



Visit London – the Mayor’s plan for tourism:

London is a world city with unrivalled appeal. Thanks to its blend of attractions and vibrant social scene, the capital draws an estimated 30 million tourists spending £15 billion each year into the economy. That’s equivalent to about 12 per cent of London Gross Domestic Product, with nearly half a million full-time and part-time jobs at stake. London is also a vital gateway to the rest of the country with more than half – 56 per cent – of the overseas visitors to the UK spending time in the capital.

But London’s tourist industry faces major challenges. The nature of tourism has changed significantly since the events of 11 September. These events shook tourism as an industry throughout the world with London losing over a billion pounds of visitor income.

To re-strengthen this vital industry my first programme was emergency aid to attract people back to the hard-hit West End theatreland by offering discounted tickets to everyone in the country. This led to the sale of 47,000 tickets.

The second step was to set up the London Tourism Action Group which, working with the London Tourist Board, offered a ‘Great London Deals’ campaign.

The next step is to launch a radical marketing campaign for the capital and to revamp the longer-term structures for promoting tourism in London. I have this year put £3 million into this from the London Development Agency, and intend to provide £4 million next year. I want this to be matched by a similar sum from the private sector.



I am particularly pleased that Tamara Ingram, chair and CEO of McCann Erikson, and one of the most experienced marketing figures in the country has accepted my proposal to be chair of the London Tourist Board. She will oversee London's tourist marketing – a job she is superbly equipped to provide.

London's tourism will continue to face challenges. We all hope that a new Gulf War can be avoided but if it does come, London will be faced with the challenge of rapidly rebuilding visitor confidence in the capital. We must hit the board running for this challenge by revamping our tourist delivery now. This is why I have decided to radically step up the support given by the public sector.

With my agreement, the London Development Agency have appointed advisers, KPMG to look at all the implications of the delivery structure and I expect their work to be completed in time for this structure to start delivering against my plan by April 2003.

Until now, the capital has had no single co-ordinated tourism plan. Tourism in London has been left without sufficient government support for too long. Tourism is now one of the items at the top of my political agenda and Visit London is my strategic plan for London tourism. Let's all work together to create the best possible welcome for London's visitors.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Livingstone". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ken Livingstone

New leadership and co-ordination

Visit London is the Mayor's strategic tourism plan for the capital. It is a blueprint for growth: providing new leadership, new funding and a new focus for London's tourism industry. It is the first-ever Londonwide strategy which will be backed by top-level policy input.

Visit London will:

- provide new leadership for London's tourism industry
- move tourism up the agenda and secure increased funding
- co-ordinate and engage the many stakeholders more effectively
- work at improving the London 'product' by taking a clear strategic approach to the capital's infrastructure needs
- create a step-change in marketing with smarter targeting
- ensure improved data and intelligence is gathered to monitor trends and make London even better for the future.

It is crucial we maximise the benefits for London's residents and minimise the negative impact of tourism. We need to enhance public/private collaboration in projects and organisations that promote and manage tourism.

The challenges ahead

Although London attracts a large number of overseas leisure tourists and ranks highly as a desirable destination for business travellers, we could do much better.

Domestic tourism could also be stronger.

There needs to be a step-change in the provision of marketing and support of the industry because:

- competition from other European cities is growing
- deregulation of airlines means other destinations are increasing popular and accessible
- there is a long-standing concern that the capital's image has relied too heavily on its ceremonial and historic grandeur
- there are potential markets which could be tapped into by smarter and more targeted marketing
- web access and e-commerce is changing the way people buy travel and find the information they need.

The quality and value for money of London's product need to be improved because:

- London is perceived to be expensive
- there is a shortage of mid-range hotels
- most facilities are in the centre of the city
- a growing skills shortage threatens services
- information about the capital can be difficult to access
- transport lacks investment and is often of poor quality.

A blueprint for growth

Several key principles underlie *Visit London*:

Growth: the Mayor is committed to London's growth as a tourism destination, as a way to create jobs and increase the contribution to the economy of the capital and therefore to the country as a whole.

Dispersal: growth needs to be more evenly spread across London, with new businesses encouraged to develop outside the central London area. This will offer greater choice and value for money to visitors, spreading the economic benefits of tourism more equally across the city, and minimise any negative impacts.

