



# **OPEN BRITAIN**

**Policies to support the tourism industry**

*Dee Doocey*

*Liberal Democrat Tourism Spokesperson*

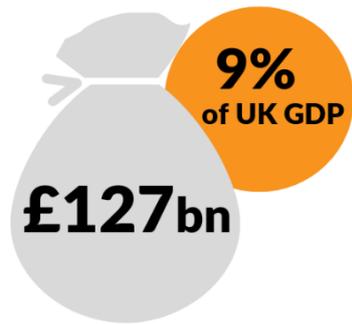
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# Tourism in Figures

The UK tourism industry contributes...



...to the UK economy each year



...or 10% of jobs, which are distributed throughout the UK



...revenue from international visitors per year

The industry consists of...



...95% of which are SMEs or microbusinesses

Tourism is expected to grow at...



...in the UK per annum by 2025, according to VisitBritain

Visitor spend per country in 2018



38m UK visits



...from overseas visitors in 2018

Sources: VisitBritain, *Visitor Economy Facts*  
ONS, *International Passenger Survey 2018*  
Map derived from inbound and domestic visitor spend 2018

## Introduction

Tourism is the lifeblood of our economy. There is a rich tapestry of UK destinations beyond the capital cities – London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. From traditional ‘bucket and spade’ resorts like Blackpool to creative hotspots like Brighton; rural retreats like the Lake District to modern city attractions like those in Bradford, Hull, Liverpool and Gateshead. The industry touches every part of the United Kingdom.

It comprises over 250,000 businesses, 95% of which are micro businesses and SME’s.<sup>1</sup> They provide jobs for 3.1m people – approximately 10% of the UK work force, contributing £127bn to the economy each year – 9% of GDP.<sup>2</sup> Jobs in the industry are well distributed around the country, boosting rural, urban and seaside communities alike. The industry is responsible for 29% of global service exports.<sup>3</sup>

There were 38 million overseas visits to the UK in 2018<sup>4</sup>, 67% of whom came from European Union countries.<sup>5</sup> International visitors spend £24.5bn per annum<sup>6</sup> and generate £7bn in tax for HMRC.<sup>7</sup> Youth and student educational travel is worth over £27bn to the UK economy, with 20% of all students in higher education coming from outside the UK.<sup>8</sup> The array of music and sport activities on offer in the UK is a significant component too: music tourism generates £4bn in spend per year, whilst sport tourism generates £2.3bn.<sup>9 10</sup>

The importance of the tourism sector to the UK economy is beyond dispute. Nonetheless government has neglected to make tourism a part of its industrial strategy. The challenges are three-fold. First, how to support the industry to grow and develop through turbulent political and economic times, enabling these thousands of businesses to recruit and retain staff, and to continue growing and creating jobs. Second, how to ensure the industry protects and enhances the natural environment on which much of it relies. And third, how the sector can be fairly and effectively regulated to take account of technological change, particularly in the accommodation market.

This paper sets out proposals which taken together:

- provide a framework of increased support for the tourism industry which will allow it to flourish, with an upgrade to the status of tourism inside Government
- help less well-off communities in Britain gain opportunities through the tourism industry, helping to rebalance the economy away from an over-reliance on London and boosting opportunities for young people to get skills and develop a career

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<sup>1</sup> APPG for Tourism, 2018, Leisure and the Hospitality Industry, *Inquiry into the Sharing Economy*, p.3

<sup>2</sup> VisitBritain, 2017, *Sector Deal Bid*, p.7

<sup>3</sup> World Tourism Organisation, 2019, *World Tourism Barometer*, Volume 15, p.1

<sup>4</sup> Visit Britain, 2019, *2019 Inbound Tourism Forecast*

<sup>5</sup> Tourism Alliance, 2017, *Tourism After Brexit*, p.3

<sup>6</sup> Visit Britain, 2019, *2019 Inbound Tourism Forecast*

<sup>7</sup> Visit Britain, *Tourism Sector Deal*, October 2017

<sup>8</sup> British Educational Travel Association, 2018, *Youth Student & Educational Travel Statistics Report 2018*, p.2

<sup>9</sup> UK Music, 2017, *Wish You Were Here*

<sup>10</sup> Tourism Statistics, 2018, *Tourism Statistics 2018*

- promote growth to enable the industry to be internationally competitive and sustainable, so helping to achieve our national objectives on climate change
- promote the benefits of technological innovation while putting in place a level playing field for the accommodation sector, from Airbnb rooms right through to traditional hotels
- reduce taxation on tourism by central government, to boost the sector, while empowering local authorities to raise revenue and invest in their local tourist economies, aiming for an overall revenue-neutral impact

# Upgrading the status of Tourism

## Tourism in government

- **A new Secretary of State for Tourism, Culture, Communications and Sport**
- **Updated status for VisitEngland**
- **National tourist boards to be more accountable with ambitious targets**

The machinery of government matters. The notable absence of a department for tackling climate change following abolition of DECC under this government has, for example, undoubtedly detracted from the focus of the administration on that issue.

Tourism is at present a 'poor relation' nested within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, a status which simply does not recognise the crucial role of tourism in creating jobs and supporting the UK economy. The portfolio is passed from pillar to post and seen as a rung on the ministerial ladder rather than an important responsibility. In the past 20 years, there have been 15 Tourism Ministers.

**We therefore propose to refocus and rename the DCMS as the Department for Tourism, Culture, Communications and Sport. The current responsibilities of the DCMS for digital, media and sport would remain the same, but crucially, the Secretary of State would take on personal responsibility for Tourism in addition to Culture.**

This role would take a lead on promoting the UK as a tourist destination, supporting rural and coastal communities, and attracting large international business events.

The government's sector deal aims to double the size of the tourism industry to £268 billion and grow employment to 3.8 million. We would embed this progress permanently into the UK's industrial strategy by instituting a joint Minister of State straddling the Department for Culture and Tourism, and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy.

Meanwhile we would restructure the national tourist boards. VisitBritain presently has responsibility to market all of the UK overseas. This has resulted in VisitEngland being downgraded to an advisory board within VisitBritain, despite strong recommendations from the DCMS Select Committee and the industry that it should not be.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, tourism is fully devolved in Scotland and Wales, with the Welsh Tourist Board having become an executive part of government.

