**From:** Evans, Marion - Experience Oxfordshire
**Sent:** 30 March 2017 17:34
**To:** Matthew Parry
**Subject:** Bicester Gateway: Application 16/02586/OUT

Sent on behalf of Hayley Beer-Gamage

Dear Matthew

I am writing to you in respect of the above planning application for a new 150 bed hotel and 160,000 sq ft B1 office/hi -tech development at Bicester Gateway which is going to the Cherwell District Council planning committee meeting on 13th April 2017.

Tourism is extremely important to Oxfordshire’s economy. Each year we welcome 26.5 million visitors to the County, who spent £1.96 billion in the local economy and compact turn supports over 33,000 jobs.  Part of Experience Oxfordshire’s strategy to grow the visitor economy is to get visitors to stay longer and explore the whole County. This proposed development would be a welcome addition that would increase bed stock and enable visitors to stay in a location that is ideally situated for exploring the County attractions. ‎Investment in this type of infrastructure is extremely important to improve our visitor offer and ensure that Oxfordshire can compete with other destinations.

Earlier this year Experience Oxfordshire published a report which we commissioned by Destination Research investigating 2015 travel data. This showed tourism spend was up 5% per annum to £1.96 billion and overnight stays up 5% to 2.6 million and 9.5 million for total nights. With the impact of Brexit on the Pound this is likely to increase due to the dual effect of increased overseas travellers and 'staycationers'. The proposed employment growth in Bicester and the impact of both improved rail service and the expansion of Bicester Village mean that the demand for overnight stays in Bicester is only going to increase.

Bicester Gateway occupies an important entry site into Bicester. It provides the opportunity to provide for both increased demand for overnight stays for both business and the leisure industry. Due to the increased connectivity with Oxford it offers an ideal location for visitors and conference guests to use during the year. Oxford remains underprovided for hotels and potential for expansion is limited.

Yours sincerely

**Hayley Beer-Gamage** I Chief Executive

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