WILTSHIRE & SWINDON

VISITOR ACCOMMODATION FUTURES

Final Report

Prepared for:
VisitWiltshire
Swindon & Wiltshire LEP

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hotel solutions
the hotel development consultancy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Importance of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Sector for Jobs Growth

The hotel and visitor accommodation sector is a major contributor to the Wiltshire and Swindon economy and is of vital importance for future tourism growth and employment creation. There are already more than 1,000 hotels and visitor accommodation businesses successfully operating across Wiltshire and Swindon, ranging from luxury country house hotels to 3 star and budget hotels, pub accommodation businesses, guest houses and B&Bs, holiday cottages, touring caravan and camping sites and canal boat holiday hire companies.

The Purpose & Scope of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study

VisitWiltshire and the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership commissioned the Wiltshire & Swindon Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study in 2014 to provide a robust assessment of the future opportunities for hotel and visitor accommodation development across Wiltshire and Swindon, as a means of accelerating the growth of the visitor economy and tourism employment growth. The study involved an in depth analysis of hotel and visitor accommodation supply, performance and market demand across Wiltshire and Swindon; an assessment of the likelihood of future growth in demand for hotel and visitor accommodation and what will drive this; and a review of national hotel and visitor accommodation development trends in comparator destinations, the testing of hotel and visitor accommodation developer and operator interest in Wiltshire and Swindon; and widespread stakeholder consultations. The detailed findings are presented in the main study report and supporting appendices.

The Opportunities for Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Development

The rationale and key conclusions regarding opportunities and requirements for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon are as follows:

- Luxury, boutique and high quality hotels and visitor accommodation businesses are performing strongly in Wiltshire and represent an opportunity to attract new high spending markets. There is scope for additional supply at the top end of the market through the upgrading and repositioning of existing stock and the opening of new establishments.

- There are frequent shortages of all forms of visitor accommodation in many parts of Wiltshire during the peak summer months and often at weekends for much of the year. There are also shortages of hotel accommodation on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Swindon and in some parts of Wiltshire. Additional supply is needed at these times. Tourism growth will otherwise be constrained.

- There is clear potential for future growth in demand for hotel and visitor accommodation in Wiltshire and Swindon from the corporate, contractors, domestic leisure break, overseas tourist, group tour, weddings and visiting friends and relatives markets as the area's economy expands and population increases and these markets grow nationally. There is also scope for the associations meetings market to be attracted to Swindon. Additional hotel and visitor accommodation supply will be needed to fully capitalise on these growth opportunities.

- Wiltshire is lagging behind other destinations in terms of the development of luxury country house hotels; golf resorts; boutique hotel, B&B and self-catering accommodation; glamping (luxury camping) provision; and contemporary holiday lodge accommodation - but is ahead of the competition in terms of boutique inn provision. The county needs more of these types of accommodation if it to compete successfully in the future and attract new markets that are currently going elsewhere. The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study identified developer interest for a number of these types of accommodation in Wiltshire and rural Swindon.

- Investment to modernise, upgrade, reposition and in some cases expand existing hotels and visitor accommodation businesses is a key requirement. In terms of new provision, based on the performance of existing hotels and visitor accommodation businesses in Wiltshire and Swindon, the accommodation development trends that are taking place in other locations and the gaps that have been identified in the current hotel and visitor accommodation product of Wiltshire and Swindon, the study identifies potential for:

    - Additional luxury country house hotels, given suitable properties for conversion;
    - Further golf hotels and resorts;
    - A spa hotel, given a suitable property for conversion or a site for a new-build spa hotel;
    - A luxury family hotel in the Salisbury area if a country mansion were to become available here;
    - The possible development of a hotel at Longleat, as other major attractions have developed;
    - 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;
    - Restaurants with rooms;
    - 5 star and boutique guest houses and B&Bs;
    - Additional self-catering accommodation, including 5 star and boutique holiday cottages; 5 star holiday cottage complexes with leisure; 'super' cottages that can cater for large groups; and some Access Exceptional holiday cottages that are specifically designed for independent wheelchair users
    - Small complexes of holiday lodges for rental;
    - Woodland or lakeside holiday lodge parks;
    - Eco lodges and eco lodge parks;

- Fishing lodge developments associated with existing or new fishing lakes;
- Golf lodges on golf courses;
- Holiday lodges alongside horse riding stables;
- Shooting lodges on country sports estates;
- Further small touring caravan and camping sites;
- Some larger touring caravan and camping sites;
- Camping pod developments and possibly a camping pod network along the Kennett & Avon Canal;
- Glamping developments;
- Further farm stay accommodation in terms of farmhouse B&Bs, holiday cottages, touring caravan and camping sites and glamping;
- A modern city centre hostel in Salisbury and possibly a canalside hostel in Devizes;
- Camping and bunkhouse barns along the Kennet & Avon Canal;
- Activity holiday centres;
- A small canal holiday boat hire operation on the Vale of Pewsey stretch of the Kennet & Avon Canal and one or two more hotel boat operations on the canal.

- The future development of the Wiltshire and Swindon hotel and visitor accommodation sector needs to be a gradual process. Too rapid an increase in supply could dilute off-peak business and potentially undermine the sector's viability. The opportunities are nevertheless there for significant further development of the Wiltshire accommodation sector and Swindon hotel supply over the next 10 years as the market grows, given action to address the following priorities for supporting and accelerating hotel and visitor accommodation development and employment creation..

Priorities Going Forward

The priorities going forward to support and accelerate hotel and visitor accommodation jobs growth in Wiltshire and Swindon in line with the identified development opportunities are as follows:

- **More Positive Planning Policies for Hotel and Visitor Accommodation**

  A positive, flexible and enabling planning framework will be vital to support the future development of the Wiltshire and Swindon hotel and visitor accommodation sector. The relevant policies in the draft Wiltshire Core Strategy are based on very out-of-date evidence and could be more positively worded regarding visitor accommodation development in the countryside. The partial review of the Core Strategy at the end of 2014 provides an opportunity to improve these policies in line with the findings and recommendations of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study. The Swindon Borough Local Plan does not include any specific policies on hotel and visitor accommodation development. Town centre hotel development (the priority in Swindon) is supported under national policy guidance however. Wiltshire Council is currently proposing a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) charge of £70 per sq m on hotel development, which could significantly constrain hotel development in the county. Urgent representations to Wiltshire Council are needed to oppose this charge therefore, particularly when Swindon Borough Council is proposing a nil charge for hotel schemes. An educational programme for planning policy and development control officers is needed to ensure that they are fully informed about the opportunities for hotel and visitor accommodation development and the key role that they play in realising many of the identified opportunities and the employment growth that they can deliver.

- **A Clear Strategy for Hotel Investment in Swindon Town Centre**

  The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study identifies the likelihood of further budget hotel development coming forward in Swindon town centre in the short term. It also identifies an opportunity for a town centre aparthotel or serviced apartment complex to cater for long stay corporate demand. A full service 4 star hotel would contribute more to destination development and employment creation and may be a requirement for Swindon to develop as a conference and exhibition destination. A hotel of this standard is unlikely to be secured without some form of public sector investment support however. Further work is needed to fully understand the potential to attract conference and exhibition business to the venues in Swindon town centre; assess the need for a town centre 4 star hotel to win this business; scope the potential and case for direct public sector investment in a town centre 4 star hotel and formulate a firm proposition if the case is proven; quantify long stay demand from local companies; and identify and market suitable sites for an aparthotel or serviced apartment development in the town centre.

- **The Identification of Sites and Properties for Hotel Development and Larger Scale Accommodation Schemes**

  In terms of employment creation the priority is the development of hotels and larger scale accommodation schemes such as holiday lodge parks, golf resorts, eco lodge and fishing lodge developments, a modern city centre hostel in Salisbury and activity holiday centres. The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study identifies market potential for, and developer interest in bringing forward these types of accommodation across Wiltshire and Swindon, but only identified a few sites and properties that could meet the identified market opportunities and satisfy developer requirements. A programme of work is thus now required to identify and raise developer awareness of sites and buildings that could be available, suitable and acceptable in planning terms to meet the identified opportunities.

- **The Development of the Pub Accommodation Sector**

  The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study shows good potential for the further development of high quality pub accommodation and boutique inns in Wiltshire and the rural parts of Swindon. Existing businesses of this nature are trading at high levels of occupancy at weekends, during the summer, and in some parts of Wiltshire during the shooting season between September and January. They are often fully booked at these times and generally achieve high room rates. There are many other pub accommodation businesses that could be upgraded and further developed and many pubs that could add guest bedrooms. This would be a good way of expanding the rural accommodation offer in Wiltshire and Swindon's countryside. Adding guest bedrooms can also help to ensure the commercial sustainability and future of pubs. Wadworth is making accommodation a primary focus for its future investment plans. Arkell's has also been investing in upgrading its pub accommodation stock. A number of other pub companies expressed interest in accommodation development opportunities in Wiltshire.

- **Glamping Development**

  Glamping is rapidly growing in popularity in the UK. Wiltshire has a small supply of glamping accommodation at present. Glamping businesses that have opened in the county have quickly found a strong market. There is clear scope for significant expansion of this type of accommodation, which would be entirely appropriate to encourage in rural Wiltshire and Swindon's countryside.

- **Tailored Business and Quality Improvement Support for the Accommodation Sector**

  Effective, appropriately tailored business support and quality improvement initiatives will support the expansion of existing visitor accommodation businesses and the establishment of new ones. Grants or other forms of financial assistance linked to employment creation (if they can be funded) can be an effective tool for stimulating and accelerating growth and driving up quality.

- **Spreading the Word**

  The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study includes a great deal of very detailed information that will be of interest to a wide range of audiences. Work will be needed to build awareness of the study and its findings. This may include re-packaging the report into different formats for specific audiences e.g. location specific extracts or fact sheets for particular types of accommodation. This process should include providing feedback to the hotel and visitor accommodation businesses that contributed to the study.

- **Keeping a Finger on the Pulse**

  The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study provides a snapshot of the Wiltshire and Swindon hotel and visitor accommodation sector and market at one point in time. Moving forward it will be important for VisitWiltshire and its partners to monitor how the sector is developing and performing over time to establish ongoing priorities for the further development of hotel and visitor accommodation, and to evaluate the impact of any interventions to proactively support the development of the sector.

The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study also makes a number of suggestions regarding destination marketing; the development of the corporate market for hotel accommodation through the progression of business park and office development schemes and the attraction of occupiers to them; and the further development of the leisure tourism product across Wiltshire and Swindon. Action on these fronts will be taken forward through the Wiltshire & Swindon Destination Management Plan and ongoing economic development and inward investment work.

The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Investment Action Plan 2014-2020

The Wiltshire & Swindon Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Investment Action Plan is designed to act on the study findings and recommendations to support hotel and visitor accommodation development and achieve employment growth in the sector. It sets out the required actions over the next 5 years (2014-2020) to accelerate the sector's development under 8 programmes of work to address each of the identified priorities. The Action Plan aims to create an additional 2,000 jobs in the sector by 2020, equivalent to an average annual increase in hotel and visitor accommodation employment of 5.7%.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 The hotel and visitor accommodation sector is a major contributor to the Wiltshire and Swindon economy and is of vital importance for future tourism growth and employment creation. There are already more than 1,000 hotels and visitor accommodation businesses successfully operating across Wiltshire and Swindon, ranging from luxury country house hotels to 3 star and budget hotels, pub accommodation businesses, guest houses and B&Bs, holiday cottages, touring caravan and camping sites and canal boat holiday hire companies. Spending by visitors staying in Wiltshire and Swindon hotels and visitor accommodation businesses totalled £236 million in 2012 and supported around 7,000 jobs.

1.1.2 In order to build on this strength, VisitWiltshire and the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership commissioned the Wiltshire & Swindon Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study in 2014 to provide a robust assessment of the future opportunities for hotel and visitor accommodation development across Wiltshire and Swindon, the job creation benefits that can result from the sector's expansion, and the requirements for public sector intervention to accelerate the sector's growth.

1.1.3 This is the first time that a comprehensive visitor accommodation study has been conducted across Wiltshire and Swindon. To date therefore, there has been no firm evidence base for VisitWiltshire to comment on planning applications, or support developers and operators in their plans for expansion and development. The market information this report supplies fills this gap, and will also provide an evidence base to support visitor economy funding bids into UK and European government funding streams.

1.2 Study Objectives

1.1.1. The objectives of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study were to:

- Understand current hotel and visitor accommodation performance across Wiltshire and Swindon;
- Identify the market potential for hotel and visitor accommodation development across the area to meet current and potential future supply shortages and gaps;
- Assess the potential for the development of emerging, innovative hotel and visitor accommodation products;
- Identify potential sites for, and developer interest in, major hotel and visitor accommodation development schemes that can deliver significant numbers of new jobs;
- Prepare an action plan to enable VisitWiltshire and its partners to secure the identified potential for investment in the sector and deliver quality, leading edge hotel and visitor accommodation development on the ground.

1.3 Scope of the Study

1.3.1. The study has sought to assess opportunities and requirements for the development of the following types of visitor accommodation across Wiltshire and Swindon:

- Hotels – of all standards and types, including destination offers e.g. country house hotels, golf resorts, spa hotels;
- Guest houses, B&Bs and farmhouse B&Bs;
- Pub accommodation;
- Self-catering holiday cottages and barn conversions;
- Holiday lodges and lodge complexes;
- Touring caravan and camping sites;
- Glamping (luxury camping);
- Youth and group accommodation, including hostels and children's activity holiday centres.

1.3.2. The study has sought to assess the potential for the future development of all of these forms of visitor accommodation in all parts of Wiltshire and Swindon. In Swindon the primary focus has been hotels. As a leading historic city destination with a number of live hotel and visitor accommodation development and change of use proposals, Salisbury has been the subject of additional work to understand the opportunities and requirements here in greater depth. The focus for Wiltshire's towns has primarily been to assess the potential for serviced accommodation development. The assessment of opportunities for non-serviced accommodation has concentrated largely on the rural areas.

1.3.3. In order to address the objectives of the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP in funding the study, a priority for the research programme has been to assess the opportunities for the development of hotels and larger scale visitor accommodation businesses that can deliver greater benefits in terms of employment creation, capital investment and economic gain.

1.4 Uses of the Study

1.4.1. It is envisaged that the key audiences for the study will be:

- VisitWiltshire;
- Swindon & Wiltshire LEP;
- Wiltshire Council;
- Swindon Borough Council;

1.4.2. The study findings will also provide a valuable insight into the market for the whole range of visitor accommodation offers as well as an evidence base to both influence and support decision-making by hotel and visitor accommodation operators and developers, land owners, property developers, funding bodies and the various organisations that have a role to play in destination development at a local level.

1.4.3. Key areas where the study findings can instigate change and so promote, enable and accelerate delivery on the ground include influencing and directing:

- Planning policy formulation for hotel and visitor accommodation development and decision-making on planning applications, so creating the right framework for sector development;
- The development of the Wiltshire & Swindon Destination Management & Development Plan on accommodation related issues and opportunities;
- Local level tourism strategies and plans;
- Public sector intervention to support the development of the hotel visitor accommodation sector in terms of work that might be required to attract inward investment into the sector, grow accommodation demand and provide advice and support to hotel and visitor accommodation business operators.
- The investment decisions of hotel and visitor accommodation business owners and developers, to improve, expand, reposition and take advantage of the identified opportunities for new visitor accommodation development;
- Land and property owners and developers to deliver site opportunities for visitor accommodation development and encourage direct investment in the opportunities identified.

