



WestTrans Partnership

TRAVELLING TO YOUR HOTEL

A GUIDE ON MAKING IT EASIER FOR EVERYONE



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Introduction

After experiencing a decline in recent years the UK is once again attracting high numbers of visitors from overseas. Hotels have a crucial role to play in Britain's tourist and business industries and are ideally placed to reap the benefits of increased consumer confidence.

A year after Britain hosted the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, tourist numbers are the highest since 2008. In June 2013, Britain welcomed more than 1 overseas visitor per second. In addition, overseas visitors spent £1.84 billion to June 2013, an increase of 13% from June 2012 and 8% higher than the existing June record set in 2011.¹ In London alone, in the first quarter of 2013 there were 3.4 million overnight stays by overseas visitors, an increase of 4% on the equivalent figure in 2012.²

Alongside reputation and a recognised and trusted brand, location and accessibility are considered increasingly important factors by prospective hotel users. Hotels that actively manage how guests travel to their premises and how they travel around during their stay therefore have the potential to increase their customer base and consequently their revenue.

WestTrans³ have commissioned the following Best Practice Guidance, designed specifically for hotels in the West of London looking to manage travel options to their premises. It includes suggestions on how to develop a successful travel strategy, the transport needs of different hotel users, tips for effective transport communication and a case study featuring the London Heathrow Marriott. Please take the time to read the guide. Further information is available from WestTrans on 0208 8257 223 or by visiting the [website](#).



Photo by flickr user eGuideTravel

¹ UK tourism sector boosted by latest spend and visitor statistics, Department for Culture, Media & Sport, Published 15th August 2013, Accessed 17th September 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-tourism-sector-boosted-by-latest-spend-and-visitor-statistics>

² Overseas Travel and Tourism, Q1 2013 (Excel sheet 739 Kb), Table 13, Office for National Statistics, Released 11th July 2013, Accessed 17th September 2013, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/index.html>

³ A partnership of the six West London Boroughs of Ealing, Brent, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow responsible for identifying, developing and implementing transport projects to the benefit of the subregion.

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A Successful Travel Strategy

Based on experience gained from recent projects we have found that there are two key elements to a successful travel strategy:

- **Ensuring that a range of travel options is well communicated to all audiences.** This includes information on travel to/from the hotel, travel while staying at the hotel and also information on the travel facilities available at the hotel such as car and cycling parking.
- **Providing on-site services and facilities that encourage the use of different types of transport.** This could include 'loan bikes' for those wishing to cycle during their stay, convenient and well signed on-site cycle parking, loan umbrellas and wet weather gear to encourage short journeys to be undertaken on foot and a concierge service well-versed on local transport options including public transport fares.

Ensuring that travel information is well communicated

Public Transport

The key message is that public transport is a viable alternative to the private car when travelling to your hotel. In order that this is properly communicated to your guests, any transport information should present the sustainable transport travel options first, starting with public transport.

Present key transport information by mode:

- **London Underground and National Rail** – provide information about key stations (including accessibility) and lines serving your hotel as well as key links to central London such as the West End and key interchanges such as King's Cross and Waterloo. Live links to arrivals/departures and disruptions for stations and interchanges should be fed, or linked, to your website.

- **Bus** – provide information about local bus services directly serving your hotel as well as key interchanges such as Heathrow Central bus station and relevant bus stops. Links to electronic downloadable timetables for key services should also be provided, plus links to any available real time information smart phone applications.
- **Air** – Provide links to departures and arrivals information for all Heathrow terminals.
- Provide information on **Oyster** cards and the savings that can be made. Hotels located close to underground stations may wish to provide guests with the option to purchase an Oyster card when booking their room.

Walking and Cycling

Information about local walking routes, public transport nodes, local amenities, key cycle routes and any cycle facilities provided at your hotel should be made available.

This information should be supported by mapping and online journey planning resources.

Car

Information about the use of car to travel to and from your hotel should include driving instructions supported by interactive mapping. There should also be information about the limited number of parking spaces available and the cost of parking.

Hotels with on-site parking may wish to give preference to specific 'types' of hotel user; for example prioritising staff/guests rather than event users.

Any information about car travel should be balanced with prominent information about public transport.



Photo by flickr user mattbuck4950

Other Modes

Information about coach, shuttle bus and taxi options should be provided if applicable.

- **Shuttle Bus** – provide information about the shuttle bus routes and pick up and drop off locations. Where these services are free, this should be highlighted.
- **Coaches** – provide information about the coach services, routes and stops served, and any parking.
- **Taxi/Chauffeur Service** – provide information about how to access taxis (and where) and associated costs. You may also want to discover which of the local taxi firms has the “greenest” credentials.



Photo by flickr user jtbarrett

Providing on-site services and facilities

Here we describe the different physical provisions that you may wish to make within your premises in relation to travel and transport.

Hotels interested in investing in sustainable travel could consider providing the following services:

- Electric or pedal cycles for short trips;
- Cycle racks for those wishing to arrive/leave or travel around during their stay by bicycle;
- Hybrid or electric fleet for chauffeur service;
- Realtime information on buses, trains, flights; and
- Journey planning services such as free internet, suggested travel apps and reception/concierge route-planning with the option to have information printed.

