**Outside Bodies Report**

**Purpose of report**

For decision.

**Summary**

This report is composed of two parts: updates from meetings the Board’s appointees to outside bodies have attended and a request to appoint.

Recommendations

That the Board note the updates from the outside bodies and appoint a member to liaise with the Coastal SIG.

Action

Officers to act upon the Board’s nomination to the Coastal SIG.

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**Outside Bodies Report**

**Coastal SIG Appointment**

1. We are currently seeking a representative from the Board to sit on the Coastal Special Interest Group (SIG) here at the LGA. This follows an increased interest in tourism and culture-led regeneration among their members. The CTS team and SIG collaborated on responses to the House of Lords Select Committee inquiry into coastal regeneration and wish to build on this joint work.
2. The LGA Coastal SIG seeks to champion and represent the collective interests of coastal, estuarine and maritime communities by increasing awareness and debate on environmental, economic and social issues at all levels.
3. It works in partnership with other organisations with complementary aims and brings pressure on the Government to secure local government’s full involvement at all levels of policy formulation concerning the coast.
4. There meetings run from 11am – 3pm, 18 Smith Square, Westminster, SW1P 3HZ. The upcoming meet dates are.
   1. Friday 1st March 2019
   2. Wednesday 26th June 2019
   3. Thursday 19th September 2019
   4. Friday 13th December 2019
5. Below is a link to their website containing further information about the SIG <https://lgacoastalsig.com/>

**Updates from Board Representatives**

**Theatres**

1. Theatre Champion Cllr Faye Abbott met with Theatres Trust for a general introduction and to learn more about their work. A similar meeting is being arranged with UK Theatre.

**Libraries Taskforce**

1. Cllr Peter Golds attended the Libraries Taskforce meeting on 11 December at Colliers Wood Library, London. The focus of the meeting was on the future of the taskforce, including the transition of the secretariat from DCMS to ACE. Cllr Golds expressed concern that the budgets and MOU had not been discussed more widely before the meeting.

**Tourism**

1. Cllr David Jeffels attended a meeting of Visit England’s Destinations Forum, and provided the following summary for members:
2. ‘The forum had a wide range of speakers from Visit England (VE)/Visit Britain (VB), who outlined current plans and initiatives to boost the tourism industry in England, and especially to encourage more overseas visitors.
3. The CEO of VB and VE, SALLY BALCOMBE, said the Government through the Department of Culture was working closely with VE and VB and a deal was being done to benefit the tourism industry. She added: "The Government is saying it is taking the tourism sector seriously" - news which was warmly welcomed by the delegates who were representing local authorities and many tourism businesses.
4. A Discovery Fund is being promoted which will span three years, with the aim of developing tourism products.
5. A new strategy is being developed by VB and VE which is to focus on increasing spend by visitors, dispersal of income and encouraging longer stays.
6. GILES SMITH, Director of Heritage, Tourism and Culture, said he had met the Tourism Minister to discuss such issues as Tourism Post Brexit, the Government's Spending Review and the deal for the tourism sector, which he said was being negotiated and which he believed was "very good news" . There are four areas in the sector (a) productivity (b) business events (c) skills workforce (d) new Tourism Action Zones and (e) connectivity.
7. The fact that the Government was giving priority to the tourist industry was "positive news" he said because more engagement was vital from the tourism sector with the Government, VE and VB.
8. The tourism sector was now being linked to the Government's industrial strategy. However he warned that the tourism industry would be affected by the lack of EU funding from which it had benefitted and action was being taken by Government to "repatriate" funds but it wanted evidence on the issue.
9. ANTHONY PICKLES, Head of Tourism at VE and VB said tourism "lagged behind" other industries in terms of productivity and added that there was a need to use assets better and to have greater dispersal in more places in the UK.
10. A new initiative, "Taking England to the World" has been launched and a tool-kit brochure produced in connection with the campaign.

1. A suggestion has been made that a one per cent charge on tourism (thought to be similar to the tourism tax in other mainland European countries) could generate £12 billion into the tourist industry in England. Another key part of the VB/VE strategy is to "stretch" the tourist industry more into the early spring and autumn months.
2. Action to improve productivity was highlighted by HELEN PUDDEFOOT, of "Be the Business" organisation who highlighted Cornwall as an example of good practice where hospitality businesses were working together to create a network. It was, she added, a business-led peer group for learning and support in the industry which was working with the regional Local Enterprise Partnership.
3. CAROLE DRAY, Commercial Director of VE and VB, said a new tourism awards event was being staged by the two organisations to heighten the profile of tourism in 2019/20, and urged local authorities and tourism industry leaders and organisations to get involved in English Tourism Week, which is being held from March 30 to April 7 2019.
4. University students are being encouraged to use their gap year to get involved in the tourism industry.
5. One project put forward as a good exemplar in promotion of the tourist industry was KENT'S BIG WEEKEND which targets friends and relatives of local residents to discover the county's attractions, promote experiences and create ambassadors for the holiday industry which it was felt other regions and counties in England could follow.
6. Funding comes through a large ballot and ticket donations which this year saw 130 different attractions take part with 230,000 applications made for tickets. Marketing is carried out through social media, "selfie" competitions and a poster campaign. It has resulted in MPs and local politicians getting involved and raising the awareness of the value of tourism to the Kent economy.’