

English Tourism Council

Tourism Forum III, 21 November 2000

PROGRESS REPORT ON ACTION POINTS AGREED AT THE TOURISM SUMMIT ON 1 MARCH 2000

Paper by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

ACTION POINT

CURRENT POSITION

For all Departments:

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| 1. Set up a more formal network of official level contacts to ensure close working on policies affecting tourism. Network members will represent the full range of Departmental interests in support of Ministers (if necessary, requiring more than one official per Department to take part) | <i>The Tourism and Hospitality Contact Group was set up in May and has met twice since. The Group's existence has been notified to Parliament through an arranged PQ and is being publicised through the DCMS website and the English Tourism Council.</i> |
| 2. Consider the report of the Better Regulation Task Force, to be published early Summer, on the cumulative impact of regulation and enforcement on the hotel and restaurant sector and how to improve co-ordination of regulation and enforcement in this area. | <i>The BRTF report was published at the end of June. The Government's response to the report was published on 26 September.</i> |
| 3. Hold a further Summit in a year's time to monitor progress and decide on further action. | <i>The next Summit is expected to be held in March 2001 - date and venue to be agreed.</i> |

For Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food:

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| 4. Ensure that funds available to tourism projects under the Rural Enterprise Scheme are allocated with a knowledge of the regional tourism market. | <i>The Rural Enterprise Scheme was launched on 3 October following the approval of the England Rural Development Plan by the European Commission. Under the Scheme, the project appraisal process will include an assessment of regional priorities. The appraiser will liaise with the regional tourism contact to ensure only appropriate projects are funded.</i> |
| 5. Develop a project to encourage greater links between local food producers and the tourism industry. | <i>A contract for a project on tourists' attitudes and local foods was let on 28 July. It will inform work on regional food being carried by the Heart of England Tourism Board.</i> |

ACTION POINT

CURRENT POSITION

For Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions:

6. Launch a pilot internet site in Cumbria offering public transport information linked to local attractions and consider lessons for possible extension nationwide.

The Travel Cumbria website was launched formally on 18 May 2000. It integrates the BTA's Visit Britain site and Cumbria County Council's journey planner, offering maps plotting hotels, attractions, rail and coach stations and other information.
7. Review implementation of the 1995 guidance to local authorities and the Highways Agency on signing for tourist attractions and facilities in England.

The terms of reference and the timetable have yet to be agreed but will be announced in the Autumn.
8. Publish soon a research report into the effects of planning on tourism and launch a wide debate on the findings.

The report is at draft stage. A date for publication will be set as soon as possible.
9. Launch a pilot project on car-free leisure and prepare a good practice guide.

The project is well underway and is due to be completed in 2001. The aim is to spread the results widely to those working in the leisure and tourism field
10. Ensure proper coverage of tourism in the forthcoming Rural and Urban White Papers.

The Rural and Urban white papers are being drafted for publication in the Autumn and will include references to tourism.
11. Provide more money over the next three years to improve public transport, including more through-ticketing, better information and better facilities at interchanges, which will boost tourism.

Spending Review 2000 provided the Department with £22,893m to spend on transport over the next three years (2001/02 to 2003/04). This represents a substantial increase in funding for all sectors of transport, including public transport. For example, the allocation of £6,056m for 2001/02 is an increase of nearly 20% on the money available in the current year.
12. Continue to focus on regeneration of coastal resorts, through the Single Regeneration Budget, working with the ETC Resorts Task Force and improving bathing water quality.

The outcome of Round 6 of the Single Regeneration Budget announced in August provided £172m for 35 coastal areas, including £20m to improve Blackpool's top tourism facilities. Compliance in England this year with the limit values in the Bathing Water Directive is expected to improve further from the record 90% in 1999. The target is 97% before 2005.
13. Promote the potential of the inland waterways for leisure and tourism-related use.

Waterways for Tomorrow was published on 27 June setting out the Government's policy vision for inland waterways, in particular the potential for regeneration, for tourism and enhanced leisure facilities. The paper will be followed up by a national conference in the

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For the Department for Education and Employment:

14. Work closely with the hospitality industry to customise New Deal provision to the needs of the industry, challenge perceptions about the industry and address skill shortages, and provide practical support for the second Hospitality Careers Festival in October.

developed partnerships.

15. Ensure greater coherence in delivering post 16 learning and training opportunities for the tourism industry through setting up the Learning and Skills Council next year.