1.5 Study Methodology

1.5.1. The study has involved the following modules of research and consultation:

- **A review of national hotel and visitor accommodation development trends** to assess how well Wiltshire and Swindon are competing with other parts of the UK in terms of their hotel and visitor accommodation supply.

- **A review of current hotel and visitor accommodation provision** through:

  - A thorough audit of serviced accommodation provision based on VisitWiltshire's partners database, the accommodation stock audit compiled by South West Tourism that was provided to us by VisitWiltshire, our own internet research and spotting of accommodation businesses during our field visits to the area.

  - A review of self-catering entries on VisitWiltshire's partners database and the accommodation stock audit complied by South West Tourism, together with reviews of online holiday cottage directories and holiday cottage letting agency brochures and websites. The study has not included a detailed audit and cross-check of the self-catering supply information from these sources however.
  - A review of touring caravanning, camping and glamping websites.

- **An assessment of changes in hotel and visitor accommodation supply** in Wiltshire and Swindon over the last 5 years (in terms of new hotels and visitor accommodation businesses, extensions and upgrading and closures) through our consultations with stakeholders, trawl of planning applications and the intelligence that we picked up through talking to hotel and visitor accommodation business owners and managers and other elements of our research programme.

- **Identification of proposals for future hotel and visitor accommodation development schemes** (both new operations and the expansion and development of existing ones) through our consultations with stakeholders, review of planning applications and other intelligence that we picked up during the course of our research.

- **A survey of hotel and visitor accommodation managers and owners** to gather information on performance, key markets, customer motivations, levels of denied business, market trends, development plans and business support requirements. The survey was conducted through a mix of face-to-face and telephone interviews. A total of 135 accommodation businesses took part in the survey. Three self-catering letting agencies with properties in Wiltshire were also interviewed. The accommodation businesses interviewed are listed at Appendix 1.

- **Analysis of STR Global hotel performance data for Swindon**. The sample size for Swindon is sufficient to provide robust performance data for the town's hotel sector without the need for a comprehensive survey of the town's hotel managers. Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with selected Swindon hotel managers to provide a further insight into the town's hotel markets.

- **Consultation meetings with VisitWiltshire, Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP** to gather information on the strategic policy and planning context for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon; the potential future drivers of growth in hotel and visitor accommodation demand; major hotel and visitor accommodation development proposals; potential sites and buildings for hotel and holiday accommodation development; enquiries from hotel and visitor accommodation developers interested in investment opportunities in the area; and the resources and roles of each organisation to support visitor accommodation development.

- **Email and telephone consultations with local and other stakeholder organisations** to gather further information on these issues.

- **A review of all relevant policy and strategy documents** and master plans and supporting studies for major regeneration and development projects to determine the strategic policy framework for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon and the potential impact of strategies and projects in terms of stimulating demand for hotel and visitor accommodation.

- **A review of available tourism and visitor research reports** and other relevant research material.

- **Hotel demand projections for Salisbury** to quantify the future requirements for additional hotel bedrooms in the city through to 2025. The supplies of hotels in Wiltshire's towns are not sufficient to allow robust quantitative hotel demand projections for these locations. The study does however provide a commentary on potential hotel development opportunities in each town.

- A **survey of national, regional and local hotel operators/developers** to gauge their interest in Wiltshire and Swindon, establish their site and location requirements and identify any obstacles they face relative to investing in the area. The detailed findings of this survey have been provided to VisitWiltshire as a confidential appendix.

- A **survey of national and regional operators of other types of visitor accommodation** including children's activity holiday centres, holiday parks, holiday lodge parks, glamping, hostel accommodation, the Caravan Club and the Camping and Caravan Club.

- **An audit of potential sites and buildings** identified by stakeholders as having scope for hotel and visitor accommodation development. The audit did not include site visits to assess the suitability for development of the identified sites in terms of their fit with hotel and visitor accommodation operator requirements.

1.6 Structure of the Report

1.6.1. The report comprises an initial chapter setting out the current and emerging national, regional, sub-regional and local policy and market growth context for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon, followed by chapters on each type of accommodation (listed at 1.3.) setting out the key findings and conclusions of the study regarding:

- Current supply, recent changes and planned development;
- Current performance and markets:
- Future market prospects;
- National development trends and comparisons;
- Sector development potential – including references to opportunities by location where appropriate.

1.6.2. The final chapter of the report provides a summary of the planning policy recommendations from the study and identifies other requirements for public sector intervention to support the future development of the hotel and visitor accommodation sector across Wiltshire and Swindon.

2. THE STRATEGIC, POLICY & MARKET FRAMEWORK

2.1. National Planning Guidance

2.1.1 Since 2006, national planning guidance on the development of hotels and other forms of visitor accommodation has come in the form of the '**Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism',** which contains a specific appendix on tourist accommodation, dealing principally with the location of accommodation. A copy can be found at Appendix 2 to this report.

2.1..2 On a general note, the guidance recognises the economic benefits that visitor accommodation can bring to the areas in which it is located and advocates that this should bear weight in assessing schemes. The guidance covers general locational principles and advice relating to particular types of serviced accommodation (major hotels, budget hotels/lodges, rural/pub accommodation), as well as some specific issues relating to holiday, touring caravan and chalet parks and other forms of self-catering accommodation.

2.1.3 Some of the key principles relating to hotels and other forms of serviced accommodation include:

- Identifying suitable locations for hotel accommodation should be an integral part of the plan making process, and should involve the tourist industry;
- Major hotel developments should look to the town centre first, because of their transport and regeneration implications;
- Outside the development plan process site selection should follow the sequential approach;
- There is a need to recognise the market being served by different types of hotel when allocating sites and considering applications, as this will affect the optimum location;
- New hotel developments in historic towns and cities need to be sensitive to their surroundings; conversions may also be a realistic proposition subject to impact;

- The potential to convert and re-use historic buildings in towns should be recognised;
- Similarly, the conversion of rural buildings to hotel and other serviced accommodation should be acceptable subject to scale and impact, even in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Extensions to existing hotels or other facilities e.g. to pubs to add bedroom accommodation can help support the viability of these businesses, but need to be proportionate;
- Budget hotels catering for longer staying markets should generally be destination focused i.e. in town centres;
- Lodges catering for stop-over traffic may require a location on a major routeway, ideally edge of town rather than in open countryside.

2.1.4 In terms of holiday parks, touring caravan and chalet parks, plus other forms of self-catering accommodation, the guidance identifies:

- The importance of the holiday parks industry[1] in terms of volume of nights and associated visitor spend, and as the largest provider of rural tourism bed spaces;
- The desirability of improving the appearance of these parks, protecting sensitive landscapes and relocating intrusive parks away from sensitive locations and those prone to flooding, but recognising that land values and high infrastructure costs may make this impractical and unviable;
- The need for planners to work with site owners to improve the attractiveness of sites in line with good practice and to ensure new developments and extensions embody this and minimise negative impacts;
- Whilst locating new park developments close to existing settlements is desirable, the guidance recognises there may be good reason to locate a site elsewhere or support the expansion of an existing site not close to a settlement e.g. to support business success and employment and wider tourism activity;

[1] Holiday chalets, caravan holiday homes, pitches for touring caravans, motor-homes and tenting as well as other forms of self-catering accommodation

- There may be a need for on-site staff accommodation for effective management of holiday park sites, preferably using existing buildings;
- Sympathetic consideration should be given to parks wanting to extend their opening season, given the trend towards tourism as a year round activity and better caravan standards;
- Whilst seasonal and holiday occupancy conditions are frequently used to prevent holiday accommodation falling into permanent residential use, these should be reasonable and fair, in order not to compromise the operational viability of the business;
- Planning authorities should support the provision of other forms of self-catering holiday accommodation in rural areas, particularly where they can involve the re-use of rural buildings and offer additional benefits e.g. farm diversification.

2.1.5 The issues surrounding tourism and hotel/visitor accommodation development were also addressed in **PPS 4**, which required local authorities to adopt a positive and flexible approach to economic development (including tourism and leisure development). It also emphasised the importance of an evidence base to understand industry/sector needs, using relevant market and economic information, particularly where proposals are not specifically supported by plan policies.

2.1.6 The associated **Practice Guidance** on need, impact and the sequential approach 'Planning for Town Centres' includes an Appendix on its application to hotels. It sets out an approach to assessing future need through gap analysis by location and standard/type of hotel, refined using performance data and forecasting techniques, to provide an evidence base against which individual hotel schemes can be assessed. (See extract at Appendix 3)

2.1.7 With the publication of the **National Planning Policy Framework** in March 2012, planning policy has been streamlined and many of the detailed planning policy statements and guidance notes have been revoked. This includes PPS4 referred to above, although we understand that the associated Practice Guidance on need, impact and the sequential approach is still in place. The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism has not been revoked, and so remains a material consideration in guiding and assessing applications for visitor accommodation development.

2.1.8 The NPPF says relatively little about tourism. There are two principal references:

- Tourism development (including hotels) is identified as a main town centre use (para. 23);
  - The NPPF focuses on a town centre first approach, with sequential testing to be applied should these uses wish to locate elsewhere and not be in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. This means proving that no alternative suitable sites in or closer to the town centre are available or viable;
  - However, it also indicates that the sequential approach need not apply to applications for small scale rural development (para 25);

- Tourism development is also dealt with in the NPPF's rural policy (para.28) which guides tourism in the countryside in support of a prosperous rural economy. Sustainable rural tourism development that can benefit rural businesses, visitors and communities and which respects the character of the countryside should be supported. This includes the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations.

2.1.9 In terms of other policies in the NPPF, key threads of relevance to developing the hotel and visitor accommodation sector and some of the issues identified in this study include:

- Retention of the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- A continued significant focus on supporting economic growth, also reflecting local circumstances;
- Encouragement to plan positively, meeting objectively assessed needs with flexibility to adapt to change;
- A streamlined and speedy approach to decision-making on schemes that accord with the development plan;
- Retention of requirements relating to the setting of local car parking standards, and encouragement of sustainable modes of transport;
- Re-affirmation of the commitment to the Green Belt, with review only in exceptional circumstances;
- Policies should seek to address potential barriers to investment;
- Pro-active engagement with applicants is a key strand, with positive planning and pre-application discussions encouraged;
- Joint working is expected between local authorities on cross-boundary issues, in relation to which there is a duty to co-operate;
- Weight will also be given to relevant policies within emerging Local Plans dependent on stage of preparation and conformity with the NPPF.

2.1.10 More recently, the government has introduced relaxations in the change of use rules that could impact on the development of visitor accommodation in the countryside. From May 2013 agricultural buildings up to 5400 sq ft are now covered by permitted development rights allowing them to be converted into a variety of alternative commercial uses without the need for planning consent. This also applies in National Parks, AONBs and Green Belt locations. From April 2014, permitted development rights were extended to the conversion of farm buildings to residential dwellings of up to 450 sq m for a three year period, though this does not apply in designated areas such as AONBs, National Parks and Conservation Areas or to Listed buildings.

2.2 Local Visitor Accommodation Planning Policy

Wiltshire Visitor Accommodation Policy

2.2.1 The **Wiltshire Core Strategy** sets out long-term planning and development aims for Wiltshire and was examined in public by an independent Planning Inspector in summer 2013. The emerging plan is still in the examination stage awaiting the Inspector's final report. Adoption is planned for summer 2014. There are two policies that are specifically related to tourism and visitor accommodation development:

- Core Policy 39 (tourist development)
    - Supports tourism development of an appropriate scale in main settlements and market towns;
    - Beyond this they should be as close as possible to service centres and where possible use existing/replacement buildings;
    - Some development may be permitted beyond these locations where the financial viability of an associated attraction would be supported, services and access are adequate, scale is appropriate and there are no alternative sites/buildings;
    - Extensions to existing properties of appropriate scale may be permitted;
    - The development of caravan and camp sites and their extension should not impact negatively on the landscape.

- Core Policy 40 (hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and conference facilities).
    - The supporting text identifies scope for additional budget and high quality visitor accommodation, particularly in the south/Salisbury, and also identifies a lack of conference facilities here;
    - Proposals for new hotels, bed and breakfasts, guesthouses or conference facilities, as well as extension, upgrading and intensification of existing tourism accommodation facilities will be supported in main towns and centres where scale is appropriate;
    - Beyond these centres, development should involve the conservation of buildings ;
    - Traffic and town centre viability will be key issues to be considered;
    - Change of use of hotels, pubs or conference facilities will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated there is no need for accommodation or other tourist use.

2.2.2. At an overall level, these policies appear (and are intended) to be relatively flexible to allow for appropriate new tourist development to be brought forward. However, they are founded predominantly on evidence of a need for more accommodation in Salisbury[1], which is now very out of date.

2.2.3 In addition to these two core policies, a number of area strategies feature hotel and visitor accommodation:

- Encouragement of development proposals that improve tourist accommodation and facilities in the Marlborough area in a sustainable manner, plus resistance to loss of bedspaces;
- Additional high quality hotels in Salisbury, as part of an enhanced visitor experience and improved business environment;
- The development of hotel accommodation in Trowbridge as part of creating the environment for office development and investment;
- Tourist accommodation development associated with Cotswold Water Park;
- Identification of a lack of tourist accommodation, especially B&Bs, in the Tisbury area.

2.2.4 Strategic policies support the growth of Wiltshire's tourism sector in a sustainable way, ensuring the protection and where possible enhancement of Wiltshire's environmental and heritage assets, including the delivery of new tourist accommodation and where appropriate the safeguarding of existing facilities.

In terms of the location of development, the settlement strategy does allow for carefully managed development outside of settlement boundaries in specific cases, such as new employment investment where there is an overriding strategic interest, or for other local circumstances such as providing affordable housing, allowing new tourist accommodation or supporting diversification of the rural economy. However, the tone and use of the term 'in exceptional circumstances' is not particularly positive.

[1] Value of Tourism 2008: Wiltshire; Tourism strategy for South Wiltshire 2006; Tourism Topic Paper (supporting the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (which will be replaced by the Wiltshire Core Strategy, once adopted).

2.2.5 The Core Strategy is economy led and as such identifies strategic sites for employment and housing growth. A separate Site Allocations Development Plan Document will be prepared to identify supplementary sites to meet the proposed level of development set in the Core Strategy. Additionally, there are a number of neighbourhood plans in development which are likely to identify sites for development. There are also emerging master plans for Chippenham and Trowbridge.

2.2.6 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule is in draft form and currently includes a levy of £70 per sq m on hotel development across Wiltshire. The charging schedule is likely to be adopted alongside the Core Strategy in summer 2014.

2.2.7 Tourist accommodation policies are supported by a range of model conditions that development control managers can apply, such as:

- Holiday occupancy conditions restricting accommodation from continuous occupation by the same person for more than a defined number of days in any year and re-occupation within 28 days;
- Requiring a guest register to be maintained by the operators of caravan and lodge sites, to prevent permanent residential use, and/or attaching a holiday occupancy only condition;
- Restricting opening and/or occupation of seasonal caravan sites;
- In some instances requiring all caravans to be removed from a site out of season, between 31st October and 1st March.

2.2.8. In addition, the retention policy is supported by a needs exercise that involves demonstrating that the property has been marketed for sale for a minimum of 6-9 months, or that was not commercially viable. This has been applied with mixed success in the few cases that have come forward.

