

British Marine's response to the Visitor Levy England consultation - February 2026

About British Marine and the UK marine industry - As the national trade association for the UK's leisure, superyacht and small commercial marine industry, we welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. British Marine is a membership organisation, made up of some 1300 businesses that come from the coastal and inland marine sectors. Members include companies which range from boatbuilders & engine manufacturers, to hire boat and charter companies, as well as leisure marinas, brokers, and other professional marine services.

The industry is predominantly made up of small and micro businesses and has an annual turnover of around £4.4bn and which directly provides just over 38,000 FTE jobs. Although marine businesses are not commercial accommodation providers, given the recreational nature of boating, our industry is closely intertwined with tourism. Indeed, it is partly down to the high spend on hospitality and tourism by people whilst boating and taking part in other watersports, the industry helped generate a total GVA of £17.38bn in 2022/23.

Overview - Whilst British Marine remains opposed to the principle of local visitor levies, it accepts the Government has already decided to introduce a new discretionary power for Mayors in England (and potentially for Foundation Strategic Authorities) to levy a charge on paid overnight stays and notes this consultation is about how that new power should be implemented.

British Marine is not opposed to any of the proposals set out in the Government's [consultation paper](#). Given the vast majority of marine businesses will not be directly affected by these proposals as they are not visitor accommodation providers, British Marine only wishes to comment on Chapter 4 of the consultation paper and **welcomes the clarity the Government has provided in stating that the levy would "not apply to accommodation on board a vessel, that is undertaking a journey involving one or more overnight stops."**

Chapter 4 Scope of the Levy

Question 4, Do you agree that all overnight stays in commercially let visitor accommodation should be within scope of a levy, unless otherwise exempted within the national framework or by Mayors? Yes.

We note that section 4.2.3 provides a list of accommodation types which would be considered as in scope for a levy, including "*onboard a vessel that is permanently or predominantly situated in one place.*" Section 4.2.4 helps clarify the point by stating clearly that the levy would "*not apply to accommodation onboard vessels that are undertaking a journey involving one or more overnight stops*". We support both statements and, as we made clear to both the Scottish and Welsh governments, it is only fair that where floating lodges and permanently situated Airbnb type vessels are providing paid visitor accommodation that the levy, if introduced, should apply. However, we also note that section 4.2.3 states the list "is not limited to". This raises questions as to what other types of accommodation might be brought within scope. To provide certainty for the marine industry, we would ask that the Government makes clear in any future legislation that, with the exception of those vessels that provide visitor accommodation and that are permanently or predominantly situated in one place, all other vessels are out of scope.

In summary we welcome the clarity provided in section 4.2.4 of the consultation, which states that a levy "*would not apply where accommodation on board a vessel, is undertaking a journey involving one or more overnight stops.*" **We strongly recommend that this exclusion be explicitly protected in any future enabling legislation.** Whilst it is reasonable to give relevant authorities discretion to introduce local exemptions, they should not be given power expand the scope of the levy at that would undermine the clarity of the national framework and create uncertainty for all concerned.

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