

Annex A: Key points from the LGA's response to VisitEngland's "Refreshing our Growth Strategy" consultation

1. The recent Triennial Review of VisitEngland helped to clarify the relationship with VisitBritain and we fully support VisitEngland having sole responsibility for domestic marketing. The Review confirmed that the refreshed strategy is an opportunity to embed and strengthen VisitEngland's vital role in focusing on destinations, encouraging industry to engage with councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships, championing the visitor economy across government and further developing England's positive brand. We encourage an ambitious and compelling strategy that will unite, inspire and support the many organisations with an important role to play, building upon the previous Coalition Government's Tourism Strategy.
2. Five years on from the launch of VisitEngland's previous strategy, economic growth remains the overarching policy priority for central and local government, and we strongly support the proposed vision for 2020. Councils have long recognised the economic value of the visitor economy and will continue to be key partners in achieving the strategy's vision. They have preserved and developed the environmental, historic, cultural, community and sporting assets and traditions that attract visitors and make destinations authentic. Councils' leadership is also central to unlocking future growth by supporting tourism businesses to improve their productivity through a higher value offer and creating the wider conditions for the visitor economy to thrive.
3. The refreshed strategy will need to reflect the fundamental changes to English governance that are happening up and down the country and the firmly devolutionary direction of travel. The LGA's campaign for greater devolution of growth, skills and infrastructure powers and funding stands to benefit the visitor economy by ensuring councils and businesses have the flexibility to prioritise and support local growth sectors. In this rapidly changing landscape, we encourage the strategy to recognise that decisions about how to support and fund the visitor economy are best taken locally and that councils are ideally placed to connect-up tourism businesses and Destination Management Organisations to Local Enterprise Partnerships and the wider local economic landscape.