



HARROGATE DISTRICT SITES & POLICIES DPD

Visitor Accommodation Study

May 2011

PLANNING DIVISION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This study is part of the evidence base for the emerging Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) that will contain local planning policies to control development and conservation in the District along with land use allocations. The Sites & Policies DPD will form part of Harrogate Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) – the blueprint for planning in the District - and will be used in deciding planning applications over the plan period to 2023-2024.
- 1.2 Visitor and business tourism is an important part of the District's economy. The tourism industry covers a wide range of services, facilities and supporting industries including hotels, guest houses, tourist attractions, bars and restaurants, shops, leisure facilities, cultural venues, cleaning services and transport providers. The quality of these business and services, combined with the high quality of the natural and built environment of the District, make the Harrogate District an attractive destination to tourists and businesses.
- 1.3 Business tourism, particularly conferences and exhibitions, has been a prominent feature of Harrogate since the post war period. A purpose-built conference centre was completed in 1982 and the conference and exhibition business has grown to a point where Harrogate is a leading European destination and the facilities at Harrogate International Centre are amongst the largest in the UK. Over the years significant and regular public sector capital investment has been made to support and develop this sector. Today, conferences and exhibitions held in the centre of Harrogate attract over 350,000 visitors per year. The total expenditure by visitors and organisers of events amounts to some £160 million, which supports about 5000 jobs in the local economy. The health of the visitor and business tourism industry is therefore important to the continued vitality and viability of the District's towns and villages and the communities that live and work here.
- 1.4 The District currently provides a wide range of sizes, types and quality of visitor accommodation¹ that play a central role in attracting visitors to the District. They provide safe, convenient and comfortable overnight accommodation to tourist and visitors to conferences and exhibitions and therefore represent an important support service to the visitor and business tourism industry. However, it has become evident that at peak times it is becoming increasingly difficult to accommodate all business visitors within establishments in Harrogate's town centre. It is therefore all the more important to maintain the existing supply of visitor accommodation within Harrogate town centre and consider the need to take measure to increase supply.
- 1.5 The Harrogate District Core Strategy was adopted by the Council in February 2009 and contains a number of policies that seek to protect and encourage growth in the visitor and business tourism industry. In particular, Core Strategy Policy JB1 seeks to maintain and enhance the competitiveness of Harrogate's conference and business tourism sector and to develop sustainable holiday tourism throughout the District as a year round activity. In support of this, Policy JB2 looks to both resist proposals that would undermine the conference and business tourism sector generally, and specifically, to protect existing hotel bed space and increase provision in Harrogate town centre where appropriate. Currently, the Council's Local Plan Policy TRX performs that task by protecting hotels with 30 bedrooms or more from a change of use unless it can be demonstrated that the business is no longer viable and has been actively marketed for a reasonable period of time.

¹ The term 'visitor accommodation' is used in this study to describe hotels, guest houses, bed & breakfasts and Inns. This study does not cover other types of visitor accommodation such as serviced apartments, self-catering accommodation, camping or caravan sites and holiday chalets.

1.6 In order to support both a detailed criteria based policy for the retention and protection of existing hotels and to determine whether there is the need to allocate land for new hotel development in the emerging Harrogate District Sites and Policies DPD this study carries out further research on existing provision and future requirements.

1.7 The purpose of the study is to:

- Identify and classify existing visitor accommodation in the District;
- Consider the key economic, social and environmental drivers that influence demand for visitor accommodation in the District;
- Assess the current and likely future demand for visitor accommodation;
- Review recent planning application history to determine the effectiveness of existing local planning policies; and,
- Determine an appropriate size threshold of establishment offering visitor accommodation to offer policy protection.

1.8 The desired outcomes of the work are policy recommendations on:

- The potential for further hotel development in Harrogate town; and,
- The appropriate policy response to the retention and protection of the District's existing stock of hotel in support of the visitor and business tourism industry.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Review of Visitor Accommodation Supply

- 2.1 In order to develop a picture of the current supply of visitor accommodation in the District the Accommodation List², published annually by the Harrogate Tourist Information Centre (TIC), was used as the basis for developing a list of accommodation. The details contained in the TIC document was supplemented by a search of the internet and direct contact with establishments to compile an up to date record of available serviced accommodation in the District. It should be noted that whilst this list identifies the vast majority of establishments, there are likely to be additional small or part time B&Bs and guest accommodation that are not included. Two lists were developed, one containing information on establishments located in Harrogate Town and another for businesses located outside of the town. The lists record information on the number and location of establishments and size of establishments by number of bedrooms (full details can be found in Appendices 1 and 2).

Visitor Accommodation Questionnaire

- 2.2 Questionnaires were sent to over 180 businesses offering visitor accommodation within the District. These range in size from B&Bs offering a handful of rooms to large chain hotels with over a hundred rooms and a wide range of supporting facilities. The questionnaire comprised three distinct sections with questions relating to the characteristics of the tourism industry in Harrogate, details about the respondents business and opinions on the current Local Plan Policy TRX.
- 2.3 The main purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain the views of existing businesses offering visitor accommodation in the District on how they viewed the visitor and business tourism industry, what they believe are the most important factors to developing the industry, whether they feel there is a need to increase visitor accommodation and on whether the existing Local Plan Policy TRX remained valid.
- 2.4 Two versions of the questionnaire were developed. One containing additional questions relating to the operation of the respondents business was only sent to establishments with 10 or more bedrooms. A copy of the extended questionnaire is available at Appendix 3 of this report. Businesses were given 3 weeks to respond to the questionnaire.

Review of Planning History

- 2.5 A review of planning applications relating to visitor accommodation was undertaken to identify developments that have either increased or decreased the availability of visitor accommodation in the District. Applications that have been granted planning permission between May 2004 when Policy TRX came into force and the present day have been included.
- 2.6 Two tables have been created, the first containing information on applications granted planning permission for either the development of new, or expansion of existing, visitor accommodation (Appendix 5). This table also contains information on applications granted permission for the development of supporting facilities such as

² The 2011 Accommodation List can be found on Harrogate Borough Council's website at: <http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/Documents/AccomList2011.pdf>

restaurants, bars, gyms, spas etc. The second table contains information on applications granted planning permission for development that have resulted in the loss of visitor accommodation (Appendix 6). It should be noted that there may be some cases where works internal to the hotel have taken place that have resulted in a reduction in the number of bed spaces offered but did not require planning permission. This information will help to determine whether Policy TRX has been successful in its aim of protecting hotels with 30 or more bedrooms from a change of use.

3.0 MARKET TRENDS

3.1 This section provides a review of relevant national, regional and local reports on trends in the tourism industry in order to provide some context to the study.

The Economic Case for the Visitor Economy

3.2 Commissioned by Visit Britain and the Tourism Alliance, Deloitte's report The Economic Case for the Visitor Economy, published in 2008, provides an in-depth analysis of the contribution of the visitor economy to Britain.

3.3 The UK is attractive as a cultural, environmental and heritage destination. The report highlights both the direct economic impact of the visitor economy on the UK and also the significant indirect impact on related industries and investment decisions. The visitor economy has a number of spill over benefits to other sectors of the economy such as retail and manufacturing (e.g. through goods and services provided to the transport, food and beverage and hotel sectors). The report also highlights a number of socio-economic policy areas that are also affected by the visitor economy, namely:

- Economic and social inclusion - the visitor economy offers job opportunities to those with relatively low or no skills, a vital first step on the jobs ladder, and subsequently provides on the job training opportunities to up-skill employees. The visitor economy can therefore help to reduce unemployment and boost employment opportunities. Only retail and construction industries employed more workers with no qualifications in Great Britain. On average the visitor economy employ more part time (over 50%) workers than the national all industry average (30%). Also the visitor economy offers proportionally higher numbers of part time female workers (33%) compared to the industry standard (23%), fitting well with the Governments aim of providing employment opportunities for females traditionally less likely to engage with the labour market in a full time role.
- Enterprise and business formation - there is evidence of strong entrepreneurial activity in the visitor economy with one of the highest level of business creation across all sectors (11.5% of all UK business registrations in 2006, and 13% of the total net change in businesses taking account of de-registrations), due in part to the limited barriers to entry compared to other sectors. New restaurants and hotels accounted for 46% and 37% respectively of all new businesses in the Visitor Economy in 2006.
- Sustainable development - there is a disproportionate contribution to rural and costal areas, often with evidence of strong local supply chains in these locations.
- Regeneration - tourism has been the catalyst for wider regeneration in a number of urban areas (e.g. Salford Quays and the Eden Project). However, visitor economy driven projects carry a degree of risk in the assumption that new visitors will be attracted by what is being offered.
- Heritage - the visitor economy can provide a source of income needed to cover the continuing costs of conservation and renewal of cultural and natural assets. However, this has to be balanced with the need to protect assets from potentially harmful impacts that can be caused by a high number of visitors.

3.4 Yorkshire is estimated to have contributed in the order of £2.6 billion to UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2007, accounting for 2.6% of regional GDP. This figure was comparatively low compared to the North West region (£4.7 billion and 3.4% of regional GDP) but higher than other adjoining regions, the East Midlands (£3.2 billion and 2.3 % of regional GDP) and North East (£1.1 billion and 2.2 % of regional GDP).

- 3.5 The report found that generally, the more rural a local authority, the greater the reliance on visitor economy related industries. A ranking of English authorities in 2006 by the percentage of tourism related industries in the area had Harrogate ranked number 40, with 12.1% tourism related industries.
- 3.6 Tourism also traditionally experiences seasonal peaks and troughs related to rigid holiday periods and the weather. The report suggests that seasonal effects are not as pronounced as they once were because of an increase in city based trips, however this still poses challenges for tourism in rural areas.
- 3.7 The report emphasises that it is important to ensure that the environmental impact of tourism in rural areas is limited and managed in a sustainable way and that there is a potential impact between increased visitor numbers and sustainable tourism. The report also identifies a number of further policy barriers to the expansion of the visitor economy, these included the following factors which are particularly relevant at the District level:
- Transport infrastructure - the capacity and quality of transport infrastructure as well as service provision has a significant impact on the visitor economy.
 - Climate change legislation - the sustainability of the visitor economy is clearly dependent on travel. Climate change legislation is also likely to change the nature of the product being offered in response to consumer demand although this may also be accompanied by a price premium that reduces the potential demand for such products.

The Economic Contribution Of The Visitor Economy – UK and the Nations

- 3.8 Deloitte, with Oxford Economics, were commissioned in 2009 by Visit Britain to update and extend their 2008 report The Economic Case for the Visitor Economy. The resulting report published in 2010, The Economic Contribution Of The Visitor Economy, updates figures on the economic contribution of the visitor economy to the UK and provides a breakdown of the figures for the England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 3.9 Nationally tourism directly contributed £52 billion or 4.0% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the economy and supported over 1.36 million jobs in 2009 (4.4% of the total UK workforce). The report indicates that England accounts for 82% (£44 billion) of this contribution to GDP with a proportionally larger number of employees in the visitor economy (1.1 million or 4.2% of total employment in England).
- 3.10 There were also significant indirect impacts of the visitor economy on the wider economy through interaction with suppliers of goods and services to the visitor economy, capital investment and government expenditure. The total direct and indirect contribution being in the region of 8.9% of GDP or £115 billion, and 2.64 million jobs (8.5% of the workforce) in 2009.
- 3.11 Visits to small towns and the countryside/villages accounted for approximately 37% of the contribution to GDP of domestic visitors, compared to large cities/towns (42%) and seaside destinations (21%).
- 3.12 Total spending in the visitor economy is estimated to have been £90 billion in 2009, up from £88 in 2007, but adjusting for price rises this actually represents a fall of 3%. The report estimates total domestic spending in the visitor economy to have been £70.8 billion in 2009, this is significantly larger than the estimated £19.1 billion spent by international visitors. Day trips for leisure are by far the largest component of

domestic expenditure in the visitor economy, spending in the region of £47.6 billion in 2009. Domestic overnight trips of one or more nights represent the second largest expenditure at around £22.2 billion in 2009.

