

Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Jan 2022

Dear Prime Minister

Firstly, please allow us to say thank you on behalf of all businesses across the Greater Manchester visitor economy for the extensive support that your government has provided to the sector during the pandemic. We are in no doubt that without your government's interventions, many tourism businesses would have failed, and our country's economic recovery would be much more prolonged.

We are aware that you have considered the impact of outbound travel and the critical role it plays in economic recovery. However, as we continue to welcome back our customers, we are now focusing on those vital markets that are still yet to return. Of particular concern are the inbound, high-spending international visitor markets and the investment in our city that depends on direct flight connectivity.

Manchester is England's second most visited city by international visitors. In 2019, 1.9million international visitors spent £850million in the Greater Manchester economy.

Between 2010 and 2020, world tourism doubled, but the UK's sector grew slower than the global average and the country continued to lose its market share. France welcomes twice the number of England's international visitors. The UK has only one city in the Global 100 List of most visited cities.

Prime Minister, we are missing a huge opportunity to fast track our economic recovery. Global competition is fierce, and we now face an up-hill battle to restore and grow our inbound visitor markets due to the impact of the pandemic; Brexit and associated negative perceptions.

We are therefore writing to ask you to support an *In-bound Visitor Recovery Plan*, with a focus on regional hubs, and specifically on Manchester as the regional gateway to the North. We are proposing a partnership with government to directly support route

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development in order to initiate inbound travel. We must act now in order to encourage an uplift in international arrivals in 2022.

Specifically, we would like your support to enable us to deliver more high-profile activities to drive inbound visitors through Manchester Airport. We have plans which are ready to be implemented that build on our proven track record of success: for example, after two years of direct flights between Manchester Airport and Beijing, our support demonstrated levels of growth in trade, tourism, and knowledge exchange between the North and the Far East that outstripped the national average and inbound visitors from China grew by 38%.

The visitor economy can play a key role in delivering your levelling up agenda. We have recently refreshed our Greater Manchester International Strategy and set ourselves some ambitious targets which are only constrained by resources. We would welcome a partnership with Government to deliver these and to support the recovery of the visitor economy not only in Greater Manchester, but across the North.

Yours sincerely

Mike Blackburn
**Chair Greater Manchester
International & Marketing Advisory Board**
Signed on Behalf of :

**Greater Manchester
International & Marketing
Advisory Board**

Manchester Central
Manchester City Council
McCann Health
Arts Council
Manchester University
Manchester Metropolitan University
Salford City Council
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