**“In the past 20 years, there have been 15 Tourism Ministers”**

**“The Secretary of State would take on personal responsibility for Tourism in addition to Culture”**

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<sup>11</sup> Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2015, *Tourism*, Sixth Report of Session 2014-2015

**“VisitEngland should become a national tourist board in its own right, accountable directly to the Secretary of State for Culture and Tourism”**

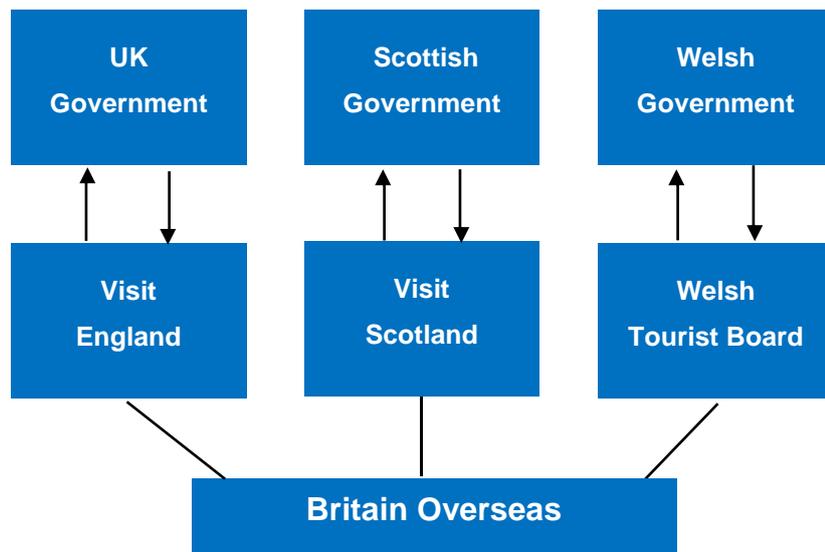
**We propose that VisitEngland should once again become a national tourist board in its own right, accountable directly to the Secretary of State for Culture and Tourism.**

Consequently, each part of the UK would have its own Tourism organisation aligned with devolution and funded by and accountable to its own national parliament. Each of them would work in concert with Destination Management Organisations around the country.

The overseas assets and work of VisitBritain would be managed by a subsidiary (Britain Overseas) jointly by the three home nations with each one having its own funding and a Memorandum of Understanding.

Finally, we would create a Department for Culture and Tourism-led taskforce at national level combining forces with Department for Transport and DEFRA to review the needs of rural communities and support development of rural public transport.

### Tourism at the heart of UK & devolved government



## Tourism and the environment

- **Improved public transport, with measures to reduce ‘over-tourism’**
- **Redistribute visitor numbers across the regions and nations of the UK**
- **Environmental issues to be placed at the heart of strategic planning for the industry**
- **An expanded green accreditation scheme for attractions and accommodation**

**“An influx of visitors, with large seasonal spikes, can put a big strain on the local environment”**

The health and beauty of our natural environment is absolutely central to the success of the industry. Many of Britain’s most popular destinations rely on the attractiveness of their coastal districts, mountainous regions or rural flora and fauna to generate business.

However, the boost that the natural world brings to the tourist economy is not always returned in kind. An influx of visitors, with large seasonal spikes, can put a big strain on the local environment. They generate waste, increase demands for water and create pollution, and cause congestion on roads. At the extreme they can do real harm to popular natural attractions through sheer weight of numbers, for example by damaging paths, trampling on vegetation or degrading wildlife diversity.

Meanwhile investment in the domestic tourism industry could substantially reduce carbon emissions, by persuading people to holiday within Britain. One of the biggest contribution’s individuals can make to reducing their own carbon footprint is to take some holidays in the UK, rather than assuming that air travel is necessary.

VisitBritain’s growth strategy for inbound tourism to Britain from 2012 to 2020 is almost completely silent on environmental factors, despite acknowledging that perceptions of Britain’s scenic natural beauty lag behind international competitors.<sup>12</sup>

The rising public concern about these issues and growing interest in health and well-being – demonstrated in the trend towards outdoor activity holidays – provides an economic incentive on the industry to do more. The long-term goal should be for a zero waste / zero emissions industry.

Elsewhere in this paper, we offer ideas to improve rural transport, reduce ‘over-tourism’ and redistribute visitor numbers towards the regions and nations of the UK. All these measures are environmental ‘wins’.

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<sup>12</sup> VisitBritain, 2013, *Delivering a Golden Legacy: A Growth Strategy for Inbound Tourism to Britain from 2012 to 2020*

**“We will place environmental issues at the heart of future strategic planning for the industry”**

In addition, **we propose to place environmental issues at the heart of future strategic planning for the industry, with a special focus on climate change**, based on a comprehensive study of the impact of tourism on the environment.

**We would expand the range and quality of advice already provided piecemeal by government agencies to tour operators, accommodation providers and site managers to enhance their environmental protection.**

**An expansion of the existing green tourism’ accreditation schemes – allowing tourism businesses to showcase their commitment to low energy and other low impact practices – would allow tourists to ‘vote with their wallets’ in favour of better managed sites and more sustainable options.**

## **Careers in the tourism and hospitality industry**

- **Promote exchange schemes as part of corporate social responsibility for international businesses so that those in low-skilled work can earn placements abroad, to broaden their experience and learn new languages**
- **Encourage hospitality industry partnerships between those businesses in the fast food market and those in premier catering**
- **Market modular tourism and hospitality apprenticeships through better links between the industry and schools**
- **Provide dedicated training for young people designed to improve development in digital and new technology**
- **Raise the profile of the industry by getting more industry figures (e.g. a celebrity chef) into schools and arranging site visits to relevant places to give pupils a ‘taster’ of a career in tourism**

The challenge of the current skills shortage in the tourism sector presents an opportunity for government and the industry to foster new careers for young people, by raising the profile of the industry and marketing tourism as a career path rather than a low skilled job. **This could be done in a range of ways from offering ‘taster days’ or a**

**few weeks' work experience to school students and/or running fully fledged training schemes which meet modular apprenticeship standards.**

**“...of those 3.1 million people employed across the industry, 44% are aged under 30, compared to 24% on average”**

Of those 3.1 million people employed across the industry, 44% are aged under 30, compared to 24% on average.<sup>13</sup> Yet 25% of tourism business have vacancies, of which 38% are considered “hard to fill”, including all food-related activities, housekeeping, project management, front-of-house and sales skills.<sup>14</sup> Skill deficiencies account for 64% of the reasons given for why such positions prove difficult to recruit.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, many of the skills which tourist-oriented businesses most need – namely in customer service and languages – are eminently transferable into other work later in life. Digital skills are increasingly needed across the sector. The hospitality sector also offers the potential for young people who would not otherwise have access to such opportunities to gain skills and to broaden their horizons by learning a language and living abroad. **Working with international businesses in the hospitality sector, we would create a scheme to enable their employees to earn the right to a placement in another European country.** For example, the big international fast-food chains could offer work in another EU member state to their employees from disadvantaged parts of Britain.

For those seeking to develop their careers in the UK, **we will encourage partnerships in the catering industry between those businesses at the perceived ‘bottom’ of the market and those at the top.** Somebody working in an access-level catering and hospitality job in a fast food chain today should have the opportunity provided – through their work – to excel in the industry, ascending the ranks of chefs, being trained in silver service or getting into management. The hospitality sector remains one of the few places where it is – and should be – possible to ascend from shop floor to boardroom, through in-work training.

**We would task national tourist boards to work with business and local authorities to develop these schemes, with councils acting as commissioners.** Known as the “Work Local” approach,<sup>16</sup> this would enable different areas to tailor training schemes and apprenticeships geared to the needs of the local labour market. Some councils might work on bespoke schemes with business, others – where there is a sufficient volume of work and of trainees, like in hotel management – could adopt a more formal approach ensuring that training programmes conform to the required standards for modular apprenticeships, where credit can be accumulated over time.

