

## **Recommendation to adopt the Visitor Accommodation Study**

I was until recently the owner of a bed and breakfast in the city centre and the former Chairman of Bath Independent Guest house and Hotel Association.

It is important to state from the outset that we are not against adding more hotel rooms to the city and broadly support the conclusions reached although 3+ years on, this look highly optimistic in light of the present economic climate.

We want to see development that "add value" to the Bath offer. No visitor ever comes to a city because there is a Travel Lodge there. The study anticipates that 350 more rooms would be required by 2016 and a further 350 by 2026.

The study identified the priority was for a 5 star branded hotel which we now have in the Gainsborough, next 1 or 2 Boutique hotels ( Hotel de Vin or Malmaison) which we do not have, and a budget hotel on a peripheral site. What we have here is planning permission granted for 190 rooms in Green Park, a further application for a Premier Inn of 108 rooms by the Odeon and a further 190 rooms at Kingsmead House, the result of a blind spot by the former administration.

The VAS was completed in 2007 but not published until 2009 and is still not official policy. The VAS needs to be adopted by BANES to identify and inform what is needed to maintain the unique and balanced offer for tourists and not allow this to be eroded by big businesses and chains. Local businesses, operated by local people contribute more to the city than the chains who draw their profit out of the local economy.

We hope that the new administration has the vision to adopt the VAS into the local planning guidelines thus guiding developers and planners with an evidence based framework which highlights the opportunities for balanced growth.