

## **Best Practice 12: Cambridge Tourism Forum, United Kingdom**

**Scale:** Metropolitan

**Stage of tourism development:** Declining

**Main objective:** Tourism quality management/Improve urban quality of life

Categories of effects:

### **Effects on urban governance**

- Integrated urban planning
- Sustainable partnerships
- Stakeholder participation
- Steering government

### **Effects on quality of life**

- Social life, local values and traditions
- Environment

Cambridge is a historic city attracting over 3 million visitors per year. The Historic Colleges and their open spaces and gardens are the most popular attraction for visitors, together with the Rivers and backs, churches and other historic monuments. As in many other cultural and heritage cities, massive tourism has brought to Cambridge both benefits and problems: on the positive side, tourism contributes to raising Cambridge overall attractiveness, and support over 6% of the city jobs. Yet, tourism also brings conflicts, as most Cambridge visitor attractions are concentrated in the rather small area of the city centre, causing serious problems of noise, congestion and disturbance in areas traditionally dedicated to education and residents public space. In the past, conflicts opposed for example the Colleges to the tourism industry (over access), the tourism industry to the City Council (regarding the growth of visitor numbers), the residents to the tourism industry (on the conversion of housing in accommodation) or the tourism industry to other businesses (over traffic and parking issues). To manage the destination in a more sustainable way, a strong policy framework for destination management was established in 1996. The Cambridge Local Plan sets out the planning framework for the development of the City and aims to conserve the character and environment of Cambridge and ensure a satisfying and enjoyable experience for visitors. It contains policies and proposals regarding visitor management and impact upon Cambridge as a tourism centre of international importance. Besides clear objectives and efficient monitoring techniques, the policy-making has from then actively included all key stakeholders groups through a series of collaborative mechanisms designed to improve dialogue - and most importantly trust - among Cambridge tourism stakeholders. These include that all concerned departments in the city council now formally coordinate tourism policy through a single committee of local councillors; all public authorities in the sub-region coordinate through the Cambridgeshire Tourism Officers group; Stakeholders in the city are represented by the Cambridge Tourism Group (CTG), which is made up of 11 representatives of the main tourism interests in the city (including hoteliers, Languages Schools, transport operators, city attractions, out of city attractions, Chamber of Commerce, Colleges, Universities and the City Council). Wider resident and business communities meet in the Cambridge Tourism Forum, which takes place annually and is open to all. Additionally, Tourism and non-tourism businesses and residents in the city centre meet in the City Centre Management Executive and Consultative Forum, which involves retailers, property owners, residents, the University, Colleges and the municipality. The overlap between these groups was deliberate and meant to build and enrich the networks. As a result of this policy and stakeholder consultation mechanisms, most objectives stated in the 1996 Plan have been met, including a decrease of the number of visitors by 400 000 compared between 1996 and 2000 and a great reduction of conflicts in Cambridge tourism management.

**Sources:** Robert Maitland (2002) Creating successful partnerships in urban tourism destinations: the case of Cambridge. *Tourism* 50(3), pp. 293-302; Cambridge Local Plan 1996.

**Link:**

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure-and-culture/tourism-and-travel/>