

Tourism bosses hoping for economic boost after Newcastle United takeover

Excitement over the potential benefits of the Newcastle United takeover stretches far beyond the pitch and the fans heading to St James' Park.

The club is a major driver of the economy in the city centre, with home games affecting hotel occupancy and increasing the amount of money spent in shops, pubs and restaurants close to the ground.

The controversial takeover by a consortium of Amanda Staveley, the Reuben brothers and the Saudi Arabian PIF fund sparked wild celebrations around the ground last week as fans starved of excitement during the Mike Ashley era looked forward to the club being potentially the richest in the world.

Read more : [go here for more North East business news](#)

Now there are hopes that that excitement will translate into an economic boost for the city's tourism and leisure sectors – two parts of the economy that suffered more than most during the coronavirus pandemic and the various local and national lockdowns.

The first sign of that new era has come with a sell-out for yesterday's game against Tottenham, the first full house at the ground in almost two-and-a-half years.

A game against that same opposition in 2018 saw average hotel occupancy in the city rise from its average of 77% to 92%, while it would rise even further when Newcastle welcomed Manchester City for a midweek game a few months later.

And though that economic boost would be welcome at any time,

sporting events often bring the added bonus of happening outside the normal tourist season, bringing visitors to the area in autumn and winter, as well as during the week.

If Newcastle United were to meet its new owners' plan and qualify for Europe, that would bring more overseas visitors to the city, as well as promoting Tyneside to new audiences on the continent, as well as in the new owners' Middle Eastern heartland.

The spending boost attached to big sporting occasions can be seen in events such as the Great North Run and the rugby league Magic Weekend – both of which were sorely missed during the pandemic.

Read More

Related Articles

▪



[Get our North East daily newsletter for all the region's](#)

[business news](#)

BusinessLive

Research by destination marketing agency NewcastleGateshead Initiative found that around 15% of visitors to Newcastle cited sport as the main reason for their trip, while the North East is second only to the North West in attracting overseas visitors through football.

And with two new hotels being planned near St James' Park in the next few years – a Moxy Hotel on the Helix site and a Raddison Red on the Strawberry Place development – there will be no shortage of a accommodation for visiting supporters.

Sarah Green, chief executive at NewcastleGateshead Initiative,

said: "St James' Park and our home football club is for many, the beating heart of Newcastle and is integral to our identity as a destination to visit and enjoy.

"It's important to acknowledge and understand the impact football has on the visitor economy, by encouraging overseas visitors, extending the peak tourism season, and boosting hotel occupancy and footfall to bars and restaurants.

"We're already seeing the positive impact the major financial investment will bring to the city, with this weekend being the first sold-out game in 29 months, which will be welcomed by our tourism and hospitality businesses and support the recovery and growth of the sector.

"Newcastle city centre is buzzing once again. The investment has reignited the club, its fans and will be transformational to the profile of our city on an international scale.

"In the last five years we have seen more than £100m of private sector investment in the visitor economy of Newcastle and Gateshead, and it's encouraging to see this trend continue which allows us to plan and shape a very bright future for the city."

The takeover has also been welcomed by Stephen Patterson, chief executive at NE1 Ltd, the business improvement district company for Newcastle City Centre.

He said: "The Newcastle United take-over is great news for the club, the fans, the city and the wider region. We all stand to benefit from a major financial investment in Newcastle United, a club at the heart of our city.

"This will have a major impact on the city's profile nationally and internationally and, economically will pay dividends for the local economy.

"A takeover of this scale will be transformational for the

club and its impact will resonate far beyond the confines of St James' Park. We have all seen the significant economic benefits experienced where takeovers of this kind go on to deliver dramatic uplifts in inward investment in the city and wider region.

“Newcastle United is a huge part of the beating heart of the city. As we come back from Covid this is just the tonic that the city needs.”

Read More

Related Articles

▪



[Faraday Institution opens North East regional office in](#)

[Newcastle University](#)

BusinessLive

Read More

Related Articles

▪



[Northern leaders push Government on levelling up and](#)

[five 'gamechanger' projects](#)

BusinessLive