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<sup>13</sup> Tourism Alliance, 2017, *Migration Advisory Committee, Call for Evidence: EEA Workers in the UK Labour Market*, p.2

<sup>14</sup> People 1st, 2016, *Migrant Workers in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector and the Potential Impact of Labour Restrictions*, p.3

<sup>15</sup> People 1st, 2016, *Migrant Workers in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector and the Potential Impact of Labour Restrictions*, p.4

<sup>16</sup> LGA/LWI Work Local, 2017, *Our Vision for an integrated and devolved employment and skills service*

**“Women are disproportionately represented in lower paid occupations within the industry”**

Modular apprenticeships enable people to gain exposure to a wider variety of work while also achieving formal recognition. The model is particularly helpful in seasonal work, allowing the practical part of the training to take place intensively during peak season and the academic part to follow as visitor numbers fall. The academic segment can be taken part-time to permit trainees to find other work to sustain their income.

Enhancing opportunities in tourism in this way will also have a positive impact on overcoming disadvantage in the workplace. At present women are disproportionately represented in lower paid occupations within the industry while progress towards gender parity in board rooms is notably lacking in tourism. As PwC has reported, women occupy just 7% of the key CEO, CFO and chair leadership positions in FTSE 350 hotel, tourism and leisure companies.<sup>17</sup>

## Britain open for business

### A flexible labour force

- **Transfer power over working visas to the Department for Business**
- **Expand the Youth Mobility Scheme, offering it to young people from a wider range of countries and for longer periods of time**
- **Abandon the principle of a salary requirement for people outside the UK to work here, focusing on filling skills shortages instead**
- **Recognise the importance of tourism-orientated soft skills (e.g. language/culinary) within the immigration system**

**“Britain needs to recognise and embrace the role of immigration in providing a flexible, skilled labour force.”**

Alongside a radical upgrade in the incentives to young people from the UK to enter the hospitality sector, Britain needs to recognise and embrace the role of immigration in providing a flexible, skilled labour force.

Almost one in four of those working in the tourism and hospitality industry is made up of non-British nationals, 55% of whom are EU nationals.<sup>18</sup> UK inbound reports that 85% of their members cite language skills as the top benefit of employing EU nationals, followed

<sup>17</sup> PwC, 2019, *Women in Hospitality, Travel and Leisure 2020 Review*

<sup>18</sup> People1st, 2017, *“Migrant Workers in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector and the Potential Impact of Labour Restrictions”*, p.2

**“...a third of the 17,000 curry houses could face closure over the next decade in a sector that employs over 100,000 people and contributes over £4 billion to the exchequer”**

closely by customer service skills (60%) and specific country knowledge (54%).<sup>19</sup>

The tourism sector is growing rapidly and will need more workers to fill the jobs it is creating. Even with an increase in the number of UK nationals entering the industry, there will patently not be enough qualified people within the domestic population. The problems are reinforced by demographic changes which mean the UK will have 700,000 fewer 16-24 year olds by 2022 than it does today.<sup>20</sup> For an industry dominated by young people, this is potentially catastrophic if politically motivated immigration controls prevent the industry fishing in a wider pool. KPMG estimates that the hospitality sector in particular could face a total recruitment gap of over 1 million workers in the coming decade.<sup>21</sup>

The plight of Britain’s Indian restaurants is a microcosm of the impact current short sighted visa restrictions have on the labour market across the whole tourism and leisure sector. Nine in ten curry houses in the UK are owned by British Bangladeshis. Their restaurants are increasingly reliant on sourcing skilled labour from outside the UK, and it is predicted that a third of the estimated 17,000 curry houses could face closure over the next decade because of problems recruiting.

The creative industries are affected too, and Brexit would make the situation worse, both restricting inward movement of musicians and artists from across Europe to the UK and restraining cultural exchanges in the other direction – putting the £4bn a year the music industry contributes to the economy at risk.

Liberal Democrats continue to campaign vigorously to remain in the European Union, but whether Brexit proceeds, is further postponed or scrapped altogether, we are committed to an immigration policy which ensures the tourism sector has the labour force it needs.

The party set out its modern, open approach to immigration in 2018 in Prosperity and Dignity in Migration Policy.<sup>22</sup> **We would transfer responsibility away from the Home Office, vesting power over work-related visas with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.** Their focus would be on filling the skills shortages the country faces.

The existing Youth Mobility Scheme, which allows young people aged 18 to 30 from countries such as Australia, Canada and Japan to live and work in the UK for 2 years, should be expanded. Clearly if Brexit proceeds, EU countries should be top of the list to come within its remit, but **the scheme could and should be expanded further to facilitate cultural exchange across a wider range of countries. The two-**

**“85% of roles in tourism and hospitality are in low-paid employment, not least because many of these jobs are part-time.”**

<sup>19</sup> Tourism Alliance, 2017, *Migration Advisory Committee, Call for Evidence: EEA Workers in the UK Labour Market*, p.3

<sup>20</sup> Tourism Alliance, 2018, *Tourism Alliance Annual Report 2018*, p.1

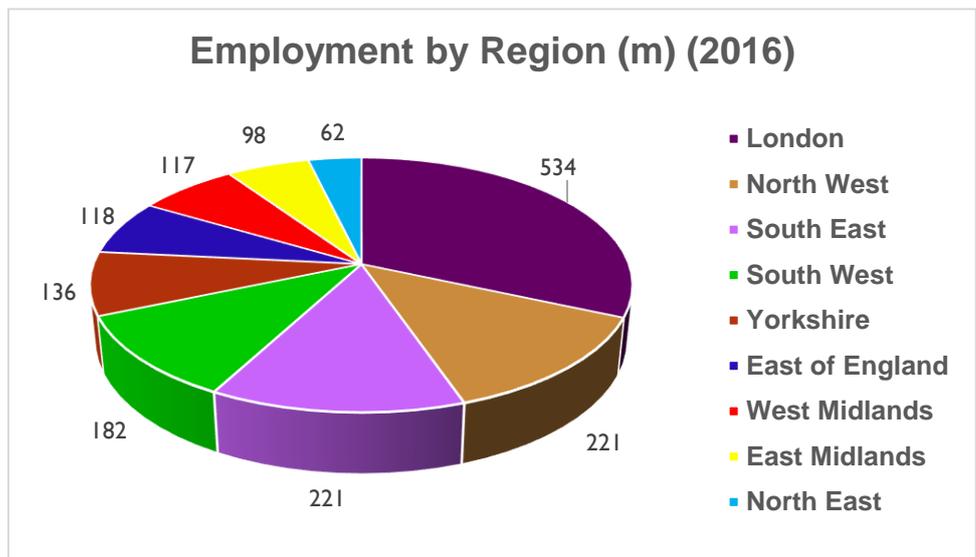
<sup>21</sup> KPMG/British Hospitality Association, 2017, *Labour Migration in the Hospitality Sector*, p.4

<sup>22</sup> Liberal Democrats, 2018, *A Fair Deal for Everyone: Prosperity and Dignity in Migration*