- 3.13 The report provided both a short and long term growth forecast for the visitor economy, predicting a slight increase in the direct contribution of the visitor economy to GDP in 2010 to £53 billion as the economy recovers from the downturn. However, the longer-term forecast is more positive with the visitor economy predicted to directly contribute 4.1% of UK GDP in 2020 (£87 billion), generating in the order of 1.5 million jobs (4.6% of total employment). The report predicts that the visitor economy will be one of the best performing sectors of the economy over the next decade outperforming other key sectors such as manufacturing.

Yorkshire and Humber Visitor Economy Strategy 2008-2013

- 3.14 This document was produced by Yorkshire Forward to provide a five-year strategy for the visitor economy in the Yorkshire and Humber region with the overall objective to achieve a 5% annual growth in visitor spend in the region to 2013. The strategy highlights the benefit of tourism stating that it is worth over £6 billion to the region, 8.5% of the regional economy, and employs almost 245,000 people in more than 23,000 businesses.

Welcome to Yorkshire

- 3.15 Welcome to Yorkshire is the regions tourist board and produces a wide range of useful statistics on the benefit of tourism to the Yorkshire & Humber region and of trends in tourist industry. Below is a selection of the information available on their website³ that provides a good backdrop to this study:

- Trips to Yorkshire in 2009 totalled 216 million (up 10% on 2008).
- Yorkshire & Humber attracts 15 million overnight staying visitors (equivalent to 48 million staying nights) every year, worth 2.6 billion to the economy.
- Overseas visitors contribute a further 3.2 million trips (13 million nights) and generate £637 million of spend a year.
- Day visits make up the largest proportion of the Yorkshire & Humber tourism economy, worth £3.9 billion to the region every year with over 194 million visitors.
- Business trips represent a significant proportion of the tourism market, making up 19% of all overnight trips in the region and accounting for a quarter of all visitor spend, equivalent to £1.6 billion a year.

- 3.16 In 2009 research undertaken by Welcome to Yorkshire identified that the region contained 4,778 hotels, guesthouses, self catering units and campsites. Serviced accommodation accounted for over half of these establishments (2,551 establishments) providing 35,768 rooms and 72,570 bedspaces. Travel by car was identified as by far the most dominant form of transportation to the region with 84% of visitors using this form of transport compared to only 8% using the train and 4% using a public bus or coach service. This research also highlighted the scenery and appearance of the countryside as the most enjoyable aspect for staying visitors.
- 3.17 Welcome to Yorkshire's Regional Serviced Occupancy survey from June 2009 suggests that the Harrogate District maintained a slightly higher room occupancy (65.9%) and bed occupancy (52.6%) than the regional averages (63.4% and 45.6%

³ Source: Welcome to Yorkshire – all data provided is available at www.welcometoyorkshire.com

respectively)⁴. This suggests that Harrogate enjoys a comparatively strong position with regards to room and bed occupancy and thereby a relatively buoyant hotel market. High occupancy rates can be an indication of local hotel need if it results in turnover trade. The average length of stays in Harrogate District was 1.9 nights and 19.5% of total stays in the District were on business. Room occupancy in Harrogate Town was higher than the District average at 67% and the proportion of stays resulting from business trips were also higher at 33.2% in 2009.

- 3.18 Finally the statistics produced by Welcome to Yorkshire highlight two interesting trends, firstly that room occupancy generally increased with the size of establishment, and secondly, that room occupancy differed by type of establishment. For example, the survey identified establishments with 4-10 rooms had a room occupancy of 58.6% whilst establishments with more than 101 rooms enjoyed a room occupancy of 68.7% on average. Secondly, hotels (at 66.2%) had a higher room occupancy than guest houses (58.3%), which in turn had a higher room occupancy on average than B&Bs (49.4%).

Tourism and the District Economy

- 3.19 The Harrogate District: Local Economic Overview⁵ prepared by the Council in 2006 emphasises the historic roots of Harrogate Town as a Spa during the Victorian and Edwardian periods and that its growth and development has gone hand in hand with that of the tourist industry in the District. Information available from the Office for National Statistics on Harrogate's labour market provides a strong indication of the dependencies of the local economy and local employment on the tourist industry. The statistics identify that there were in the order of 7,700 jobs in tourism related industries in 2008, accounting for 10.7% of the total employees jobs⁶ in the District (compared with 7.7% of employee jobs in Yorkshire & Humber and 8.2% in Great Britain).
- 3.20 Conference and business tourism is a key driver of the District economy, a major source of direct and indirect employment and a key attractor of investment into Harrogate town centre. The Harrogate International Centre (HIC) is one of the UK's largest integrated conference and exhibition facilities and the Yorkshire Showground is home to the UK's premier agricultural show and a key regional venue for outdoor events and exhibitions. A number of hotels in the District also provide conference space and meeting rooms, ranging from between approximately 2,400 sqm in total at the Majestic Hotel and 550 sqm at the Crown Hotel.
- 3.21 Business tourism spend in Harrogate during 2005/06 was valued at over £144,000. Visitor bed nights attributed to conferences and exhibitions is in the order of 530,000 nights, of which the HIC accounts for over 300,000 bed nights. This is recognised by the Council in the support given to the HIC and Yorkshire Showground in the Council's Core Strategy, Tourism Strategy and Economic Development Strategy (see section 4.0). Harrogate Borough Council has continued to invest in the HIC with the aim of sustaining and growing this key part of the local economy. The HIC has recently embarked on a multi-million pound programme of improvements, the first phase of which will see the development of a new 1,600 square metre exhibition hall.

⁴ This is based on Welcome to Yorkshire's Regional Occupancy survey from June 2009. It should be noted that these are based on a relatively small sample size of only 28 establishments in Harrogate District and 280 in total across the region.

⁵ The Harrogate District: Local Economic Overview 2006 can be found on Harrogate Borough Council's website at: <http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/Pages/harrogate-4075.aspx>

⁶ Source: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis. The definition of employee jobs excludes self employed, governmental-supported trainees and HM forces.

3.22 Vital to the continued success of the HIC and the Yorkshire Showground is the availability of a sufficient volume, range and quality of visitor accommodation in the District, and in particular within Harrogate Town itself. The HIC has reported lost conference trade as a result of the deficiencies in accommodation (although this is also attributable to a number of other factors including the town's transport links with the rest of the UK). Therefore hotels and other types of serviced accommodation are an essential ingredient to the performance of the local economy and are also, in themselves, a major source of employment in the District.

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Government Tourism Policy

- 4.1 Published in March 2011, the Government Tourism Policy⁷ outlines the Government's approach to the visitor economy as a whole. In particular the paper highlights that the UK's domestic tourism industry offers significant scope for economic growth, particularly with major forthcoming events including the Queens Diamond Jubilee in 2012, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2015 Rugby World Cup.
- 4.2 The paper highlights the importance of tourism to the UK economy. It is the third highest export earner and in most years the fifth or sixth biggest sector of the economy. However, the paper also highlights that the UK is comparatively weak in international business conventions and conferences market. However, the paper states that recent large-scale investments in new and improved or expanded venues (including Harrogate) are improving Britain's international ranking. This is particularly important due to the comparatively high spend per visit of business travellers.
- 4.3 The paper refers also to the fact that tourism is particularly labour intensive and therefore offers the opportunity to create a disproportionate number of new jobs as it grows when compared to other sectors of the economy. In addition to this the tourism sector tends to deliver a wide and well-balanced range of jobs and careers.
- 4.4 Currently residents of the UK are much more likely to holiday abroad and less likely to take a domestic break than other European nationalities creating a trade deficit in the order of 2:1 with less than 40% of total holiday spending going on domestic tourism. One of the Government's aims is to increase the proportion of UK residents who holiday in the UK to match those who holiday abroad each year. For longer stays (4 nights or more) this is stated in the paper as equating to 29% of travellers holidaying in Britain rather than just 20% today, creating an extra 4.5 million domestic trips each year, £1.3 billion more spend and around 26,000 new jobs.
- 4.5 The Government recognise the need to improve transport facilities, particularly regional airports and rail links, in areas outside of the south east of England to improve accessibility of these parts of the country to foreign tourists. The paper also identifies the current system of obtaining planning permission as slow, complex and hard to predict, making it harder for accommodation providers and tourism attractions to expand. Government are proposing to reform the planning system in England to remove barriers to growth, whilst recognising that there is also a need to protect communities from inappropriate developments and preserve important and nationally significant historic buildings and landscape, which are themselves important to the health of the UK's tourism industry.

Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

- 4.6 Tourist facilities, including hotels, are identified as a main town centre use in the Government's Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4)⁸. The statement provides that main town centre uses, including hotels and leisure facilities should be focussed in existing centres and that local planning authorities in preparing their Local Development Frameworks (LDF) should assess the need for further expansion of

⁷ Government Tourism Policy (DCMS, March 2011) can be viewed at:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/Government2_Tourism_Policy_2011.pdf

⁸ PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development (DCLG, December 2009) can be viewed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningpolicystatement4>

such uses and ensure that there is capacity to accommodate them should a need be evident. To this end, PPS4 states that local planning authorities should allocate sufficient sites in development plan documents to meet the need over at least the first five years of the plan period.

- 4.7 PPS4 stipulates that in planning for tourism in rural areas local planning authorities, when preparing their LDFs, should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments. In doing so the statement provides that Local Development Frameworks should, “support the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres”. The statement goes on to say that the benefits of doing this for the local economy should be carefully weighed against the need to protect the landscape and environment. PPS4 also provides that local planning authorities should support extensions to existing tourist accommodation in rural areas where the scale of development is appropriate to the location and where it may help to ensure the future viability of the business.
- 4.8 When determining planning applications for main town centre uses, including the development of tourist facilities and hotels, PPS4 sets out two key tests for applications. Firstly, applicants must demonstrate that there are no sites more centrally located than that being proposed, that is to say either within or adjacent to a town or district centre, that could reasonably be expected to accommodate the development. The purpose of this test is to direct tourist and leisure developments towards locations best served by transport infrastructure and other supporting facilities such as shops and services. The second test that applicants must satisfy under PPS4 is to demonstrate that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse impact on recognised centres. These tests also need to be satisfied where a local planning authority wishes to allocate sites within their development plan for tourist facilities or hotels.

Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism

- 4.9 The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism⁹, published in 2006, highlights that taking a pro-active role in facilitating and promoting the implementation of good quality development is crucial to ensuring that the tourism industry can develop and thrive. The guide provides a number of general principles for devising good tourism policies for LDFs. The guide states that in preparing LDFs local planning authorities should consider whether any policies for tourism are needed beyond what is set out in the Core Strategy. The guide also provides that planners and developers should ensure that new tourism development are as sustainable as possible in transport terms.

The Yorkshire and Humber Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026

- 4.10 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)¹⁰ was published in May 2008 to provide a long-term development strategy for the Region. It should be noted that the Government intend to revoke the RSS. However, until this takes place the RSS remains part of the District’s development plan and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in drawing together the Local Development Framework. There are a number of policies within the RSS that are relevant to tourism:

⁹ Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (DCLG, May 2006) can be viewed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/goodpracticeguide>

¹⁰ Yorkshire & Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (GOYH, May 2008) can be viewed at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100528142817/http://www.gos.gov.uk/goyh/plan/regplan/?a=42496>

- Policy E1: Creating a Successful and Competitive Regional Economy recognises tourism as one of a number of non-business class sectors that are a key economic and employment generator.
- Policy E2: Town Centre and Major Facilities provides that Regional Cities and Sub Regional Cities and Towns (including Harrogate Town) should be the focus for tourism activities.
- Policy E4: Regional Priority Sectors and Clusters identifies tourism as one of the key sectors that should be supported by plans, strategies, investment decisions and programmes. In particular the policy states that plans and strategies should provide sufficient quantity, quality and choice of a range of sites and support cluster development through a wide range of related policy areas including property needs, infrastructure, access to quality labour pools and supply chain/trading links.
- Policy E6: Sustainable Tourism seeks to promote, support and encourage tourism through an approach that, amongst other things, recognise the sustainable growth of tourism as an integral contributor to the economy, makes best use of existing tourism infrastructure, conserves and enhances the built and natural environment and integrates with a viable transport infrastructure.

