

# BRITISH CITIES PLAN TO PROMOTE DESTINATIONS IN ASIA



London, Manchester and Birmingham are set to collaborate and extensively promote British cities in China, India and also the Persian Gulf. The goal is to increase and develop tourism inflow from these three rapidly growing markets towards the future.

The project “Experience England” was launched by London & Partners. It has the support of the mayors of all three British cities involved, including London’s Mayor Sadiq Khan. The first-of-its-kind project will be financed from a grant received from VisitEngland. **The total cost is set to be about 1.2 million pounds.**

The project’s aim is to make it easier for visitors from India, China and the Gulf to visit London, Manchester and Birmingham. The campaign also focuses on the English countryside and villages along the way.

All three mayors of the major cities are thrilled with the project. “London is home to the 10 most popular tourist attractions in the UK and we’re proud to welcome millions of visitors every year. But it is important that they have the chance to see what’s on offer in other parts of the country too,” London mayor Khan noted.

Birmingham Mayor Andy Street and Manchester Mayor Burnham have expressed similar thoughts and positivity about the development. Sally Balcombe, CEO of VisitEngland, added that it is great to see such an innovative project being born. Moreover, she considers tourism a vital industry for big British cities since it accounts to 9% of the country’s GDP.

Visitor numbers from China and India are on a rise, which is one of the reasons why British cities want to further improve the situation and promote destinations that should attract Asian visitors. 2016 saw 165 thousand Chinese tourists in London. According to estimates, this number is expected to rise by 103% by 2025. Chinese expenditure is predicted to increase by 129%.

Inflow from India is also expected to grow rapidly. In 2016, 273 thousand Indian visitors arrived in the English capital. This is 16% more than in 2011. Experts predict that by 2025, the inflow from India will increase by another 90%. Expenditure is set to rise by 180%.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, particularly Edinburgh, initiatives to support Asian tourism have already been active. The city launched a social media campaign in November 2016. Since then, the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group has gained about 60 thousand followers and 66 million hits.

This campaign has been a source of great attraction for Chinese visitors. **According to reports, the inflow from China rose by 40% since the launch of the project.** Campaign operators took advantage of Chinese social media like Weibo or WeChat, promoting the Scottish capital and its main attractions.

Edinburgh has long been one of the most popular destinations in the UK. As of now, it is the second

most popular destination after London. However, the aim is to increase the number even more by doubling the inflow of Chinese tourists by 2020.

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