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# **Tourism**Alliance

**the voice of tourism**

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## MARCH 2011 NEWSLETTER

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### **Where To From Here**

The long-awaited and long overdue Government Tourism Policy has finally been launched to a mixed reception by the industry.

The Tourism Alliance greeted it as the most significant contribution to UK tourism development since the formation of the RDAs (and the consequential increase in regional tourism funding) 10 years ago. The Policy is a significant improvement on previous tourism strategies such as "Tomorrow's Tourism" and "Tomorrow's Tourism Today" which simply stated that the Government's aim was for tourism to grow, providing increased revenue and employment, and that the industry should get on and deliver this by improving quality, service standards and productivity while the Government sat back and watched.

The significant difference in this Policy is that it sets out a range of actions and initiatives that the Government commits to undertake or promote in order to improve the regulatory environment in which tourism businesses operate.

That said, I think it's fair to say that the initiatives in the Policy are something of a Curate's egg. While there are ones that have the potential to considerably improve the competitiveness of tourism businesses such as establishing a Task Force to tackle Regulatory Burden, simplifying the visa process (including biometric data sharing with trusted European partners) and taking better account of Tourism in policies developed by Government departments outside DCMS. There are also a number of issues that are commented on but which the Policy fails to resolve or address with definitive measures (such as developing more all weather attractions). However, to the disappointment of the industry, a number of highly important issues to the UK's international competitiveness (eg., VAT levels, APD and Daylight Saving) have either been glossed-over or omitted from the Policy.

Nevertheless, the Policy sets targets for both international and domestic tourism growth and initiatives that are intended to help achieve the goals. This means that the Policy contains specific actions and policy initiatives that can be monitored both in their implementation and their effectiveness in providing growth and employment for the UK economy.

The Tourism For Growth publication that the Alliance launched for the this year's Parliamentary Reception sets out in tabular form the initiatives in the Policy, the likelihood of the initiatives being actioned effectively and the probable impact that these initiatives will have on tourism growth. The next step is therefore for the Alliance to push for greater clarity of definition and the implementation of the initiatives and to hold Government to the task by undertaking an end-of-year review and a report in December on how well the Government has delivered their Policy.

**Regards**



**Kurt Janson**  
**Policy Director**  
**Tourism Alliance**

## £60M SAVED FOR SHIRE AND METROPOLITAN AUTHORITIES

The Tourism Alliance has had a significant win in that DCLG has agreed with our submission to retain the Day Visitor Survey as the basis for calculating the Environmental Protection and Cultural Services and Highway Maintenance components of the Finance Formula Grant Distribution to local authorities.

DCLG had proposed that, in future, the calculations should use data from the International Passenger Survey, however, this would have considerably disadvantaged local authorities in regions that are further away from the main ports of entry. By maintaining the use of Day Visitor Survey data, shire and metropolitan local authorities will therefore continue to receive over £60m of tourism related funding.

## TOURISM FOR GROWTH

The Tourism Alliance launched a new report, “**Tourism for Growth**” at its annual Parliamentary Reception to mark British Tourism Week. The report was produced in response to the new Tourism Strategy and makes the case for continued Government involvement and investment in the tourism sector.

The report also outlines key issues that were either skimmed-over or omitted from the Tourism Policy that the Government still needs to address in order to optimise the sustainable economic growth and employment available from tourism. These include;

- VAT on Tourism Products and Services
- Air Passenger Duty
- The Availability of Visas
- Daylight Saving
- Aviation Capacity

Importantly, the publication also rates the initiatives in the Tourism Policy on their ability to provide growth and employment for the UK economy. This will provide a basis for an analysis of how well the Government now performs on delivering the initiatives in the Policy. In December the Alliance will be producing an End of Year Report that scores the Government’s performance.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of Tourism For Growth

## A FAIR TAX FOR FLYING

The Tourism Alliance is supporting the ABTA co-ordinated Fair Tax for Flying Campaign which has brought together more than 25 airlines, airports, tour operators, destinations and trade associations to call on the Government to make Air Passenger Duty fairer.

The campaign sets five tests that the Government need to take into account as they review the overall structure and level of aviation tax:

1. Will any revision increase the overall amount travellers pay to fly to and from the UK?
2. Will any change be designed to be offset by the income from the UK’s inclusion in the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)?
3. Will a new approach remove the unfairness that travellers buying a premium economy ticket for a few extra inches of legroom are classed the same as first class travellers and pay double the rate of tax?

4. Will any new policy address concerns that defining bands by national capital cities creates unhelpful exceptions that are unfair to passengers and damage destinations?
5. Has the policy's impact on destinations, trade and tourism been adequately understood and considered?

The campaign has been successful in preventing the anticipated announcement in the Budget that Air Passenger Duty would be increased and in getting the Government to consult on reforms to the current scheme including banding and the treatment of Premium Economy seats.

However, there is still much to be done as the proposed increase has only been delayed until next year and with aviation being included in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme from 2012, visitors coming to the UK for the Olympics next year face the prospect of double taxation on their tickets.

[Click Here](#) for more information and to join the Fair Tax on Flying campaign

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the consultation document on reforming APD

### VISA APPLICATION CHANGES

The UK Border Agency has provided more information on the Tourism Policy initiative to "make guidance available in local languages wherever possible, and in the future to examine the case to do the same for application forms". As the first part of this process, from April 2011, visa guidance will be translated into six languages - Arabic, Chinese (simplified script), Hindi, Russian, Thai and Turkish.

The UK Border Agency has also announced the introduction of a Fast Track service for customers in India who are applying for visitor visa to the United Kingdom. For an additional fee of around £60, a visitor visa application will be fast-tracked with a guarantee that documents will be returned within a specified time. Depending on the location, this could be as soon as the next working day.

This service is being made available to customers who have travelled without difficulty in the last five years to the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, US or a Schengen country and will apply to all categories of visitor visa except student visas.

### TOURISM ALLIANCE PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION

Paul Maynard MP hosted the extremely successful Tourism Alliance Annual Parliamentary Reception held in Westminster. The event was attended by over 150 MPs and members who were addressed by Guest Speakers Jeremy Hunt and John Cridland on the importance of tourism to the UK economy.

Jeremy Hunt especially welcomed the Tourism Alliance's new publication, Tourism for Growth, and agreed that it was important that the tourism industry held the Government to account and made sure that the Tourism Policy didn't now gather dust on a shelf.

### THE ACTIVE GUIDE

The Outdoor Industries Association has launched a new website to encourage holidaymakers to make the most of the Great British Outdoors.

The Active Guide (TAG) website, which will be of particular interest to Destination Management Organisations and Local Authorities, is a comprehensive, interactive online guide to the best outdoor locations and activities around the UK. It is designed for people making holiday decisions on the basis of activity rather than destination and provides information based on where popular outdoor pursuits including walking, cycling, climbing, camping, caravanning and a variety of

watersports can be undertaken through the UK. Using the site's map based interface, visitors will be able to quickly access a database of service providers, activity centres, clubs and retail outlets. The site will also direct visitors to a wealth of user generated content including people's favourite locations, routes, videos, photos, and other useful information.

[Click Here](#) for further information

## 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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