Harrogate District Local Plan

- 4.11 Policy TRX: Hotel Protection of the Harrogate District Local Plan (Selective Alteration, May 2004)¹¹ provides that changes of use to hotels with 30 or more lettable bedrooms will not be permitted in Harrogate town unless clear evidence is provided to demonstrate that they are no longer viable for use as such for three years. For hotels of a similar size elsewhere in the District the timeframe for evidence is reduced to two years or where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impact on the supply of visitor accommodation available in the area.
- 4.12 Applicants proposing development that would result in a loss of a hotel with 30 or more bedrooms are required to show that the property has been effectively marketed at its existing use value for at least a year. In addition, evidence is also required of occupancy rates for at least three years and of capital expenditure for 5 years in order to demonstrate non-viability.
- 4.13 The policy was developed in response to a decline in serviced accommodation in Harrogate town and increasing pressure to change the use of hotels and guest houses to residential properties. The supporting text to Policy TRX states that the volume of accommodation in Harrogate reached a historic low figure in 2001 of 1,880 rooms compared to 2,320 rooms in 1995. At the time the policy was developed there was also concerns being expressed by clients of the HIC that the level of accommodation available may not be adequate to sustain larger conferences and exhibitions.

Harrogate District Core Strategy

- 4.14 The Core Strategy¹² was adopted by the Council in February 2009 and provides the strategic policy context for the District up to the year 2021 and beyond. The Core

¹¹ The Selective Alteration to the Harrogate District Local Plan (HBC, May 2004) which includes Policy TRX can be viewed at: http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/Documents/DS-HDLP-Sel_Alteration_saved_CS2.pdf

¹² The Core Strategy (HBC, February 2009) can be viewed at: http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/Documents/DS-P-LDF_CS_AdoptedFeb09.pdf

Strategy contains a number of policies that relate to tourism development, the following are of particular relevance to this study:

- Policy JB1: Supporting the Harrogate District Economy seeks to maintain and enhance the economic role of the District and support innovation and enterprise with regards to developing sustainable holiday tourism throughout the District and enhance its year round activity.
- Policy JB2: Conference and Business Tourism looks to support conference and business tourism industry by resisting proposals which would undermine the industry to the detriment of Harrogate town centre, protecting hotel room space and increasing hotel provision in Harrogate town centre.
- Policy JB4: Retail and Town Centre Development provides that the role of Harrogate town as a Sub Regional Town will be reinforced through, amongst other measures, enhanced hotel provision. The policies supporting text adds that additional hotel accommodation within the town centre will be supported to assist business and holiday tourism sector.

Harrogate Tourism Strategy

4.15 The Harrogate Tourism Strategy was adopted by the Council in 2009. Two key elements of the strategy that are relevant to this study are the focus on promoting and marketing the District and maintaining Harrogate's national role as a destination for conferences and exhibitions. The strategy highlights the importance of tourism to the economy of the Harrogate District and that the prime aim of the strategy is to ensure adequate support for the industry so it may continue to deliver economic impact into the longer term across the District. The HIC and Yorkshire Showground, together with surrounding hotel and associated infrastructure are recognised as key drivers of the industry. The Council are currently in the process of preparing a new Harrogate Holiday Tourism Action Plan.

Economic Development Strategy

4.16 The Economic Development Strategy for Harrogate District 2010-2015¹³ sets out the actions Harrogate Borough Council will take to generate wealth, investment and jobs for the District. The strategy highlights the importance on business tourism to the local economy stating that it attracts over 350,000 visitors per annum and brings spending of around £160 million to the District each year, supporting in the order of 21,000 tourism-related jobs (30% of employment) in hotels, restaurants and other related businesses.

4.17 Key strengths of the Harrogate economy are identified including: the quality of the environment; positive perceptions of Harrogate as a place to live, work and visit; the HIC and 'conference town' economy; the leisure tourism offer; and, the quality of cultural venues and facilities. However a number of weaknesses in the economy are also highlighted within the strategy including the relatively poor and under pressure transport networks and the need to fully develop and promote the District's tourism offer and products.

4.18 The strategy sets out a number of actions for the Council to address these weaknesses in the economy and to exploit opportunities. Of particular relevance to this study are the following actions:

¹³ The Economic Development Strategy for Harrogate District 2010-2015 (HBC, April 2010) can be viewed at: <http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/Pages/harrogate-3765.aspx>

- Lobby for investment to develop a high quality transport system which enables people to travel and goods to be moved efficiently, safely and with minimal environmental impact.
- Encourage continued investment in physical infrastructure relating to the District's tourism offer.
- Consolidate and enhance Harrogate's role as an internationally competitive events destination;
- Improve the distinctiveness and competitiveness of the Harrogate District visitor economy, to achieve further growth in both business and leisure tourism.
- Encourage the continued renaissance of our 'rural capitals' (Boroughbridge, Knaresborough, Masham, Pateley Bridge, Ripon) particularly around economic investment and promoting /developing their visitor economies and arts/cultural offer.
- Encourage appropriate levels of sustainable tourism to maximise economic benefit from the District's environmental assets (linked to promotion of greener transport options).
- Promote 'heritage' and the 'outdoors' as specific tourism products for the Harrogate District (alongside other District tourism products such as 'indulgence' and 'family').

4.19 As can be seen from the above actions, there is a strong focus in the Economic Development Strategy on consolidating and developing the tourist and leisure economy in the District. There is also the recognition that in order to attract more visitors to the District more will need to be done to improve supporting facilities such as transport networks, infrastructure and services. The availability of visitor accommodation in sufficient volume and quality will also be key to achieving these long-term aims for the District's economy.

5.0 ANALYSIS

Review of Visitor Accommodation Supply

- 5.1 Table 1 below provides a breakdown the supply of visitor accommodation in the District by size of establishment. The table is based on an analysis of the two lists of accommodation contained at Appendix 1 and 2 of this study and includes the supply of rooms from hotels, guest houses, B&Bs and Inns in the District. The table distinguishes between supply in Harrogate town and in the rest of the District.

Table 1: Harrogate District Bedroom Stock 2011

ESTABLISHMENT SIZE (NUMBER OF ROOMS)	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-100	101+	Total
HARROGATE TOWN								
Establishments	42	16	1	0	4	5	6	74
Rooms	262	232	26	0	172	384	869	1,945
Percentage	13%	12%	1%	0%	9%	20%	45%	100%
REST OF THE DISTRICT								
Establishments	65	12	2	6	2	1	2	90
Rooms	265	159	57	210	93	94	312	1,190
Percentage	22%	13%	5%	18%	8%	8%	26%	100%
HARROGATE DISTRICT TOTAL								
Establishments	107	28	3	6	6	6	8	164
Rooms	527	391	83	210	265	478	1,181	3,135
Percentage	17%	12%	3%	7%	8%	15%	38%	100%

Harrogate Town

- 5.2 In total the study has identified 74 establishments in Harrogate town offering serviced visitor accommodation. The majority of these establishments are smaller scale guest houses and B&Bs. However, the smaller number of larger hotels supply a greater share of the total number of bedrooms in the town, with 20% of establishments (15 in total) each providing over 40 bedrooms containing 74% of the total bedroom stock in the town (1,425 rooms). The threshold for protection of establishments with 30 or more lettable bedrooms offered by Local Plan Policy TRX currently offers protection against the loss of these 15 establishments in Harrogate town.
- 5.3 The majority of rooms provided in the town are double (57%) and twin rooms (19.5%). Single rooms made up a smaller proportion of rooms (14.5%) followed by family rooms (9%). However, it should be noted that there is often flexibility in the configuration of rooms, with a number of establishments stating families can often be

accommodated in double or twin rooms, and that double and twin rooms are often interchangeable. Approximately two thirds of establishments in Harrogate town have a 4 star rating from either Visit Britain or the AA within their various accommodation categories. Most of the remaining establishments had a 3 star rating and only a handful of businesses had no accreditation.

- 5.4 Increasing policy protection to include establishments with 20 or more bedrooms would only afford protection from a change of use to one additional establishment within Harrogate town, The Studley Hotel on Swan Road. Lowering the policy threshold to 10 would cover a further 17 establishments in Harrogate town providing 13% of the bedrooms recoded in the town (258 rooms). No establishments are present in the town with 31-40 rooms, so increasing the threshold limit to 40 bedrooms or more would not make any difference to the number of establishments currently protected by Local Plan Policy TRX. Alternatively, raising the threshold limit to 50 bedrooms would remove protection from 4 establishments that supply 9% of bedrooms in Harrogate town (172 rooms).
- 5.5 It should be noted that whilst Table 1 does not take account of serviced apartments, this type of accommodation is expanding in Harrogate town with several operators now offering high quality apartments to the short-term let market. This type of accommodation can be particularly attractive to business visitors and families as they offer comfort, size and flexibility. This trend has increased over the past five years with a number of new operators starting up and existing businesses expanding the number of apartments they offer.

Rest of the District

- 5.6 The study identified a further 90 establishments offering serviced visitor accommodation across the rest of the District outside of Harrogate town. 72% of establishments outside of Harrogate town have less than 10 bedrooms and comprise 22% of the bedroom stock available. 59% of the total bedroom stock in the rest of the District (709 rooms) is provided by only 12% of establishments (11 in total) offering 30 or more rooms each.
- 5.7 Similar to arrangements in Harrogate town, the majority of rooms recorded were double (66%) and twin rooms (22%), with family rooms accounting for the same share of rooms (9%) and single rooms making up a smaller proportion of rooms (3%). Approximately one third of establishments outside of Harrogate town have a 4 star rating, and another third a 3 star rating, from Visit Britain or the AA. A larger proportion of businesses had no accreditation than was the case in Harrogate town. When calling establishments to compile information for this study, a number of proprietors mentioned the cost involved, particularly in view of the present economic uncertainty, as the reason for not currently seeking accreditation.
- 5.8 Increasing policy protection to include establishments with 20 or more bedrooms would only afford protection from a change of use one additional establishment, the Kings Head Hotel in Masham. Lowering the policy threshold to establishments with 10 or more rooms would cover a further 15 establishments, providing 17% of the recorded bedroom stock outside of Harrogate town (206 rooms). Six establishments outside of Harrogate town have 31-40 bedrooms. Increasing the policy threshold to establishments with 40 bedrooms or more would therefore remove policy protection from these establishments that offer a combined total of 210 rooms (18% of bedrooms outside of Harrogate town). A further 2 establishments have between 41-50 rooms, providing a further 93 bedrooms (8% of bedroom stock).

Harrogate District Total

- 5.9 In total, the review of visitor accommodation supply in the District has identified a total of 164 establishments offering 3,135 bedrooms to the market. The vast majority of these establishments (107 establishments and 65% of the total) are guest houses, inns and B&Bs with less than 10 lettable rooms. These smaller establishments provide 17% of the Districts total bedroom stock. By comparison there are only 27 establishments (16% of the total) in the District that contain 30 or more bedrooms. However, these establishments provide 69% of total supply of bedrooms in the District (2,164 rooms).
- 5.10 Table 2 below identifies the supply of serviced visitor accommodation within the Districts main settlements. The table highlights that the majority of the Districts total bedroom stock is located within Harrogate town. The level of supply within the 4 other market towns in the District and the City of Ripon is substantially lower by comparison but this reflects both the comparative sizes of these settlements and the level of the services and facilities available for visitors in Harrogate town, but also the impact of the exhibition and conference industry in Harrogate town.