16. Continue to support National Training Organisations in hospitality and tourism, including the Hospitality Training Foundation's training initiative for micro-businesses.

For the Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

17. Review regularly overseas visa sections to ensure they are as welcoming and user-friendly as possible.

The First Choice Working with New Deal pilot succeeded in achieving 500 placings. The lessons learned will be extended into further pilot locations eg rural and seaside resorts. A Hospitality specific Gateway is being developed the industry to be used in the next phase. Careers Festival activity in many locations is being by ES and Springboard UK in local

The Learning and Skills Council came into being as a Body Corporate on 1 September 2000. There will be a transitional period until 1 April 2001 by which time the LSC should be in a steady state. During the transitional period, the LSC will honour the commitments it inherited and will ensure that support for learners, including those on a work based route, is maintained. This period will see the winding down of both the FEFC and of various TECs, with the LSC taking over much of the good practice that these organisations currently exercise. We have encouraged people from tourism businesses to apply for membership of local LSCs.

All NTOs have received support for their programme of work submitted to DfEE under their Enabling Agreements 2000/2001.

On-going. As part of the regular round of reviews of individual overseas posts, customer service standards continue to be scrutinised, under guidance from the FCO/Home Office Joint Entry Clearance Unit (JECU). A key aim is ensuring that visa applicants are always treated fairly and courteously.

In October 2000, the Government introduced new entry clearance procedures which will allow Entry Clearance Officers at posts overseas to issue a visa which also confers leave to enter the UK. The change should benefit travellers by streamlining entry procedures at the port of entry and replacing the old single entry visa with a new

visa that allows more than one entry. The Government has also introduced a right of appeal for applicants refused a visa for family visits.

ACTION POINT

CURRENT POSITION

FCO contd

18. Work with the British Tourist Authority and other bodies (including the Department of Trade and Industry) to provide a single channel of information about the UK to persons abroad.

Well on target. With support from the British Tourist Authority, British Council, Trade Partners UK and Invest UK, the FCO has led a successful bid for Capital Modernisation Funds to create a UK portal site and on-line access points at strategic locations overseas such as British Embassies. The first roll-out of "information kiosks" is expected in early summer 2001.

For the Home Office:

19. Publish a White Paper proposing to modernise liquor and public entertainment licensing law (including the "two-in-a-bar rule"), allowing more consumer choice and increasing attractiveness to visitors.

The White Paper "Time for Reform: Proposals for the Modernisation of our Licensing Laws" was published on 10 April 2000. It set out proposals for the comprehensive modernisation of liquor and public entertainment licencing laws in England and Wales. When publicising the White Paper the Home Secretary invited comments by the end of July. A substantial number have been received, and are being taken into account in the preparation of the necessary legislation.

20. Decide on the outcome of consultations to de-regulate Sunday dancing and restaurant opening.

The Home Office has laid before Parliament a draft deregulation order ending a current prohibition on commercial dancing on Sundays and providing, subject to various safeguards, extended drinking hours on Sunday nights where music and dancing takes place under a public entertainment licence. The deregulation Committees of both Houses have asked for further consideration to be given to strengthening the safeguards proposed; and Ministers are in correspondence with the committees on this point. It remains their hope to make the order before the end of the year.

21. Launch a review of gambling law which will take account of the desirability of maximising the economic benefits to the UK; and meanwhile consider any scope for interim deregulation.

An independent review of gambling law and regulation was set up earlier this year and began work immediately after Easter. The review body, chaired by Sir Alan Budd, is expected to report in summer 2001. In the meantime the Home Office has been consulting the Gaming Board and the relevant industry associations on possible interim deregulation proposals which would not cut across the review's body work. These include relaxation of various restrictions on the organisation of bingo

and
the ways in which gaming machines take payment.
In the meantime the Home Office has brought
forward a statutory instrument extending the hours
which casinos may open.

ACTION POINT

CURRENT POSITION

Home Office contd

22. Work with the tourist industry to ease entry procedures for genuine visitors, such as some tourist groups, and consider the need for "welcome" training for immigration officials.

All Immigration Officers and Entry Clearance Officers receive dedicated training on the professional standards and behaviour required when dealing with visa applicants and visitors to the UK and on equal opportunities, human rights and race relations legislation. We are exploring whether the British Tourist Authority could have input into immigration service training courses to emphasise the importance of customer service. A meeting has been set with BTA to discuss further.