2.2.9 In terms of the workability of these policies from the Council's perspective:

- On the whole, Development Control appear to feel that the policies work well, in terms of permitting development and resisting loss.
- Refusals we understand are rare, and those schemes that have been refused appear to have been refused on the basis of something individual to the site, the scale of development, its design or impact rather than a broader policy principle. An example quoted was the Penruddock Arms (new build accommodation in an AONB and Grade 11 listed building setting).
- Whilst there had been an example of a refusal for permanent warden's accommodation at a caravan and camp site near Stonehenge, the small scale of the site and the failure to demonstrate the need for this accommodation, particularly year round, were the reasons for refusal. Other schemes would be assessed on their own merits.
- In terms of any additional guidance or support to the Development Control team, the main areas identified were:
    - How to judge impact of a new hotel on existing supply;
    - The type of accommodation that the Council should be encouraging in terms of type, standard, size or brand.

2.2.10 The view from the private sector on planning policies indicated some shortcomings and potential barriers to development, in some cases impacting on the future viability and sustainability of the business: Most notably:

- An enforced period of winter closure for self-catering establishments, limiting the ability to take long winter lets to support viability;
- The number of conditions attached to planning permissions;
- The time taken to process planning applications.

2.2.11 Wiltshire Council is committed to a partial review of the Core Strategy; work will start on this at the end of 2014. This review could potentially revisit Core Policies 39 and 40 in the light of the findings and recommendations of this study.

Swindon Visitor Accommodation Policy

2.2.12 The emerging Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 is at an advanced stage of preparation. It is awaiting examination, and likely to be adopted in early 2015. Tourism and leisure are identified as one of the area's key employment sectors under policy CT2. There are no specific hotel policies in the plan; hotels are viewed as a town centre use as a defined in the NPPF and therefore fall within the town centre policy EC3. SD2 (sustainable development) and SC1 (Swindon's central area) are also relevant. Other holiday accommodation is covered under SD2.

2.2.13 Whilst the 2006 Local Plan remains the adopted development plan for Swindon, many of these policies have been superseded. Policies R9 and R12 covered holiday accommodation and hotels/serviced accommodation are in conformity with the NPPF.

2.2.14 Also of relevance:

- The Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule is likely to be put in place following the adoption of the Local Plan early in 2015. There will not be a charge for hotels.

- The Town Centre Masterplan (not part of the LDS) makes some general references to hotels. The Central Area Action Plan mentions hotels in relation to specific area policies and schemes such as the Cultural Quarter, Union Square Commercial Quarter and Swindon Central/railway corridor.

2.3 Driving Growth - Other Relevant Policies and Strategies

Swindon & Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan

2.3.1 The Swindon and Wiltshire LEP have just published their Strategic Economic Plan (March 2014). Its vision is for a transformational growth programme to deliver a leading hub of innovation, world class business and entrepreneurs, an outstanding digital infrastructure, a thriving network of Higher Education Colleges and the heart of the British army. It targets the delivery of 47,000 jobs and 64,000 homes to 2026, and the SWLEP is bidding for £275m of Local Growth Funding to bring forward existing growth plans and new opportunities.

2.3.2 The key opportunities identified are:

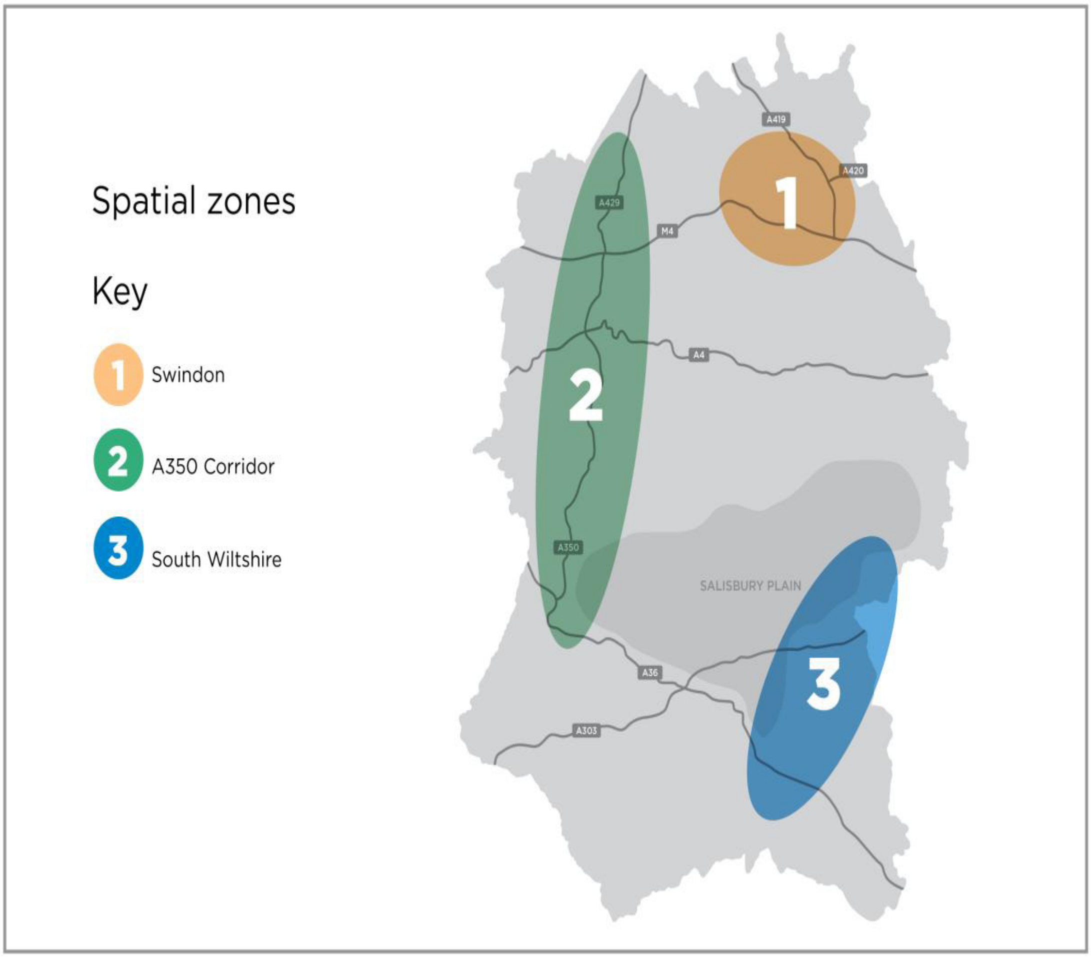
- Innovation – by global businesses such as BMW, Intel and Honda, with a focus on the M4 and A350 corridors, and a strategy to attract more such companies. Dyson is expanding its research facility at Malmesbury which will create 3,000 new engineering jobs. The unique ICT infrastructure around Corsham through MoD investment is an additional driver for new technology firms, as is the cluster of Health and Life Science companies around Porton and the opportunity to develop the Porton Science Park here.

- Military – reforms to the army will add a further 4000 troops and 4000 partners and dependents to the area and the new tri-service defence college of Technical Training at Lyneham opening in 2015 will support 5500 students and staff on site by 2019. The MoD is investing over £1bn in infrastructure in Swindon and Wiltshire. There are also proposals for a major military museum attraction with significant pulling power to draw substantial visitor numbers, complement existing attractions, and increase length of stay.

- Town centres – investment in the poorer town centres is needed to prevent leakage of expenditure and create more attractive places to live, work and visit. This includes:
    - Swindon - a regional leisure destination anchored by the new Oasis Leisure Centre and 6,500 seat arena;
    - Chippenham – improve access and connectivity, expanded retail and leisure offer, a major transport hub around the station, a redeveloped college site, hotel and community campus;
    - Melksham – development of housing alongside a new canal link creating a significant tourism and leisure attraction;
    - Salisbury – sustainable regeneration of sites such as the Maltings, Churchfields industrial estate and Southampton Road to provide office, retail, leisure and other employment space.

- Urban expansion – there are major proposals for new urban expansion around Swindon (8,000 homes in the Eastern villages and 4500 homes at Wichelstowe), Chippenham (2700 homes), Trowbridge (2600 homes) and Salisbury (1100 homes) alongside significant new allocations for employment land. Improving linkages is important to reduce out-commuting.

2.3.3 Three growth zones are identified that cut across local authority boundaries – Swindon (town centre, Eastern Villages and Wichelstowe), the A350 corridor (Malmesbury, Corsham, Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge) and South Wiltshire (Salisbury, Porton and the Garrison Towns (see map).

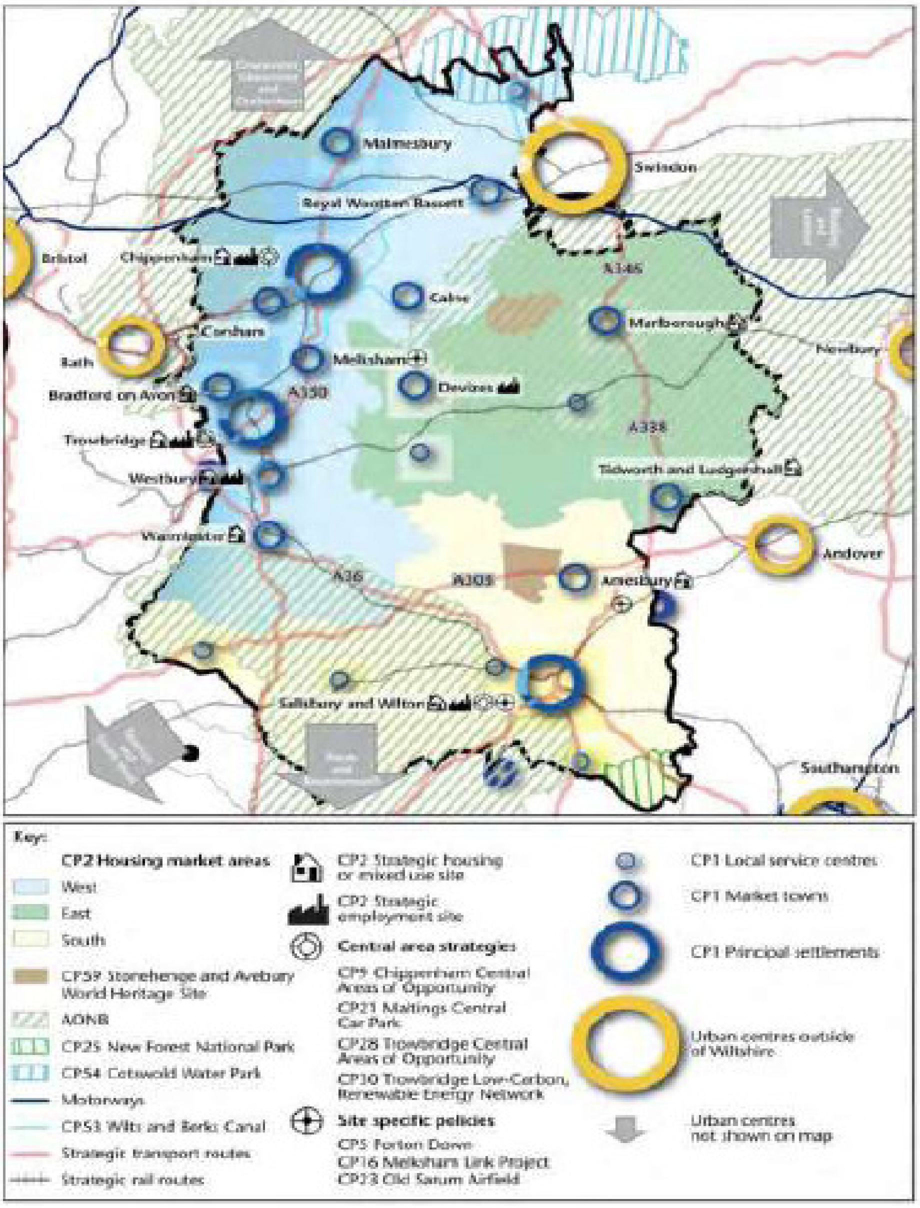


Wiltshire Core Strategy

2.3.4 The levels of growth forecast for Wiltshire to 2026 in the Core Strategy are summarised below:

- 27,000 new homes
- 37,000 new jobs and 178 ha of employment land
- An increase in Wiltshire's population of over 48,000, from 461,480 in 2011 to 510,300 in 2026.

2.3.5 The key diagram below sets out the spatial distribution of this growth.



2.3.6 Wiltshire's Core Strategy strategic objective to deliver a thriving economy identifies a key issue relating to out-commuting from Wiltshire and a need to identify and allocate the right sites in the right locations to meet business needs, and retain and attract business investment in a very competitive market place. Policies seek also to support the delivery of additional opportunities for employment provision over and above those identified at allocated sites, in the main settlements and for rural based businesses, as well as protect existing employment sites where appropriate. The regeneration of brownfield sites in the main settlements and the re-use of redundant MoD facilities are part of this wider sites strategy. Economy policies also support appropriate proposals for tourism development and accommodation.

2.3.7 A number of target sectors have been identified for Wiltshire in order to promote the move towards a higher-value economy. These include:

- Advanced engineering and manufacturing;
- Business services;
- Bioscience;
- Environmental technologies;
- Food and drink;
- ICT and creative industries;
- Agriculture, land-based industries and tourism.

2.3.8 Many of the key projects identified to deliver the growth targeted in the Core Strategy for Wiltshire are identified in the SWLEP's Strategic Economic Plan, including the army re-basing programme around Salisbury, the tri-service training college at Lyneham, the expansion of Dyson at Malmesbury, and the town centre regeneration programmes.