Table 2: Visitor Accommodation by Location 2011

	Establishments	Rooms	% of Rooms
Harrogate Town	74	1,945	62%
Knaresborough	12	79	2.5%
Ripon	13	141	4.5%
Boroughbridge	1	35	1%
Masham	3	47	1.5%
Pateley Bridge	4	22	0.5%
Larger Villages ¹⁴	18	117	4%
In the Countryside	39	749	24%
District Total	164	3,135	100%

- 5.11 Outside of Harrogate town, 24% of the total bedroom stock in the District is located in the countryside away from main built up areas. This compares to only 14% of the total rooms identified being located outside of Harrogate town but within one of the District's other market towns, the City of Ripon or a larger village. However, half of the supply of rooms classed as in the countryside are provided by only three hotels, the Days Inn at the Wetherby Services on the A1(M), the Nidd Hall Hotel and the Burn Hall hotel (with a combined total of 406 bedrooms).

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses

- 5.12 The questionnaire received 25 responses (a response rate of 13%)¹⁵ from a variety of type and size of establishment in different geographic locations throughout the District. Although a relatively low response, this does not diminish the validity of the views obtained.

¹⁴ This row includes those establishments outside of the District's market towns and the City of Ripon but within one of the larger villages recognised as either a Group B or C settlement by the Council's Core Strategy (see footnote 12 on page 12 for details on where to find the Core Strategy).

¹⁵ One further response was received but did not include any contact details for the respondent. The response could therefore not be registered and does not form part of this study.

5.13 In summary, the results of the questionnaire were as follows:

- The 25 establishments that responded to the questionnaire comprised of 3 hotels, 13 guest houses, 6 B&Bs and 2 companies offering serviced accommodation supplying a combined total of 649 bedrooms to the market. The businesses varied in size from 3 bedroom B&Bs to hotels with over 100 rooms. 70% of the combined total number of bedrooms of the 25 respondents were double rooms, 14% twin rooms, 12% single rooms and only 4% family rooms. However, some respondents noted that double, twin and family rooms are often interchangeable.
- The quality of the District's natural and built environments were identified as the most important factors contributing to the attractiveness of Harrogate as a visitor destination. However, there was little difference between the average scores of all of the factors that respondents were asked to rate suggesting that all are important to making a successful destination. The friendliness of people and feeling of safety was also highlighted by one respondent as an important factor that attracts visitors to the District.
- The two most important challenges to the tourism market in Harrogate were identified as the quality of accommodation and the effectiveness of marketing. Again other factors such as the availability and type of accommodation, the quality of transport facilities both within the District and its transport connections outside of the District, along with competition from other UK destinations were also rated highly as important challenges to Harrogate's tourist industry. One respondent stated that Harrogate was poor at advertising itself in comparison with other areas such as York, whilst another respondent highlighted a lack of family attractions as a problem.
- 80% of respondents were optimistic about the prospects of the tourism industry in Harrogate over the next 5-10 years. However, one respondent caveated their positive response with the warning that we need to actively promote Harrogate to achieve this aim.
- Responses to the question about whether there is room for further growth in visitor accommodation in Harrogate was mixed with 56% responding yes and 44% no. One respondent suggested that we should encourage more out-of town budget accommodation in Harrogate with frequent transport into the centre to support conference trade whilst retaining the town's unique look and feel for leisure visitors to the town. Another respondent suggested that higher end accommodation for visitors who are looking for something different was needed whilst others responded that there should be a mix of accommodation types to cater for conference delegates, tourists and families alike.
- The majority of establishments that responded have a dining room (68%), whilst only 38% have a bar. Only the hotels who responded offered a swimming pool, spa and/or conference facilities, whilst some smaller establishment contained meeting rooms.
- Response to the question about average annual room occupancy was low with only 6 respondents. Of those establishments who did respond to this question, the average annual room occupancy remained fairly static over three years between 2007-2010 at between 71.5% and 72.5%.
- The range in the rack rates charged for different room types by respondents was as follows: between £35 and £135 for a single room; £40 and £180 for a twin room; £63 and £250 for a double room; and, £63 and £130 for a family room.
- Guests stayed an average of 2.2 nights at the establishments who responded to this question.
- Only two respondents recorded how many nights worth of business they had to turn away in the last year. However, 72% of respondents stated that the main

reason for turning away trade is due to the establishment already being fully booked and 24% due to the lack in availability of the requested room type.

- The majority (52%) of businesses who responded only employed between 1 and 3 full time equivalent staff. As can be expected, only the hotels and larger guest houses employed a greater number of people.
- 67% of respondents stated that the Sites & Policies DPD should retain a similar policy to the existing Local Plan Policy TRX.
- 36% of respondents felt that offering protection against the loss of establishments using the current threshold of 30 bedrooms or more was appropriate, 29% of respondents felt that protection could be extended to include hotels with 20 or more bedrooms and 17% of respondents felt that all sizes of establishment should be covered by the policy. The remaining 12% of respondents felt that the threshold could be reduced to only protect against the loss of establishments with 40, 50 or 100 plus bedrooms.
- 48% of respondents felt that protection should not be extended to other types of establishments other than hotels, whilst 24% felt that guest houses should be included, 12% B&Bs and 12% serviced apartments.
- 71% of those establishments who answered the question stated that they felt that the current period for demonstrating viability of three years in Harrogate Town and two years elsewhere in the District is still appropriate. The remainder suggesting that the period should be reduced to 2 years in Harrogate Town and 1 year elsewhere in the District.
- Only 30% of those establishments who answered the question felt that it was necessary to identify land in Harrogate for new hotel development.
- 74% of those establishments who answered the question stated that local planning policies should encourage the expansion of existing establishments.
- Respondents also made a number of additional comments on the health of the tourism industry in Harrogate and on the content of a local planning policy. These comments included:
 - Increasing the number of large chain hotels will impact on guest houses who will not be able to compete on price with the larger hotels leading to closures that will reduce the room stock and choice for visitors.
 - Increasing the number of accommodation providers may help in attracting larger conferences but also runs the risk of changing the small town feel that attracts visitors to Harrogate.
 - With the expanding market of serviced apartments there is currently no need for new hotels in Harrogate Town.
 - We need a period of reflection to evaluate the need for additional accommodation due to a reduction in conference trade.
 - It is important to protect guest accommodation in Harrogate Town to service conference trade but not so much in the wider District.
 - There needs to be encouragement of smaller private providers.
 - There needs to be a more cohesive and effective plan to market the destination for business and leisure tourism outside of HIC events.
 - A lot of times in the year there is an oversupply, which pushes the rates achieved down.
 - Need a simplification of the planning system and building regulations.
 - With the expansion of the HIC it is essential that Harrogate can offer the right mix of accommodation (type and rate) in order to attract the bigger exhibitions and conferences.
 - The timing of conferences and exhibitions needs to be better organised to spread them out more evenly.

5.14 A record of these additional comments made by respondents, along with tables containing a full account of the responses to the questions posed by the questionnaire, are provided at Appendix 4 of this report. Please note that the names of responding establishments have been removed along with details on the number of bedrooms so that responses cannot be attributed to an individual establishment.

Review of Planning History

5.15 The review of planning history has identified 9 planning permissions granted between May 2004 and May 2011 that would result in the development of visitor accommodation as part of a new establishment (see Appendix 5 for details of these applications). Of these applications, 1 involved the development of a new hotel (the Days Inn Hotel at the Wetherby services on the A1(M) that opened in 2009), 2 new guest houses, 1 B&B and 5 that involved visitor accommodation associated with existing public houses. In total 174 new bedrooms were granted planning permission as a result of these applications of which 126 bedrooms were in hotels, 11 in guest houses and 37 in B&Bs and Inns. One scheme (creating 3 bedrooms) was located within Harrogate Town, whilst 4 were within one of the other Group A, B or C settlements identified in the Core Strategy (creating a total of 27 bedrooms). These settlements all contain a certain level of services and facilities that cater for the needs of the local community. They also tend to have access to better public transport services and employment opportunities than smaller and remoter settlements in the District. The remaining 4 schemes (creating 144 bedrooms) were located outside of these larger towns and villages and therefore classed as being in the open countryside.

5.16 A further 20 planning permissions were granted to extend existing establishments, 18 of which involved the creation of new bedrooms, whilst the remainder involved the expansion of supporting facilities such as bar, restaurant and spa facilities. Of those permissions that would create new bedrooms, 9 were at existing hotels, 5 at guest houses and 4 at Inns. In total 228 new bedrooms were granted planning permission during this period of which 211 bedrooms were in hotels, 5 in guest houses and 4 in Inns. Ten schemes granted planning permission were located in existing establishments in Harrogate Town (creating 158 bedrooms), whilst 3 were within one of the other Group A, B or C settlements identified in the Core Strategy (creating 8 bedrooms). The remaining 7 schemes were in the open countryside creating 62 bedrooms.

5.17 Appendix 6 of this report shows that 10 planning permissions were granted since May 2004 that would result in the loss of visitor accommodation in the District. These permissions would result in a total loss of over 62 bedrooms¹⁶. Of these permissions, 10 were for a change of use to a dwelling house or apartments, whilst 1 was for a change of use to supported living accommodation. In terms of location, 6 schemes involving the loss of visitor accommodation were located in Harrogate Town, whilst 4 were within one of the other Group A, B or C settlements identified in the Core Strategy. The remaining scheme was located in the open countryside. However, of these permissions three (accounting for 23 bedrooms) have not yet been implemented and are still currently trading, either under the original management or as a new concern.

¹⁶ It was not possible to identify how many lettable bedrooms were lost as a result of three of the applications from the information available in the application files. Therefore the total number of potential lost bedroom stock as a result of planning permissions is greater than that provided in paragraph 5.17, but unlikely to be significantly greater due to the size of the buildings involved.

5.18 A further planning application for a 298 bed hotel located close to the junction of the A1(M) and A59 was pending a decision at the time of writing this report. The decision on this application was deferred to the Head of Planning by the Councils Planning Committee in March 2010 who was authorised to approve the application subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement (a legal agreement containing a schedule of planning obligations required to make the development acceptable) and to the receipt of a Direction from the Highways Agency allowing the Council to approve the application.

6.0 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 As highlighted by this study the District's tourism and business conferencing sectors are important contributors to the vitality and viability of the District. The strength of both these sectors is intrinsically linked to the provision of a sufficient range and quality of visitor accommodation in accessible locations and in particular within Harrogate town, the Districts only sub-regional centre and the focus for tourism activities and business conferencing.
- 6.2 When developing planning policies as part of the Sites & Policies DPD it will therefore be important to create the necessary conditions to both maintain a sufficient supply of visitor accommodation in the District and to encourage the development of new and expansion of existing establishments offering visitor accommodation within Harrogate town.
- 6.3 The results of the questionnaire highlighted the support of businesses to retain a planning policy similar to the current Local Plan Policy TRX to prevent the loss of hotels unless it can be demonstrated that the business is no longer viable and that it has been marketed effectively for an appropriate period of time. The results of the questionnaire also highlighted that the current periods for demonstrating the economic viability of establishments was considered reasonable by the majority (71%) of establishments that responded.

