agenda recognised key areas of structural weakness in the tourism system and much of our work has, therefore, been focussed on addressing these problems.

### EnglandNet

The EnglandNet project is a partnership between the English Tourism Council and England's ten Regional Tourist Boards, it has received £3.6m from the Invest to Save Programme. It will make best use of information technology to deliver marketing and business support to consumers and tourism operators. The last six months have focussed on establishing the team, the business plan and business models. A key activity has been progressing work to ensure the formation of EnglandNet as a limited company. A Regional Planning Guide has been produced, and Regional Tourist Boards have also produced regional project plans. Bids have been approved for Pathfinder Projects, to inform various technical aspects and to be undertaken in the next year.

### Marketing

At the end of February the ETC led Domestic Marketing Group produced a report for DCMS, '*The case for Domestic Marketing of England*'. Following the Secretary of State's announcement about the establishment of national marketing for England, the ETC has worked closely with the Minister, his officials and various sub-groups to identify the priorities and way forward. This work continues as planning for the new organisation gathers pace.

### Industry data and market intelligence

Market Intelligence continues to be fundamental to a better understanding of tourism. Besides the United Kingdom Tourism Survey and the United Kingdom Occupancy Survey, the ETC has undertaken data collection, for a new Leisure Day Visits Survey. A number of further studies have been undertaken including:

- Consumer intelligence;
- Rural tourism market perceptions;
- a survey on attitudes to local and regional food and drink; and,
- research on visitor satisfaction and resident attitudes to inform the national sustainable tourism indicator set.

### **Improving quality**

The UK National Accessibility Scheme was launched in July 2002 following an extensive revision of the standards so that businesses will be better prepared to deal with disability legislation. A training course and website have been established to support this activity. In addition two new quality assurance schemes have been introduced since March 2002, these are campus accommodation and franchised standards for self-catering properties.

### **Fitness for Purpose**

The ETC has advised the DCMS on the development of a Fitness for Purpose initiative as part of a series of measures to address quality issues.

### **Producing a skilled workforce**

We have recently re-launched our series of training courses under the national brand of *Welcome to Excellence* as part of the drive to improve quality customer service and staff training. The launch received national and regional media coverage. The Regional Tourist Boards are actively promoting the scheme and there has been positive feedback from trade contacts and an increase in enquiries from the industry. Around 30,000 courses are delivered to industry annually.

The ETC has participated in a Steering Group to establish a Sector Skills Council for the Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Sector. Government approval has now been given for the next stage of this process. The ETC is currently the chair of the England National Working Group, responsible for ensuring that objectives and strategies within the Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Sector Skills Council reflect English national and regional perspectives.

## **3. Delivering national strategies**

### **Accessibility**

In addition to our work on the National Accessibility Scheme, the ETC is part of a new transnational partnership, the Tourism Awareness network. Funded by the European Commission, its role is to research the barriers and issues surrounding the participation of disabled people in tourism activities. It will also share best practice, raise awareness of barriers, and offer ideas to solve them.

### **Sustainability**

In response to the ETC report *Time for Action* a comprehensive review of Green Accreditation 'Labels' has been produced and is now ready to be rolled out nationally. The aim of such a scheme is to improve the environmental performance of small tourism businesses, which make up 77% of businesses that have a turnover of less than £250,000. This work is being undertaken in partnership with the Countryside Agency. In addition, the '*Tourism Management Handbook: A Sustainable Approach*' will provide guidance on sustainable tourism to local authority tourism officers.

The Government's response to the Planning Green Paper, '*Sustainable Communities - Delivering through Planning*' issued in July 2002 sets out how the existing Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) will be revised. To assist

this work the ETC prepared a draft good practice guide for planning, *A New Approach to Planning for Tourism*.

## **Rural**

The ETC has been closely involved in setting up the Rural Affairs Forum Tourism Sub-Group, chaired by Tim Smit, of the Eden Project. The Group reviewed progress on how the ETC/Countryside Agency Rural Tourism Strategy is being implemented. Issues that the Sub-Group have agreed to take forward include:

- examining ways to call for an increase in rural tourism funding in the next Spending Review;
- more effective use of Regional Economic Development funds for rural tourism;
- improving the profile and marketing of the countryside; and developing the market for local products.

## **4. Assisting the regional bodies to deliver the tourism agenda**

The ETC has been closely involved in developing a new set of working relationships with Regional Development Agencies and RTBs in preparation for the new tourism responsibilities. In particular, the ETC has played a lead role in assisting with the establishment of the Southern and South East England Tourist Board, to take effect from April 2003. This will ensure that tourism in the South East fits with the RDA boundaries and can be developed in line with the RDA's strategic priorities.