Swindon Borough Local Plan

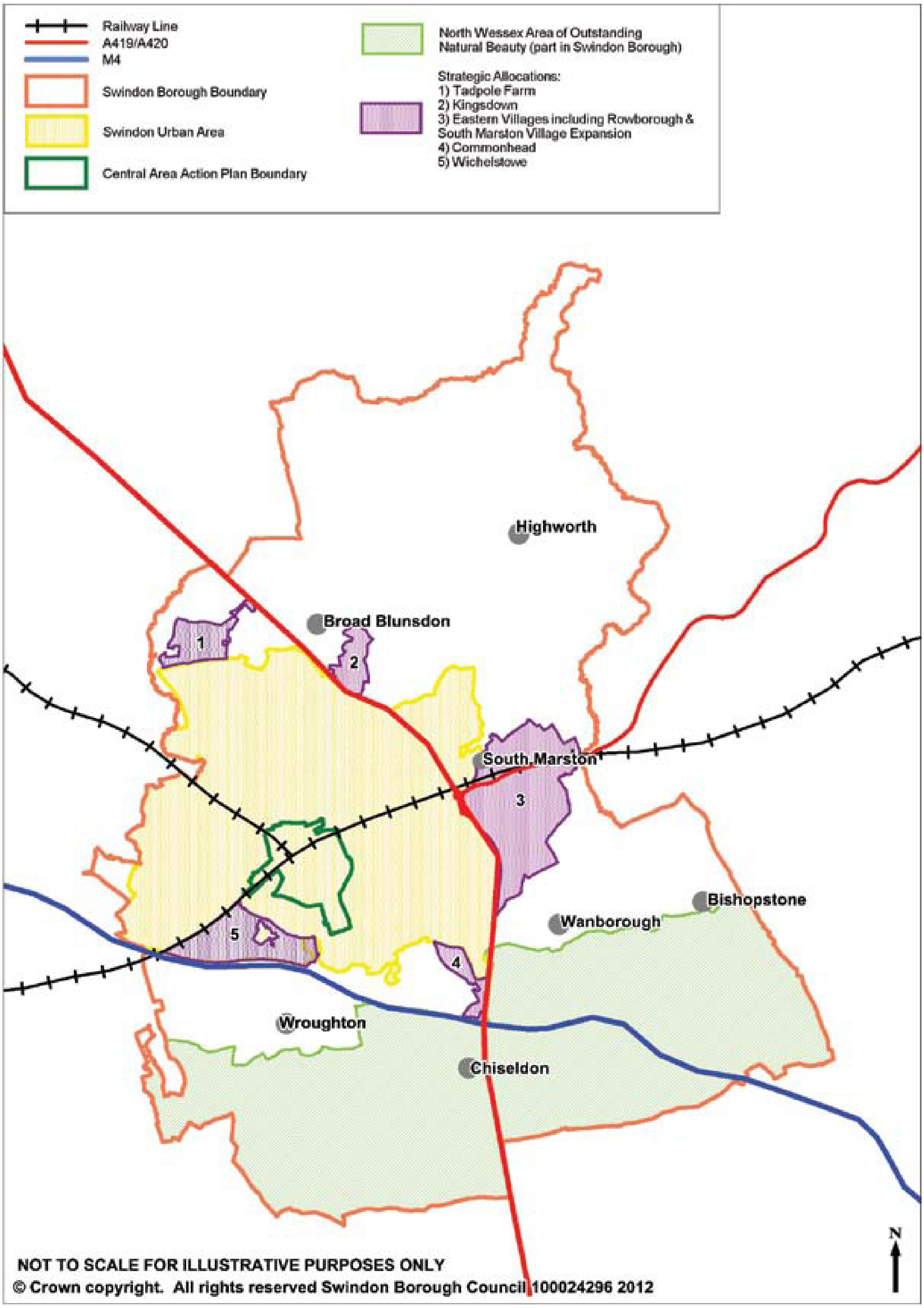
2.3.9 The levels of growth forecast for Swindon to 2026 in the Swindon Borough Local Plan and the broad spatial vision are summarised below:

- 22,000 new homes
- A population increase to 252,900 by 2026, an increase of 43,200 from the 2011 base of 209,700
- 19,600 new jobs
- The development of 119.5 ha of employment land

2.3.10 The key diagram overleaf sets out the spatial strategy and distribution of this growth. It centres around a combination of focused growth on Swindon urban area and strategic sites for new development at Wichelstowe, Commonhead, Tadpole Farm, Kingsdown and the new Eastern Villages, Rowborough and expansion at South Marston. The map overleaf quantifies the more detailed housing and employment land allocations.

2.3.11 The policies relating to employment growth are underpinned by an Economic Strategy for Swindon 2012-26. The 6 priorities identified to deliver that growth focus on:

- Positioning Swindon as a hub of engineering and manufacturing technology – automotive, hydrogen fuel development, digital technologies and ICT;
- Revitalising the town centre – office, retail, leisure and public realm;
- Establishing Swindon as a regional leisure destination – major attractions around Oasis, improved arts and cultural attractions, and the promotion of the visitor economy;
- Creating a low carbon Swindon
- Developing Swindon's higher education provision and connections to industry and other institutions;
- Creating a place of opportunity for young people.- including a University Technology College



Railway Line
A419/A420
M4
Swindon Borough Boundary
Swindon Urban Area
Central Area Action Plan Boundary
North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (part in Swindon Borough)
Strategic Allocations:
1) Tadpole Farm
2) Kingsdown
3) Eastern Villages including Rowborough & South Marston Village Expansion
4) Commonhead
5) Wichelstowe
Highworth
Broad Blunsdon
South Marston
Bishopstone
Wanborough
Wroughton
Chiseldon
1
2
3
4
5
N
NOT TO SCALE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY
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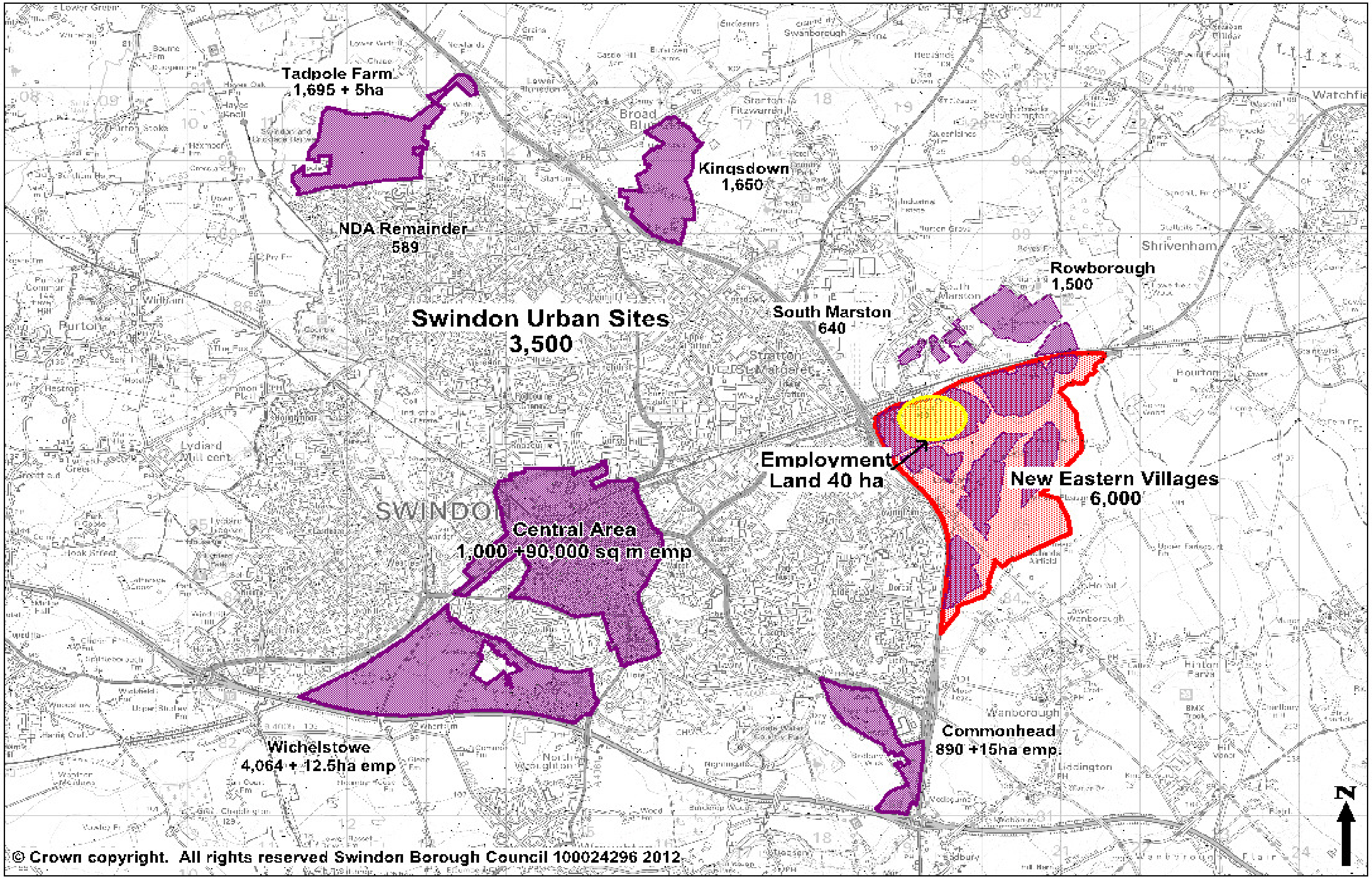
Tadpole Farm
1,695 + 5ha
Kingsdown
1,650
NDA Remainder
589
Swindon Urban Sites
3,500
South Marston
640
Rowborough
1,500
Employment
Land 40 ha
New Eastern Villages
6,000
Central Area
1,000 +90,000 sq m emp
Wichelstowe
4,064 + 12.5ha emp
Commonhead
890 +15ha emp.
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2.3.12 Some of the key schemes to help deliver this strategy include:

- Kimmerfields – this is Swindon's new central business district, formerly known as Union Square. It is a £350m scheme to create a new commercial heart for Swindon on an 18 acre site, being developed by Muse Developments. It will deliver 650,000 sq ft of offices, 150,000 sq ft of retail, 450 residential units, a new bus station, Primary health Care Trust building, public square, and a hotel.
- North Star and Oasis Leisure Development – a 40 acre development area being developed by Moirai Capital Investments. Proposals include a £1.5m refurbishment of the Oasis Centre, an indoor ski slope, 21,500 sq m of associated retail and restaurants, a 6,500 capacity indoor events arena and a sports hall, a cycle track, gym and multi-use games area.
- The Corn Exchange – proposals for this site aim to create a new centre for Swindon Old Town in a heritage-led regeneration scheme. It includes a hotel, high quality restaurants, residential and leisure facilities.
- Regent Circus – Swindon's new retail and leisure destination in the town centre, located on the site of the former college. The scheme will deliver a 50,000 sq ft food store, a 6 screen cinema, and 8 restaurants.
- A new cultural quarter for Swindon's town centre that will incorporate a new £15m art gallery and museum that will act as a catalyst for wider regeneration.

2.4. Other Office, Distribution and Supermarket Schemes

2.4.1. Our research has also identified the following major office, distribution and supermarket schemes in Wiltshire in addition to those already identified in the Strategic Economic Plan and Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Home Bargain's £70m regional distribution centre and southern management training centre that is currently under construction at Solstice Park at Amesbury. The training centre will train 170 managers per year;
- The development of a new £7m headquarters building for Hitachi Capital's fleet management business on the White Horse Business Park in Trowbridge;
- Plans for a new Tesco supermarket at Marsh Farm on the outskirts of Royal Wootton Bassett;
- The redevelopment of the former Bowyers site in Trowbridge for a Morrison's supermarket, eight-screen Cineworld cinema, six restaurants and a pub;
- The development of a Waitrose supermarket in Malmesbury;
- The redevelopment of Langley Park in Chippenham to include a mix of industrial, office, residential, retail and leisure uses.

2.5 Tourism Growth Prospects

National Tourism Market Trends

2.5.1 In terms of **future prospects**, tourism remains a growth industry in the UK. Research undertaken by Deloitte and Oxford Economics for VisitBritain in 2013[1] projects a real annual growth rate in domestic tourist spending on overnight stays of 3.8% from 2013 and a real growth rate of 6.1% per year for spending in the UK by overseas tourists. Over the next decade or so, the tourism market place will be influenced positively and negatively by a complex range of factors – economic, demographic, social, technological etc. Those of most relevance to Wiltshire and Swindon include

- **The staycation -** a key trend during the recession has been the growth of the staycation market as UK residents opted to take holidays in this country rather than going abroad. There are two groups of staycationers **-** "Switchers" include a high proportion of families - they are primarily motivated to 'switch' a foreign holiday for one at home because of financial constraints - and "Extras" who tend to be younger and are more likely to be single. They are less affected by their economic situation and are more motivated by a desire to explore the UK and go somewhere new. Research undertaken for Visit England in November 2013 suggests that UK residents are beginning to more positively consider holidays abroad again as the country comes out of recession, disposable incomes start to rise, and job security returns. This suggests that the staycation trend may start to wane. Having said this, people that have had an enjoyable holiday experience in England in the last few years seem to be well disposed to do so again and the growth in short break taking looks set to continue with many people now taking multiple short breaks rather than one main holiday.

- **The rising cost of petrol** is resulting in Britons taking holidays closer to home.

- **Demand for 2-night weekend break stays in hotels has reduced** during the recession but looks set to recover as the economy improves and consumer confidence returns.

[1] Tourism Jobs and Growth: The economic Contribution of the Tourism Economy to the UK, Deloitte/Oxford Economics, November 2013.

- **An ageing UK population** – the percentage of the UK population over 65 is increasing. It has widely been considered that this generation is a powerful economic force, with sufficient time and disposable income to enjoy short breaks and regular holidays.

- **Widening younger markets, with greater economic power.** Young people in Britain are staying at home longer and delaying marriage and parenting. The consequence is an increase in pre-family travellers. The delays in parenting also mean families are getting older (and more sophisticated and affluent). Similarly the emptynester market of the future will less likely be 45+ but more likely to be 55 or even 60+.

- **The rapidly rising birth rate** in the UK should result in a growth in the pre-school family holiday and short break market.

- **Short breaks -** society has become increasingly time poor with shifting patterns of trip taking to higher frequency short breaks.

- **Tourism is becoming increasingly experiential** - tourists are looking for immersion in a culture, unique experiences, authenticity, exploration, adventure and personal fulfilment from their holiday experience.

- Greater interest in health and fitness and cheaper and more widely available camping equipment, outdoor clothing and bikes are fuelling growth in **interest in outdoor activities** as a key driver for holidays and leisure breaks.

- **Growing interest in 'green' holidays** – while purchasing holidays on environmental impacts is not currently mainstream, there is growing interest in low impact holiday and short break options.

- There is growing demand for **'foodie' breaks**, with increasing numbers of destinations and tourism businesses trying to entice people for breaks based on eating and drinking in award winning restaurants and gastropubs, sampling and buying local produce, cookery courses and attending food and drink festivals.

- **Customers continue to be ever more demanding** in terms of the quality of facilities and standard of food and service that they expect to receive from accommodation businesses. Those that fail to invest and to deliver what customers are looking for are quickly getting left behind.

- **The Internet**, increasingly accessed on the move from smart phones, is now the main channel for researching, booking and planning holidays, breaks and days out. It has dramatically increased the marketing reach for destinations and tourism businesses, providing new ways of affordably reaching millions of potential customers. Consumers are increasingly booking accommodation through the growing number of third party websites that offer discounted accommodation and holidays such as LateRooms, Lastminute.com, and booking.com, and taking advantage of special offers promoted through daily deals sites such as Groupon, Wowcher, Travelzoo and Secret Escapes. This is resulting in an increasingly deal-driven and competitive market but enables accommodation operators to sell late availability accommodation much more effectively, enabling them to boost occupancies, albeit at reduced rates. The growth of social media and customer review sites, in particular Tripadvisor is making it ever more important for accommodation businesses to deliver excellent standards of service and facilities to ensure that they achieve favourable reviews and high rankings.

- **Inbound tourism** is forecast to grow strongly in the UK, boosted by the massive worldwide exposure of the country during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Strong growth is expected to come from the emerging middle classes in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Britain welcomed a record 32.9 million overseas visitors in 2013. Spending by overseas tourists passed the £20bn mark for the first time, at a record £21bn, an increase of 13% on 2012, which itself was a record year. VisitBritain is forecasting a further increase of 2.5% in overseas tourist visits in 2014 and a 4.2% increase in overseas visitor spending.

Trends in the Wiltshire Tourism Market

2.5.2. In the 5 years between 2006 and 2010 Wiltshire slipped from 13th to 30th (out of 45) fastest growing English destinations in terms of visitor spend. By 2010 the continued loss of market share meant that Wiltshire was being out-performed by every other South West destination. A lack of investment in the visitor economy compared to other destinations, including investment in visitor accommodation and a paucity of new visitor accommodation coming on stream, is likely to have contributed to this fall back in competitive market performance.

2.5.3. The VisitWiltshire Business Plan 2012-2015 seeks to redress this and through leadership, activity and influence to grow the value of Wiltshire's visitor economy, winning back market share and matching the national tourism growth targets of 5% pa.

The Value of Staying Visitors to Wiltshire

2.5.4. According to the latest Cambridge model figures for the county, visitor spending contributed £959 million to the Wiltshire economy in 2012, and with the multiplier effect of tourism supported business turnover this figure increases to £1.4 billion. This level of spending supported over 27,500 jobs, 8% of all Wiltshire employment.

