
TourismAlliance

the voice of tourism

OCTOBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

We Need a Plan

Over the past month the Government has devised a £50bn bail-out plan for the country's banking system- this is on top of earlier the £24bn the bank of England spent to bail-out Northern Rock at the start of the year. The treasury has also announced that it is considering bringing forward the Government's capital expenditure programme in order to support the construction/housing sectors and pump money into the economy.

The question is should there be a specific recovery plan for the tourism sector?

On the face of it, there doesn't seem to be any real need for one. The latest IPS figures show that, apart from the expected downturn in the American market, overall visitor numbers to the UK are up 2% in the year to August and expenditure is up a healthy 6% to £11bn in the first eight months of the year. On the domestic front, things look even healthier with visitor nights up 5% and expenditure up an inflation-beating 8% over 2007 for the first six months of 2008.

However, these figures don't tell the full story. The bookings for most of the inbound visitors that have occurred in June to August will have been made in January to March, well before the worst of the economic downturn. Also, the strengthening of the Euro over the last year has done much to increase the UK's competitiveness in the shorthaul market and boost tourism from Europe. Indeed, using VisitBritain price elasticity figure of -1.3, you would have expected tourism receipts from Europe to have fallen by over 15% had the pound stayed at the same level with the euro as it was 12 months ago.

With a predicted fall in international tourism and increased unemployment, a significant reduction in consumer confidence and discretionary expenditure on the domestic front, 2009 is going to be a very difficult year for tourism in the UK. So rather wait until there is a significant downturn in tourism (bearing in mind the retrospective nature of IPS and especially UKTS) the Government needs to act now and put together a contingency plan for the sector.

While bailing out the banks and trying to kick-start the economy has severely reduced the chances receiving Olympics-related marketing funds, there is much that the Government can do to support the industry by simply reducing the existing regulatory burden and putting a moratorium on new regulation that would impose costs on the industry. For a start, how about expediting the Eton review recommendations to reduce licensing fees for small businesses, shelve plans to increase APD and visa fees, rein-back the excesses of the Department of Health's Alcohol strategy and provide certainty as to the fire safety requirements for small accommodation providers.

Regards



**Kurt Janson
Policy Director
Tourism Alliance**

TA SAYS “NO” TO MANDATORY CODE

As part of “Safe, Sensible, Social: The Next Steps in the National Alcohol Strategy”, the Department of Health has been consulting on whether all licensed premises should be subject to a mandatory code of practise in relation to the provision of alcohol as a means of reducing binge drinking and anti-social behaviour.

The Tourism Alliance has put forward a strong submission stating that there is an inherent contradiction between the Minister of State for Public Health, Dawn Primorolo, stating in the foreword of the consultation document that “We know that most retailers and consumers of alcohol act responsibly and it is the irresponsible minority on which our efforts are focused” and the body of the document suggesting that a mandatory code is required.

To require the many thousands of tourism businesses with licenses such as guesthouses, tourist attractions, historic houses, country pubs and restaurants to adhere to a code designed to curb the excesses of a relatively small number of inner city bars and nightclubs is the height of regulatory heavy-handedness and is neither warranted nor justified.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the Tourism Alliance submission

FIRE SAFETY SENSE NEEDED

A new UK-wide cross-industry campaign has been launched under the "Fire Safety SENSE" banner. The campaign aims to highlight the inconsistent and often disproportionately onerous enforcement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which threatens the viability many thousands of small hospitality businesses.

The campaign is supported by the Tourism Alliance and by VisitBritain, Farm Stay UK, South East Tourism, Southwest Tourism, the Bed & Breakfast Association, the English Association of Self-catering Operators, the British Institute of Innkeeping and has been endorsed by Shadow Tourism Minister Tobias Ellwood MP on behalf of the Conservatives.

The Campaign started a national online **10 Downing Street Petition** on 1st October, the second anniversary of the implementation of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. The petition calls on the Prime Minister to:

"Act to ensure that the 2006 Fire Regulations ("RRFSO") are enforced proportionately and consistently without onerous burdens on very small premises not justified by the actual risk".

[Click Here](#) for details of the campaign and to sign the e-Petition.

TA PROVIDES EVIDENCE TO SELECT COMMITTEE

The Tourism Alliance recently presented written evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee for their inquiry into The Effects of the Licensing Act 2003. Specifically the Committee sought evidence as to:

- Whether the Act has led, or looks likely to lead, to a reduction in bureaucracy for those applying for licences under the new regime and for those administering it;
- Whether the anticipated financial savings for relevant industries will be realised.

The Alliance evidence stated that while the industry broadly welcomed the new legislation, there were still areas where the financial cost to businesses had increased significantly and where there had been an increase in the regulatory burden facing tourism-related businesses.

