

**Minutes of Meeting of VisitScotland held in the Ramada  
Jarvis Hotel, Inverness on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September  
2002**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Chairman:	Peter Lederer
	Board Members:	Pat Buchanan Michael Cantlay Brian Houston
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Chief Executive	Philip Riddle
	Directors:	Hugh Hall (Corporate Services) William Macleod (Industry Services) Malcolm Roughead (Marketing)
	Staff:	Triffany McKirdy (Minutes)
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		Donal Dowds Sheena Kitchin Donald Anderson

## 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Friday 21 June 2002 were approved.

## 2. MATTERS ARISING

The Board noted that negotiations had been ongoing between the Management Team and the Scottish Executive regarding VisitScotland's future funding requirements and that the out come of the Executive's spending review was imminent.

*The Board agreed that:*

- *the Minister for Tourism should be invited to meet the Board prior to its meeting on 11 October to discuss strategic priorities and resources;*
- *further attempts should be made to meet with the First Minister to explain to him first hand the importance to the Scottish economy of continued and increased public investment in tourism.*

### 3. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on Friday 21 June 2002 were noted.

### 4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

In presenting his report to the Board, the Chief Executive highlighted the following:

- encouraging season to date figures particularly in terms of UK numbers with returns to year 2000 levels looking possible but challenging;
- the launch of "Autumn Gold" and successful "go live" of the new visitscotland.com Contact Centre;
- progress on the ATB Review and points of interest involving individual Tabs;
- meetings and events attended since the last Board meeting

*The Board:*

- *noted the report from the Chief Executive and;*
- *agreed that an additional meeting of the Board may be required before the end of October to finalise VisitScotland's advice to the minister on the ATB Review.*

### 5a. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

In presenting his report, the Director of Marketing gave a round up of:

- strategic marketing activity including progress on brand positioning, work with the BTA on branding Britain, development of the national events strategy, direct access improvements, participation in the national golf strategy and details of an internal review of Business Tourism;
- UK Marketing activity including VisitScotland involvement in Inverness 2008, Euro 2008, Spring 2002 evaluation, Autumn 2002 launch and business tourism, new media and product portfolio developments;
- research activity including reports completed and in the pipeline;
- international marketing activity including reports on USA, France, Benelux and Germany, progress on the million visitor campaign, a review of genealogy and our plans for a genealogy push in Australia and NZ later this year;
- progress on the operation of the eTourism joint venture.

The Director of Marketing also presented the results of research into a proposed new corporate brand for VisitScotland. In so doing, he gave

a report on the outcomes of focus groups, explained the various brand identities currently in use by VisitScotland, set out the steps that are in hand to codify our branding guidelines and gave reassurance on the assessment of associated costs/risks.

*The Board:*

- *noted the Director of Marketing's report;*
- *expressed satisfaction with the early progress made on eTourism and asked that arrangements be made for Board members to visit the new Centre at mutually convenient times; and*
- *approved the adoption of the new Corporate identity which will be rolled out from the start of 2003.*

## **5b. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY SERVICES**

In presenting his report, the Director of Industry Services highlighted the following:

- engagement with the Area Tourist Boards including details of meetings held and progress on the ATB Review;
- Information Services and TIC customer service activities and the transfer of CID responsibilities to eTourism;
- progress in seeking harmonisation between quality assurance schemes in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK ;
- a proposed review of the Thistle Awards following this year's event – arrangements for which are now in place;
- VisitScotland's representation on the board of Springboard and on the steering group of a skills deficiency project in tourism being undertaken by the Scottish Centre for Tourism;
- product portfolio development is being prioritised to enable focus on key products;
- other product development activities including projects with the Tourism Innovation Group and VisitScotland's contribution to the National Cultural Strategy.

