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Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP
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Our Ref: MC2020/20435

Dear Tobias,

Thank you for your sharing your letter of 24 June to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, regarding Covid-19's impact on tourism in coastal regions. I apologise for the delay in providing my reply.

We recognise the extremely difficult circumstances for tourism businesses across the country, including those in coastal communities. My officials and I receive regular updates about the significant impacts this is having across the sector. We will continue to listen to stakeholders' concerns and closely monitor the ongoing effects on the tourism industry.

I appreciate the National Coastal Tourism Academy (NCTA)'s insightful suggestions regarding how best to support coastal tourism. I have noted their proposals and share their enthusiasm for supporting tourism's recovery as effectively as we can.

To help the sector, you will know that the government has cut the rate of VAT applied on most tourism and hospitality-related activities from 20% to 5% until March. This significant fiscal intervention builds on our existing package of support to protect businesses and workers against Covid-19 - including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan scheme, as well as business rates relief and grants for eligible leisure and hospitality businesses. In August, we also introduced the Eat Out to Help Out scheme to encourage people back into hospitality settings once again.

I appreciate the scope and long-term focus of the NCTA's proposals. While we must first focus on assisting businesses through the immediate period, we have not lost sight of our ambitions for the sector.

I echo your comments about the importance of working collaboratively with coastal stakeholders - we will continue to engage with the sector on how we can most effectively aid tourism's recovery. In the meantime, I encourage tourism businesses and organisations to continue to make full use of the forms of government support available to them.

Nigel Huddleston MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Sport, Tourism and Heritage