2.5.5. Staying visitors accounted for 1.7m trips and 5.6m nights and £321m of spending in Wiltshire in 2012. Visitors staying in serviced accounted for 52% of staying visitor spend in the county in 2012, followed by visits to friends and relatives (26%) and self-catering accommodation (12%). The full breakdown by type of accommodation used and sub-area is set out in the tables overleaf.

Table 10: Number of total overnight trips by accommodation

	Kennet	North Wiltshire	Salisbury	Swindon	West Wiltshire	Total Wiltshire	% distribution (2012)
Serviced	50,000	116,000	121,000	289,000	77,000	653,000	38%
Self catering	20,000	23,000	25,000	4,000	36,000	109,000	6%
Touring caravans /tents	21,000	14,000	36,000	0	11,000	83,000	5%
Static vans/holiday centres	0	0	0	0	17,000	17,000	1%
Group/campus	0	0	4,000	0	0	4,000	0%
Second homes	5,000	0	2,000	1,000	0	2,000	0%
Other/mixed	6,000	4,000	7,000	1,000	4,000	23,000	1%
Paying Guests	5,000	9,000	8,000	14,000	9,000	47,000	3%
SFR[3]	92,000	154,000	135,000	233,000	147,000	760,000	45%
Total 2012	**195,000**	**321,000**	**338,000**	**543,000**	**303,000**	**1,699,000**	**100%**
Total 2011	181,000	291,000	312,000	482,000	297,000	1,546,000	
Total 2010	169,000	318,000	338,000	530,000	309,000	1,692,000	
% change 2012/11	8%	10%	8%	13%	2%	10%	
% change 2012/10	15%	1%	0%	2%	-2%	0%	

Table 11: Number of total nights by accommodation

	Kennet	North Wiltshire	Salisbury	Swindon	West Wiltshire	Total Wiltshire	% distribution (2012)
Serviced	107,000	253,000	263,000	630,000	168,000	1,422,000	26%
Self catering	107,000	122,000	136,000	22,000	198,000	586,000	11%
Touring caravans /tents	78,000	51,000	130,000	1,000	39,000	299,000	5%
Static vans/holiday centres	0	0	0	0	86,000	86,000	2%
Group/campus	0	1,000	20,000	0	0	21,000	0%
Second homes	28,000	0	50,000	17,000	0	67,000	1%
Other/mixed	39,000	29,000	43,000	7,000	29,000	147,000	3%
Paying Guests	20,000	35,000	30,000	53,000	34,000	173,000	3%
SFR[3]	331,000	552,000	484,000	835,000	527,000	2,728,000	49%
Total 2012	**683,000**	**1,042,000**	**1,157,000**	**1,566,000**	**1,081,000**	**5,529,000**	**100%**
Total 2011	741,000	1,117,000	1,245,000	1,657,000	1,138,000	5,898,000	
Total 2010	693,000	1,041,000	1,156,000	1,544,000	1,117,000	5,551,000	
% change 2012/11	-8%	-7%	-7%	-5%	-5%	-6%	
% change 2012/10	-1%	0%	0%	1%	-3%	0%	

Table 12: Total overnight trip expenditure by accommodation

	Kennet	North Wiltshire	Salisbury	Swindon	West Wiltshire	Total Wiltshire	% distribution (2012)
Serviced	£12,556,000	£29,361,000	£30,648,000	£73,264,000	£19,638,000	£165,467,000	52%
Self catering	£7,271,000	£8,297,000	£9,239,000	£1,540,000	£13,430,000	£39,777,000	12%
Touring /tents	£3,134,000	£2,037,000	£5,227,000	£56,000	£1,592,000	£12,046,000	4%
Static /holiday centres	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,668,000	£4,668,000	1%
Group/campus	£0	£103,000	£1,362,000	£0	£0	£1,465,000	0%
Second homes	£0	£0	£956,000	£319,000	£0	£1,275,000	0%
Other/mixed	£745,000	£554,000	£839,000	£133,000	£577,000	£2,848,000	1%
Paying Guests	£1,179,000	£1,966,000	£1,723,000	£2,975,000	£1,876,000	£9,719,000	3%
SFR[3]	£10,162,000	£16,937,000	£14,851,000	£25,632,000	£16,166,000	£83,748,000	26%
Total 2012	**£35,046,000**	**£59,254,000**	**£64,847,000**	**£103,921,000**	**£57,946,000**	**£321,011,000**	**100%**
Total 2011	£30,000,000	£50,000,000	£56,000,000	£86,000,000	£47,000,000	£269,350,000	
Total 2010	£33,627,000	£55,792,000	£62,342,000	£97,404,000	£54,136,000	£303,300,000	
% change 2012/11	17%	19%	16%	21%	23%	19%	
% change 2012/10	4%	6%	4%	7%	7%	6%	

Source: Volume and Value of Tourism in Wiltshire 2012, Tourism South East

VisitWiltshire Target Visitor Markets and Marketing Strategy

2.5.6 VisitWiltshire has ambitious plans to grow the market, and particularly the value that visitor spending can bring by an additional £20m, with a focus on staying visitors. The quality, range and capacity of the accommodation offer then will be of vital importance to achieving this target. The fit of the current offer with the requirements of both current markets and the new aspirational markets that the destination is seeking to attract will key to success.

2.5.7 Some highlights from the 2013 marketing strategy of relevance to this study include:

- Key target markets are:
  - Mosaic types – Hardworking Families, Yesterday's Captains, Garden Suburbia, and Innate Conservatives;
  - By origin – from East and West Midlands, Greater and Central London, and M4 corridor;
  - Additional markets are families and younger couples;
  - Overseas visitors – from Germany, North America, Netherlands and Japan.
- Product brand values include:
  - Ancient and mystical;
  - Beautiful landscapes;
  - Easy access.
- Attack brands are:
  - Stonehenge;
  - Salisbury;
  - Icons including White Horses, Avebury, AONBs;
  - Dispersal from the Bath and London attack brands
- Thematic messaging focuses on heritage cities, active outdoors and rural escapes;
- A target to increase group visits to Wiltshire by 10%;

2.5. 8 VisitWiltshire's Business Plan 2012-2015 aims to grow inbound visits and visitor spend, win market share and stimulate economic growth. Targets for growth in visitor spending are in line with England's Strategic Framework for Tourism at 5% p.a., which would grow Wiltshire's visitor economy from £1.1bn to £1.3bn by 2015, and generate 3,000 jobs.

Area Visions Tourism Strategies & Priorities

2.5.9 Wiltshire has parts of three **AONBs** – Cotswolds, Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs, and North Wessex Downs. Clearly these are sensitive landscapes which draw visitors because of their attractiveness, but which also need to be conserved and enhanced, therefore a balance needs to be reached between protection and enjoyment through sustainable tourism development. However, without additional visitor accommodation supply, growth will be constrained. Each of these AONBs has a Management Plan which addresses tourism to varying degrees. Below we highlight some key messages of relevance to this study in each case:

- The Cotswolds has developed and published a Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the AONB 2011-2016. It identifies a need for more lower end basic accommodation, particularly in terms of camping and caravanning facilities and bunk-style accommodation, and hostels. Glamping is also identified as a niche product to grow, and B&B for horses and cycle accommodation also feature. Other opportunities centre around new product development relating to walking, cycling, local produce, health and well-being, access for all holidays, rural skills and conservation holidays, and green tourism. There is a desire to convert day visitors to staying visitors through suitable product development
- The North Wessex Downs Management Plan recognises the potential for sustainable tourism, particularly for the performance of the AONB as a short break destination, to be improved. Currently the area is under-performing as a staying visitor destination, with around half of overnight stays being with friends and relatives and the majority of stays in hotels and guest houses being for business purposes. The management plan talks about appealing to affluent young and older couples from London and the Home Counties who could bring real benefits to the rural economy, spending on food, drink and in local shops.
- In the case of Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB some work has been done on developing a visitor economy strategy. The lack of cheap group accommodation was identified together with insufficient high quality accommodation for shooting. A Sustainable Rural Tourism Project was introduced in 2012 to support rural tourism businesses through networking, business support and other initiatives such as encouraging the up-take of the Green Tourism Scheme.

2.5.10 There is a tourism strategy for South Wiltshire, which covers the key attractions/destination of Stonehenge and Salisbury & Cathedral, but as it was produced in 2005 it is now very out of date. These attractions however, generating 1.25m and 250,000 respectively remain a significant draw to the area with international renown and validation via WHS status. The strategy identified some accommodation needs, which were aspirations at that time, and which have informed emerging policies. As far as far as it has been possible to tell these have not been substantiated through any feasibility assessment, and include:

- A 4 star 100 room hotel that could cater for the groups market;
- At least one boutique hotel;
- More 3 star provision;
- A general need to up-grade the quality of hotel supply;
- A 25% increase in hotel supply and 15% increase in B&B supply to 2015;
- Improvements to the quality of pub accommodation and inns;
- Improvements to the quality of self-catering accommodation particularly more 4 star and above;
- An increase in the supply of self-catering accommodation in Salisbury city centre;
- Some good quality low cost accommodation, including group/hostel accommodation.

2.5.11. Other priorities contained in this tourism strategy for tourism development included:

- A conference facility with capacity for 250-800;
- A new attraction of international significance;
- Improved retail, food and beverage and early evening visitor offer;
- Facilities for walking, cycling and outdoor activities.

2.5.12 This strategy is being replaced by the Destination Management & Development Plan (DMP) currently being prepared by VisitWiltshire which will provide a much-needed comprehensive assessment and plan for the whole of Wiltshire and Swindon, and which in terms of visitor accommodation needs will be informed by our research findings and recommendations.

2.5.13. The Salisbury Vision regeneration strategy and programme and Salisbury BID back this up and attempt to implement some of these recommendations, or provide the backcloth for private sector investment in the tourism offer to take place. The regeneration programme focuses on the development of some key sites – the Maltings and Central car park (retail-led mixed use), Churchfields (residential-led mixed use) and Southampton Rd/Eastern Gateway (residential-led office and retail). Churchfields includes a hotel and conference centre.

2.5.14 Several of the other market towns across Wiltshire are gearing up to improve their tourism offer and exposure to the market, including Corsham, Warminster, Devizes and Chippenham. Common themes include improving the independent retail offer, developing events and festivals, promoting and developing the arts and heritage assets, walking and cycling. Group accommodation, better quality hotels and caravan site provision feature to varying degrees.

Visitor Attraction Development

2.5.15. The long-awaited £27m **Stonehenge visitor centre** opened in December 2013. It includes an exhibition of prehistoric objects, a forensic reconstruction of an early Neolithic man and a 360 degree virtual 'stand in the stones' experience, alongside a cafe, shop, education space and toilets. The building is located 1.5miles from the monument, which visitors will now access by a 10-minute shuttle bus or on foot. The project has included closing the A334, which has been grassed over. An outdoor gallery with several reconstructed Neolithic houses opened in 2014. The new centre will significantly improve the visitor experience at Stonehenge and the marketing partnership with VisitWiltshire will contribute towards extending visitor length of stay considerably. A pre-booked timed ticket system has been introduced to help minimise queues and avoid overcrowding at peak times.

2.5.16. Longleat is reportedly considering plans to develop theme park rides. The development, called **Project Inca**, would see the creation of a new area on currently unused land with two roller coasters, two water-based rides and a number of smaller rides. This will build on the significant levels of investment seen in the recent past at Longleat. We have no information about whether or when the project will proceed

2.5.17. We understand that VisitWiltshire have been leading on discussions to bring a major new visitor attraction to Wiltshire . Further information is expected July 2014. Early indications from the DMP research indicates the need for another major groups-focused attraction in the county.

2.5.18. The latest plans for the **Oasis Leisure Centre** in Swindon include a 6,500 capacity music and entertainment arena, a 200metre real snow indoor ski slope with a separate slope for beginners and a fun snow area, ten pin bowling, a multiplex cinema, a hotel, leisure-related retail, cafes, bars and restaurants and multi-storey parking. The ski slope will be the longest UK slope.

2.6 Prospects for Growth in Accommodation Demand

2.6.1. Our analysis of the above strategic, policy and market context suggests the following prospects for future growth in demand for hotel and visitor accommodation in Wiltshire and Swindon by market:

- Given the scale of employment growth forecast in Wiltshire and Swindon, **corporate demand** for hotels and other forms of serviced accommodation should increase as office development and business park schemes are progressed. The expansion of activities linked to the MoD will also be an important driver of future growth in corporate demand. Growth is likely to be strongest in Swindon, particularly linked to the development of engineering and manufacturing technology here and office development in the town centre, particularly in terms of the Kimmerfields central business district. Corporate demand should also grow in Salisbury and some of the other key market towns where business park and office schemes are proposed and where significant investments are planned e.g. the expansion of Dyson at Malmesbury, new technology infrastructure at Corsham, Home Bargains regional distribution centre and southern management training centre at Solstice Park, new Hitachi Capital HQ in Trowbridge, and development of Porton Science Park. The army re-basing programme and Super Garrison at Salisbury and the tri-services technical training college at Lyneham are also likely to generate increased corporate demand for their surrounding areas.

- **Contractor demand** for budget hotels, pub accommodation and guest houses looks set to increase significantly as the planned major development schemes are progressed.

- Whilst the **corporate residential conference market** started to show some signs of recovery in 2013, it looks unlikely to return to pre-recession levels of demand given the cutbacks that companies have made to training and meeting budgets, the development of in-house meeting and training facilities by many companies and the growing use of video and teleconferencing technology.

- Given Swindon's competitive advantages of location and rate, there is scope for some of Swindon's larger hotels to target small to medium-sized **residential association conferences,** also providing an opportunity also to boost demand at weekends and over the summer months.

- There is potential for Swindon to attract **large association conferences.** Whilst the scale of this opportunity requires some research, the ability to use the conference facilities at STEAM and possibly the new arena at the Oasis, adds new product and capacity potential to the advantages of location and rate that Swindon offers as a conference destination. The arena could also provide opportunities to attract **trade exhibitions**. Further hotel development in the town centre is likely to be needed first for Swindon to fully capitalise on opportunities in these markets.

- There is good potential for the continued development of **leisure break business** in Wiltshire, with the key strengths of its iconic attractions of Stonehenge, Salisbury Cathedral and Longleat. Wiltshire and Swindon's location mean that they also provide an excellent base for visiting surrounding destinations with national and international appeal, such as the Cotswolds, Bath, Oxford and the New Forest.

- The county is well placed to benefit from some of the key market trends affecting leisure break demand in terms of the ageing of the UK population and increasing numbers of older actives; the growth in the pre-family/career couples market; the increasing interest in outdoor activity breaks; and the growing concern for the environment and interest in low impact/ environmentally sustainable short break options. These latter trends should drive growth in leisure breaks focused around specific activities in the county, such as walking, cycling, shooting, horse riding and food and drink. The new Stonehenge visitor centre is expected to generate increased leisure break business, given the extended duration of visits to the site that it is achieving and the requirement to pre-book visits. The development of other visitor attractions and events and festivals also have significant potential to drive increased levels of leisure-break business.

- The future growth of leisure break business in Wiltshire will however be contingent on the development of additional accommodation given that many of the county's establishments are operating at or near capacity during the summer months and at weekends. New markets for leisure breaks, such as career couples from London and the Home Counties can also be attracted in increasing numbers if more high quality boutique style accommodation offers are developed.

