**From:** LEP Chief Executive - Nigel Tipple [ChiefEXEC@oxfordshireLEP.com]
**Sent:** 30 March 2017 13:36
**To:** Matthew Parry
**Cc:** Beer-Gamage, Hayley - Experience Oxfordshire; Harrhy, Rebecca - Oxfordshire LEP
**Subject:** Bicester Gateway Project

Dear Matthew,

I wanted to write to you in respect of the above development proposal which is coming to Planning Committee I believe on the 13th April.

Whilst we would not comment on, or wish to influence in any way, the specific planning application in respect of Bicester Gateway. We do recognise the significant impact this development could have on local provision of employment and hotel bed space.

As you will be aware the overriding objective of OxLEP and our Board is to support and drive the economic growth of the county, to create jobs and secure private sector investment. This proposal therefore meets each of those objectives and comes just after we have agreed and published our refreshed Strategic Economic Plan. The Plan sets out the importance of 4 connected thematic Objectives, People – skills, Place – housing/employment, Enterprise – jobs/investment and Connectivity – road/rail/broadband etc.

The Gateway proposal would therefore support this strategic ambition and deliver specifically to  two of our four objectives; Place and Enterprise directly. For this reason we would wish to reflect the value of such an investment to the local and regional economy.

The second and equally important reflection is that associated with Business tourism and hotel provision. We know from work commissioned by Experience Oxfordshire our DMO and reported in 2016 that  tourism spend was up 5% per annum to £1.96 BN with overnight stays also increasing by the same percentage (5%) to 2.6M taking us to a total of 9.5m bed nights/annum.

Following the publics decision to leave the EU and this week’s “triggering of Article 50” we have the prospect of a weaker pound encouraging overseas visitors to come to the UK coupled with increased “staycationers' sheltering from weak currency exchange. The proposed employment growth in Bicester coupled with improved rail service to London and the expansion of Bicester Village as a major tourist destination will result in increased demand for overnight stays.

For these reason we see the Bicester Gateway development as proposed being a positive and timely initiative capable of responding to increased demand and creating the kind of quality facilities at the gateway to a growing community.

I trust this is helpful in setting out how this development meets our strategic objectives both locally and nationally.

I trust this is a helpful context.

Regards

Nigel

**Nigel Tipple**

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