Resources: skills levels and shortages need to be addressed with the provision of training and other mechanisms to improve access to jobs for London's communities. Small business support and information along with coherent branding need to be developed.

Diversity and inclusion: London's diversity is an important element in its appeal. Its multicultural strengths should be enhanced, promoting the involvement of all sections of the community in developing new businesses and new tourism initiatives.

In order to realise these principles *Visit London* – the Mayor's three year strategic tourism plan – depends on co-operation and co-ordination with the industry and with relevant agencies around a detailed Action Plan, which will be agreed by the end of the year.

Visit London Action Plan

The Action Plan will focus on four separate themes:

Leadership and promotion

- **New funds and organisation for tourism management:** improving the structure of tourism management and securing of new forms of funding for London will be a priority in the *Visit London* plan, with a new organisational structure introduced in the first year
- **Private and public sector working together:** the new organisational structure will enable London's tourist industry to function more effectively and efficiently by bringing public and private sector organisations into partnership
- **Brand for London:** a strong, harmonised brand message is needed. Key partners will be brought together to strengthen this brand and build a better understanding of the brand values and look at the opportunities for sub-branding.

Market development

- **Better targeting and identification of new markets:** domestic tourism and business travel opportunities will be developed along with dynamic new marketing campaigns, which will target overseas visitors.

As a priority, research will be undertaken, drawing on the expertise of other partners, to identify the potential for developing new markets. Research will also look at ways to diversify, increase and spread the benefits of tourism in London.

- **Domestic tourism plan:** a five-year plan will be drawn up to develop domestic tourism in London.

Evidence and intelligence

- **Tourism research and monitoring:** the contribution of tourism to London needs to be measured more accurately. London needs to be able to monitor the impact of changes in tourism and forecast future changes. With more robust market intelligence, the capital will have a stronger basis to support bids for more resources or investment
- **Statistical information:** through GLA Economics, the unit which builds and disseminates economic intelligence, a framework producing regular statistical information will be developed in the first year of *Visit London*. A second priority will be set to gain information establishing London's price competitiveness, and to evaluate promotional campaigns.

New products

- **Convention centre:** a glaring gap in London's tourism facilities is its lack of a suitable venue for international conventions. An assessment of the value and feasibility of a convention centre will be undertaken in the first two years of the plan
- **Quality assurance:** new benchmarking schemes will be used to assess London's performance. The recommendations of a study currently being conducted on improving visitor accommodation will be implemented
- **Tourist information:** the lack of Tourist Information Centres will be addressed and the potential for e-commerce in the tourism sector will be explored, so that the quality of information and services available to visitors can be enhanced and extended
- **Dispersal of tourism:** the London Development Agency will begin by commissioning a study to look at the development of hotels outside the central area of London and consider ways of using inward investment to encourage a dispersal of tourism to the outer areas of the capital
- **London events:** an assessment of London's capacity to host major world events will be undertaken. A more coherent approach will be taken to brand London events.

London: a world city for decades to come

The London Development Agency will deliver the Mayor's plan for tourism through the creation of a new organisation, building on current expertise. This will enhance private/public sector collaboration to ensure higher revenue and growth for tourism in the capital.

Putting together this new organisation with the many partners in the tourist industry in London today will be the first priority for the Mayor.

The new organisation will:

- be better resourced with new funding
- engage the private sector more closely to work on projects and issues to promote and manage tourism
- launch new higher-profile marketing drives to promote London as a tourist destination
- develop a strong, consistent approach to London's branding
- be a powerful unified voice for London's tourism.

The London Development Agency will work with its partners to ensure that the right business and skills support should be offered to the tourism industry and that enhanced market intelligence and economic data are available. With Transport for London and the boroughs, it will work on Londonwide initiatives to improve the capital's infrastructure and public spaces.

Visit London and the subsequent Action Plan will make a step-change in the provision of tourism services in London.

Visit London is a framework for tourism development in the capital. With strong effective leadership, new marketing initiatives and the mobilisation of new resources, our capital can assure its continued status as a world city for decades to come.

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City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

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