02 June 2026

Culture, Media and Sport Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

CommonsCMS@parliament.uk

Dear Committee,

We write to you as both The Business of Events (TBOE) and the Events Industry Alliance (EIA) and on behalf of a significant number of other organisations representing the UK's business events sector.

You will recall that both TBOE and EIA, along with several others, provided evidence to the committee last year as part of your inquiry into major events, which included business events, a sector that comprises over 50% of the value of the UK Events sector. That evidence highlighted the need for the UK to remain competitive in the face of growing international competition, to have a more joined up approach from government to ensure we capitalise on those opportunities to attract major business events to the UK and, as a minimum, to safeguard the very modest funding already provided by DCMS, including its highly successful Business Events Growth Program (BEGP), to support and protect the UK's world leading business events economy.

You will therefore understand, that following reports that this funding was to be reviewed, the total disbelief as we learned this week that the business events team at VisitBritain is being reduced from nine to two, including its highly regarded Head of Business Events, and the total abolition of the BEGP.

The impact of this short-sighted decision by both DCMS and VisitBritain cannot be understated for our sector. As a result of this reduction, we are now the only major economy without a fully funded and resourced business events team, which will

impact our ability to compete effectively, and attract major international business events to cities across the UK.

By VisitBritain's own research and statistics, the BEGP delivered a 35-1 return on investment and £60.6 million in direct economic return since 2018, from a total government investment of less than £1.8 million. In total, the BEGP has attracted 167 events to cities throughout the UK since the programme launched, many beyond London, including Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Bristol, Aberdeen, Liverpool, Manchester, Cambridge, Newport and Newcastle. To be absolutely clear, these destinations will be negatively impacted as a result of this decision, as will the governments stated ambition of growing international visitors to 50m by 2030 (from 38m in 2023) given visitors attending business events currently account for 17% of all visits.

This choice, made by DCMS and VisitBritain, also sends the wrong message to our international audiences, and hands the advantage to our competitors, particularly in Europe, at a time when the global business events economy is forecast to grow significantly over the next 3-5 years. We now find ourselves here in the UK with a smaller national business events team, and budget, than Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

This also signals that the UK is simply not serious about growing its event economy or being seen as a serious player in the global business events market, despite the significant efforts of the sector itself.

Business events are not tourism; they drive trade, exports and inward investment, supporting business and communities in every part of the country. As a £70 billion sector, that supports over 600,000 jobs, we have, as an industry, lost total confidence in VisitBritain's ability, or aspiration, to fully support and represent the UK business events sector, and we now need change. This sector deserves better, and to be able to work in partnership with a department and organisation that understands both the dynamics and opportunities for growth that the sector provides to the wider UK economy and society.

We urge you to help us make that change, and to support and protect our world leading UK business events sector.

Sincerely, and on behalf of;

All Party Parliamentary Group for Events
Association of Event Venues
Association of Event Organisers
The Audience
beam
The Belfry Hotel & Resort
Bridgit Baker Consulting
The Business of Events
Business Travel Association
The Celtic Collection
Celtic Manor Resort
Church House Westminster
Davies Tanner
Edinburgh International Conference Centre
Events Industry Alliance
The Events School London
Excel London
Experience Oxfordshire Venues
ICCA UK & Ireland
ICC Wales
Liverpool Experience Campus
Meetings Industry Association
PCMA
Plus4Group
Power of Events
TFI Lodestar
Tourism Alliance
UKEvents
VisitAberdeenshire