*The Board noted the Director of Industry Services report.*

## **5c. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

In presenting his report, the Director of Corporate Services highlighted the following:

- the variety and scope of communications activity both internal and external including a summary of PR activity, plans for the "Open Day" and plans for a series of Business Breakfasts and Roadshows;

- finalisation of the public version of the eTourism joint venture business case to be published later this year in accordance with good practice;
- progress on the development of a revised corporate performance framework – a draft framework will be put to the Board's next meeting;
- developments in the pipeline in HR following the major restructuring which is settling down well;
- ongoing work on the development of the corporate risk strategy that will be put in place by the end of March 2003;
- proposals to undertake feasibility work on a new financial system.

*The Board noted the Director of Corporate Services report.*

## **6. QUALITY AND STANDARDS FEE INCREASES**

Membership fees for all quality assurance schemes are reviewed annually. The Board received a proposal on the implementation of a 5% rise in fees for scheme year 2003. The Board heard that the increase would enable VisitScotland to keep pace with the costs of operating the schemes and reduce the subsidy that the schemes enjoyed. In addition to the fee increase, it was also proposed that there would be a £10 flat rate fee to provide every member with a basic "simple" entry in the relevant "Where to Stay" guide. The proposals have been endorsed by the schemes' Overseeing Committees.

*Following discussion, the Board:*

- *approved the fee increase and the introduction of a listing fee;*
- *noted that a comprehensive review of all schemes would be commenced later this year which amongst other things would examine associated costs and charges; and*
- *recommended that a survey of customer (i.e. QA members) opinion should be undertaken to gauge members views on the cost/value of QA schemes.*

## **7. ENTERPRISE & LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE INQUIRY**

Following VisitScotland's giving of informal evidence to the Committee, the Board received a progress report on the early stages of the Committee's Inquiry into Tourism. Board members had already received copies of the material used to brief the Committee and reference was made to the outcome of the research commissioned by the Committee. It was noted that many of the research recommendations aligned with the existing strategies adopted by VisitScotland. VisitScotland will be giving formal evidence to the Committee on 30 September.

*The Board noted the position.*

## **8. TOURISM UK**

The Chairman reported on a new initiative – Tourism UK – sponsored by the Chairmen of VisitScotland, the English Tourism Council and the Wales Tourist Board. Tourism UK will act as a platform for promoting the best interests of domestic tourism in the UK by providing a collective, coherent and strategic steer to governments on the common concerns, common purpose and common agenda of the tourism sector in the UK. The Board was invited to provide any comments or suggestions on the proposed role of Tourism UK.

*The Board endorsed the proposed initiative.*

## **9. BANK MANDATES**

The Board delegated to the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services authority to execute mandates, approve indemnities and application forms and amend bank signatories for the Bank of Scotland and Citibank banking services as the need arises.

## **10. FINANCE REPORT TO 31 JULY 2002**

The Board received a report on VisitScotland's financial performance to 31 July 2002 including an analysis of spend to date compared to budgets.

*The Board noted the report.*

## **11. VISITSCOTLAND BUSINESS PLAN**

The Board noted the final version of the Business Plan for 2002/05 as approved by the Minister and also that publication of the Plan is subject to confirmation of the level of resources to be made available for years 2 and 3 of the Plan.

## **12. DATES FOR 2003 BOARD MEETINGS**

*The Board agreed the schedule of meetings for 2003.*

### 13. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

#### NDPB Shadow Initiative

Following discussion on the arrangements for the Scottish Executive's "NDPB Shadow Initiative",

*Board Members agreed that they would individually contact and arrange a meeting/event with their respective shadow before the end of the year with a view to inviting them all to attend the Board meeting on 31 January.*

*It was further agreed that the deputy Chairman would conduct a single briefing to which all "shadows" would be invited.*

#### Angus & Dundee Tourist Board

The Chief Executive reported that in an internal "thinkpiece" paper on the review of ATBs that had been prepared by VisitScotland's policy adviser and which had received unfair adverse publicity, there may have been some perceived implied misrepresentation of the financial situation of the Angus and Dundee Tourist Board. The Chief Executive confirmed that there was certainly no criticism of AGTB intended and that the Board's financial position was not giving VisitScotland cause for concern.

*The Board noted this clarification.*

*Meeting ended: 12.20pm*

*VisitScotland  
September 2002*