- Wiltshire should benefit from the anticipated growth in inbound tourism to the UK in terms of greater numbers of **overseas tourists** visiting or passing through the county. Its iconic attractions and strategic location mean it is well-placed to capitalise on the growth in this market. There is also potential to capture overseas tourists travelling through the county to the West Country for stop off visits. The Dutch and German markets appear to offer particular potential for touring caravan, motor home and camping holidays and stop overs.

- Growth in the UK and overseas **group tour market presents an opportunity for** Swindon and Wiltshire to attract additional demand from these markets. This is a key weekend market for Swindon hotels that they will continue to target to boost weekend occupancies. Group tour demand is set to grow as a result of the projected ageing of the UK and European population and the growth in overseas tourism. Group tour business can however be very low-rated and hotels will usually only take it to boost off peak periods or in the absence of demand from other higher paying markets. Hotels may therefore seek to reduce the levels of group tour business that they take as demand grows from other markets. Given the more limited bedroom capacity of most of Wiltshire's hotels there may be more mileage in seeking to attract independent group tours and small, special interest groups, which are usually prepared to pay higher prices for hotel accommodation.

- Accommodation demand from **wedding parties** should grow as the Wiltshire and Swindon populations increase and the supply of wedding venues develops.

- Accommodation demand from **people visiting friends and relatives** should also increase as the population grows.

- There could be some scope to increase demand for **canal boat holidays and breaks** on the Kennet and Avon Canal if the supply of hire boats is expanded.

3. HOTELS

3.1. Current & Proposed Supply

Competitive Hotel Supply

3.1.1 The accommodation audit identified 80 hotels in Wiltshire and Swindon with a total of 4,072 letting bedrooms[1]. This supply is analysed by standard and location in the table overleaf.

3.1.2 Swindon has by far the largest hotel stock in the area - 22 hotels with a total of just over 2,000 letting bedrooms - almost as many hotel bedrooms as in the whole of Wiltshire. Hotels in Cricklade and Royal Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire and at the Cotswold Water Park at South Cerney in Gloucestershire also largely trade in the Swindon hotel market, taking the total competitive stock of hotels for the town to 28 , with a total of just over 2,500 letting bedrooms.

SWINDON BOROUGH HOTEL SUPPLY
BY STANDARD/TYPE OF HOTEL– JUNE 2014

Standard of Hotel	Hotels	Bedrooms	Percentage of Total Bedrooms %	Average Size of Hotel (Bedrooms)
5 Star	-	-	-	-
4 Star	4	595	28.8	149
Boutique	-	-	-	-
3 Star	9	783	37.8	87
2 Star	-	-	-	-
Budget	7	657	31.8	94
Not Graded	1	17	0.8	17
Serviced Apartments	1	16	0.8	16
TOTAL	**22**	**2068**	**100.0**	**94**

[1] Other elements of serviced accommodation supply are dealt with elsewhere in this report e.g. pubs and inns.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON HOTEL SUPPLY - JUNE 2014

Area	5 Star		Boutique		4 Star		3 Star		2 Star		Ungraded		Budget		Svcd Apts		TOTAL	
	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms
Amesbury					1	103					3	80	1	69			**5**	**252**
Bradford on Avon							3	83									**3**	**83**
Calne					1	43	1	26									**2**	**69**
Chippenham	1[1]	48					2	73			1	23	3	191			**7**	**335**
Corsham	1[2]	42					2	77									**3**	**119**
Cricklade							1	46									**1**	**46**
Devizes							1	25			1	19	1	53			**3**	**97**
Landford											1	14					**1**	**14**
Malmesbury	1[3]	23	1	12			2	61									**4**	**96**
Marlborough							1	37			1	12					**2**	**49**
Melksham							1	24	1	13							**2**	**37**
Purton							1	17									**1**	**17**
Royal Wootton Bassett							2	108			1	9					**3**	**117**
Salisbury					3	145	4	109	1	20	2	58	1	78	1	12	**12**	**422**
Swindon					4	595	9	783			1	17	7	657	1	16	**22**	**2068**
Trowbridge							1	21			3	37	1	80			**5**	**138**
Warminster					1	32							1	53			**2**	**85**
Westbury											2	28					**2**	**28**
TOTAL	**3**	**113**	**1**	**12**	**10**	**918**	**31**	**1490**	**2**	**33**	**16**	**297**	**15**	**1181**	**2**	**28**	**80**	**4072**

Notes:
1. The Manor House Hotel and Golf Club, Castle Coombe
2. Lucknam Park, Colerne
3. Whatley Manor, Easton Grey
4.

3.1.3 The Swindon hotel supply is a broadly even mix of 4 star, 3 star and budget/limited service hotels. There are no boutique hotels currently serving Swindon and the town has a very limited stock of serviced apartments.

3.1.4 Many of the UK's leading national and international hotel brands are represented in Swindon, including Hilton, Marriott, Holiday Inn, Jury's Inn, Village Urban Resort, Holiday Inn Express, Premier Inn, Travelodge and Campanile.

3.1.5 The overall quality of Swindon's hotel supply appears to be good, although a few hotels are receiving mostly negative customer reviews on Tripadvisor for the quality of their bedrooms, public areas, food and service.

3.1.6 The hotel stock in Swindon is spread across the town , linked primarily to key business park locations. The hotel stock in Swindon town centre is relatively limited and all at the budget or midmarket level. The town centre no longer has a 4 star hotel following the closure of the Menzies Hotel at the end of 2013.

3.1.7 Wiltshire has 58 hotels with a total of 2,004 letting bedrooms. In addition the 4 star Warner Leisure Hotels adults only Littlecote House Hotel (201 bedrooms) is located on the edge of the county at Chilton Foliat near Hungerford. The county's hotel supply is primarily a mix of 3 star, 4 star, budget and ungraded hotels. Wiltshire also has three luxury 5 star country house hotels. It only has one small boutique hotel and only one small serviced apartment operation in Salisbury.

WILTSHIRE HOTEL SUPPLY[1]
BY STANDARD/TYPE OF HOTEL– JUNE 2014

Standard of Hotel[2]	Hotels	Bedrooms	Percentage of Total Bedrooms %	Average Size of Hotel (Bedrooms)
5 Star	3	113	5.6	38
4 Star	6	323	16.1	54
Boutique	1	12	0.6	12
3 Star	22	707	35.3	32
2 Star	2	33	1.7	17
Budget	8	524	26.1	66
Not Graded	15	280	14.0	19
Serviced Apartments	1	12	0.6	12
TOTAL	**58**	**2004**	**100.0**	**37**

Notes:

1. Official star rating or equivalent positioning

3.1.8 Wiltshire's 3 and 4 star hotel stock includes:

- Two 4 star and five 3 star country house hotels;
- One 4 star golf resort and two 3 star golf & country club hotels;
- A 3 star Luxury Family Hotel (Woolley Grange near Bradford on Avon).

3.1.9 The county's 3 and 4 star hotels are otherwise located in Salisbury and in and around Wiltshire's main towns.

3.1.10 One of Wiltshire's 5 star country house hotels (The Manor House Hotel at Castle Coombe) also offers golf.

3.1.11 Most of the county's 4 and 5 star country house and golf hotels have spas, in some cases quite extensive ones. One 3 star country house hotel (Luxury Family Hotels' Woolley Grange) also has a spa, while three other 3 star country house and golf hotels have leisure facilities.

WITLSHIRE COUNTRY HOUSE & GOLF HOTELS -JUNE 2014

Hotel	Location	Grade[1]	Bedrooms	Spa	Leisure	Golf
Lucknam Park	Colerne	5 star	42	√		
The Manor House Hotel	Castle Coombe	5 star	48			√
Whatley Manor	East Grey	5 star	23	√		
Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf	Bowood	4 star	43	√		√
Bishopstrow House	Warminster	4 star	32	√		
Homewood Park	Freshford	4 star	21	√		
Howards House Hotel	Teffont Evias	Boutique	9			
Leigh Park Country House Hotel	Bradford on Avon	3 star	38			
Widbrook Grange	Bradford on Avon	3 star	20		√	
Woolley Grange	Bradford on Avon	3 star Luxury Family	25	√		
Stanton Manor	Stanton St Quintin	3 star	23			
Guyers House Hotel	Corsham	3 star	37			
Cricklade House Hotel & Country Club	Cricklade	3 star	46		√	√
The Wiltshire Hotel, Golf & Country Club	Royal Wootton Bassett	3 star	58		√	√
Old Manor	Trowbridge	3 star	21			

Note:
1. Official star rating or equivalent positioning

3.1.12 Wiltshire's 3 and 4 star hotels are predominantly small (20-40 bedrooms). The only large hotel with more than 100 bedrooms is the Holiday Inn Salisbury-Stonehenge at Amesbury with 103 bedrooms. The next largest hotel in the county is the Mercure White Hart in Salisbury, with 68 bedrooms.

3.1.13 Wiltshire has 8 budget hotels operated by either Premier Inn or Travelodge. Premier Inn is represented in Chippenham, Salisbury and now Trowbridge, where it opened an 80-bedroom hotel in December 2013. Travelodge is represented in Amesbury, the Leigh Delamere M4 motorway service area, Devizes and Warminster.

3.1.14 Just over half of the hotels in Wiltshire are independently owned and operated. 25 hotels are managed or marketed under local, national and international hotel brands either through direct ownership and operation, membership of marketing consortia or under franchise or management arrangements.

HOTEL BRANDS REPRESENTED IN WILTSHIRE - JUNE 2014

Hotel Brand	Standard/ Style of Hotel	Number of Hotels in Wiltshire	Hotels in Wiltshire
Exclusive Hotels	5 star	1	The Manor House, Castle Combe
Relais et Chateau	5 star	2	Whatley Manor, Easton Grey Lucknam Park, Colerne
Best Western	3/4 star	4	Best Western Leigh Park, Bradford on Avon Best Western Plus Angel, Chippenham Best Western Mayfield House, Crudwell Best Western Red Lion, Salisbury
Holiday Inn	3/4 star	1	Holiday Inn Salisbury-Stonehenge, Amesbury
Mercure	3/4 star	1	Mercure White Hart, Salisbury
Legacy Hotels	3/4 star	1	Legacy Rose & Crown, Salisbury
City Lodge	3 star	1	City Lodge Salisbury
Relaxinnz	2/3 star	1	The George Hotel, Amesbury
Wetherspoon Hotels	2/3 star	1	King's Head Inn, Salisbury
Longleat Hotels	Country House Hotels	1	Bishopstrow House, Warminster
Old English Inns	Inns	1	Castle & Ball, Marlborough
Wheeler's Restaurants	Inns	1	Rudloe Arms, Corsham
Luxury Family Hotels	Family Hotels	1	Woolley Grange, Bradford on Avon
Premier Inn	Budget	3	Premier Inn Chippenham Premier Inn Salisbury North Premier Inn Trowbridge
Travelodge	Budget	5	Travelodge Amesbury Stonehenge Travelodge Chippenham Leigh Delamere M4 Eastbound Travelodge Chippenham Leigh Delamere M4 Westbound Travelodge Devizes Travelodge Warminster

3.1.15 While we have not undertaken a full assessment of the quality of Wiltshire's current hotel stock, from our visits to hotels in the county and assessment of Tripadvisor customer reviews for the county's hotels it would appear that the quality of Wiltshire's hotels is variable but broadly meeting the market's requirements. There are clearly some high quality hotels in the county that have benefited from recent investment. There are others however that appear to be somewhat old fashioned in terms of what they offer and some hotels that have clearly seen little recent investment. Tripadvisor reviews for Wiltshire hotels are largely positive. Only a few hotels are consistently receiving poor customer ratings. We would however comment that from the research we have undertaken there appear to be very few hotels in Wiltshire that are offering the more contemporary style of hotel that is starting to emerge in other parts of the country.

3.1.16 Salisbury has the largest stock of hotel accommodation of any location in Wiltshire, with 12 hotels with a total of 422 letting bedrooms. The city's hotel supply is a mix of 4 star, 3 star, ungraded and budget hotels located primarily across the city centre. The quality of the city's hotel offer seems to be meeting the market's requirements, with hotels generally receiving favourable reviews on Tripadvisor. A few hotels are evidently in need of investment however. Salisbury does not currently have any boutique hotels and no budget hotel provision in the city centre, with the city's existing Premier Inn located on the northern outskirts of Salisbury, although permission has recently been granted for a 65-bedroom Premier Inn in the city centre. The city has one serviced apartment operation - Peartree Serviced Apartments.

SALISBURY HOTEL SUPPLY
BY STANDARD/TYPE OF HOTEL– JUNE 2014

Standard of Hotel	Hotels	Bedrooms	Percentage of Total Bedrooms %	Average Size of Hotel (Bedrooms)
5 Star	-	-	-	-
4 Star	3	145	34.4	48
Boutique	-	-	-	-
3 Star	4	109	25.8	27
2 Star	1	20	4.7	20
Budget	1	78	18.5	78
Not Graded	2	58	13.7	29
Serviced Apartments	1	12	2.9	12
TOTAL	**12**	**422**	**100.0**	**38**

Recent and Proposed Changes in Hotel Supply

New Hotels

3.1.17 There has been very little activity in terms of new hotel development in Wiltshire and Swindon in the last 4 years, and anecdotally for a considerably longer period. The 4 star Bowood Hotel, Spa and Golf Resort opened on the Bowood Estate in 2009, as did the 3 star Jury's Inn in Swindon town centre. There have otherwise been no new hotels in Wiltshire and Swindon until the opening of the Trowbridge Premier Inn in December 2013.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON – NEW HOTELS 2009-2014

Hotel	Standard	No. Rooms	Year Opened
Wiltshire			
Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort	4 star	43	2009
Premier Inn Trowbridge	Budget	80	2013
Swindon			
Jury's Inn	3 star	229	2009

3.1.18 No hotels are currently under construction in Wiltshire and Swindon. This contrasts sharply with the increasing supply being seen in other provincial towns and cities; boutique, budget hotels and serviced apartments in other historic cities;, country house hotels and golf resorts in other rural areas; and small boutique hotels in market towns (see 3.3)

Hotel Extensions, Refurbishment and Rebranding

3.1.19 There has been more activity in terms of the refurbishment of existing hotels and changes of ownership of hotels, alongside the development of some hotels in terms of additional guest bedrooms and new facilities. Many hotels have seen very little in terms of recent substantial investment however. Our research has identified the following recent changes to the Wiltshire and Swindon hotel supply in terms of extensions, refurbishment, new facilities, changes of ownership and rebranding:

Swindon

- The Village Urban Resort has undergone a £5 million refurbishment;
- The Hilton Swindon has been fully refurbished;
- The Swindon Marriott completed a £1.1 bedroom upgrade in 2013;
- The South Marston Hotel (operated by Focus Hotels) was rebranded as a Mercure hotel in 2013.
- The Swindon Holiday Inn is currently up for sale as part of a portfolio of 21 Holiday Inn hotels across England.
- The Cotswold Water Park Four Pillars (which trades largely in the Swindon hotel market) has extended and developed additional conference and banqueting facilities and self-catering apartments.