Loan umbrellas, wet-weather gear and showers and changing facilities for event attendees could be provided to encourage more journeys to be made on foot or by bicycle.

Consideration could also be given to selling public transport tickets within the hotel reception or incorporating the price of travel, or services such as loan cycles, within room rates to actively encourage their use.

Concierge staff should be well-informed about local public transport options and costs and the availability of this service should be widely advertised.

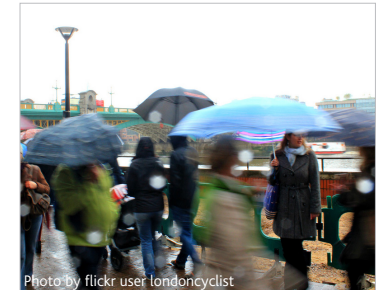


Photo by flickr user londoncyclist

Understanding the Needs of those Visiting your Premises

Hotel guests and others, for example conference organisers, will consider transport options when organising their event or arranging their stay.

In addition, hotel guests may be interested in how easy it is to travel to and from the hotel at the start/end of their stay and what other options are available for travel during their stay.

You might want to think about the needs of each 'type' of person using your hotel in terms of the travel options made available to them. The needs of regular users such as staff are different to those of infrequent users such as event goers and different again for hotel guests (see Table opposite).

The key is to ensure that all users are presented with viable alternatives to the car when travelling to your hotel and that information on these options is well communicated.

Hotel Users and their Transport Needs	
Hotel User	Transport Requirements
Guest – Leisure	Infrequent user requiring information on transport to/from the hotel at the start and end of their stay in addition to information about getting about during their stay. Choice of hotel often influenced by ease of access and proximity to attractions.
Guest – Business e.g. Event/Conference Attendee	One-off user requiring information on how best to get to/from the hotel on event day. Likely to benefit from real-time updates made available at the hotel.
Event Organiser	One-off user requiring information about the hotel's accessibility to determine its suitability for an event.
Supplier	Mixture of regular and one-off users requiring information on access for goods vehicles and any height/weight restrictions on local routes.
Staff	Regular user requiring real time updates on public transport networks.



Photo by flickr user HerryLawford

Communicating Travel Information: Hints and Tips

Make use of the following hints and tips to ensure that guests can easily access transport information:

Online

Best practice suggests that your website should include a clearly identifiable section on travel to your hotel. The travel information element of your website could include: a location map, 'Getting here by' statements for train, bus, walking etc., online and mobile journey planning (for pre-trip and during-trip planning), live rail and tube departure times and road disruption information.

The internet offers a broad range of useful travel information, some of which is regularly updated by key stakeholders and organisations such as Transport for London, the Highways Agency, National Rail Enquiries and the BBC. These sources of information should be integrated into your existing or new travel information page as web links or 'open' data feeds.

T Tips: Online

- Create a dedicated travel information page with a recognisable URL – such as <http://www.hotelname.co.uk/hotels/travel> - which can be used on marketing materials.
- Promote the travel information page on your homepage.
- Include a link to your travel information page on booking confirmations and promote use of all travel modes, ideally with emphasis on public transport and cycle/walking.
- Provide an interactive journey planner to enable guests to proactively plan their journey.
- Establish communications channel with TfL and transport providers to ensure that you are informed of transport disruption such as engineering works.

- Regularly monitor 'hits' on your website via Google Analytics and analyse what features people are using and where they are accessing them from (geographically).

Social media should be used to communicate key messages. Twitter and Facebook, for example, can be used to promote upcoming events and share public transport information.

T Tips: Social Media

When promoting events via Facebook and Twitter, provide a link to your hotel's travel information page. You can monitor the traffic generated by this link.

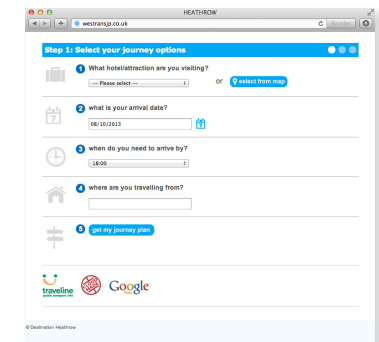
- Include core transport messages and a link to the hotel's travel information page/journey planner within email signatures of staff. This should also include links to the hotel's Twitter account and Facebook page if applicable.

Printed Material

The provision of clear and consistent travel information is essential. Language used should be common, relevant and accurate i.e. underground rather than subway. This applies to both printed and online materials.

Bus timetables, public transport network maps, walking and cycling routes and parking information should be available for guests in a printed format at reception, via a concierge service or in welcome packs. The existence of these resources should be highlighted to guests when they arrive.

If you would like your hotel to appear on the WestTrans Journey Planner Tool (also featured in the case study) please go to www.westtransjp.co.uk and select the option to "Suggest a hotel".