Setting an Appropriate Size Threshold for Policy Protection

- 6.4 Response to the questionnaire on the matter of the appropriate size threshold for offering policy protection to hotels was mixed. 52% of the establishments who responded to the questionnaire felt that protection could be extended to establishments with 20 bedrooms or less, 36% suggesting that the current threshold of establishments with 30 bedrooms or more remains appropriate, and the remaining 12% responded that the threshold could be reduced to only protect against the loss of establishments with 40, 50 or 100 plus bedrooms. Setting the right size threshold is important in order to ensure that protection it targeted appropriately to maintain the type of establishments and number of bedrooms necessary to support the visitor and business tourism industry, whilst not placing undue restrictions on smaller independently run businesses.
- 6.5 It is considered unreasonable to develop a policy that contains a universal presumption against the change of use of visitor accommodation to other uses. There has always been a market in changes of use to and from smaller establishments to other uses and this has not been a cause for concern as a balance has generally struck between gains and losses. As demonstrated by information produced by Welcome to Yorkshire (see paragraph 3.19), smaller establishments tend to have lower room occupancy rates than larger establishments. This study has shown that smaller establishments also make up a smaller proportion of the overall bedroom stock in the District (see paragraph 5.9). Their contribution to the total occupied bedroom stock is therefore comparatively small, and certainly disproportionate to the number of establishments of this size present in the District.
- 6.6 By comparison, larger hotels make up a greater proportion of the total bedroom stock in the District (see paragraph 5.9) and also tend to have higher room occupancy rates than smaller establishments. Therefore their loss has a significant impact on the availability of visitor accommodation, on the local economy, and on local employment opportunities. Larger establishments are also harder to replace when

lost due to the lack of suitable, available and viable land or premises in most locations, and particularly within Harrogate Town.

- 6.7 The review of planning permissions highlighted that since Local Plan Policy TRX was adopted, only smaller scale establishments (those with under 10 rooms) and no hotels were lost to other uses. This could either indicate that Policy TRX has been successful in protecting larger scale establishments from change of use or re-development, or simply reflects the position that larger establishments are generally more viable than smaller establishments and more resilient to changes in the market. There tends to be a higher turnover in smaller establishments due to the pressures of competition, because they are generally more susceptible to a downturn in the market and because of the wishes of their owners.
- 6.8 The review of visitor accommodation in the District has shown that should the threshold for protection be increased to establishments with 40 bedrooms or more then only 5 additional existing establishments would not be protected by the policy. However, these include a number of establishments important to the continued vitality and viability of some of the District's towns and larger villages such as the Crown Hotel in Boroughbridge, Dower House Hotel in Knaresborough, the Unicorn Hotel in Ripon and Swinton Park Hotel near Masham.
- 6.9 If the threshold was reduced to establishments with 10 or more bedrooms this would offer protection to a further 32 establishments with a combined total of 464 bedrooms (or 15% of the total bedroom stock in the District). However, most of these establishments are small, family run, guest houses. Alternatively, if the threshold was lowered to cover establishments with 20 bedrooms or more this would only offer protection to an additional 2 establishments, the Kings Head Hotel in Masham and The Studley Hotel in Harrogate. Although these establishments only provide a total of 53 bedrooms, they are both considered important for different reasons. Currently, no establishments offering visitor accommodation in Masham are protected by Local Plan Policy TRX. The Kings Head Hotel has 27 bedrooms and is located in the centre of the town on the Market Square and is therefore considered important to the continued vitality and viability of Masham. The Studley Hotel on Swan Road has 26 rooms and is situated on the edge of Harrogate town's shopping centre and only a short walk from the HIC. This establishment is therefore ideally located to cater for both tourist and business trade in the town. In conclusion, it is recommended that the policy threshold is lowered to protect establishments with 25 or more lettable bedrooms in order to offer some protection against the loss of these establishments over the plan period.

The Need to Allocated Land for Hotels Development in Harrogate Town

- 6.10 It is important to encourage the retention and establishment of a wide range of accommodation types and sizes to offer the maximum choice to visitors in terms of price, quality and experience. The majority of respondents to the questionnaire felt that there was no need for the Sites & Policies DPD to identify land in Harrogate for new hotel development, but it was also felt that planning policy should encourage the expansion of existing establishments in the District.
- 6.11 Figures from the Harrogate International Centre provided as evidence to support the adoption of Local Plan Policy TRX identified that the number rooms Harrogate town fell from 2,320 rooms in 1995 to 1,880 rooms in 2001. The review of establishments undertaken as part of this study has identified that there are currently 1,945 bedrooms available in 74 separate establishments in Harrogate town, and that the majority of these rooms are provided in a small number of large hotels. Although the

total number of rooms available in the town has remained relatively static, in general, the quality of accommodation on offer in the town has improved since 2004. Also, other types of visitor accommodation such as serviced apartments are becoming more commonplace, a trend likely to continue.

- 6.12 The review of planning application history also demonstrated that since May 2004 planning permission was granted to develop a further 161 bedrooms in Harrogate Town and 241 bedrooms elsewhere in the District, either involving the creation of a new establishment or by way of an expansion to an existing business. In contrast only around 62 bedrooms would be lost through planning permissions granted during the same, a number of which have not been implemented and remain trading. There are also other development proposals that are either pending a decision or in the pipeline that will also increase the supply of visitor accommodation in Harrogate. With work underway to expand conference and exhibition space at the HIC, and with potential long-term improvements to the Yorkshire Showground, it remains important to protect existing hotel accommodation and create the conditions for the continued expansion and improvement of visitor accommodation in the District. However, it is not considered necessary to identify land within the Sites & Policies DPD for the development of new visitor accommodation.

Next Steps

- 6.13 The information gathered in this study will be used to inform the emerging planning policies to be contained within the Sites & Policies DPD. It is recommended that the Sites & Policies DPD contains a policy to both protect existing accommodation and encourage existing establishments to expand and improve, particularly those in sustainable locations, but that there is no specific need to identify land for the development of new visitor accommodation within Harrogate town.

APPENDIX 1: VISITOR ACCOMMODATION IN HARROGATE TOWN MAY 2011

Name	Address	Settlement	Single	Double	Twin	Family	Total Rooms
Acomb Lodge	6 Franklin Road	Harrogate	1	2	1	1	5
Acorn Lodge Guest House	1 Studley Road	Harrogate	1	4	2	0	7
Alamah Guest House	88 Kings Road	Harrogate	2	2	2	1	7
Alderside Guest House	11 Belmont Road	Harrogate	1	0	2	0	3
Alexa House Hotel	26 Ripon Road	Harrogate	3	6	2	2	13
Alexandra Court Hotel	8 Alexandra Road	Harrogate	1	10	0	0	11
Alvera Court Hotel	76 Kings Road	Harrogate	5	6	1	0	12
Applewood House	55 St Georges Road	Harrogate	2	2	1	0	5
April House	3 Studley Road	Harrogate	1	3	1	0	5
Arc	68 Kings Road	Harrogate	2	6	0	0	8
Arden House Hotel	69-71 Franklin Road	Harrogate	4	6	4	0	14
Ascot House Hotel	53 Kings Road	Harrogate	3	8	7	1	19
Ashbrooke House Hotel	140 Valley Drive	Harrogate	2	2	1	2	7
Ash Grove Guest House	72 Kings Road	Harrogate	2	2	2	0	6
Ashley House Hotel	36-40 Franklin Road	Harrogate	5	6	6	1	18
Ashwood House	7 Spring Grove	Harrogate	1	2	1	1	5
Aston Hotel	7-9 Franklin Mount	Harrogate	2	3	11	1	17
Azalea Court Hotel	56-58 Kings Road	Harrogate	3	3	11	1	18
Balmoral Hotel	Franklin Mount	Harrogate	2	7	3	2	14
Barcelo Harrogate Majestic Hotel	Ripon Road	Harrogate	21	94	47	8	170
Barkers Guest House	204 King Road	Harrogate	1	2	0	1	3
Bay Tree House	98 Franklin Road	Harrogate	3	4	1	1	9
Belmont Guest House	86 Kings Road	Harrogate	3	2	2	1	8
Brookfield House	5 Alexandra Road	Harrogate	6	6	1	0	13
Cedar Court Hotel	Park Parade	Harrogate	0	74	26	0	100
Cairn Hotel	Ripon Road	Harrogate	16	44	67	8	135
Conference View	74 Kings Road	Harrogate	1	2	3	0	6
Crown Hotel	Crown Place	Harrogate	10	60	30	4	114
Dragon House	6 Dragon Road	Harrogate	2	4	4	2	12
Franklin View	19 Grove Road	Harrogate	0	2	1	0	3
Garden House	14 Harlow Moor Drive	Harrogate	3	2	2	0	7
Geminian	11-13 Franklin Mount	Harrogate	1	5	2	0	8
Glenayr Guest Accommodation	19 Franklin Mount	Harrogate	3	2	3	1	9
Grants Hotel	3-13 Swan Road	Harrogate	12	14	8	7	41
Green House	7 Grove Road	Harrogate	0	0	0	3	3
115 Harrogate Boutique B&B	115 Franklin Road	Harrogate	0	2	1	0	3
Harrogate Brasserie	26-28 Cheltenham Parade	Harrogate	0	10	4	2	16
Holiday Inn	Kings Road	Harrogate	0	214	0	0	214
Hollins House	17 Hollins Road	Harrogate	1	2	3	0	6
Hotel du Vin & Bistro	Prospect Place	Harrogate	0	39	4	0	43
Lamont House	12 St Mary's Walk	Harrogate	0	4	2	0	6
Murray House	67 Franklin Road	Harrogate	3	4	3	0	10
18 Park Parade	18 Park Parade	Harrogate	0	2	1	0	3
Premier Inn	Hornbeam Park Avenue	Harrogate	0	18	1	49	68
Ruskin Hotel	1 Swan Road	Harrogate	2	3	0	2	7
Scotia Guest House	66-68 Kings Road	Harrogate	1	1	1	2	5
Shannon Court	65 Dragon Avenue	Harrogate	2	3	1	2	8
Shelbourne House	78 Kings Road	Harrogate	2	4	0	2	8
Sherwood Hotel	7 Studley Road	Harrogate	1	4	1	0	6
Spring Lodge	22 Spring Mount	Harrogate	1	3	1	0	5
St George Hotel	1 Ripon Road	Harrogate	34	42	12	2	90
The Bijou	17 Ripon Road	Harrogate	1	8	1	0	10
The Camberley	52-54 Kings Road	Harrogate	3	6	1	2	12
The Cavendish	3 Valley Drive	Harrogate	4	6	3	1	14
The Coppice	9 Studely Road	Harrogate	1	2	1	1	5
The Dales	101 Valley Drive	Harrogate	2	5	1	0	8
The Fountains	27 Kings Road	Harrogate	2	6	2	0	10
The Gables	2 West Grove Road	Harrogate	2	4	3	0	9
The Grafton	1-3 Franklin Mount	Harrogate	6	6	2	3	17
The Harrogate Arms	Craggs Lane	Harrogate	1	2	1	1	5
The Kimberley Hotel	11-19 Kings Road	Harrogate	4	80	3	6	93
The Kingsway Hotel	36 Kings Road	Harrogate	2	3	1	2	8
The Lawrence	38-42 Kings Road	Harrogate	0	7	0	2	9
The Old Swan Hotel	Swan Road	Harrogate	31	105	0	0	136
The Pine Marten	Otley Road	Harrogate	0	12	0	0	12
The Studley Hotel	28 Swan Road	Harrogate	2	10	8	6	26
The Welford	27 Franklin Road	Harrogate	2	2	1	0	5
The Yorkshire Hotel	Prospect Place	Harrogate	12	30	37	1	80
Travelodge	The Ginnel	Harrogate	0	10	0	36	46
Townhouse B&B	43 Strawberry Dale Avenue	Harrogate	0	1	2	0	3
West Park Hotel	19 West Park	Harrogate	19	14	7	2	42
White Hart Hotel	2 Cold Bath Road	Harrogate	13	29	10	1	53
Wynnstay House	60 Franklin Road	Harrogate	0	4	1	0	5
Ye Olde Coach House	2 Strawberry Dale Terrace	Harrogate	2	1	1	0	4
TOTAL:			281	1105	376	174	1945