The Alliance asked for the Committee to recommend that the findings of the Elton Inquiry into Licence Pricing be implemented as soon as possible, that further resources be dedicated to reduce the inconsistent local interpretation and implementation of the Act so as to reduce the burden on tourism businesses and that a review of enforcement requirements be undertaken in an attempt to reduce the overall cost of licensing for local authorities and businesses.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the Tourism Alliance evidence to the Select Committee

DRAFT APPRENTICESHIPS BILL

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) have been consulting on a draft Apprenticeship Bill – the consultation ended on 8 October. The draft Bill will establish a statutory basis for the Apprenticeships programme, to set out the relationship between different parts of the Apprenticeship system and ensure employers and apprentices can be confident that an Apprenticeship offers a high quality route to acquiring skills. An Apprenticeships Act is planned for 2009.

Through the establishment of an employer group, People1st has produced an Apprenticeship Strategy for hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, which aims to raise the quality of Apprenticeships in the sector, increase their profile and significantly improve completion rates. In its response to the draft Bill, People1st outlined that the Bill and the resulting Act must take into account the needs of the tourism industry and small businesses.

SHINE AWARDS NOMINATIONS WANTED

As mentioned last month the Tourism Alliance is supporting the Shine Awards which recognise and support talented women in the tourism sector. New this year are awards aimed at recognising businesses that support and nurture this talent and nominations for currently being sought for companies that:

- Are committed to diversity of talent, by designing and implementing strategies to attract, and retain the most diverse pool of people. **(SHINE Company for Attracting Diversity of Talent)**
- Put people at the top of their agenda and achieve clear benefits in so doing. **(SHINE Company for Talent Development)**
- Embrace coaching and mentoring and devote senior management's time to mentor young tourism professionals, particularly women. **(SHINE Company for Leadership in Coach-Mentoring)**
- Put in place effective flexible working practices which drive motivation and support employees' work-life balance. **(SHINE Company for Flexible Working and Work-Life Balance)**

- Have a female headed-team achieving demonstrable excellence in team work, performance and productivity. **(SHINE Female-headed Team of the Year)**

You can nominate on line by clicking [here](#) (link to company nomination form)

Don't miss the opportunity to showcase your success to the industry, your staff and your clients...get nominating now, you have until 31st October

BORDER AGENCY PLAN

The UK Border Agency was established in April 2008, bringing together Border and Immigration Agency with staff from HMRC's Customs Detection staff and the FCO's UKvisas staff to form a single coherent border control agency reporting to the Home Office. The aim of the UK Border Agency was stated at the time as being *"to make legitimate travel easier, yet prevent those who might cause us harm from travelling here"*.

UK Border Agency has now produced a new highlighting the steps that it has taken so far in achieving this aim and the actions that it will be taking in future. Unfortunately almost all the steps (taken and proposed) focus on preventing the entry of undesirables into the UK and there is very little in the plan on steps that are to be taken to make legitimate travel easier. Indeed, Minister of State for Borders and Immigration, Liam Byrne, goes so far as to state in the Foreword that *"The purpose of the UK Border Agency is clear – to secure our border and control migration for the benefit of our country. That means we will protect our borders and our national interests; that we will tackle border tax fraud, smuggling and immigration crime."*

The Tourism Alliance will be continuing to bring a little balance to this somewhat "siege mentality" thinking.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the UK Border Agency Plan

A NEW SKILL CAMPAIGN FOR THE SECTOR

People1st has launched a UK wide multimedia and TV ad campaign to improve the reputation of jobs in hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism. In doing so it has brought together some of the leading brands including McDonalds, Compass, Sodexo and Baxter Storey. The TV ad was timed to coincide with the announcement of GCSE exam results, and directed people to an innovative microsite which has a 'YouTube' style repository of videos showing real people with great jobs. The site also features a self analysis test helping young people to discover the skills and capabilities which employers value.

[Click Here](#) to visit the campaign website

In addition, a new Foundation – the One and All Foundation – was launched on 1 October to promote opportunities to all who work in hospitality, based on the fact that everyone is different and come from different backgrounds. The Foundation will conduct research, promote education and awareness, introduce reverse mentoring, and find and share best practice and role models. The Foundation's unique selling point is that it focuses on ensuring real equality of opportunity in the hospitality sector'.

[Click Here](#) for further information and details of its Trustees.

WTA CONFERENCE 2008

The Wales Tourism Alliance is holding their annual conference at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells on 2-3rd November. The theme for this year's conference is Survival and Revival in 2009 and the conference programme centres on Marketing with Momentum; Gearing up with Government; Implementing Investment; Coping with the Crunch and Responding to the Rain.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the programme for the conference and to book online

THE TOURISM ALLIANCE

The Tourism Alliance is the Voice of the Tourism Industry.

Established in 2001 with the support of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Tourism Alliance comprises 50 Tourism Industry Organisations that together represent some 200,000 businesses of all sizes throughout the UK.

The purpose of the Tourism Alliance is to identify and develop policies and strategies to raise standards and promote quality within the industry and work with and lobby government on all key issues relevant to the growth and development of tourism and its contribution to the economy.

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