



## END OF TERM LOBBY UPDATE



Parliament has now broken up for the summer, but it's clear already that there has been some real drive behind policy changes to support tourism. At the heart of this are the new ministers in DECC – John Whittingdale as Secretary of State and Tracey Crouch as Minister for Tourism, both of whom were colleagues on the Culture Select Committee prior to their roles in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

In November 2014 BALPPA appeared in front of them both while giving evidence to the culture committee's tourism inquiry, which produced a report recommending that tourism be a higher priority in DCMS and that a VAT cut should be looked at more closely. Since then Crouch and Whittingdale have become the ministers responsible and their response to their own report was predictably positive.

The result is that DCMS has now launched a new tourism strategy, a five point plan to enhance the industry, which is implementing reforms recommended by the select committee and accepted within the Government's response to it. The five 'points' are: looking at the tourism landscape, skills and jobs, common sense regulation, transport, a GREAT welcome (referencing the 'GREAT' advertising campaign).

Government is now going to create an ministerial group on tourism, chaired by minister in charge of DCMS, and will be expanding the role of the tourism council in advising this body. The aim will be to improve decision-making in tourism and alleviate issues perceived to arrive because of DCMS acting as a 'silo' and not consulting, for example the business department or the local Government department in its decision-making.

The Government is also going to continue looking at business rates, with a particular focus on how they can be changed to the support the tourism industry, and although not accepting the recommendation for a VAT cut for tourism, they leave the door open; we know Tracey Crouch is a supporter of the campaign.

Alongside all of this the Government has committed itself to cutting red tape, sponsoring a £1 million prize for 'Rail for Tourism innovation' and are pushing the tourist industry to create more apprenticeships.

All of this paints a positive picture for future policy approaches to tourism, but we will continue to press and ensure the good noises become a reality and that the momentum doesn't fall back.

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