

VisitWiltshire Report Identifies Potential for Visitor Accommodation Investment and Development across the County

31 July 2014. As part of its strategy to grow Wiltshire's visitor economy, VisitWiltshire has published the first ever detailed analysis of Wiltshire's visitor accommodation sector.

[*The Wiltshire and Swindon Visitor Accommodation Futures report*](#), compiled by hospitality experts Hotel Solutions, identifies a lack of many types of accommodation across the county, particularly during the summer months and at weekends throughout the year, and spotlights a number of opportunities for future growth.

The report was commissioned by [VisitWiltshire](#) with support from the Wiltshire & Swindon Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It provides a robust assessment of future opportunities for visitor accommodation development across Wiltshire and Swindon, and sets out a five-year Action Plan that aims to create an additional 2,000 jobs by 2020, equivalent to an average annual increase in visitor accommodation employment of 6%.

The study involved an in-depth analysis of the hotel and visitor accommodation supply, performance and market demand, national trends, the competitive environment, an assessment of the potential future growth in demand, and the factors which might drive this. It also included developer testing to identify specific developer/investor opportunities.

Areas for growth

Whilst recognising there are already sufficient numbers of some types of accommodation in some parts of the county, the report highlights a number of key opportunities for growth including:

- Additional luxury country house hotels, given suitable properties for conversion;
- Further golf hotels and resorts;
- A luxury family hotel in the Salisbury area if a country mansion were to become available, and a family hotel near Warminster;
- The possible development of a hotel at Longleat;

- Boutique hotel development in Salisbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Corsham, Malmesbury, Marlborough and Devizes;
- Additional budget hotel provision in Swindon, Salisbury, Amesbury and Chippenham;
- An aparthotel or serviced apartment complex in Swindon town centre, and some additional serviced apartment provision in Salisbury;
- A 4 star hotel in Swindon town centre, given direct public sector investment if the development of such a hotel is identified as a priority to support the regeneration of the town centre and the development of Swindon as a conference and exhibition destination;
- Boutique inns across Wiltshire and rural Swindon;
- New-build pubs with adjacent budget hotel bedrooms on the outskirts of Chippenham and possibly Melksham and Trowbridge;
- Pubs and restaurants with rooms across the county;
- Smaller accommodation offers throughout the county from budget to luxury
- Increased self-catering accommodation including 4 star and boutique holiday cottages, 'super' cottages for large groups and Access Exceptional cottages.
- Holiday lodges, eco lodges and holiday parks
- More camping offers from basic campsites to glamping and increased hostel accommodation in Salisbury and Devizes
- Camping and bunkhouse barns along the Kennet & Avon Canal and hotel boat operations;
- Serviced accommodation in Swindon and Salisbury

Key priorities

The report also addresses a number of key priorities in order to accelerate the growth of accommodation offers. These include:

- The identification of specific sites and properties for hotel development and larger scale accommodation schemes
- More positive planning policies for hotel and visitor accommodation
- A clear strategy for hotel investment in Swindon town centre
- The development of a pub accommodation initiative
- Development of a 'glamping' offer
- Tailored business and quality improvement support for the accommodation sector
- Improved communication with the sector about latest accommodation trends
- A business support and training programme across the county.

Hotel Solutions has also made a raft of recommendations for next steps in an Investment Action Plan. The team at VisitWiltshire will be following up on these recommendations over the next few months with Wiltshire Council, Swindon Council and the LEP.

As a result of this plan, and the Developer survey conducted as part of this study, VisitWiltshire has identified expressions of interest from 24 potential developers and investors. VisitWiltshire is now actively pursuing leads for new serviced apartments, 'glamping' products, holiday lodge parks, a children's activity holiday centre, quality pub accommodation and country house hotels.

David Andrews, Chief Executive of VisitWiltshire said: "While the number of bed-spaces outside London has grown by over 20% in the last 10 years, Wiltshire's bed-stock has remained static.

"This report is extremely important in helping us identify and prioritise opportunities for growth and, as a result, we are already working on a number of strong leads to secure new types of accommodation product for the county. Tourism continues to grow at 5% per annum and this study will help us make sure we have the right blend of accommodation, in the right locations across Wiltshire".

Barry Dennington, Chair of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, said: "This report is an extremely useful tool, around which we can form our future plans for the visitor economy. There are clearly some issues that need to be addressed, such as the gaps in accommodation provision of many types across the county, but there are some really exciting opportunities for growth too, which could potentially create 2,000 jobs in the area.

"The LEP is fully supportive of the visitor economy and recognises how important it is to both Swindon and Wiltshire. It is therefore crucial that we act upon the findings in this report and take full advantage of the growth opportunities it presents."

The report is available to download [here](#).

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Note to editors

VisitWiltshire was established in August 2011 and is the official Tourist Board for Wiltshire. It is a private sector membership organisation representing over 550 members. VisitWiltshire's priority is to grow the county's Visitor Economy by raising awareness of the destination and generating additional tourism visits and spend. Wiltshire's Visitor Economy currently generates an estimated £1.4billion and supports over 27,000 jobs.