



VisitBritain/VisitEngland
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London SW1H 0ET

The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
DCMS
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ

11 March 2019

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to set out a submission from the Tourism sector in response to the request you made at the Tourism Industry Council in November 2018.

The Tourism industry across the UK came together over the past 18 months to put together its case for a Sector Deal within the UK Government's Industrial Strategy. Every nation and region has fed into the process from right across the sector – tech to hotels, airlines to attractions. Today, the UK Tourism industry accounts for £127bn annually, and is the fourth largest service export – but there is more to do and that's what the Sector Deal will help achieve.

Since your request in November, the sector has regrouped, and a number of engagements have taken place across the UK with 10 roundtables, a meeting of industry leaders and many further commitments given by individual companies and organisations across the UK.

The four areas of further commitments were around investment in hotels, skills and workforce, accessibility and data sharing. I am pleased to respond that the commitments offered are substantive, show the desire to work together and that a Tourism Sector Deal would make a difference.

The document lays out the detail of the commitment, case studies from across the UK and list local, regional and national commitments, which I believe, highlight the diversity and spread of this sector.

- **Investment:** the UK is the hotel investment hub of Europe with around a third all hotel investment. In the pipeline are 130,000 hotel rooms, which are under development and driving billions of investment into the economy.
- **Skills:** the Tourism and Hospitality sector has committed to creating 300,000 apprenticeships over the next 5 years, alongside a new Skills Council, which will oversee a multi-million pound campaign to highlight the work opportunities in the sector.

- **Data:** the industry will scope the development of a new Data Mining Hub which will use big data to better understand real time customer flows and make the UK one of the most competitive destinations in the world.
- **Accessibility:** the UK is already a global leader at accessibility and millions are being invested across the country. The Sector will now work to build marketing to highlight this success and become the renowned world leader.

The schedules above are an impressive indication of what is being done, much of which was planned before the uncertainty of Brexit and now a likely global economic slowdown. The Industry like many others is attuned to these risks and issues, so in announcing the Sector Deal and showing its commitment to Tourism, the Government will keep the industry aligned and supportive of the plans the Industry itself has coalesced around.

I look forward to meeting with you on 20th March to discuss these commitments further and to look ahead to the quickest possible conclusion of the Sector Deal process.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S. Ridgway".

Steve Ridgway
Chairman, BTA Board