**year period should also be renewable for a further term, to four years.**

The Conservative Government's proposed post-Brexit salary requirement of £30,000 for those coming to the UK to work would be highly damaging to the sector. 85% of roles in tourism and hospitality are in low-paid employment, not least because many of these jobs are part-time.<sup>23</sup> A pub chef, for example, typically earns only £23,000 per annum and there is a real shortage.<sup>24</sup> 85% of chefs in London were born abroad, as were 50% of those outside the capital.<sup>25</sup> Overall the UK is already losing approximately 10% of its working chefs every year.<sup>26</sup> While the food industry is booming, this is a chronic challenge. **We oppose the principle of an arbitrary salary requirement and would instead base visa decisions on the merit of the applicant and skill shortages in the country.**

While there has often been a focus on ensuring immigrants coming to the UK can speak English, **skills in other languages should also be weighed in the balance, since these are so critical to the sector.**



<sup>23</sup> UK Hospitality, 2019, *Own Correspondence*

<sup>24</sup> BBPA, 2019, *Own Correspondence*

<sup>25</sup> The Edge Foundation, 2019, *Skills shortages in the UK Economy 4*

<sup>26</sup> The Edge Foundation, 2019, *Skills shortages in the UK Economy 4*

## A warmer welcome for visitors

- **the costs of the long-term visitor visa within emerging tourism markets**
- **Allow nationals from high-growth development countries to transit to the UK without needing to acquire a Direct Airside Transfer Visa (DATV)**
- **Transfer responsibility for visitor visas to the proposed Ministry of Culture and Tourism**

The Home Office has engendered a system which deters rather than facilitates visits to the UK. A standard UK visitor visa (visa valid for 6 months) is £95. A long term visitor visa (valid for 10 years) is £822. Therefore, in order to get value for money from the long term visa, it would be necessary to visit the UK nine times.

**“...we would exempt more countries such as China and India from the Direct Airside Transit Visa requirement”**

**We would transfer responsibility for visitor visas to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and would particularly focus on making repeat visits easier and more attractive.** Repeat holiday visitors are likely to stay longer on their trip to the UK than first-time visitors and they spend more on average per night.<sup>27</sup>

**We would reduce the cost of long-term visitor visas from emerging tourism markets,** to encourage an upfront investment in return visits to the UK. Additionally, to encourage the ongoing use of UK airports as ‘hubs’ for international flights, **we would also exempt more countries such as China and India from the Direct Airside Transit Visa requirement,** allowing nationals from high-growth development countries to enter the UK for transit purposes without need of a visa.

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<sup>27</sup> Visit Britain, 2017, *Britain’s Visitor Economy Facts*

## A new international convention centre for London

- **A leadership role for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in bringing a new convention centre to the Crossrail 1 route in London**

The case for a new international convention centre located in central London has been much debated in recent decades, with at least four major studies concluding in favour.<sup>28</sup> While existing venues have improved their offer, we believe the case remains strong since international convention centres differ from normal conference venues. Normally located in capital cities, they cater for much larger numbers of business visitors, requiring an auditorium seating of up to 5000 people, large exhibition space, additional meetings rooms, usually extensive hotel capacity in the immediate vicinity and excellent transport connections.

London lacks a venue able to compete effectively with the Palais de Congrès in Paris, for example. In consequence, Paris hosts approximately twice as many international association conferences as London each year and achieves four times as many delegate-days, despite London's English language advantages. Latest data from the International Congress and Convention Association reflects this trend, showing that Paris continues to outpace London in the convention market.<sup>29</sup>

**A key role of the new Secretary of State for Culture and Tourism will be to improve the UK's share of the international convention market. Sites should be identified for a new London International Convention Centre along the new Crossrail 1 route, with fast access to Central London and the capital's international airports at Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton. Feasibility studies for the project should be developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, with developers invited to bid to build it.**

**“London lacks a venue able to compete effectively with the Palais de Congrès in Paris”**

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<sup>28</sup> ICC, 2005, *Commission Report*

<sup>29</sup> ICCA, 2018, *ICCA Releases Largest Ever Statistics Report for 2018*

## Food standards

- **Make the display of food hygiene ratings mandatory for businesses in England, including on online takeaway websites**

An integral part of any visit within or to the United Kingdom is eating out. Britain's towns and cities typically offer one of the most diverse ranges of cuisines anywhere in the world. Yet – as in any country – the quality of food, and the hygiene standards applied in its preparation vary widely.

The Food Standards Agency's most recent research (2017) suggests that in England where displaying food hygiene ratings is voluntary, only 49% of businesses choose to display them. This is comparably lower to Wales (84%) and Northern Ireland (82%) where displaying them is mandatory. In England, only 28% of those with a low rating of 0-3 are displaying their. Taken together, this evidence demonstrates the limits of a voluntary approach<sup>30</sup>.

In addition, an investigation by Which in 2017 found 652 hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs had failed the FSA's hygiene inspections (a score of 2 or lower). The most shocking findings where hotels were concealing their scores included:

- A five-star Hotel in Westminster who received a 2 star hygiene rating
- A four-star Hotel in York which received just a star hygiene rating

The Local Government Association (LGA) and Food Standards Agency (FSA) are rightly calling for the law in England to be changed. To promote transparency for consumers, the **Liberal Democrats would change the law to compel all food outlets in England to display food hygiene ratings**. To ensure consumers are equally well protected online, displaying these ratings would also be a requirement of online takeaway websites and apps such as Just Eat and Deliveroo.

**“...652 hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs failed the Food Standard Agencies' hygiene inspections”**

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<sup>30</sup> FSA, 2018, *Display of Food Hygiene Ratings in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2017 Wave of Research)*

## Making the most of tourists' time

- **Utilise technology to encourage tourists to visit attractions during quiet periods**

**“apps which would enable UK attractions to show in real-time when they are busiest”**

Amsterdam has led the way in using technology to signpost tourists to the attractions when they are least busy. The Dutch capital's "Discover the City" app sends users notifications when an attraction is busier than usual and suggests an alternative. The city has also used data collected from the Amsterdam tourist card to establish usage patterns; the data is used to encourage tourists to visit attractions during quieter periods.

In government we would **work with the industry to produce common apps which would enable UK attractions to show in real-time when they are busiest, encouraging visitors to come when demand is lower**. The apps would build a usage picture up over time, enabling visitors and venues to plan.

## Better transport within the UK

- **Radical devolution of power over bus and rail services in England**
- **Complete HS2, Crossrail, Crossrail 2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and a programme of electrification across Britain's rail network**
- **Boost the use of regional airports for domestic and EU flights**
- **Improve the infrastructure around airports so that fewer passengers use road transport to reach them**
- **Simplify the rail fare system to remove fare pricing anomalies**
- **Make the BritRail pass available to UK citizens, enabling everyone to explore the whole country over the course of a month**
- **Improved physical accessibility of transport, and the availability of clear visible and audible live passenger information**
- **Implement the Rail Delivery Group's proposals enabling a more efficient use of train capacity on long-distance services**

**“We would encourage councils to make contracts conditional on improved physical accessibility to trains and buses”**

When people choose to visit Britain, they should return having had a good experience travelling around the British Isles. Likewise, domestic visitors making day trips and short stays in British resorts should be able to do so, ideally without using a car. Yet at present only 20% of tourist travel within the UK is undertaken by public transport.