23. Consider the scope for streamlining and improving the effectiveness of fire legislation affecting hotels and restaurants.

The Home Secretary remains committed to the rationalisation and simplification of fire safety legislation but, up to now, it has not been possible to secure a Parliamentary time for a bill. The Home Office has now established the Fire Safety Advisory Board which brings together representatives of business, the insurance industry and trade, as well as the fire service interests, to maintain a strategic overview of fire safety matters. The Board met for the first time on 3 August and immediately established a working group to develop detailed proposals for the reform of fire safety legislation. The working group, which is to report back to the Fire Safety Advisory Board in November, will build on the outline proposals contained in the Home Office consultation document, Fire Safety Legislation for the Future, which was issued in 1997. This document suggested a new general duty of fire safety care on employers and owners and occupiers of almost all premises (except single private dwellings) to provide and maintain adequate fire precautions. The new duty which would, of course, apply to the operators of hotels and restaurants, would be goal based, not prescriptive. Any new legislation would simplify the existing law, repealing and consolidating existing legislation where appropriate. The working group will also examine whether, and if so, how far, the desired reforms can be achieved by means of an order under the Regulatory Reform Bill which is expected to be introduced in the next Parliamentary session.

24. Discuss with interested parties how to exploit the tourism potential of the UK's ethnic and cultural diversity

The Home Office has written to the English Tourism Council to initiate discussion of this issue.

ACTION POINT

CURRENT POSITION

For the Department of Trade and Industry:

25. Ensure the new Small Business Service is truly customer focussed and attuned to the needs of small tourism businesses, including micro-businesses.
26. Encourage the tourism industry to make full use of the Information Society Initiative to promote uptake of e-commerce amongst small firms including using the network of ISI advice centres and marketing the ISI/Inter-Forum e-commerce awards to the industry.
27. Work closely with the tourism and hospitality industry under the Industry Forum Adaptation Scheme to develop a new benchmarking project to exchange information on good industry practice.

The SBS is in the process of developing and will be implementing a business support strategy built on detailed understanding of small business needs, particularly those of start-ups and micro-businesses who have less than 10 employees. Consideration of customers will be fundamental to the new network of Business Links which will be expected to tailor services to the particular needs of their areas and of their business communities.

As part of the ISI trade partnership programme, we have placed a series of e-commerce articles in the travel and tourism trade press. These take the form of a series of 'how to' guides which can then be supported with editorial. We have also created a series of e-commerce case studies as part of ISI/In-Forum e-commerce awards, and also from nominations from ISI centres and have ensured that we have secured examples from a broad cross section of industry including tourism.

Officials are discussing with the Trade Association the inclusion of the Benchmark Index in a proposal for hospitality sector benchmarking.

For the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

28. Provide funds under round 2 of the Invest to Save Budget for a pilot project to help small tourism businesses to use new technology to communicate with central and local government and each other.

The development of the business-to-business extranet for the Lizard Peninsula Tourism Association (LPTA) is nearing completion. Content is now being compiled which will enable tourism businesses easy access to a wealth of government and regulatory information, and links to sources of local, regional and national expertise. The site will also allow businesses to join LPTA online.

29. With the Department of Trade and Industry discuss with relevant bodies implementation of the recommendations of the Tourism Consumer Group on improving price transparency in hotels, and in particular will consult on proposals to modernise the Tourism (Sleeping Accommodation Price Display) Order 1977.

Implementation of recommendations on hotel telephone charges, handling complaints and cancellation charges is nearly completed. Initial consultation on review of the 1977 Price Display Order is in progress – the closing date for responses was 31 October.

ACTION POINT

CURRENT POSITION

DCMS contd

30. Support the English Tourism Council, the AA and the RAC in bringing more properties within the voluntary inspection schemes to secure accommodation quality.

The new ETC/AA/RAC joint grading scheme has been strongly endorsed and widely promoted by DCMS Ministers, in order to increase knowledge and take up of the scheme. Raising participation in the scheme has been included in the ETC's funding agreement. It is also planned to highlight the issue with the new London Mayor.

31. Report on the outcome of the Summit to the Tourism Forum on 18 April and publish a report, subject to consulting other Departments.

Report made to Tourism Forum on 18 April and published. Summary leaflet published in June following clearance by Departments.