



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Date: 27th August 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Appointment of a Coastal Communities Minister

We write to you as the collective voice of coastal communities, the coastal tourism sector and 57 coastal local authorities. We are the Local Government Association's Coastal Special Interest Group (57 coastal local authorities), the Coastal Communities Alliance (coastal authorities and partners) and National Coastal Tourism Academy (37 Coastal Destination Management Organisations and over 2,000 small businesses).

We recently gave evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Hospitality and Tourism's "Coasts and Waters" inquiry, in which we highlighted to MPs the dire situation that coastal communities around the UK find themselves. A proposal for the appointment of a Minister for Coastal Communities arose from this session, receiving unanimous support from the Officers and Members present. We write today to add our support to this ask, as was outlined in the letter sent from the APPG's Chair, Steve Double MP, on 24 July 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the socio-economic disparities and unique systemic challenges faced by coastal communities around the UK. The coast is home to around 3 million people, including some of the most deprived populations in the UK. The loss of industry is a major factor and coastal economies are now highly dependent on tourism, representing 15-20% of the workforce or 220k jobs – most of them highly seasonal. A lack of skilled jobs locally is compounded by limited commuting opportunities. Coastal communities are also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with coastal flooding and erosion posing an ever greater threat.

Coastal areas are being devastatingly impacted by the pandemic, pushing many coastal local authorities, businesses and communities to breaking point. 7% of coastal tourism businesses have already closed¹ and 20-25% of accommodation forecast to be lost this year².

It is clear that coastal communities are falling through the gaps. In line with the Government's commitment to level up all parts of the UK, the time is now for the introduction of a dedicated Coastal Communities Minister with a remit that cuts across relevant departments.

¹ NCTA Business Survey, May 2020

² Hotel Solutions Report May 2020

The UK's coast is a significant asset and an area of great potential. On the horizon lies a new future for an independent United Kingdom and our coast offers abundant opportunities. Our tourism, maritime, energy, creative and environmental economies have the potential to be world leaders. Now is a time for reimagining and with the right leadership, we can avoid the stagnation that befell our coastal economy following the 2008 financial crash and transform the fortunes of the 3 million residents of our coastal communities for the better; securing economic resilience for the first time in generations.

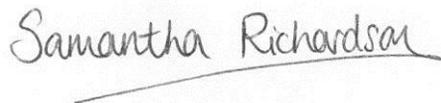
We believe that appointing a dedicated Coastal Communities Minister would prove this Government's commitment to delivering the levelling up agenda across the United Kingdom and ensuring that coastal communities are not, once again, left behind.

We are happy to provide any further detail as would be helpful and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Ernest Gibson
Chairman, LGA Coastal Special Interest Group



Samantha Richardson
Director, National Coastal Tourism Academy



Nicola Radford
Lead Officer, Coastal Communities Alliance