To address the problems at their root, there needs to be radical **devolution of power in England, in particular local bus and train services**. This would enable councils to 'bundle up' licenses to run profitable routes with a requirement to run less profitable routes, to ensure more of Britain is covered by bus services. We would encourage councils to **make contracts conditional on improved physical accessibility to trains and buses**. We would also insist on **clear standards of visible and audible live passenger information, identifying stops and service running times**.

Nationally, the party is committed to an additional £100bn investment in capital projects to include major upgrades in rail infrastructure, with a **clear commitment to completing HS2, Crossrail 2 and a programme of electrification across Britain's rail network**.

Just as HS1 has boosted the seaside towns of Margate and Folkstone, we would further boost economies outside London by **encouraging**

**more domestic and EU flights to land and depart from regional airports such as Birmingham and Manchester.** Once HS2 is complete Birmingham will be within 40 minutes' reach of London and getting to Manchester will take little over an hour. This long-term approach avoids the need for expanding airports in London and the South East. **We would also improve the infrastructure around airports, adding rail links and reliable express bus services so that fewer passengers use road transport to reach them.**

**“reduce empty seats and improve the customer experience for tourists”**

For those booking ahead, we would **implement the recommendations of the Rail Delivery Group's 'Easier Fares for All'**. This would simplify the hopelessly byzantine system of rail fares in the UK, removing anomalies like those which mean buying two tickets for different segments of the same route (so called 'split ticketing') is cheaper than buying one direct fare.

We would also implement the Rail Delivery Group's proposals enabling **a more efficient use of train capacity on long-distance services.** Currently, some peak services have few passengers, whilst off-peak services just before and after peak services can be overcrowded. This can cause significant discomfort as passengers are made to stand for long periods.

**In addition, we would expand the BritRail scheme presently available to foreign tourists so that it is available to UK citizens for up to one month per year. The pass would include 'RailBus' validity, enabling people to explore beyond the rail network as well as free or discounted access to heritage steam railways.**

Finally, **we would continue to improve both the physical accessibility of public transport and the availability of live running and destination information presented in stations, on trains and buses, and on a variety of apps.**

## Taxation on tourism

- **Reduce VAT on visitor accommodation and attractions**

### Value Added Tax

The World Economic Forum's biennial Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 ranks the UK as the fifth most competitive tourism destination in the world.<sup>31</sup> However, while the UK is highly competitive overall, the UK is ranked as the second worst destination in the world for Price Competitiveness mainly because high levels of taxation get pushed on to the consumer.<sup>32</sup>

In particular, the rate of VAT on accommodation is twice the amount paid by visitors to the four other main tourism destinations in Europe (Germany, France, Spain and Italy).

There has been a long-running campaign by the tourism industry for the UK to introduce VAT below the standard rate of 20% on services supplied to tourists.<sup>33</sup> Proponents have argued that this would allow hotels, and visitor attractions to cut prices, boosting sales and employment in this sector, which in turn would encourage growth in the wider economy.

European VAT law limits the discretion of any Member State, the UK included, to set lower VAT rates on individual goods and services. There is, however, a dispensation for a lower rate on certain supplies associated with tourism: specifically, hotel accommodation, and some types of admission charge, including charges for entry to amusement parks.

Several Member States have made use of this dispensation and charge lower rates of VAT between 5 and 15%; indeed, the United Kingdom is one of only three countries not to offer a reduced rate. The Treasury and the Tourism industry agree that the first-year cost of a reduction to 5% would be £2bn for accommodation and £1bn for attractions.<sup>34</sup>

Research by the Cut Tourism VAT group, supported by the industry, suggests that this measure would create 130,000 new jobs, improve the UK's balance of trade by £23bn, and raise over £5.2bn for the Exchequer over ten years.<sup>35</sup>

**We would aim to reduce VAT on accommodation and attractions to allow the UK to compete with equivalent European countries.**

**“We would aim to reduce VAT on accommodation and attractions to allow the UK to compete with equivalent European countries.”**

<sup>31</sup> World Economic Forum, 2017, *Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report*

<sup>32</sup> World Economic Forum, 2017, *Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report*

<sup>33</sup> Cut Tourism VAT Campaign

<sup>34</sup> Cut Tourism VAT, 2018, *Financial Highlights of Cut Tourism VAT Research*

<sup>35</sup> Cut Tourism VAT, 2018, *Financial Highlights of Cut Tourism VAT Research*

The reduction would be on a revenue neutral basis, taking into account increased yields from corporation and income taxes from the boost to sector activity and also the revenues generated from local levies proposed in the next section.

## Power for local communities and their councils

- **Councils in England and Wales to be given powers to deal with the problems of ‘over tourism’**
- **Revenue raised through a local accommodation tax to be ringfenced for investment in infrastructure supporting the industry through councils and DMOs**

Tourism is of overwhelming benefit to the UK economy, and the overwhelming thrust of a Liberal Democrat approach in central government would be to foster better conditions for the sustainable growth of the industry. Our commitment to a more open economy with a preferential VAT regime would create even more jobs in the industry and greater overall output as a result.

However, central to a strong economy is a strong society. The United Kingdom is the fifth largest economy in the world but only the 80th largest by land mass.<sup>36</sup> Tourism outside London is concentrated in a relatively small number of alternative centres including the Lake District, the West Country and parts of Scotland. ‘Overtourism’ can lead to significant strain on infrastructure and services within an area, and to an unsustainable ricochet of demand for local businesses between seasons.

Tourists draw on a range of public goods while visiting their destination - water and sewerage systems, utilities, waste disposal facilities, parks and recreation areas, health care facilities, police and public safety services – but the entire cost is borne by local residents and the national taxpayer.

To remedy this imbalance, Scottish Local Authorities are in consultation with the Scottish Government to be given powers to introduce a £2 per night hotel tax. If granted, this could produce a fund of approximately £11-£14m per year to be invested in the “ongoing success of [the] tourism and hospitality industry and the services which matter most to local people”.<sup>37</sup> For example, in Edinburgh, whose population

**“‘Overtourism’ can lead to significant strain on infrastructure and services within an area”**

<sup>36</sup> World Economic Forum, 2018, *The World’s Biggest Economies in 2018*

<sup>37</sup> BBC News, 2019, *Bid to introduce a £2 tourist tax in Edinburgh wins support*

**“Revenues raised through a local accommodation tax would be ringfenced for investment in infrastructure and services supporting the industry”**

increases exponentially during the summer, the Council is looking to tourists to supplement income from residents to fund the provision of such services as transport, traffic management and street cleaning. A survey commissioned by the Council found 91% of residents and 51% of accommodation providers in favour of the move.<sup>38</sup>

**We believe that similar powers should be vested in councils in England and Wales, enabling them to introduce similar levies to deal with the problems of ‘over-tourism’.** In making this move the United Kingdom would join the 19 European Union member states which presently have routine recourse to such a tax.<sup>39</sup>

**Revenues raised through a local accommodation tax would be ringfenced for investment in infrastructure and services supporting the industry and could be used to reverse the trend of cuts to local tourism development management organisations.** Councils introducing such schemes would be required to set up an advisory board of local businesses, to ensure those paying the levy are meaningfully involved in spending decisions. There would be much to learn from the model of Business Improvement Districts, which impose a common levy on all businesses in an area in return for greater investment in infrastructure, marketing and the public realm.

