

Consultee Comment for planning application 21/03918/F

Application Number	<input type="text" value="21/03918/F"/>
Location	<input type="text" value="Waterperry Court 2-6 Middleton Road Banbury OX16 4QG"/>
Proposal	<input type="text" value="Conversion of 2-6 Waterperry Court to a hotel (Use Class C1) including eastern extension, associated car parking, landscaping and ancillary works"/>
Case Officer	<input type="text" value="Wayne Campbell"/>
Organisation	<input type="text" value="Economic Development (CDC)"/>
Name	<input type="text" value="Steven Newman (Economic Dev. Officer)"/>
Address	<input type="text" value="Economic Development Cherwell District Council Bodicote House White Post Road Bodicote Banbury OX15 4AA"/>
Type of Comment	<input type="text" value="Support"/>
Type	<input type="text"/>
Comments	<input type="text" value="Please see attached comments."/>
Received Date	<input type="text" value="23/12/2021 20:42:22"/>
Attachments	The following files have been uploaded: 2021-12-23 Waterperry Court.pdf

ENVIRONMENT & PLACE INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

From: Economic Growth Service – Cherwell District Council
To: Principal Planning Officer – General Developments Planning Team (Wayne Campbell)
Our Ref: 2021-12-23 **Your Ref:** 21/03918/F
Ask for: Steven Newman **Ext:** 1860 **Date:** 23/12/2021

**This response raises local economic development issues only.
The response is provided without prejudice to the consideration of applications for planning permission.**

Applicant's Name: Waterperry Court Development Ltd & Travelodge Hotels.

Address / Location: Waterperry Court, 2-6 Middleton Road, Banbury, OX16 4QG

Proposal: Conversion of 2-6 Waterperry Court to a hotel (Use Class C1) including eastern extension, associated car parking, landscaping and ancillary works.

Location: Waterperry Court, 2-6 Middleton Road, Banbury, OX16 4QG

1.0 Summary

- The proposed redevelopment and change-of-use of these premises to a hotel would contribute towards the vitality of the town centre and complement the economic development aims of the Council. I therefore support this proposal.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 With significant housing growth being planned and experienced in and around Banbury, the Council's extant adopted Economic Development Strategy (EDS) seeks to guide and enable balanced growth, including employment opportunities within thriving urban centres (as reflected in Cherwell's Local Plan). It is therefore important to guard against the inappropriate loss of land uses that support employment and enterprise opportunities and/or the provision of services to the community.
- 2.2 The vacant Waterperry Court premises represent both a risk and opportunity for the town centre. Located in a prominent position, at a busy road entrance and adjacent to Banbury Railway Station, the relatively modern building provides an opportunity for refurbishment to meet the future needs of both the town and the owners of the premises. A risk is that, without investment and occupancy, the premises would continue to be vacant and to not serve the town whilst the fabric would deteriorate and detract from plans to redevelop the wider Canalside area.

3.0 Change-of-Use

- 3.1 The proposal seeks a change-of-use to redevelop the premises and to re-establish a productive and viable use.
- 3.2 The office market report by White Commercial provides evidence of a continuing lack of demand for office space, especially for those premises in Banbury requiring refurbishment and/or with constrained floor plans such as Waterperry Court. Despite proximity to the railway station and an expanding local population, the indication is that there would be little interest from occupiers – even if refurbished to

modern standards or adapted to a more innovative arrangement 'post-Covid'. If local enterprises require office space, it is also shown that alternative premises exist locally.

3.3 Whilst it is accepted that an office redevelopment of these premises may not in the foreseeable future be viable, the economic growth policies of the Council provide a framework to guide the re-use of premises to ensure they remain important venues for local employment opportunities and service provision.

3.4 Cherwell's EDS is a component of Cherwell's Community Plan and has three broad themes of Developing People, Business and Place:

- **Raise expectations and ambitions** and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining. We will foster and develop alternative ways of accessing employment such as apprenticeships, volunteering or work-based training;
- **Promote and support business diversification** and a sustainable economy in both urban and rural environments. Protect and grow local services and businesses, while supporting town centres to be attractive economic hubs for the district.
- **Manage our infrastructure development**, matching housing growth with local jobs, transport to work, facilities and services. We will plan effectively for our future workforce and employment patterns, focusing on what we need to achieve in raising our skills and actively attracting the right businesses into the area.

3.5 These themes provide a basis to consider the impact of the proposed change-of-use.

4.0 Local Economic Impact

4.1 The report provided by Pegasus indicates that notable economic benefits would be expected to arise during the two phases of development:

- **Construction:** Around 36 roles on site and locally during the 18-month build phase – adding an estimated £4m of gross value added (GVA).
- **Operation:** Around 22 full-time equivalent jobs rising to 30 in the wider economy when considering multiplier effects. It is expected, per annum, to create additional GVA of £729,000 and £442,000 wages for on-site staff.

4.2 The projected visitor expenditure is of particular interest:

"Visitors staying at the hotel are estimated to spend around £1.2million per annum on food & drink, entertainment, etc. Given the scheme is located on the edge of Banbury town centre, it is likely that businesses located in the town centre will see a significant boost in trade once the hotel is operational."

4.3 As a 'limited-service hotel', I would agree that there is the potential for town centre businesses to identify this as an opportunity to cater for the requirements of future hotel guests. It would also add competitive advantage to a growing town via a new operator providing additional capacity and an alternative for guests to choose from. Within the locality, such hotel operations have evidently been over-trading, suggesting that as demand continues to grow there is a need to provide additional overnight accommodation.

4.4 From CDC-commissioned research, of the 8.2m visits in 2019 to the district, those involving overnight stays are generally of most value to Cherwell's local economy. Through 0.4m Staying Nights, the Total Staying Spend was £90m – a figure that has risen consistently over the last decade by around £2.5m per annum. (Source: Destination Research 2020).

4.5 The need for full or part-serviced visitor accommodation in Cherwell may not be immediately evident but of all Staying Trips in 2019, 60% were for 'business' (compared to 19% 'Friends & Relatives' and 16% 'Holiday'). This indicates the importance of such accommodation to support other businesses within Cherwell's economy.

5.0 Assistance Available

- 5.1 To ensure the construction and operational phases proceed efficiently, I suggest that a 'Training and Employment Plan' is prepared (as indicated above in paragraph 3.4), drawing upon the local assistance available through the local further education college, Job Centre Plus, the Council's economic growth service and the Local Enterprise Partnership:
<https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/skills/our-programmes/community-employment-plans>
- 5.2 To maximise the benefits to hotel operator to both the town and the hotel operator, I would also encourage collaboration with Chiltern Rail, Experience Oxfordshire, Banbury Business Improvement District, Castle Quay, Banbury Chamber and other associations that have potential to collaborate to further enhance the vitality of the town.