APPENDIX 2: ACCOMMODATION OUTSIDE HARROGATE TOWN MAY 2011

Name	Address	Settlement	Single	Double	Twin	Family	Total Rooms
Arthington Lodge	Jubilee Farm, Wescoe Hill Lane	Weeton	0	0	0	1	1
Bailey Motte Cottage B&B	1 Foundry Gardens	Knaresborough	0	1	0	0	1
Bank Villa	The Avenue	Masham	0	2	3	1	6
Bay Tree Farm	Aldfield	Ripon	0	2	3	1	6
Best Western Crown Hotel	Horsefair	Boroughbridge	0	19	16	0	35
Bewerley Hall Farm	Bewerley	Pateley Bridge	0	3	2	0	5
Bishopton Grove House	Bishop Grove House	Bishopton	0	1	1	1	3
Black a Moor Inn	Boroughbridge Road	Ripon	0	3	2	0	5
Boar's Head Hotel	Main Street	Ripley	0	14	21	5	40
Bowes Green Farm	Colber Lane	Bishop Thornton	0	1	1	0	2
Box Tree Cottages	Coltsgate Hill	Ripon	0	3	2	1	6
Bridge Hotel	Walshford	Wetherby	1	14	14	3	32
Burn Hall Hotel & Conference Centre	Burn Hall, Tollerton Road	Huby	0	84	8	2	94
Central House Farm B&B	Haverah Park	Harrogate	0	2	1	0	3
Chequers Inn & Restaurant	Fountains Abbey Road	Bishop Thornton	0	8	6	0	14
Cold Cotes	Cold Cotes Road	Felliscliffe	0	4	2	0	6
Cowscot House	Back Lane	Kirkby Malzeard	0	0	3	0	3
Crescent Lodge	42 North Street	Ripon	0	2	0	1	3
Crown Hotel		Lofthouse	0	1	0	2	3
Cundall Lodge Farm	Cundall	York	0	2	1	0	3
Days Inn	J46 A1 (M) Wetherby Services	Wetherby	0	59	37	33	129
Dower House Hotel	Bond End	Knaresborough	3	13	12	3	31
Ebor Mount Guest House	18 York Place	Knaresborough	1	4	1	2	8
Gallon House	47 Kirkgate	Knaresborough	1	2	0	0	3
General Tarleton Inn	Boroughbridge Road	Ferrensby	0	9	2	0	11
Goldsborough Hall	Church Street	Goldsborough	0	2	0	3	5
Gate Eel B&B	Gate Eel Farm	Dacre Banks	0	1	1	0	2
Harefield Hall Hotel		Pateley Bridge	0	19	0	0	19
Harrogate Motel	Brackenthwaite Lane	Burn Bridge	4	1	4	1	10
Herrons Keep	Shortsill Lane	Flaxby	0	2	0	0	2
High Green Farm	Wath Road	Wath	0	1	1	0	2
High Winsley Farm	Brimham Rocks Road	Burnt Yates	0	2	1	0	3
Hob Green Hotel	Hob Green	Markington	0	6	2	3	11
Hollybreen	Ellingstring	Masham	0	1	0	1	2
Holly Corner	3 Coverdale Drive	Knaresborough	0	1	1	0	2
Knabs Ash	Skipton Road	Felliscliffe	1	2	1	0	4
Lamb & Flag Inn	Boroughbridge Road	Bishop Monkton	0	3	1	1	5
Lavender House	28 College Road	Ripon	0	2	0	0	2
Lyndale Guest House	King Street	Pateley Bridge	0	4	1	1	6
Mallard Grange	Aldfield	Ripon	0	2	2	0	4
Middle Ridge	42 Mallorie Park Drive	Ripon	0	1	1	0	2
Newton House	5-7 York Place	Knaresborough	2	9	0	0	11
Nidderdale Lodge Farm	Ripon Road	Fellbeck	0	2	1	0	3
Nidd Hall Hotel		Nidd	4	179	0	0	183
North Dockenbush		Brearton	0	0	3	0	3
17 Peckfield Close		Hampsthwaite	1	0	2	0	3
Queen Head Inn		Kettlesing	0	7	0	0	8
Ravencroft B&B	Moorside Avenue	Ripon	0	2	0	1	3
Ripon Spa Hotel	Park Street	Ripon	6	17	17	0	40
Riverside Guest House	20-21 Boroughbridge Road	Ripon	3	4	7	4	18
Roslyn House	9 King Street	Pateley Bridge	1	4	2	1	7
Royal Oak Inn	Oak Lane	Dacre Banks	0	1	2	0	3
Rudding Park Hotel		Follifoot	0	33	13	3	49
Scaife Hall Farm	Hardisty Hill	Blubberhouses	0	2	1	0	3
Sharow Cross House	Dishforth Road	Sharow	0	3	0	0	3
Sportsmans Arms Hotel		Wath	2	9	0	0	11
Staveley Grange	The Grange	Staveley	0	3	0	0	3
St George's Court	Old Home Farm	Grantley	0	3	1	1	5
Swinton Park		Masham	0	25	0	5	30
Talbot House	27 High Street	Pateley Bridge	1	5	1	0	7
The Bay Horse Inn	Main Street	Goldsborough	0	5	0	0	5
Crab Manor Hotel	Dishforth Road	Asenby	0	12	0	0	12
The Coutyard at Dukes Place	Fountains Abbey Road	Bishop Thornton	0	2	1	0	3
The Crown Hotel		Middlesmoor	0	5	0	2	7
The Crown Inn	Main Street	Grewelthorpe	1	1	1	0	3
The George	Main Street	Wath	1	4	0	0	5
The Groves	30 Market Place	Knaresborough	0	0	4	0	4
The Half Moon Inn	Sharow Lane	Sharow	0	1	1	1	3
The Half Moon Inn		Fellbeck	0	1	1	0	2
The Hermitage	10 Waterside	Knaresborough	0	2	0	0	2
The Kings Head Hotel	Market Place	Masham	2	21	0	4	27
The Market Tavern	12 Castlegate	Knaresborough	0	3	2	1	6
The Miners Arms		Greenhow	0	0	0	2	2
The Mitre	4 Station Road	Knaresborough	0	4	0	0	4
The Moor House	Dallowgill	Kirkby Malzeard	0	0	5	0	5
The New Inn	Pateley Bridge Road	Burnt Yates	1	4	1		6
The Old Coach House	2 Stable Cottages	North Stainley	2	4	2	0	8

The Old Deanery	Minster Road	Ripon	0	9	0	1	10
The Old Royal Oak	7 Market Place	Knaresborough	0	4	2	0	6
The Royal Oak	36 Kirkgate	Ripon	0	5	0	1	6
The Ship	84 Bondgate	Ripon	0	0	3	1	4
The Unicorn Hotel	Market Place	Ripon	0	16	13	3	32
The White Bear	Wellgarth	Masham	0	11	0	3	14
The White Horse	61 North Street	Ripon	4	0	3	5	12
The Willow Restaurant and B&B	8-10 Park Road	Pateley Bridge	0	1	1	0	2
The Yorke Arms Hotel		Ramsgill	0	14	0	0	14
Warren House Farm	High Ellington	Masham	0	1	1	0	2
Waterside Cottage	120 Briggate	Knaresborough	0	0	1	0	1
Wellington Inn	Darley Head	Darley	1	5	6	0	12
Wood Hall Hotel	Trip Lane, Linton	Wetherby	0	36	8	0	44
TOTAL:			43	782	260	105	1190

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO ESTABLISHMENTS

HARROGATE VISITOR ACCOMMODATION STUDY – QUESTIONNAIRE

February 2011

An electronic copy of this questionnaire is available if you would prefer to e-mail us your response. To request an electronic copy, or if you have any questions about how to complete the questionnaire, please contact James Langler, Principle Planner, by calling: (01423) 556642 or by e-mail: james.langler@harrogate.co.uk

Please return your completed questionnaire by **FRIDAY 4 MARCH 2011** to either the above e-mail address or by post to: James Langler, Department of Development Services, Harrogate Borough Council, Knapping Mount, West Grove Road, Harrogate, HG1 2AE

YOUR DETAILS

Name of Establishment	
Name of Respondent	
Post Title	
Telephone Number	
E-mail Address	

TOURISM IN HARROGATE DISTRICT

1. Attractiveness of the District as a destination

On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate each of the following in terms of their importance to the District's tourist market (10 being of high important and 1 of low importance):

Natural environment and landscape	
Quality of the built environment	
Historical and Archaeology attractions	
Tourist leisure attractions	
Cultural facilities	
Shopping	
Pubs, clubs and restaurants	
Conferencing and exhibition facilities	
Accessibility of the countryside	
Other, please specify...	

2. Challenges to the market

On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate each of the following in terms of their impact on the future success of tourism in Harrogate District (10 being of high important and 1 of low importance):

Economic downturn	
Transport infrastructure - Getting to/from the District	
Transport Infrastructure - Getting around the District	
Availability of accommodation	
Quality of accommodation	
Type of accommodation	

available	
Opportunities for expansion of existing establishments	
Marketing	
Competition from UK destinations	
Competition from international tourism	
Other, please specify...	

3. Are you optimistic about the prospects of the tourism industry in Harrogate over the next 5-10 years?

Yes	
No	

4. Do you think there is room for further growth in visitor accommodation in Harrogate?

Yes	
No	

If you answered 'Yes' to this question, what type of accommodation do you think is needed and where should this be provided?

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

Unless otherwise specified, the questions below relate to the **2009/2010** financial year. Please answer as many questions as you can. If you have any questions about the Council's use of this information please contact James Langler on: (01423) 556642 or e-mail: james.langler@harrogate.gov.uk

5. Type of establishment

Hotel	
Guest House	
Bed & Breakfast	
Serviced Apartments	
Other, please specify...	

6. Number of bedrooms

	No. Rooms
Single	
Twin	
Double	
Family	
Total	

7. Does your establishment provide any of the following services and facilities?

Dining room	
Bar	
Gym	
Swimming pool	
Spa	
Meeting rooms	
Conference facilities	
Other, please specify...	

8. Average annual room occupancy¹

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Annual Average % Room Occupancy	%	%	%

9. Total annual room nights

10. Achieved average room rate²

 £

11. Room revenue yield (Room Revpar)³

 £

12. Rack rates

Single	£
Twin	£
Double	£
Family	£

13. Average duration of stay (nights)

14. Denied business (nights)

15. Reasons for denied business

Fully booked	
Lack of appropriate room type	
Other, please specify...	

16. Number of full time equivalent staff employed

¹ Occupancy - The proportion of bedrooms available during the period that are occupied during the period.

² Room rate - The total bedroom revenue for 2009/10 divided by the total bedrooms occupied during that period.

³ Room revenue - The total bedroom revenue for 2009/10 divided by the total available rooms during the period.

PLANNING POLICY OPTIONS

The current planning policy position for visitor accommodation in the Harrogate District is provided by Harrogate District Local Plan (as revised May 2004) Policy TRX:

Local Plan Policy TRX: Hotel Protection

Within Harrogate town the change of use of hotels with 30 or more lettable bedrooms will not be permitted unless clear evidence is provided to demonstrate that they are no longer viable for use as such for three years.

Elsewhere in the district the change of use of hotels with 30 or more lettable bedrooms will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they are no longer viable for use as such for two years or there will be no significant adverse impact on the supply of visitor accommodation available in the area.

17. **Do you think a similar policy should be contained in the Council's emerging Sites & Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)?**

Yes	
No	

18. **Do you think protection should be extended, or reduced, to the following sized establishments (select one)?**

All tourist accommodation	
10 bedrooms	
20 bedrooms	
40 bedrooms	
50 bedrooms	
100 bedrooms	
Other, please specify...	