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<sup>38</sup> BBC News, 2019, *Bid to introduce a £2 tourist tax in Edinburgh wins support*

<sup>39</sup> BBC News, 2018, *Taxing Times for Europe’s Tourists*

## Transparency, standards and local control

### A registration scheme for the accommodation sector

- **A statutory registration scheme for the accommodation sector, bringing enhanced safety standards cross the board and especially in the ‘sharing economy’**
- **New powers for local authorities to limit the number of homes registered as short lets**
- **Removal of ‘rent a room’ tax relief on rooms designated as short lets**

In the last decade, technology has overtaken and outmoded the present regime of regulation for accommodation provision the world over. Sharing economy platforms are increasingly being used to turn residential properties into business opportunities, but without any of the burdens of planning permission or protection for neighbours.

Meanwhile the government has established an unusually close relationship with the primary accommodation platform, Airbnb, vesting public funds in the company in a partnership to promote local attractions. We incline toward a more neutral relationship with global companies of this kind.

**“This is akin to permitting car manufacturers to sell vehicles with stickers on saying ‘this car has no seatbelts’”**

In 2018, 45% of Airbnb listings in London were from apparently professional hosts with multiple listings, as were 51% of listings in Manchester.<sup>40</sup> Yet there is not a level playing field with the rest of the accommodation sector in terms of protecting consumer safety. Airbnb routinely asks hosts – for example – if there is a smoke detector fitted in the building; the host is then at liberty to say ‘no’ and the property is listed anyway, albeit with a warning. This is akin to permitting car manufacturers to sell vehicles with stickers on saying ‘this car has no seatbelts’. Likewise, hosts are not informed that they should purchase public liability insurance, and policies sold by Airbnb themselves are inadequate with only c£800k of cover whereas the recommended minimum is £2m-£5m.

Having looked at the range of responses to this challenge from around Europe and the US, **we would implement – through local authorities – a statutory registration scheme for all guest accommodation** – from five-star hotels to Airbnb shared rooms. The scheme would bring together existing standards in fire safety, food safety and increase consumer transparency.

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<sup>40</sup> See [insideairbnb.com](https://insideairbnb.com)

As in most European and US cities, anyone advertising accommodation through any medium would be required to display their registration number, and we would make provision for these to be checked by the consumers just as company numbers can be checked online at Companies House.

**“implement – through local authorities – a statutory registration scheme for all guest accommodation”**

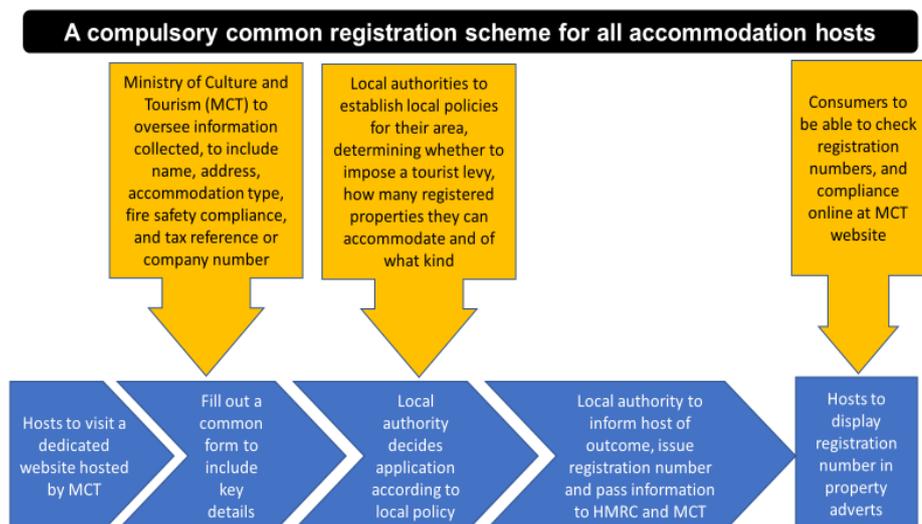
Whereas platforms like Airbnb presently refuse to share information about hosts with local authorities – fairly citing data protection rules as a barrier – the registration scheme would institute sharing of information as part and parcel of operating businesses of this kind. Hosts would also share a company number and/or unique tax reference code (if operating as a sole trader) as part of the registration process, which could where necessary enable cross-checking with HMRC data. All registered accommodation would be required to collect the tourist levy outlined above where that local authority had one in place.

The registration scheme would prescribe minimum, basic, national standards reflecting and increasing existing fire safety standards. For example, any property made available as guest accommodation would be required by law to have an audible carbon monoxide detector, a smoke alarm and a fire escape route displayed within the property.

To improve the supply of homes to rent for local residents in areas, **councils would be empowered to prescribe a maximum limit on the number of nights registered accommodation could be made available for short-term lets.** This would not affect businesses incorporated as bed and breakfasts or hotels but would encourage landlords to let their properties to local private rented sector tenants rather than make them available at a premium on platforms like Airbnb. In the same vein, **the ‘rent-a-room’ tax relief available on income from permanent lodgers would cease to be available on short-term tourist lets.**

**“The registration fee in each local authority would be set on cost-recovery grounds only...”**

**The registration fee in each local authority would be set on cost-recovery grounds only, with an assumption that each council would carry out a spot-check inspection on one in ten registered properties each year.**



- **Improve the use of heritage maintenance funds to tackle urgent repairs**
- **Protect the National Lottery Heritage Fund**

**“There are 26 million visits annually to independently owned historic houses...”**

Approximately two in five adults visit historic buildings each year and three in five say they enjoy visiting towns and cities with a historic character.<sup>41</sup> The relatively small land mass of the United Kingdom is home to 31 UNESCO World Heritage sites. There are 26 million visits annually to independently owned historic houses, which also host school visits, exhibitions and concerts.<sup>42</sup>

Nearly 6.5 million visits were made in 2017/18 to properties maintained by English Heritage alone,<sup>43</sup> and the National Trust benefits from five million members, approximately six times as many as all the political parties put together.<sup>44</sup>

However, these historic sites are in need of substantial maintenance. At the time of writing, there were £1.4bn worth of repairs outstanding on independently owned historic houses, of which £480m are urgent.<sup>45</sup> To maintain both the sites and the visitor numbers, we would take two targeted measures to support these properties.

