



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**22 January 2010**

### **Major Surrey tourism conference provides expert advice for the year ahead**

The tourism industry scored a century last week as over 100 delegates attended a major Surrey tourism conference at leading tourism attraction Mercedes-Benz World in Weybridge.

The event, which was organised by Tourism South East, in partnership with the Elmbridge Business Network, Business Link, and the Visit Surrey Partnership, provided advice and shared innovative approaches to developing tourism business from leading industry experts.

Shadow Tourism Minister Tobias Ellwood MP opened the event as part of a wider tour of the South East. His keynote address recognized both the importance of the industry to the region and the significance of partnerships to tourism success. In addition, he expressed his keenness to see the introduction of financial incentives for Local Authorities to encourage and support the development of the tourism industry.

Hotel entrepreneur Rabih Hage, founder of the extraordinary new London hotel Rough-Luxe also shared some of his secrets to success. On the day the proprietor encouraged fellow businesses to recognise themselves as curators of authentic tourism experiences.

John Williams, Chairman of Tourism South East said, 'Tourism is undoubtedly a key driver to the economy of Surrey generating £1.5 billion per annum and providing 35,000 local jobs in the county. But businesses need help, support and advice to make the most of their potential, and it is the role of Tourism South East to help deliver that. The attendance at Mercedes-Benz world, in spite of the snow, shows the appetite of tourism businesses in Surrey to learn from each other, celebrate best practice, hear from experts and engage with Westminster, all to improve the quality and competitiveness of the sector.'

**For further information please contact Hannah Payne on 023 8062 5471,  
[hpayne@tourismse.com](mailto:hpayne@tourismse.com)**

ENDS

**For further information contact: Hannah Payne on 02380 625471 or email [hpayne@tourismse.com](mailto:hpayne@tourismse.com)**

**More information about Tourism South East can be found at [www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com](http://www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com).**

**More information about Visit Surrey can be found at [www.visitsurrey.com](http://www.visitsurrey.com)**

**More information about Business Link can be found at [www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast)**

**More information about the Elmbridge Business Network can be found at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/business](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/business)**

#### **Note to Editors:**

Photo – Shadow Tourism Minister Tobias Ellwood MP (front) and John Williams, Chairman of Tourism South East (back) at Mercedes-Benz World. For a higher resolution version of the image please contact Hannah Payne on 02380 625471 or email [hpayne@tourismse.com](mailto:hpayne@tourismse.com)

Tourism South East (TSE) is a not-for-profit company which is the official tourist board for the region, covering Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex.

Tourism South East receives core funding from SEEDA, and is active in a range of programmes to support the tourism sector in the South East region, which is the second largest outside of London and is worth in excess of £12bn p.a. to the regional economy (7% of regional GVA), and supports over 300,000 jobs.