19. **Do you think protection should be extended to the following types of establishments?**

Guest Houses	
Bed & Breakfast	
Serviced Apartments	

20. **Do you think the periods for demonstrating that an existing establishment is no longer viable are appropriate?**

Yes	
No	

If you answered 'No' to this question, what period do you think would be appropriate?

Harrogate Town	
Elsewhere in the District	

21. **Do you think the Sites & Policies DPD should identify land in Harrogate Town for new hotel development?**

Yes	
No	

22. Do you think the policy should provide more encouragement for existing establishments to expand?

Yes	
No	

23. Is there anything further you would like to add on the future of visitor accommodation in Harrogate, how the Council can support the District's tourism industry, or to expand on your answers to the questions?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

APPENDIX 4: RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Attractiveness of the District as a destination - On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate each of the following in terms of their importance to the District's tourist market (10 being of high important and 1 of low importance)?

	Average Response
Natural environment and landscape	8.34
Quality of the built environment	8.34
Historical and Archaeology attractions	7.5
Tourist leisure attractions	7.36
Cultural facilities	6.74
Shopping	6.64
Pubs, clubs and restaurants	7.38
Conferencing and exhibition facilities	7.5
Accessibility of the countryside	7.98
Other, please specify...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better transport links (public and private), road signage (add some brown signs on A1 detailing attractions). • Wedding venue. • Entertainment. • Parking - not cost but availability at peak times. • Friendliness and feeling of safety.

2. Challenges to the market - On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate each of the following in terms of their impact on the future success of tourism in Harrogate District (10 being of high important and 1 of low importance)?

	Average Response
Economic downturn	7.04
Transport infrastructure - Getting to/from the District	7.74
Transport Infrastructure - Getting around the District	7.24
Availability of accommodation	7.96
Quality of accommodation	8.12
Type of accommodation available	7.96
Opportunities for expansion of existing establishments	6.48
Marketing	8
Competition from UK destinations	7.24
Competition from international tourism	5.16
Other, please specify...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harrogate is very poor at advertising itself. Look at York for a positive spin on a near city. • Prices at conferences for businesses. • Lack of family attractions.

3. Are you optimistic about the prospects of the tourism industry in Harrogate over the next 5-10 years?

	Average Response	Percentage
Yes	20	80%
No	5	20%
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to actively promote Harrogate to achieve this aim. 	

4. Do you think there is room for further growth in visitor accommodation in Harrogate?

	Average Response	Percentage
Yes	14	56%
No	11	44%
If you answered yes to this question, what type of accommodation do you think is needed and where should this be provided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of town budget accommodation - with frequent transport to town centre - perhaps free! This will encourage conference trade and leave the town looking and feeling unique for our leisure visitors. Encourage restoration and renewal programmes in some of the older hotels to enable them to compete with other city areas. 3 and 4 star hotel accommodation at one end of the market close to the centre of town and also a need for more affordable bed and breakfast/guest house/lodge type provision both within and outside on the peripheral roads. All new accommodation should have a minimum 75% car park space to bedroom ratio. Only for about 4 weeks a year, otherwise there is ample accommodation at present rates. Hotels and B&Bs for short stays. More family friendly attractions in B&B/Guest Houses. More attractive features in accommodation e.g. games rooms with pool etc, staffed bar, dinner service, room service etc, especially needed within guest houses and smaller accommodations to create better competition for large chain hotels. High end quality rooms. There are many hotels and guest houses in Harrogate. We are out of town and many guests stay in the countryside locations. Top end accommodation for visitors who are looking for something different and with more of a personal touch as the uniformity of big hotels can be a less attractive feature of corporate and conference visitors. What - unknown. Where - central free booking agency/TI. A mix of hotel and apartment (self catering) accommodation close to the centre. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed, to cater for conference delegates through to families seeking leisure time. But town and country i.e. Nidderdale. • Budget Hotel. Town Centre. • 5 Star hotel top end accommodation. • Good quality accommodation which would encourage visitors to regard Harrogate as a destination not just B&B for conference guests. Situated in and around Harrogate - 15 miles.
--	--

5. Type of establishment?

Type	Response	Percentage
Hotel	3	12%
Guest House	13	52%
Bed & Breakfast	6	24%
Serviced Apartments	2	8%
Other, please specify...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant with rooms. 	

6. Number of bedrooms?

Room Type	Total Rooms	Percentage
Single	80	12%
Twin	90	14%
Double	457	71%
Family	23	23%
Total	649	100%

7. Does your establishment provide any of the following services and facilities?

Type	Response	Percentage
Dining room	17	68%
Bar	8	32%
Gym	3	12%
Swimming pool	2	8%
Spa	2	2%
Meeting rooms	2	2%
Conference facilities	7	7%
Dining room	3	3%
Other, please specify...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes we have small meetings and coffee mornings. • Guest lounge. • Entertainment theatre. • Hospitality fridge offering wine, beer, fruit juice and water in every bedroom - free. 	

Please Note: Questions 8-11 were only present in the longer version of the questionnaire sent to establishments with 10 or more bedrooms. The response to these questions was low and therefore little weight should be attached to the average responses provided below.

8. Average annual room occupancy¹

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Annual Average % Room Occupancy	72%	71.5%	72.5%

9. Total annual room nights

Responses (Nights)
Average of 13,585 room nights

10. Achieved average room rate²

Responses (£)
Average of £65

11. Room revenue yield (Room Revpar)³

Responses (£)
Average of £39

12. Rack rates

	Average Rack Rate by Room Type (£)			
	Single	Twin	Double	Family
Range	35-94	40- 119	70-250	78-130
Average	53	87	96	94

13. Average duration of stay

Responses (Nights)
Average of 2.2 nights

14. Denied business

There were only three responses to this question with an average of 148 nights denied business. However, one response was far higher than the other two and therefore greatly increased the average.

¹ Occupancy - The proportion of bedrooms available during the period that are occupied during the period.

² Room rate - The total bedroom revenue for 2009/10 divided by the total bedrooms occupied during that period.

³ Room revenue - The total bedroom revenue for 2009/10 divided by the total available rooms during the period.

15. Reasons for denied business

Fully booked	72%
Lack of appropriate room type	24%
Other, please specify...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other companies usually available - due to cancellations, especially housing conference full. • Too expensive - discount rate being offered by destination Harrogate members. • Or closed

16. Number of full time equivalent staff employed

	FTE Staff
Range	Between 0 and 147 full time equivalent employees
Average	Average of 15 full time equivalent employees

17. Do you think a similar policy should be contained in the Council's emerging Sites & Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Total	16	7	1
Percentage of Responses	67%	29%	4%

18. Do you think protection should be extended, or reduced, to the following sized establishments (select one)?

	Total	Percentage
All tourist accommodation	4	17%
10 bedrooms	2	8%
20 bedrooms	7	29%
40 bedrooms	2	8%
50 bedrooms	2	8%
100 bedrooms	2	8%
No response	7	28%
Other, please specify...	2	8%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two respondents entered 30 under 'other'. 	

Two respondents selected more than one option in the 40, 50 and/or 100 bedrooms categories. For this reason the total percentage adds up to 108%. However, this does not affect the summary of response to this question at paragraph 5.13 of the report.

19. Do you think protection should be extended to the following types of establishments?

	Total	Percentage
Guest Houses	6	24%
Bed & Breakfast	3	12%
Serviced Apartments	3	12%
Responded No The Above Options	12	48%
No Response	7	28%

20. Do you think the periods for demonstrating that an existing establishment is no longer viable are appropriate?

	Total	Percentage of Responses
Yes	17	71%
No	7	29%

Three of those who answered ‘no’ to the question suggested that 2 years in Harrogate town and 1 year elsewhere in the District was an appropriate period for demonstrating viability. One response suggested that 1 years evidence was sufficient in both Harrogate town and the rest of the District whilst another respondent suggested that no evidence was necessary.

21. Do you think the Sites & Policies DPD should identify land in Harrogate Town for new hotel development?

	Total	Percentage of Responses
Yes	7	30%
No	16	70%

22. Do you think the policy should provide more encouragement for existing establishments to expand?

	Total	Percentage of Responses
Yes	17	74%
No	6	26%

23. Is there anything further you would like to add on the future of visitor accommodation in Harrogate, how the Council can support the District’s tourism industry, or to expand on your answers to the questions?

- Any action to increase either the number of accommodation provider sites or additional rooms will possibly increase the likelihood of attracting larger conferences but also runs the risk of changing forever the very reason people come to Harrogate – its small town friendly feel!
- Increasing number of bed spaces provided by large chain type establishments will ultimately mean that many guest houses will close as they will not be able to compete with the ridiculously low prices charged during times by the larger hotels. It is not possible for guest houses to command the double/triple rates charged by larger hotels during peak times.
- If you increase dramatically the status quo of guest houses/serviced accommodation to larger hotels there is a real possibility that this will ultimately reduce the room stock and the choice for visitors.
- With the expanding market of serviced apartments there is currently no more need for extra hotels etc in the town. We need a period of reflection, say 5 years, to monitor and evaluate figures of occupancy that are now in steady decline due to a reduction in conference trade etc.
- I think that it is important to protect the town centre guest accommodation in order to service the conference trade though can see no reason to protect the wider district.
- It should also be noted that where a mixed use application is made that this is considered rather than denied on the above local directive.
- At peak times there can be excess demand which distorts normal pricing differentials across the spectrum of accommodation providers, with some highly expensive guest houses and B&Bs.

- There needs to be greater encouragement of smaller private providers whether it be in terms of planning or business rates to encourage growth in the accommodation market for the future.
- A more cohesive and effective plan is required of Harrogate Borough Council to effectively market the destination for business and leisure tourism outside of HIC events.
- There are sufficient hotels etc in Harrogate to satisfy demand – at a lot of times of year there is an over-supply which pushes the rates achieved down significantly.
- Discount on expansion i.e. if you expand you get a discount on your business rates for the first year.
- Simplification of the planning and building regulations, as well as making it faster.
- Get the right staff in tourist information centres who are willing to work and promote the available businesses.
- Would support the identification of land for new hotel development in Harrogate - Dependant on the site and nature of the development.
- A variety of small units/apartments creates flexibility in the market. The existing larger hotels should be viewed as the minimum provision accommodation core offering. What is HBC doing to encourage the expansion of guest houses, B&Bs and serviced apartments, rather than expansion of 'core'?
- With the expansion of HIC it is crucial that Harrogate can offer the right mix of accommodation (type/rate) in order to attract the bigger exhibitions/conferences.
- Parking restrictions definitely have a negative impact on all types of visitors to Harrogate.
- There are a number of sub-standard guest houses, all unaccredited by Visit Britain or AA. They need to be closed down as they are detrimental to Harrogate's reputation.
- The nature of the Harrogate market has been and is currently that there are busy times, March through to June, and September through to November, and very quiet times, December, January and particularly February, when we are practically empty and when we do have guests it is usually for the odd night or a Saturday. If you are open, August can be busy with visitors.
- The guest house is a business and as such we need to maximise our profits, therefore we will hold out for as long as possible for the longest booking period a conference or exhibition will give us. So that guests requiring a one night stay, the 21st of June for Housing as an example, will be turned away until we know we can't fill our beds with longer term stays. As other guest accommodation providers adopt the same approach this obviously gives the impression that Harrogate is full with no beds available. We tell such guests to wait until a lot nearer the conference start date and enquire again then. Even on the first day of a conference beds will be available because of last minute cancellations and no shows.
- Delegates for conferences often book ahead for the following year, but despite asking for large deposits or even full payment in advance we have found a number of times such delegates fail to appear, and we have turned away others believing these rooms are taken, again this gives the impression that Harrogate is full with no beds.
- We are members of Accommodation Harrogate which has a membership of over forty guest houses and small hotels and we have a round robin e-mail system so we can notify one another of last minute vacancies we have so we can accommodate last minute enquirers. Also we are all in contact with the TIC.
- A major problem through the year is an overlap of events at the HIC, and or with events at the Great Yorkshire Show. A good example this year is the Saturday of the Spring Flower Show, April 16th, when many delegates want to arrive for the British Neuroscience Conference (for which we already have a number of bookings). We would rather take delegates for the four nights of that conference than one night for the Flower Show. I fear that a lot of people wanting to come for the Flower Show and stay Saturday night, or make a weekend of it and stay Friday and Saturday night won't be accommodated. Microbiology overlaps with the Petroleum Suppliers which in turn overlaps with the Flower Show. The BAPO conference and Exhibition clashes with New Wine Women Conference. We still are unsure of the impact of having the Perinatal Conference, Countryside Days and the Culture Shock Festival competing with each other

for bed spaces. On the weekend of the 22nd November Ladies Barber Shop and the Foremost Golf Show overlap, and Chiropodists and Podiatrists overlap with the Knitting and Stitching Show.