**As well as our longstanding commitment to cut to 5% the VAT rate on repairs and maintenance, we would introduce a better tax regime for heritage maintenance funds. Secondly, we would protect the 20% of national lottery funding which goes to the National Lottery Heritage Fund so that it continues as a reliable revenue stream for the nation’s historic sites.**

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<sup>41</sup> DCMS, 2017, *Taking Part focus on: Heritage*, p.1

<sup>42</sup> Historic Houses, date unknown, *Facts and Figures*

<sup>43</sup> Statista, 2018, *Number of visitors to English Heritage sites 2011-18*

<sup>44</sup> National Trust, 2018, *Fascinating facts and figures*,

<sup>45</sup> Nordicity, 2018, *Changes to the Tax Treatment of Heritage Maintenance Funds: A Cost Benefits Analysis*

## Museums and galleries

- **Give greater freedom to museums and galleries to generate income**
- **Maintain free public entry to major museums**
- **Promote regional museums and galleries to showcase exhibits presently locked in storage**

The UK's museums and galleries are a major attraction to domestic visitors and overseas tourists alike. While the big London venues attract the lion's share of visitors (22 of 30 of the UK's major attractions are in the capital), the National Museum of Scotland attracted well over 2m visitors last year as did Edinburgh Castle. The National Railway Museum in York, the Merseyside Maritime Museum and Titanic Belfast each attracted around a million visitors.

**“We would give the sector much greater freedom to generate non-designated income from their own resources”**

These historic buildings and gardens, alongside parks and zoos are part of a rich tapestry of cultural assets which add considerably to Britain's "offer" as a tourist destination. They provide a valuable learning and recreational resource for all age groups. However, a prolonged period of austerity has meant that this important sector has had to face serious pressures on budgets.

**We would give the sector much greater freedom to generate non-designated income from their own resources, particularly through education and outreach work. Meanwhile, we are committed to retaining free public entry to our major museums and will ensure that national and local government continue to support the sector.**

To ensure the UK's cultural reach extends beyond the capital, **The Arts Council and the Major London Galleries and Museums should work to establish regional satellites and promote special exhibitions.** Only 10% of a typical museum's artefacts are on display at any one time, so such regional galleries and museums could be used to showcase exhibits which are presently locked away from public view in storage. Government should earmark regeneration funding for the development of these regional centres to act as a catalyst for private sector investment.

The benefit of such an approach can be seen in venues like the Turner Contemporary in Margate and the Tate in St. Ives. We regard these as a model on which to build.

## Independent Museums

- **Encourage the major grant makers to simplify and improve the accessibility of their grant application forms**
- **Create a scheme that encourages more retired citizens with relevant professional experience to volunteer as trustees to independent museums and bring their skills to the sector**
- **Offer volunteer placement schemes in independent museums within the National Citizen Service to get more young people involved with their local museum sector**

**“We would create a scheme that encourages more retired citizens with relevant professional experience (e.g. accountancy) to volunteer as trustees”**

Independent museums are an integral part of preserving the rich, cultural heritage of the UK. Consisting of over 1,600 independent museums and galleries, they are more numerous than any other type of museum in the UK. They generate £1.17bn of income per year for the museum sector in England, and over 100,000 volunteers give their time to support them.

However, from 2007 to 2017, the museum sector has faced a 13% decrease in overall funding. Independent museums have particularly badly hit, with half receiving no core funding or very little. This has resulted in 19% of independent museums reducing their opening hours in the past year to remain viable. Furthermore, the Museums Association attributes a marked decline in the number of full-time staff independent museums employ to the loss in public funding.

Given that independent museums are often run entirely by volunteers, it can be difficult to find spare capacity to apply for grants, particularly where application processes are arduous. We welcome the National Lottery Heritage Fund's recent move to simplify their processes, having acknowledged these difficulties. To help independent museums apply for the funding they need, **we propose working with the major grant funders to make their grant application processes more accessible.**

To help the sector find and retain the skills it needs, we would **create a scheme that encourages more retired citizens with relevant professional experience (e.g. accountancy) to volunteer as trustees.** This would address difficulties where independent museums may not have the funding or capacity to acquire specific skills (e.g. digital / finance). We believe the benefits would be two-way, with opportunities for participants to continue practicing their skills, and to feel valued for contributing to their community.

It is important young people feel involved in their community and have opportunities to learn about their cultural and historical heritage. **To facilitate this, we would task the National Citizen Service (which engages 15-17 year olds in social action) to secure and offer more**

**voluntary placements for young people in independent museums.** These placements would provide the opportunity to gain essential skills and knowledge, as well as benefiting the museums by introducing new skills and perspectives to their teams and improving their connections with the wider community.

## A new deal for coastal communities

- **Coastal deals for a renaissance in Britain’s coastal communities**
- **Funding for transport infrastructure, new jobs and new homes**
- **Action on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**

**“...five out of ten of the local authorities in Britain with the lowest average employee pay are in coastal communities”**

**“Where local partnerships and authorities have held ownership in working on solutions for regenerating their area, there have been examples of huge success”**

Britain’s seaside towns are part of our rich cultural heritage and folk memory. They still accommodate about ten percent of our population and are a key part of the tourism and hospitality industry.

However, five out of ten of the local authorities in Great Britain with the lowest average employee pay are in coastal communities.<sup>46</sup> These towns have faced a ‘double whammy’ in recent years of falling demand for traditional “bucket and spade” holidays reducing visitor numbers, and a variety of social problems attracted by the availability of cheap living quarters in old boarding houses run by absent HMO landlords. The abundance of this kind of accommodation has encouraged population transience, in particular as a result of local authorities from outside these areas placing vulnerable adults and children into HMO accommodation. This comes with an attendant additional pressure on local services.

The measures in this paper are designed, taken together, to promote a renaissance of visits to Britain’s traditional tourist hotspots, boosting the local economies and providing much needed opportunities for those who live and work in them. The Liberal Democrat approach to investment in schools, broadband connectivity, preventative public health care and high-quality affordable housing would all help.

However, we also recognise there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to regenerating coastal communities. No two coastal communities are alike. Each has its own unique history, geography, assets and challenges, meaning a solution that might help in one area may not work well in another. Our approach is to empower local authorities to make decisions for their own area because they know it best.

<sup>46</sup> Social Market Foundation, 2017, *Britain’s Coastal Communities*

Where local partnerships and authorities have held ownership in working on solutions for regenerating their area, there have been examples of huge success. For example, the Cornwall 365 project represents an innovative approach to connecting the creative and visitor economy, to market Cornwall as a unique cultural destination.<sup>47</sup> So far, the project has already increased visitor numbers, with two out of three businesses taking part in the project attracting more visitors as a result. We support promoting locally-led projects of this kind, and empowering local authorities and communities to drive their own development.

To assist with this, we propose to extend **the “town deals” concept recently piloted in Greater Grimsby,<sup>48</sup> with new ‘coastal deals’**. Local authorities would be invited to bid for funding to upgrade transport infrastructure, create new jobs working with business and build new homes. Such deals also provide an opportunity to work with port operators to help drive regeneration in seaside towns through agreed development of housing and amenities on port sites.

Separately, we would **impose more effective regimes on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**. Following the examples of Bristol City Council and Runnymede Borough Council, we would issue template guidance to councils for setting a policy on what constitutes a ‘fit and proper’ landlord. This would enable more councils to use the existing licensing scheme without risk of legal challenge. We would also reverse the present presumption that converting dwellings to HMOs should be regarded as permitted development. This would build on existing powers to create ‘saturation zones’ by ensuring that planning permission is sought for each conversion and that local authorities can have clear policy on the concentration of these types of property.

