

# Background paper F(iv): Tourism and Short Stay Accommodation

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Policy CS34 of the Core Strategy 'Sustainable Tourism' sets out the spatial policy to support and encourage improvements and additions to the tourism offer in Oxford. Encouraging longer stays and greater spend, by maintaining a viable and flourishing tourism sector in Oxford, which will continue to generate economic and other benefits for the City.

## 2 The Oxford Hotel and Short-Stay Accommodation Study

2.1 An Oxford hotel and short-stay accommodation study ('the study') was commissioned by Oxford City Council with the support of Tourism South East to provide a robust evidence base of the current and potential future demand and development potential for hotel and short-stay accommodation in Oxford through to 2026, to feed into the local development framework. The final report, 'Oxford Hotel & Short Stay Accommodation Futures'<sup>1</sup> was published in November 2007; an overview is given in the paragraphs below.

2.2 Oxford is a visitor destination with an international reputation and a significant tourism hub within the South East Region. Oxford City Council is committed to tourism and has a vision for its development as part of its economic strategy. This vision includes increasing the length of stays and the spend of visitors to the City. The City Council recognises the importance of an adequate supply of overnight accommodation to achieve this.

### Current situation

2.3 Oxford's hotel supply is split between the City centre and the City outskirts and arterial roads. The supply is very different in each of these locations. The greatest proportion of the City's hotel stock is located outside the City centre. The supply here comprises mainly large 4 star business and conference hotels and budget/upper-tier budget hotels. The City centre supply comprises mainly luxury/boutique hotels and a number of 3 star hotels. There are no budget or 2 star hotels in the City centre. Oxford's hotel supply has increased by 17% since 2003, with the opening of the Malmaison (91 rooms) and a number of extensions to existing hotels. **Table 1** gives details of hotel accommodation in the wider City centre area.

**Table 1: Current City centre Hotels (at 2007)**

Hotel – City Centre	Standard	Rooms
Randolph	5 star	151
Old Bank	4 star	42
Old Parsonage	4 star	30
Malmaison	4 star	91
Cotswold Lodge	4 star	49

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Hotel & Short Stay Accommodation Futures (2007) Hotel Solutions

Eastgate	3 star	63
Best Western Linton Lodge	3 star	70
Royal Oxford	3 star	26
<b>Total</b>		<b>522</b>

Source: 'Oxford Hotel & Short Stay Accommodation Futures'

### Need

- 2.4 The study shows a strong hotel market in Oxford, with hotels of all standards achieving high occupancy rates and achieved room rates, and regularly denying business both during the week and at weekends. With the development of the conference centre in the West End area, it is considered that there is a need for a large 4 star hotel on-site of approximately 150 bedroom size, a need for a large 3 star hotel (140 bedrooms), potential for up to 2 budget or upper-tier budget hotels (100 rooms each), scope for up to 3 new boutique hotels (30-50 bedrooms) in the longer term. Opportunities for existing city centre 3 star hotels to expand and or upgrade to 4 star / boutique standard, scope for one or two new serviced apartment complexes (30-100 units); potential for one or two more hostels. The Royal Oxford Hotel could be replaced as part of the redevelopment of the Island site (Park End Street, Hythe Bridge Street), which is one of the key redevelopment sites of the West End Area Action Plan<sup>2</sup>.

### Opportunity

- 2.5 The study showed that there is strong market potential and developer interest for significant new hotel and short stay accommodation development in Oxford, of all types and standards, in both the City centre and on the outskirts of the city.
- 2.6 It is clear there are lots of extremely positive messages coming out of the Hotel study. The renaissance of the West End presents a real opportunity for the City Council to steer and support the development of the hotel and short stay accommodation sector within the City centre to the benefit of Oxford as a whole. A real opportunity for the sector to make a positive contribution to the development of this world-class City.

## 3 Oxford Tourism Strategy

- 3.1 Oxford is a visitor destination of national and international significance, attracting over 7 million visitors a year with over half of these from overseas. The Tourism Strategy 2003-2008 for Oxford is coming to the end of its life, and a new strategy is currently being prepared, which should be published in Autumn 2008.<sup>3</sup> The focus of the forward strategy is very much about:

- Targeting high value markets;
- Increasing spend;
- Increasing length of stay;
- Diversifying the product and offer;

<sup>2</sup> West End Area Action Plan (June 2008) Oxford City Council

<sup>3</sup> A new tourism strategy for Oxford, commissioned jointly by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the West End Partnership, is currently being prepared by Tourism Solutions. Two workshops have so far been held which brought together key stakeholders to feed into the new strategy.

- Growing business and conference tourism through 'Destination Oxford' conference desk.

## 4 Conclusions

- 4.1 It is important that the hotel infrastructure of Oxford helps to support and grow the tourism industry and the wider economy. The study emphasises strong market potential and developer interest for significant new hotel and short stay accommodation development in Oxford, of all types and standards.
- 4.2 The study highlights a potential need for up to 15 hotel and short stay accommodation development sites to be allocated. However, it is not possible to allocate sites exclusively for this use, as there are many other more pressing land use demands on land in Oxford such as housing, employment and community infrastructure. Core Strategy Policy CS34 seeks to encourage new sites for short-stay accommodation in the City centre (including the West End) and on main arterial routes within the City, as well as protecting and modernising existing sites. Specific sites that are suitable for additional tourist attractions and accommodation uses, along with other uses, will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD and Area Action Plans.