**NEW YORK CITY AND MANCHESTER SIGN
FIRST-EVER CITY-TO-CITY TOURISM PARTNERSHIP**

***—New Two-Year Marketing Collaboration to Boost Tourism Between Two Key Destinations—***

**New York City (January 16, 2020)** – **NYC & Company**, New York City’s official destination marketing organization, and **Marketing Manchester**today signed a first-ever official city-to-city tourism collaboration agreement. Formalized this morning at a press conference at CULTUREPLEX in Manchester, the new two-year alliance includes a collaboration agreement between the two cities, the sharing of best practices in tourism marketing and a partnership with Virgin Atlantic to stimulate reciprocal travel. NYC & Company president and CEO Fred Dixon was joined by Marketing Manchester Managing Director Sheona Southern and Virgin Atlantic’s Head of Brand Strategy & Campaigns Hai Bei Chen for the announcement and signing ceremony.

“It’s a pleasure to announce our newest tourism marketing partnership with one of the United Kingdom’s most important Northern England cities. Both destinations are capitals of diversity and iconic hubs of arts & culture, sports and media. We believe there is outstanding potential to further develop joint tourism opportunities between Manchester and New York City. We look forward to collaborating with Marketing Manchester, Manchester Airport and Virgin Atlantic to further solidify this new alliance and in so doing, welcome more visitors to our welcoming urban destinations,” said NYC & Company president and CEO **Fred Dixon**.

**Sheona Southern**, managing director at Marketing Manchester, added: “I’m incredibly proud that Marketing Manchester has been able to secure what is undoubtably a very powerful partnership with NYC & Company. New York City is one of the top tourism destinations in the world and to be able to align ourselves with a city that we have so much in common with – especially in respect to being open, diverse and welcome destinations – is a huge coup and speaks volumes about Manchester’s increasing global profile.

“Marketing Manchester has been delivering strategic and tactical marketing in the USA for many years and this formal partnership – based on an agreement to share insights and intelligence, connections and collaboration opportunities and access to media infrastructure – is particularly well-timed as we look to develop closer links with the country’s key cities like New York, which is served daily by Virgin Atlantic and other carriers with non-stop flights to/from Manchester Airport.”

The new tourism partnership between New York City and Manchester comes as Virgin Atlantic increases services between the two cities. Now flying its largest aircraft on the Manchester to JFK route, the Boeing 747, Virgin Atlantic is increasing capacity out of Manchester to New York by 65 percent this winter. Virgin Atlantic is also excited to announce it will debut its iconic Clubhouse lounge in Manchester for the first time this Spring. With a la carte dining and a full service bar, quiet working spaces and a spa, Upper Class customers and Gold Card members can relax and rejuvenate before their flight.

**Juha Jarvinen**, Chief Commercial Officer at Virgin Atlantic, commented: “We’re incredibly proud to be part of this partnership and look forward to working with NYC & Company and Marketing Manchester to drive more customers travelling between Manchester and New York City”.

“Growing our presence in Manchester is a huge focus for us – we recently increased capacity on our Manchester to New York route by 65% - and with additional services to Orlando, Barbados and Las Vegas we’re committed to offering customers more options than ever before from our home in the north.”

The city-to-city partnership includes the sharing of best practices in tourism marketing and destination management, including strategy around arts and culture, sports, and LGBTQ+ travel. As part of the new tourism collaboration, New York City and Manchester will exchange marketing assets worth $500,000 USD in each destination. New York City will utilize digital billboards on Manchester’s main roads, courtesy of Ocean Media. and across TfGM (Transport for Greater Manchester) to promote the destination. Manchester will have bus shelters and Link NYC digital screens throughout New York City to promote its tourism message as well.

In 2020, New York City will celebrate several cultural milestones. **The Metropolitan Museum of Art** and **American Museum of Natural History** will both commemorate 150th anniversaries while the **New York Botanical Garden** in the Bronx will debut the first large-scale exhibition of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama’s engagement with nature, including new works created specifically for the exhibit. The new **Apollo Performing Arts Center** in Harlem will debut in Fall, 2020, marking the first physical expansion of the theater in its 85-year history.

Additional 2020 developments include the observation deck **Edge** at Hudson Yards and the 50th anniversary of the **New York City Marathon**.

New York City has the most active hotel development pipeline in the United States, with approximately **123,000 hotel rooms** currently and another **20,000 rooms** on the way. Recent hotel openings include Conrad New York Midtown, Equinox Hotel Hudson Yards, Hotel Hendricks, Hotel Indigo Williamsburg and Moxy East Village. This year, the City will welcome new brands Aman, Six Senses, and Virgin Hotels, among others.

For Manchester, 2020 represents a significant cultural shift for the city with over $260 million of investment bearing fruit with: the opening of a new special exhibition gallery at the **Science and Industry Museum**; the reopening of **Contact** and **Octagon** theatres after significant upgrades; the expansion of iconic music venue **Band on the Wall**; the rebirth of iconic **Wigan Pier**; and the phase one opening of Europe’s biggest heritage gardening project, **RHS Garden Bridgewater**.

Furthermore, the city’s food and drink scene will continue to flourish with the boutique, 40-room **Stock Exchange Hotel** offering food by acclaimed British chef Tom Kerridge, London’s **Street Feast** due to arrive in the city, and food tourists flocking to Ancoats to visit **Mana**, Manchester’s first Michelin-starred restaurant in over forty years. Meanwhile **Hotel Brooklyn** will make a splash when it opens in spring whilst several rebrands will see **The Edwardian Manchester**, **Hyatt Regency Manchester** and **Hyatt House**, and a new **Kimpton** join the city’s booming hotel scene, aided also by the introduction of several new U.S. brands including **Hampton by Hilton** and **MOXY by Marriott**.

All of this will be closely followed in 2021 by the opening of several new galleries at **Manchester Museum**, a new wing and restructure at **Manchester Jewish Museum**, and arguably one of the most significant cultural projects in Europe when **The Factory**, a highly flexible new arts structure designed by world-leading architects OMA, founded by Rem Koolhaas, opens.

The United Kingdom is New York City’s number one source of international visitation and in 2019, the City forecasted visitation from this market to be 1,308,000, an all-time high. For Manchester, the USA is second in terms of the city’s top ten source markets for international visitors.

Currently, NYC & Company has several other active city-to-city tourism partnerships across the globe including Madrid, Amsterdam, Cape Town, Toronto, Tokyo, Buenos Aires and Berlin.

**About NYC & Company:**

NYC & Company is the official destination marketing organization for the City of New York, dedicated to maximizing travel and tourism opportunities throughout the five boroughs, building economic prosperity and spreading the positive image of New York City worldwide. For the official source on all there is to see and do in New York City, go to [nycgo.com](http://www.nycgo.com).

**About Marketing Manchester:**

As part of The Growth Company, Marketing Manchester promotes Greater Manchester on the national and international stage to key sectors including; media, digital and tech; science; advanced manufacturing; financial and professional services; tourism; culture; and sport. For more information, please visit: [marketingmanchester.com](http://www.marketingmanchester.com/)

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