T Tips: Printed Material

- Provide a printed transport information pack with each booking confirmation. This should include easy-to-understand guidelines on how to get to your hotel using all travel modes – prioritising public transport and active travel.
- Include the web address of your hotel’s travel information page on any printed materials such as brochures, compliment slips, invitations and other marketing materials.
- Provide transport information within guests’/delegates’ packs and conference rooms.

Within your Hotel

Increase the visibility of travel information in your hotel and integrate travel planning into your employees’ daily routines. This will help to disseminate information amongst staff and guests alike.

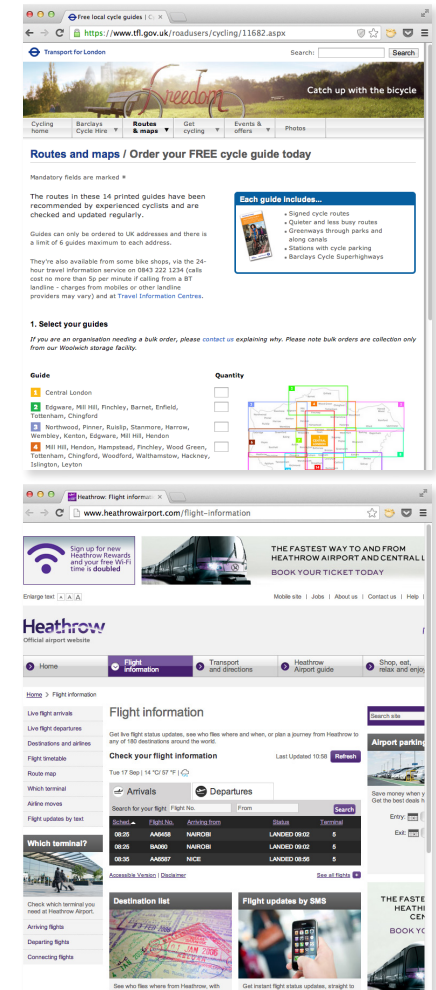
T Tips: Within your Hotel

- Use in-house digital displays (such as plasma screens) to provide updates on public transport networks and real time departure information – make it easy for your guests (and staff) to plan their journey home.
- Promote regular use of the travel information page by your staff by including live travel information links on the company intranet. This allows staff to plan their journey before they leave their desks.
- Ensure that all travel information and communications channels are reviewed and updated regularly. In particular, web links should be checked on a monthly basis to ensure accuracy and validity.

Useful Web Links

Below is a list of useful travel information websites which can be linked to on your travel information page via hyperlinks:

- [West London Journey Planner](#)
- [Travel Information](#) (for West London)
- [Heathrow Flight Information](#)
- [National Cycle Journey Planner](#)
- [London Cycle Journey Planner](#)
- [London Cycle Maps](#)
- [Barclays Cycle Hire](#)
- [London Walking Journey Planner](#)
- [Public Transport Journey Planner](#) (London)
- [Public Transport Journey Planner](#) (National)
- [London Bus and Tube Maps](#)
- [Bus Departures Smart Phone Web App](#)
- [Live National Rail Information](#)
- [Live Tube Information](#)
- [Tube Planned Works Calendar](#)
- [Traffic Information](#) (London)
- [Traffic Information](#) (National)



Case Study: London Heathrow Marriott

Background

The Heathrow Marriott Hotel is located to the north of Heathrow Airport, with good access to public transport links. A key motivation for incorporating a journey planner on the hotel's website was to manage travel demand associated with conferences.

Measures

The Heathrow Marriott Hotel's **Maps and Transportation** page provides an interactive Microsoft-powered map which illustrates the location of the hotel. Below the map is a description of how to travel to the hotel and a link to the WestTrans journey planning tool under the heading "Getting to our hotel is easy by public transport".

The Microsoft-powered map enables visitors to obtain driving directions to the hotel whilst the journey planner provides directions by public transport. In both cases, users only need to enter an origin address as the destination has already been completed.

The **Maps and Transportation** page also includes links to maps and timetables of the Hoppa Bus Service; the National Express Bus Service that connects the hotel to Terminals 1, 2, 4 and 5.

Achievements

Since the WestTrans journey planning tool was introduced on the Heathrow Marriott's Maps and Transportation page in October 2011 it has received 7000 hits and has helped to plan 3000 public transport journeys to the hotel.

Both the journey planning tool and the travel information provided by the Heathrow Marriott demonstrate the range of travel options available to guests and enables them to make an informed choice. In addition, it demonstrates the intention of the hotel to improve their guests' travel experience.

Message

The transport information that is communicated by the Heathrow Marriot Hotel provides a balanced mix of all modes, both private vehicles and public transport. Access by private car is provided via the interactive map. The only textual information provided is in relation to public transport, which means that public transport is promoted as a viable alternative mode of transport.

The key transport message is that the Heathrow Marriott Hotel is easily accessible by public transport modes.

"It is becoming increasingly important to offer sustainable travel solutions to our guests. The journey planner offered by WestTrans for our website, is a perfect solution for planning a direct public transport route to and from our hotel. We are delighted to offer this as a transport solution to our guests and conference delegates."

Sales and Marketing
Communications Manager,
London Heathrow Marriott