Salisbury

- The Legacy Rose & Crown added 3 new bedrooms in 2013 through the conversion of a bar area, in addition to development of its restaurant and general refurbishment. The hotel has planning permission for an extension to provide an additional 12 guest bedrooms and a larger restaurant.
- The Mercure White Hart is currently seeking planning permission for a rear extension to provide additional function space and 28 new guest bedrooms.
- Milford Hall added 10 bedrooms in 2010 and upgraded to 4 stars in August 2013. The hotel is about to start work on the development of a spa.
- The Red Lion has been sold at the beginning of 2014 to new owners Cypress Ltd (owners of the Rose & Crown in Colchester and Atlantic Hotel in Chelmsford), who are currently upgrading the hotel and increasing the number of bedrooms by bringing currently unused bedrooms into use.
- Grasmere House has planning permission for an additional 15 bedrooms. The hotel's owners have no plans to progress this project at present however.
- The City Lodge converted its breakfast room into two suites in 2012.
- The Premier Inn Salisbury North was fully refurbished in 2012.
- The Kings Head Inn is currently undergoing a £1million refurbishment programme.
- The former Clovelly Hotel was converted into the Peartree Serviced Apartments in 2010.

Wiltshire

- The Rudloe Hall Hotel at Corsham was acquired by Marco Pierre White's Wheeler's Restaurants in April 2013 and has been relaunched as the Rudloe Arms following a ground floor refurbishment.
- Lucknam Park opened a cookery school in November 2012 and a wellbeing house in September 2013.
- Greene King refurbished the Castle & Ball Hotel in Marlborough in 2011.
- Woolley Grange was acquired by Luxury Family Hotels from the former Von Essen Hotels in December 2011. The company is gradually refurbishing and upgrading the hotel.
- The Best Western Leigh Park Country House Hotel at Bradford on Avon added 16 bedrooms in 2009 and extended its restaurant.
- Widbrook Grange at Bradford on Avon has recently been sold. The plans of the new owners are unknown at this stage.
- The Old Manor Hotel at Trowle was purchased by private buyers in July 2013, who are now in the process of restoring and upgrading the hotel.
- The Beechfield Hotel at Melksham has been gradually upgraded and is hoping to achieve a 4 star rating in 2014.
- Mayfield House at Crudwell added 4 bedrooms in 2010.
- Bishopstrow House was acquired by the Longleat Hotel Group from Von Essen Hotels in October 2011. The company has so far invested £1 million in refurbishing the hotel's lounge areas and 14 of its bedrooms. It received planning permission in 2013 for the demolition of its indoor tennis court building and replacement with a new building to give an additional 42 guest bedrooms.
- The Wiltshire Hotel Golf & Country Club at Royal Wootton Bassett was acquired by new owners in February 2013. They have not so far invested in upgrading the hotel.
- The Amesbury and Devizes Travelodges were refurbished to the new Travelodge bedroom specification in 2013 and 2014.
- The Premier Inn Chippenham added 24 bedrooms in November 2013.
- The Cricklade Hotel & Country Club was sold to Ambienza Hotels (operator of the Cotswolds 88 Hotel in Gloucestershire) in 2010.
- The New Forest Lodge Hotel at Landford is currently up for sale.
- Howard's House Hotel at Teffont Evias was acquired by new private owners in 2010, who are gradually upgrading the hotel.
- The Castle Hotel in Devizes was fully refurbished in 2012.

- The Cedars Hotel in Westbury was bought out of administration by private buyers who are currently renovating the hotel and have changed its name to the Chalford House Hotel.
- The Hilbury Court Hotel in Trowbridge was taken over by new tenants in 2012, who are gradually refurbishing it.
- The Inn at High Post which went into administration in 2012 has a new owner who is currently redeveloping the hotel with a view to re-opening in August 2014.

Hotel Closures

3.1.20 Our research has identified the following recent hotel closures in Wiltshire:

Wiltshire

- The Ivy House Hotel in Marlborough (36 bedrooms) was sold to Marlborough College in 2012 for conversion into a girls' boarding house.
- The Georgian Lodge Hotel (10 bedrooms) in Bradford on Avon has been converted to residential apartments.
- Box House at Box (hotel and conference centre) was converted to office use in 2010.
- The Oxford Hotel at Chippenham was converted to 7 flats in 2010.
- Ridge House hotel at Alderbury was converted to residential use in 2011.

Swindon

- The 4 star Menzies Hotel (94 bedrooms) in Swindon town centre closed in December 2013 following the liquidation of Menzies Hotels earlier in 2013 and the failure of the administrators to find a buyer for this hotel, which was operating under a short-term lease agreement.
- The Ivy Hotel (33 bedrooms) in Wroughton closed in March 2013 after entering administration.
- The former 4 star Liddington Hotel (198 bedrooms, ex-De Vere Venue) was converted to a PGL children's activity holiday centre in 2010 after going into administration in 2009.
- It was announced in May 2014 that Swindon's 3 star Madison Hotel will close in June 2014 for redevelopment, with the loss of 94 bedrooms.

3.1.21. We understand that both the Menzies and the Madison were in need of significant investment. Tripadvisor reviews for both hotels were low. The net effect on Swindon's hotel supply of these closures (419 rooms) combined with the addition of the Jury's Inn (229) leaves a loss of 190 rooms in the town, though if the Menzies comes back into hotel use (there is said to be interest) the loss would be 96 rooms.

Planned and Proposed Hotel Development

3.1.22 Five proposed hotel projects have been identified in Wiltshire and 4 hotel proposals in Swindon, via consultations and planning application reviews, and are detailed in the table overleaf. Most of these hotel proposals are at a very early stage and some appear to be largely speculative, with no firm hotel operator interest.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON – HOTEL PROPOSALS - AS AT JUNE 2014

PROPOSAL BY AREA	DETAIL OF SCHEME	CURRENT STATUS
SWINDON		
Hampton by Hilton Paragon Laundry site Aylesbury Street	Proposed 118-bedroom Hampton by Hilton upper-tier budget hotel	Planning permission was granted in 2009 and renewed in 2012.
Oasis Leisure Scheme	A hotel is proposed as part of the Oasis Leisure Scheme	At a preliminary stage - no firm proposal currently
Locarno Buildings	Plans put forward by developers Swindon Corn Exchange Ltd for the £27 million regeneration of the Locarno buildings in the Old Town include an 82-bedroom hotel alongside three branded restaurants, 49 apartments and other facilities	At an early stage
Kimmerfields	The plans for the Kimmerfields Central Business District include a proposed 250-bedroom hotel.	At a preliminary stage - no firm proposal currently
SALISBURY		
Premier Inn, Salisbury City Centre	Spenhill Developments has plans to demolish and rebuild the Tesco store in Salisbury City Centre to provide a replacement ground floor shop with a 65-bedroom Premier Inn budget hotel above.	Planning permission granted in January 2014
Abode Hotel	Planning permission was granted in 2009 for the conversion and development of the post office building on Castle Street into a 50-bedroom ABode boutique hotel with a cafe/bar, restaurant and new post office.	Unknown
CHIPPENHAM		
Langley Park	The Central Chippenham Partnership's Plans for the regeneration of Langley Park and Hathaway Retail Park include a proposal for a 102-bedroom hotel, alongside a supermarket, 115 new homes and leisure uses.	Outline planning permission granted December 2013
CORSHAM		
MoD Copenacre Site	A hotel is included in Copenacre Developments proposals for the redevelopment of the MoD Copenacre site, alongside a care home, 84 homes and office space.	Outline planning permission granted November 2012
WARMINSTER		
Thoulstone Park, Chapmanslade	The new owners of the former Thoulstone Park golf course are considering plans for the development of an eco-friendly hotel and golf facilities on the site alongside the planting of a new English woodland. The site has planning permission for a 54-bedroom hotel with spa pool, gym, treatment rooms and a function suite, with the condition that the golf course is restored to use.	The plans for the development of the site are currently being worked up by the owners.

3.2. Current Performance and Markets

3.2.1. Appendix 7 provides a detailed analysis of hotel performance and markets in Wiltshire and Swindon by location, standard and type of hotel. The following paragraphs provide a synopsis of this assessment.

a) Occupancies, Achieved Room Rates[1] and Revpar[2]

3.2.2 The table overleaf sets out our calculations for average annual room occupancies, achieved room rates and revpar for Wiltshire and Swindon hotels for 2012 and 2013[3], based on the information that we gathered from hotel managers and owners.

3.2.3 Key points to note from the table are as follows:

- Hotel performance in Wiltshire was broadly in line with national averages in 2012 and slightly ahead of them in 2013, largely as a result of strong growth in 4 star country house and golf hotel performance in the county.
- 4 star country house and golf hotels are trading strongly in Wiltshire, particularly in terms of achieved room rate and revpar performance.
- 3 star hotel performance is relatively weak overall and varies significantly by location and quality of hotel - performance is generally stronger for higher quality 3 star hotels.
- Budget hotels in Wiltshire are generally achieving high occupancies, although performance varies significantly by location and brand.
- 4 star and budget hotel occupancies are strong in Salisbury. 4 star achieved room rates are however below the national average for 3/4 star chain hotels. The overall performance of the city's 3 star hotels is weak when compared to national hotel performance statistics, although there are some stronger performers at this level in the market in the city.
- Hotel performance in Swindon is comparatively weak: hotel occupancies, achieved room rates and revpar figures are all well below the national averages here.
- Hotel performance improved in 2013 compared to 2012 in all parts of Wiltshire and Swindon and for all standards of hotel.

[1] The amount of rooms revenue (excluding food and beverage income) that hotels achieve **per occupied room** net of VAT, breakfast (if included) and discounts and commission charges.
[2] The amount of rooms revenue (excluding food and beverage income) that hotels achieve **per available room** net of VAT, breakfast (if included) and discounts and commission charges.
[3] As this is the first time this sort of detailed performance research has been conducted for Wiltshire, long term trend information is not available at this local level

WILTSHIRE HOTEL PERFORMANCE 2012-2013

Standard of Hotel/Location	Average Annual Room Occupancy %		Average Annual Achieved Room Rate £		Average Annual Revpar £	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
National						
All standards (4 star/ 3 star/ Budget)[1]	69.8	72.6	59.22	59.94	41.32	43.53
UK Provincial 3/4 Star Chain Hotels[2]	70.2	71.9	69.72	70.71	49.05	50.81
Wiltshire						
All standards (4 star/3 star/Budget)	70.4	72.8	58.44	61.08	41.14	44.47
3/4 Star Hotels	68.9	71.1	64.77	67.58	44.65	48.03
4 Star Country House/ Golf Hotels	67.1	74.8	112.30	123.94	75.34	92.69
3 Star Hotels	67.3	68.5	n/a	54.97	n/a	37.64
Budget Hotels	75.0	78.0	n/a	43.32	n/a	33.80
Salisbury						
All standards (4 star/3 star/Budget)	72.9	76.3	59.43	59.83	43.34	45.62
4 Star	73.7	76.7	69.44	70.58	51.18	54.10
3 Star	65.2	69.5	57.44	56.68	37.48	39.40
Swindon						
All standards (4 star/3 star/Budget)	65.1	68.2	53.11	53.84	34.60	36.73

Source: Hotel Solutions – Survey of Wiltshire Hotel Managers – November 2012-February 2014

Notes:

1. Source: STR Global
2. Source: TRI Hotstats UK Chain Hotels Market Review
3. Source: STR Global

3.2.4. Locations with high 3 star hotel occupancies in 2013 (of 70-80%+) are:

- Amesbury
- Bradford on Avon
- Corsham
- Malmesbury
- Marlborough

3.2.5. 3 star hotel occupancies were not quite as strong (65-70%) in Calne, Chippenham, Devizes and Melksham, and low (50-60%) in Royal Wootton Bassett. There are no 3 star hotels in Warminster.

3.2.6. 3 star achieved room rates tend to vary more by quality than location. They ranged from £35 to £75 in 2013.

3.2.7. Budget hotel occupancies are very strong (75-80%+) in Amesbury, Chippenham and Salisbury but lower in Devizes. We have no information about budget hotel performance in Warminster. Premier Inns generally achieve higher room rates than Travelodges.

3.2.8 In line with the national trend, hotel occupancies, achieved room rates and revpar figures dropped sharply in Wiltshire and Swindon in 2009 as a result of the Credit Crunch, and remained largely static between 2010 and 2012 as a result of the ensuing economic crisis and recession, downturn in the corporate market, government and MoD cutbacks and weakening of leisure demand. Corporate rates reduced as companies cut back on business travel budgets and leisure demand has become much more price competitive and deal driven as customers have switched to buying through online travel agents/ hotel comparison sites such as LateRooms and booking.com. This downturn in hotel performance was exacerbated in Swindon with the opening of the Jury's Inn in 2009, resulting in a significant increase in the town's hotel supply at a time when market demand dropped back. In 2012 performance was hit by the combined impact of the poor weather and the Olympics deterring visitors from travel, other than localised impacts related to viewing the Olympic torch.

3.2.9. Most hotels have seen little improvement in performance until the second half of 2013, particularly in terms of achieved room rates. While occupancies have gradually improved, hotels have found it very difficult to do anything to grow their room rates. With rising operating costs, many hotels have seen a downturn in their profits, and their ability therefore to invest in improvements to their product. There have however been some exceptions to this trend:

- Budget hotel performance has remained strong throughout the recession in most parts of Wiltshire and Swindon;
- Hotel performance has remained strong at the top end of the market, with 4 and 5 star country house and golf hotels seeing a steady improvement in occupancies and achieved room rates in the last three years. One 5 star country house hotel saw a sharp increase in occupancy levels in 2009 following the opening of a new spa.

b) Patterns of Demand

Seasonality

3.2.10. In common with similar rural and heritage destinations, the hotel market in most parts of Wiltshire is largely leisure driven and seasonal as a result. Weekend and midweek leisure demand peaks between April and October but is much lower in the winter months. Midweek corporate demand is more stable throughout the year but is not the predominant source of business for hotels in most parts of the county. The hotel market in Swindon is also seasonal. Midweek demand from the local corporate market is fairly stable year round. Weekend group tour and leisure break business is much more seasonal however, peaking during the summer months.

Midweek Occupancies

3.2.11. Wiltshire and Swindon hotel occupancies peak sharply on Tuesday and Wednesday nights when corporate demand is at its strongest. Hotels in most locations frequently fill and turn business away on these nights for much of the year. Monday and especially Thursday night occupancies are generally lower, particularly for 3 star and small ungraded hotels.

3.2.12. Budget hotels generally achieve strong occupancies on all four midweek nights through a mix of demand from business visitors and contractors. Midweek demand for budget hotel accommodation is not as strong in Devizes however.

3.2.13. Midweek occupancies can be lower and more variable for the county's luxury 4 and 5 star country house and golf hotels, which cater mainly for leisure break stays and residential conferences and business meetings during the week.

3.2.14. Midweek demand is more seasonal for some 3 star hotels in Salisbury, peaking between May and September.

Weekend Occupancies

3.2.15. Friday and Saturday occupancies are very strong (75-90%+) for most of the year for luxury 4 and 5 star country house and golf hotels, budget hotels , 4 star hotels in Salisbury and 3 star hotels in Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Malmesbury, Marlborough and Melksham. Such hotels frequently fill and turn business away on Saturday nights.

3.2.16. Salisbury 3 star hotels achieve high occupancies and deny business on Friday and Saturday nights between April and October. They trade at much lower levels of weekend occupancy during the winter months however.

3.2.17. Friday and Saturday occupancies and achieved room rates are much lower and more seasonal for 3 and 4 star hotels in Swindon, 3 star hotels in other parts of Wiltshire and small ungraded hotels. Such hotels rarely deny business on these nights.

3.2.18. Sunday night occupancies are very low (30-40%) for hotels of all standards and types in all parts of Wiltshire and Swindon. A few hotels have had some success in boosting Sunday night occupancies by taking group tours and through special offers, albeit at reduced room rates.