**“...we would impose more effective regimes on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).”**

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<sup>47</sup> LGA, 2019, *Cornwall 365*

<sup>48</sup> Gov.UK, 2018, *Government announces landmark Town Deal for Greater Grimsby*

## Rural tourism

- **New links between attractions in rural areas nearby to each other**
- **A focus on access to rural attractions without using a car**
- **Keep tourists connected to fast mobile data and broadband through their stay**
- **Support farmers to redevelop land for tourists or attractions**

**“neighbouring attractions could forge combined ticketing arrangements permitting discounted entry to more than one attraction alongside travel between them.”**

It is estimated that 9.5 million people live in rural communities in the UK.<sup>49</sup> Government spending per person in these areas tends to be lower than in urban centres and Whitehall frequently develops policy without due consideration of how they will work in sparsely populated areas. Investment – both public and private – focuses on urban areas.

Tourism therefore provides a life line to the rural economy. In 2015, 20m overnight trips were taken to rural destinations while day-visitors undertook a further 335m trips to rural areas. Together these visitors spent £20.7bn in rural destinations, sufficient to support over 380,000 fulltime jobs in the rural economy.<sup>50</sup>

A significant amount of existing tourism to rural areas is related to large organisations such as the National Trust, National Parks, and English Heritage. The National Trust alone have 5 million members who undertake 200 million visits a year, including 22 million to parks and nature reserves.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the money that comes in from tourists themselves, the National Trust employs 10,000 staff and makes use of 16,000 volunteers.

We want to **engage with these organisations to offer greater integration between nearby destinations and transport solutions which enable people to access them without a car.** For example, neighbouring attractions could forge combined ticketing arrangements permitting discounted entry to more than one attraction alongside travel between them. The railway industry could also offer through ticketing and organised travel between stations and attractions, and tourist minibus services could operate on popular walking routes.

<sup>49</sup> Gov.UK, 2019, *Rural Population and Migration Statistics*

<sup>50</sup> Tourism Alliance – Rural Tourism Inquiry call for evidence

<sup>51</sup> BBC, 2017, *National Trust Memberships Hit New High of Five Million*

**“support for farmers who wish to diversify their businesses by providing accommodation to tourists or by creating visitor centres and experiences.”**

To keep tourists connected while they are visiting rural Britain, we would require UK mobile phone companies to pool coverage where necessary, to provide a minimum standard of 4G across the widest possible swathe of the countryside. We would invest in rural broadband, upgrading the present universal service obligation to 30Mbps download speeds of the kind which visitors enjoy while at home.

Finally, we would offer support to farmers who wish to diversify their businesses by providing accommodation to tourists or by creating visitor centres and experiences.

## Summary of recommendations

### Tourism in Government

- A new Secretary of State for Tourism, Culture, Communications and Sport
- Upgraded status for VisitEngland
- National tourist boards to be accountable, with ambitious targets

### Tourism and the Environment

- Improved public transport
- Measures to reduce 'over-tourism'
- Redistribution of visitor numbers from the capital to the regions and nations of the UK
- Environmental issues to be placed at the heart of strategic planning for the industry
- An expanded green accreditation scheme for attractions and accommodation

### Careers in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

- Promote exchange schemes as part of corporate social responsibility for international businesses so that those in low-skilled work can earn placement abroad, to broaden their experience and learn new languages
- Encourage hospitality industry partnerships between those businesses in the fast food market and those in premier catering
- Market modular tourism and hospitality apprenticeships through better links between industry and schools
- Provide dedicated training for young people designed to improve skills development in digital and new technology
- Raising the profile of the industry by getting more industry figures into schools and arranging site visits to relevant places to give pupils a 'taster' of a career in tourism

### A Flexible Labour Force

- Transfer power over working visas to the Department for Business
- Expand the Youth Mobility Scheme, offering it to young people from a wider range of countries and for longer periods of time
- Abandon the principle of a salary requirement for people outside the UK to work here, focusing on filling skills shortages instead
- Recognise the importance of tourism-orientated soft skills (e.g. language/culinary) within the immigration system

## **A Warmer Welcome for Visitors**

- Reduce the costs of the long-term visitor visa within emerging tourism markets
- Reduce the number of countries affected by the Direct Airside Transit Visa (DATV) requirement: allow nationals from high-growth development countries to transit to the UK without needing to acquire a DATV
- Transfer responsibility for visitor visas to the proposed Ministry of Culture and Tourism

## **A New International Convention Centre for London**

- A leadership role for the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in bringing a new convention centre to the Crossrail 1 route in London

## **Food Standards**

- Make the display of food hygiene ratings mandatory for businesses in England, including on online takeaway websites

## **Making the most of tourists' time**

- Utilise technology to encourage tourists to visit attractions during quieter periods

## **Better Transport within the UK**

- Radical devolution of power over bus and train services in England
- Complete HS2, Crossrail, Crossrail 2 and a programme of electrification across Britain's rail network
- Boost the use of regional airports for domestic and EU flights
- Improve the infrastructure around airports so that fewer passengers use road transport to reach them
- Improved physical accessibility of transport, and the availability of clear visible and audible live passenger information
- Simplify the rail fare system to remove fare pricing anomalies
- Implement the Rail Delivery Group's proposals enabling a more efficient use of train capacity on long-distance services
- Make the BritRail pass available to UK citizens, enabling everyone to explore the whole country over the course of a month

## **Taxation on Tourism**

- Reduce VAT on visitor accommodation and attractions
- Enable local authorities to bring in tourist levies to fund local infrastructure through councils and destination management organisations

## **Power for Local Communities**

- Councils in England and Wales to be given powers to deal with the problems of ‘over tourism’
- Revenue raised through a local accommodation tax to be ringfenced for investment in infrastructure supporting the industry through councils and DMOs

## **Transparency, Standards and Local Control**

- A statutory registration scheme for the accommodation sector, bringing enhanced safety standards across the board and especially in the ‘sharing economy’
- New powers for local authorities to limit the number of homes registered as short lets
- Removal of ‘rent a room’ tax relief on rooms designated as short lets

## **Heritage**

- Improve the use of heritage maintenance funds to tackle urgent repairs
- Protect the National Lottery Heritage Fund

## **Museums and Galleries**

- Give greater freedom to museums and galleries to generate income
- Maintain free public entry to major museums
- Promote regional museums and galleries to showcase exhibits presently locked in storage
- Encourage the major grant makers to simplify and improve the accessibility of their grant application forms
- Create a scheme that encourages more retired citizens with relevant professional experience to volunteer as trustees to independent museums and bring their skills to the sector
- Offer volunteer placement schemes in independent museums within the National Citizen Service to get more young people involved with their local museum sector

## **A New Deal for Coastal Communities**

- Coastal deal for a renaissance in Britain’s coastal communities
- Funding for transport infrastructure, new jobs and new homes
- Action on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

## **Rural Tourism**

- New links between attractions in rural areas nearby to each other
- Support farmers to redevelop land for tourist accommodation or attractions
- Keep tourists connected to fast mobile data and broadband through their stay
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