
Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives



The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Councillor Kevin Guy
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Lewis House, Manvers Street, Bath. BA1 1JG
www.bathnes.gov.uk
Email: kevin_guy@bathnes.gov.uk
Telephone: 01225 395025

Sent by email:

angela.rayner.mp@parliament.uk

Date: 11/07/2025

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to you jointly as the political leaders of Bath and Cambridge, two cities that receive a huge number of visitors, both domestic and overseas, and are crucial to the UK visitor economy.

We have consulted with the leaders of York and Oxford and as a group we advocate for sustainable tourism and the devolution of power to Local Government. In light of the increasing number of tourists visiting our cities and towns, we believe it is both necessary and prudent for a conversation between those key heritage cities, that are so important to brand UK in the international market, about how the benefits of mass tourism can be concentrated most strongly in the places which support this crucial industry.

Tourism significantly contributes to the local economy, providing jobs and supporting businesses. However, it also places a considerable strain on public services and infrastructure, including roads, waste management, and public transport. The costs associated with maintaining these services falls on Local Government and residents who may not reap the direct benefits of the tourist influx.

As places, we are committed to moving towards a more sustainable visitor economy. This would be one that lightens the impact of the industry on the environment, contributes to the regeneration of the natural world and distributes the economic benefits of tourism widely across destinations and amongst residents. However, this will require investment and powers beyond our means.

A tourist levy associated with overnight stays (as found in Scotland and soon to be available in Wales) could provide Mayoral Combined and Local Authorities with an option to manage these costs effectively whilst continuing to support the growth of the UK's visitor economy. The revenue generated could be reinvested into the community, improving facilities and services for both residents and visitors. It could also ensure destinations remain competitive and support wider work to attract investment into the economy whilst also funding initiatives aimed at preserving cultural heritage sites, maintaining public amenities, and promoting sustainable

tourism practices and supporting companies in the visitor economy.

However, we do not believe that a tourist tax of this type is the sole solution to this issue. Given the complexity of these challenges, we propose the organization of a round table discussion between key destination cities such as ours and government. The primary objective of this round table would be to explore and develop strategies for ameliorating the adverse impacts of tourism in our destinations whilst also considering how the benefits can be as impactful and wide ranging as possible to drive greater economic and social value.

Such a discussion would provide a comprehensive platform to:

- Assess the multifaceted impacts of mass tourism on destinations.
- Identify best practices and innovative solutions implemented by other places facing similar issues.
- Identify opportunities to unlock greater value from tourism that sticks in local destinations and benefits the UK.
- Formulate policies and mechanisms for financial assistance in destinations, ensuring sustainable tourism development.
- Foster collaboration and partnership among stakeholders to effectively address and mitigate the consequences of overtourism and grasp opportunities to invest in placemaking and the visitor experience.

By convening this round table, we can work towards creating a balanced approach that maintains and grows the economic benefits of tourism while preserving the integrity and sustainability of our destinations. This initiative would not only benefit the affected areas but also set a precedent for responsible tourism management in the future.

We would greatly appreciate your consideration of this proposal and look forward to the possibility of discussing it further.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We are confident that, together, we can pave the way for a more sustainable and equitable tourism industry.

Best wishes



Cllr Kevin Guy
Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council



Cllr Cameron Holloway
Leader, Cambridge City Council