- We do not feel that increasing hotel sizes or numbers (or other sorts of accommodation) in Harrogate is the way forward, there are enough bed spaces in Harrogate. There is a wide choice of budget accommodation, cheap hotels and guest houses, expensive hotels and guest houses, self catering accommodation, of all shapes and sizes to cater for visitor's tastes.
- A better organisation of the timing of conferences and exhibitions would help in some way to alleviate a supposed bed shortage. We appreciate that co-ordinating different events and their requirements presents a bit of a headache but over the years of operating the guest house we have grown tired of weekends, and other periods when two or more events can be taking place in and around Harrogate and days on either side are devoid of anything.
- Tell road users where Harrogate is, particularly on the A1. Brown signs both northbound and southbound on the road are needed to tell prospective visitors about the Turkish Baths, The Mercer Art Gallery, The Pump Room, and Harlow Carr Gardens. I believe currently there is no sign to Ripon on the southbound A1, so drivers won't come through Ripon on the A61 on to Harrogate. Hopefully this will be rectified when the road works are completed (2012?).
- More trains between Harrogate and Leeds, York and London are needed. Though there are now some major advances in this direction. However a lot of our tourist visitors are still dismayed that the earliest train to York from Harrogate on a Sunday is 11.33am.
- More promotion of Harrogate as a tourist destination base for its own sake, to visit the Dales, York, for shopping at Leeds and Meadowhall (we do have guests stay who have gone to the Metro Centre in Newcastle).
- Visitors can't find the TIC. It is a very nice building and the staff are very pleasant and obliging but it needs to be near to the bus and train station, either that or lots of clear signage to where it is.
- I believe we currently have enough accommodation providers in the area and no more is required.
- Everyone should be made to be graded or should not be allowed to trade as a B&B/guest house etc. If someone decides to stop trading due to retirement then they should be allowed to do so, especially the smaller properties.
- Over the past 12 months our plans have been curtailed by the negative obstructive attitudes of the Harrogate planners. This still continues resulting in a less appropriate and less attractive development for our customers. Too much attention is paid to local bigotry – a more balanced and commercial view would help.

APPENDIX 5: VISITOR ACCOMMODATION GAINS SINCE MAY 2004

Application Reference	Address	Development Proposal	Decision Issue Date	Increase in Bedroom Stock
05/02694/FUL	Argyle Guest House 80 Kings Road Harrogate HG1 5JX	Two storey side/rear extension providing a kitchen and additional bedroom with en-suite facility for the hotel use.	25.07.2005	1
06/01821/FUL	Crown Hotel Grewelthorpe Ripon North Yorkshire	Retention and completion of conversion of redundant building to form 3 short term letting rooms for use with Public House.	30.05.2006	3
06/02459/FUL	White Bear Public House Wellgarth Masham HG4 4EN	Conversion of redundant offices to create 12 bedroom guest accommodation.	07.08.2006	12
06/03715/FUL	George Hotel (Formerly Cragg Lodge Hotel) Wormald Green Harrogate HG3 3PR	Erection of extension to create 1 additional bedroom guest accommodation.	18.09.2006	1
06/04790/FUL	Yorke Arms Ramsgill Harrogate North Yorkshire	Extension to create 8 bedroom guest accommodation	22.05.2007	Superseded by another application.
07/00325/FUL	Miners Arms Hotel Greenhow Harrogate HG3 5JQ	Conversion of part of the public house to create 6 bedroom guest accommodation, restaurant and function room.	09.05.2007	6
07/01621/FUL	Wood Hall Hotel Trip Lane Sicklinghall Wetherby North Yorkshire LS22 4JA	Three storey extension to increase restaurant, leisure and lounge bar facilities - 150sqm.	25.05.2007	0
07/01686/FULMAJ	The Majestic Hotel Springfield Avenue Harrogate HG1 2HU	Six storey extension to accommodate 85 bedroom guest accommodation	06.06.2007	Superseded by another application.
07/01705/FULMAJ	The Kimberley Hotel 11-19 Kings Road Harrogate	Extension to create 9 self-catering guest accommodation, 18 bedroom guest accommodation, 6 staff bedrooms and additional dining and lounge areas.	06.06.2007	Superseded by another application.

Application Reference	Address	Development Proposal	Decision Issue Date	Increase in Bedroom Stock
07/02881/COU	The Cross Keys Inn 17 Cheapside Knaresborough HG5 8AX	Change of use from manager's flat to form 6 bed and breakfast room guest accommodation.	03.07.2007	6
07/05057/COU	Cavendish and Brooklands Hotels 3 & 5 Valley Drive Harrogate	Conversion of 2 hotels to 1, alterations to ground floor to allow for formation of bar, restaurant and 1 additional bedroom.	14.11.2007	1
07/05107/COU	Kings Head Hotel Market Place Masham HG4 4	Change of use from outbuilding/retail/storage unit to 4 bedroom guest accommodation.	03.12.2007	4
07/05347/FUL	Hotel Du Vin Prospect Place Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 1LB	Erection of single storey side extension and conversion of staff accommodation to form 10 additional guest bedrooms.	20.12.2007	10
07/06101/FUL	Fox House King Street Pateley Bridge Harrogate North Yorkshire HG3 5AT	Conversion of dwelling to form 6 bedroom guest house accommodation.	23.01.2008	6
08/00013/REMMAJ	Moto Wetherby Motorway Service Area Deighton Road Kirk Deighton Wetherby	Formation of new 126 bedroom guest accommodation.	27.02.2008	126
08/00018/FUL	Conference View Guest House 74 Kings Road Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 5JR	Erection of first floor extension to create 1 bedroom guest accommodation.	06.02.2008	1
08/02122/COU	43 Strawberry Dale Avenue Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 5EA	Change of use of dwelling to form 3 bedroom guest bed and breakfast accommodation.	16.06.2008	3
08/04306/FULMAJ	Rudding House Follifoot Harrogate North Yorkshire HG3 1JH	Erection of west wing extension to provide 48 hotel rooms (34 net additional rooms) and spa (revised scheme).	10.12.2008	34

Application Reference	Address	Development Proposal	Decision Issue Date	Increase in Bedroom Stock
08/04615/FUL	The Kimberley Hotel 11-19 Kings Road Harrogate	Changes to permission 07/01705/FULMAJ to substitute 9 self-catering units for 21 bedroom guest accommodation, dining room no longer extended, but accommodated it within the disused basement, additional seating provided on the terrace 08/03577/FUL	10.11.2008	21
09/00225/FUL	Premier Inn Hornbeam Park Avenue Harrogate North Yorkshire HG2 8QT	Erection of three storey extension to create additional 15 bedroom guest accommodation.	06.04.2009	15
09/00950/FUL	The Camberley 52 - 54 Kings Road Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 5JR	Conversion of living accommodation to form 2 bedroom guest accommodation.	27.04.2009	2
09/02322/COU	The Moor House Dallowgill Ripon HG4 3RH	Change of Use of dwelling to guest house with 5 bedroom guest accommodation.	03.08.2009	5
09/02365/FUL	The Bridge Walshford Wetherby North Yorkshire LS22 5HS	Two-storey rear extension and single storey extension to create a leisure facility with treatment rooms and an additional 5 bedroom guest accommodation.	29.07.2009	5
09/03169/FUL	The Victoria Station Road Cattal York North Yorkshire YO26 8EB	Erection of extension to create 7 bedroom guest accommodation.	12.10.2009	7
09/03962/FUL	Nidd Hall Hotel Nidd Harrogate North Yorkshire	Erection of detached single storey extension to create 19 bedroom guest accommodation.	28.04.2010	19
09/05044/FULMAJ	The Majestic Hotel Springfield Avenue Harrogate HG1 2HU	Application for 107 bedroom guest accommodation.	10.03.2010	107
09/05072/FUL	Crab And Lobster Asenby Thirsk North Yorkshire	Erection of detached annex forming 3 bedroom guest accommodation.	03.03.2010	3
10/00837/FUL	Yorke Arms Ramsgill Harrogate North Yorkshire	06/04790/FUL Revised Scheme, now only creating 4 bedroom guest accommodation.	11.05.2010	4

Application Reference	Address	Development Proposal	Decision Issue Date	Increase in Bedroom Stock
10/05323/FUL	Rudding Park Hotel Follifoot Harrogate North Yorkshire	Additional fine dining restaurant.	02.02.2011	0
TOTAL:				402

APPENDIX 6: VISITOR ACCOMMODATION LOSSES SINCE MAY 2004

Application Reference	Address	Development Proposal	Decision Issue Date	Loss to bedroom stock
05/04201/FUL	Grassfield Country House Hotel Low Wath Road Pateley Bridge HG3 5HL	Conversion from hotel into 2 dwellings	31.10.2005	9
04/04460/FUL	Delaine Hotel 17 Ripon Road Harrogate HG1 2JL	Conversion of hotel and managers annex to form 6 no. self contained apartments.	01.11.2004	9
04/00860/FUL	Princes Hotel 7 Granby Road Harrogate North Yorkshire	Conversion of hotel to form 5 no. flats with the loss of 7 bedroom guest accommodation.	29.06.2004	7
04/06198/COU	28 Harlow Moor Drive Harrogate North Yorkshire HG2 0JY	Change of use from guesthouse to 1 dwelling	11.01.2005	Not Known ¹
05/00214/FUL	Farndale Guest House Horsefair Boroughbridge York YO51 9AH	Conversion of existing guest house and bar to form 7 flats	19/10/2005	Not Known ¹
05/04279/FUL	Rose Manor Hotel Horsefair Boroughbridge York YO51 9LL	Conversion from hotel (Class C1) to single dwelling (Class C3)	14/11/2005	18
06/04739/FUL	The Orient 51 Valley Drive Harrogate North Yorkshire HG2 0JH	Conversion of hotel to form 7 short term let apartments, with erection of replacement dormer to front and bin store.	13.11.2006	12
07/00576/FUL	Healey Mill Healey Ripon North Yorkshire HG4 4LH	Conversion of bed and breakfast to form 1 dwelling.	29.09.2007	Not Known ¹
07/00671/FUL	68 Kings Road Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 1BT	Conversion from Guest house to supported living apartments.	11.04.2007	8
08/00395/FUL	Box Tree Cottages 15 - 17 Coltsgate Hill Ripon	Conversion to form 3 dwellings	08.05.2008	6
09/01212/FUL	The Alexander 88 Franklin Road Harrogate HG1 5EN	Conversion of guest house to form dwelling. Loss of 5 bedroom guest accommodation.	18.05.2009	5
Total:				62

¹ It was not possible to identify how many lettable bedrooms were lost as a result of this application from the information available in the application file.