Midweek Markets

3.2.19. Corporate demand related to local companies is the core midweek market for most standards of hotel in Wiltshire and Swindon. Hotels primarily serve companies in their immediate locality. Hotels in Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade trade largely in the Swindon corporate market. Some Swindon business visitors opt to stay in Marlborough. Hotels in Bradford on Avon and Melksham also trade in the Trowbridge and Chippenham corporate markets to a certain degree.

3.2.20. The corporate market is very competitive in Swindon. Corporate room rates are consequently comparatively low here. This, together with the low-rated nature of weekend demand for Swindon hotels, are the key factors behind the below average achieved room rate performance for the town's hotels.

3.2.21. Corporate demand in Salisbury is insufficient to fill all of the city's hotels during the week. This is the key factor behind the lower occupancies and more seasonal trading performance of Salisbury's 3 star hotels. Corporate demand in the city is dominated by MoD-related business on lower government rates. There are few companies in the city that generate substantial higher-rated business for hotels. These are the key factors that contribute to the below average achieved room rate performance for Salisbury hotels.

3.2.22. There appears to be an element of long stay, project-related corporate business in Swindon and Salisbury. Further research is required to fully understand the strength of such demand however.

3.2.23. Wiltshire's luxury 4 and 5 star country house and golf hotels trade only marginally in their local corporate market. Midweek leisure breaks and residential conferences and business meetings are their core weekday markets.

3.2.24. Wiltshire and Swindon hotels saw a sharp downturn in corporate demand in 2009 followed by a period of largely stagnant levels of corporate business during the recession between 2010 and 2012. Corporate room rates also dropped and have remained broadly flat. Most hotels reported the beginnings of a recovery in corporate business in 2013, which appears to have continued so far in 2014.

3.2.25. Residential conferences are a small market for most Wiltshire and Swindon hotels, other than luxury country house and golf hotels. This is a market that has been reducing steadily for many years as companies have cut back on meeting and training budgets, developed their own in-house meeting and training facilities, and made greater use of video and teleconferencing technology. While there were some signs of recovery in this market in 2013 it is unlikely that Wiltshire and Swindon hotels will see significant growth in residential conference business going forward.

3.2.26. Midweek occupancies for Salisbury and Amesbury hotels are boosted between May and September by leisure demand in terms of UK and overseas group tours, midweek leisure break stays and overseas tourists.

3.2.27. Midweek leisure breaks are the key weekday market for 4 and 5 star country house and golf hotels.

3.2.28. Most of Wiltshire's 3 star hotels attract some midweek break business during the summer. This is a minor weekday market for most but a key source of midweek trade for a minority of 3 star hotels that proactively target the emptynester and retired short break market.

3.2.29. Group tours are a very minor midweek market for the majority of Wiltshire's 3 star hotels. Most are too small to cater for group tours alongside their core corporate business, which delivers much higher room rates. Some hotels cater for small special interest tours in the summer months.

3.2.30. Other minor midweek markets for Wiltshire 3 star hotels are overseas tourists during the summer months; shooting parties between September and January; cycling and walking groups; and parents visiting students at the University of Bath, Marlborough College or the private schools in the county.

3.2.31. Budget hotels attract strong midweek demand from contractors working on construction, development, shop fitting and IT projects. This additional source of weekday business alongside local and transient corporate business is the key reason why budget hotels are able to achieve such strong midweek occupancies.

3.2.32. Small ungraded hotels also cater for contractors alongside business visitors. Some also attract a small amount of trade in terms of midweek leisure break stays and demand from overseas tourists during the summer months.

Weekend Markets

3.2.33. The core weekend market for most Swindon hotels is UK and overseas group tours using the town's hotels as a base primarily for visiting Bath, the Cotswolds, Stonehenge, Longleat and Oxford. This is generally low-rated business that hotels take in the absence of demand from higher-paying leisure markets. Some of the town's branded 3 and 4 star hotels attract weekend break business as a result of their company's brand strength in this market, national leisure break marketing , and their leisure facilities. Leisure break business for such hotels is primarily low-rated and offer-driven.

3.2.34. Weekend breaks are the core weekend market for most of Salisbury's hotels, typically accounting for 50-60% of their weekend trade. Key draws are Salisbury Cathedral and Stonehenge. Hotels achieve high weekend break rates during the summer months. Weekend break business tends to be more offer driven during the winter. Weddings are the main weekend market for one hotel in the city, usually blocking it out to the weekend break market, and a secondary source of weekend business for other hotels, accounting for up to 20-30% of their weekend trade. Group tours are a significant weekend market for one 3 star hotel, which uses them to help boost Sunday occupancies. This is a minor weekend market for other 3 and 4 star hotels in the city. One hotel caters for a German cycle touring group every year. Most of Salisbury's hotels attract some weekend demand from overseas tourists during the summer months. Masonic lodge weekends are a core shoulder season weekend market for one hotel. Soldiers and other people coming into Salisbury for a night out are the core weekend market for some city centre 3 star hotels.

3.2.35. Weekend breaks are the core weekend market for Wiltshire's 4 and 5 star country house and golf hotels, which act largely as leisure break destinations in their own right because of the quality of their facilities and food and their spa and golf offering. The destinations in which these hotels are located tend to be of secondary importance. London, the Home Counties, South East England and South Wales are key source markets for weekend break business. These hotels achieve very high room rates at weekends and attract strong demand for their feature bedrooms and suites, particularly for special occasion stays. Sunday night business tends to be driven through special offers and added value packages. The county's country house and golf hotels also have strong appeal for weddings. This tends to be a minor weekend market for most of them however as they concentrate more on the weekend break market that can deliver strong, high-rated business across two and even three nights, whereas weddings-related business tends to involve primarily single night stays.

3.2.36. Wedding parties are the main weekend market for a number of the county's 3 star hotels, in terms of the weddings that they hold themselves and weddings held at country house and golf hotels, wedding barns and other wedding venues and weddings held in marquees in the grounds of large country homes in some parts of the county. Weddings trade frequently blocks 3 star hotels out to weekend break business as wedding parties generally book well in advance.

3.2.37. Most of the county's 3 star hotels attract some weekend break business. This is a key weekend market for some hotels but a lesser market for those hotels that concentrate on the weddings market. Weekend break business is limited for 3 star hotels in Calne and Chippenham. Key draws for weekend break stays are Bath, the Cotswolds, Stonehenge, Salisbury, Longleat, Lacock, Castle Coombe, Marlborough and crop circles. Some hotels also attract cyclists, e.g. using the Kennet & Avon Canal for a cycling break. Hotels with golf and spa facilities attract weekend demand for golf and spa breaks. Some of the county's 3 star hotels primarily drive weekend break business on price, through the online travel agents and daily deals sites, such as Groupon and Travelzoo. Others achieve high prices for weekend breaks during the summer but drive winter business through special offers and added value packages. Key weekend break markets are emptynesters and career couples. Some hotels reported a downturn in 2-night weekend break stays during the recession, resulting in a weakening of Friday night occupancies.

3.2.38. Group tours are a strong weekend market for one of Wiltshire's 3 star hotels and a minor weekend market for some other 3 star hotels. A number of hotels do not take weekend group tours however, either because they are too low-rated or because they would block them out for weddings business. Those hotels that cater for this market attract a mix of UK and overseas group tours. The room rates that UK group tours are prepared to pay are generally very low. Overseas groups will pay more. Some of the county's 3 star hotels expressed interest in growing this market, particularly in terms of attracting higher-rated private, special interest and overseas groups.

3.2.39. Other weekend markets for Wiltshire's 3 star hotels are:

- Overseas tourists - a strong market for hotels in the vicinity of Stonehenge;
- Walking and cycling groups;
- Parents of students studying in Bath, at Marlborough College and at the private schools in the county;
- National Trust groups;
- People visiting friends and relatives;
- Transient holiday markers stopping off en-route to and from the West Country;
- Event visitors.

3.2.40. There is a wide range of events held across Wiltshire that generate some localised demand for hotel stays in the immediate vicinity. Major events that generate substantial demand for hotels in nearby parts of Wiltshire and Swindon are Badminton Horse Trials, Bath Christmas Market, the International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford and the Summer Solstice at Stonehenge.

3.2.41. Budget hotels attract a broad mix of weekend markets including wedding parties, people visiting friends and relatives, leisure break stays, holiday makers stopping off en-route to/from the West Country and overseas tourists. It is this mix of markets that enables them to achieve high weekend occupancies. Budget hotels have strong appeal to the family market. Leisure demand has grown steadily for the county's budget hotels over the last 3-4 years as a result of the staycation trend and the national marketing campaigns and special offer strategies of Premier Inn and Travelodge.

3.2.42 Wedding parties and people visiting friends and relatives are the key weekend markets for Wiltshire's small ungraded hotels. They tend not to attract weekend break business, either because they have less appeal for this market or because they are fully booked with wedding parties.

Prospects for 2014

3.2.43. Wiltshire and Swindon hotel managers are generally positive about the prospects for their hotel in 2014. Most expect to see an increase in occupancy and achieved room rate on the back of strengthening corporate and leisure demand as the country comes out of recession, the local economy begins to grow again and Wiltshire's share of the domestic and overseas tourism continues to grow.

3.2.44. Hotel managers are generally focusing on driving up room rates during the peak months and boosting off-peak business through increased and improved marketing, particularly in terms of greater use of online travel agents and the promotion of special offers and added value packages. Some hotel managers expect to see improved trading figures as a result of investment

3.2.45. A number Salisbury and Amesbury hotel managers feel that the new arrangements and increased length of time required for a visit to Stonehenge will help to encourage visitors to stay overnight in the area.

3.2.46. The closure of the Menzies hotel in Swindon town centre may help to boost hotel occupancies and push up room rates in Swindon.

3.2.47. There is some uncertainly in Amesbury, with MoD projects coming to an end, and less optimism in Chippenham. The small ungraded hotels in Trowbridge have seen a sharp fall in occupancies since the opening of the new Premier Inn in the town centre in December 2013, and are very concerned about their ability to compete with this hotel going forward.

3.3. National and Comparator Destination Hotel Development Trends

3.3.1 Prior to drawing conclusions about hotel development potential in Wiltshire and Swindon, a review of hotel development trends nationally and in comparator destinations provides a useful backcloth, both in terms of explaining where the market is going and identifying potential products and active operators that Wiltshire and Swindon might attract. Below we have broken these down by type of location to highlight their relevance to Salisbury, rural Wiltshire and Swindon.

Hotel Development in Historic Towns & Cities

3.3.2. Key trends in terms of **hotel development in comparator historic towns and cities to Salisbury** have been as follows:

- The opening of boutique hotels, either through the upgrading and repositioning of existing hotels; the conversion of suitable, and sometimes unusual buildings; and in a few cases the development of new-build boutique hotels. The first Hotel du Vin boutique hotel opened in Winchester in 1994. The company has subsequently opened in Royal Tunbridge Wells, York, Cambridge, Cheltenham and Henley-on-Thames. Hotel du Vin's sister brand, Malmaison, has opened in Oxford, through the conversion of the former Oxford Castle prison. Abode Hotels has opened boutique hotels in Canterbury and Chester, while Chapter Hotels has opened in Exeter and Cheltenham. Independent boutique hotels have opened in many historic towns and cities, including Shrewsbury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cambridge, Lincoln and Oxford.

- The development of budget hotels. Premier Inn opened new hotels in 2013 in Lincoln, Cambridge, Shrewsbury, Bath and Canterbury and opened a new hotel in Worcester in January 2014. It will open a new hotel in Harrogate later in 2014 and is on site with a new hotel in Winchester. Travelodge has opened two new hotels in Cambridge in 2011 and 2013. A Holiday Inn Express will open in St Albans in 2014 and an Ibis budget hotel is planned for Cambridge. Almost all historic towns and cities in the UK now have some level of budget hotel provision.

- While budget hotels have undoubtedly challenged existing hotels and guest houses in the historic towns and cities where they have opened, they have also brought benefits in terms of attracting new markets and encouraging investment in existing hotels and guest houses. Oxford, for example, saw the opening of a number of budget hotels in the late 1990s. This, together with a number of other factors, resulted in a sharp drop in occupancy, turnover and profits for many guest houses and small hotels in the city. Some poorer quality and less well located establishments closed, however others upgraded and improved their marketing to respond to the new competition from budget hotels. A number of new guest houses also opened. The overall result was no net change in the city's supply of small hotels and guest houses but an overall improvement in the quality of this element of Oxford's accommodation supply. Cambridge has been going through a similar transition since 2011, with the opening of three large new budget hotels on the outskirts of the city in the last 3 years. This has encouraged investment in some 3 star hotels and guest houses. Others have been reluctant to invest in the face of the new competition however as they do not feel that they will see a sufficient return. Poorer quality, less well located hotels and guest houses have seen a sharp downturn in occupancy and room rate. Some of these establishments may well close but the overall quality of the city's hotel offer will improve. Cambridge is an expensive city to stay in, particularly in the city centre. The new budget hotels around the city should open Cambridge up to new markets that have thus far been unable to afford to stay in the city.

- A few historic cities have seen the opening of new 4 star hotels. A Doubletree by Hilton opened in Lincoln in December 2011, while a new 4 star Holiday Inn opened just outside Winchester in 2010. Two new 4 star hotels are proposed for Cambridge. The city's depth of international science, technology, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies gives Cambridge a very strong corporate hotel market that is able to support further 4 star hotel development here.

- Some historic cities have seen the upgrading of existing 3 star hotels to 4 stars. In Winchester the Winchester Royal and The Winchester hotels have both upgraded to 4 stars. The city now only offers 4 star and boutique hotels: it has no midmarket hotel offer.

- Another trend in some cathedral cities has been the opening of hotels within cathedral precincts, in some cases through the conversion of properties that are owned by cathedrals or diocesan bodies. These include The Old Palace in Lincoln, Canterbury Cathedral Lodge and Grays Court in York.

- Serviced apartments have gradually developed in some historic cities, particularly where there is strong international corporate demand and long stay, project- related corporate business e.g. Cambridge, Chester, Cheltenham, York and Harrogate. In most cases the serviced apartment supply in such cities has developed in terms of the letting of residential apartments by serviced apartment letting agencies. Very few purpose-built serviced apartments have so far been developed and none of the leading branded serviced apartment or aparthotel operators have so far opened in historic cities.

Hotel Development in Rural Areas

3.3.3. In terms of hotel development in rural areas key trends of relevance to Wiltshire have included:

- At the top end of the market there has been activity in terms of the development of **luxury country house hotels**, including the opening of Lime Wood in the New Forest and the soon to open Heckfield Place near Hook in Hampshire; the £30 million development of the Raithwaite Estate in North Yorkshire as a luxury hotel and spa; the opening of the Ellenborough Park Hotel & Spa near Cheltenham in 2011; and the redevelopment in 2012 of Wood Norton Hall near Evesham as a country house hotel. Plans have also been unveiled for the development of new luxury country house hotels in Hampshire (the conversion by the Nicolas James Group of the former Treloar School near Alton), Surrey (the conversion of Cherkley Court near Leatherhead), West Yorkshire (involving the conversion of Bretton Hall near Wakefield)and Kent (on the Salomons Estate in Tunbridge Wells). A number of country house hotel companies have also expanded in the last 3 years. Brownsword Hotels has established the Gidleigh Collection of luxury country house hotels following its acquisition of 4 hotels previously owned by the now defunct Von Essen Hotels company. Hand Picked Hotels has acquired three new country house hotel properties in the last 16 months near Bath and in Guernsey and Northamptonshire.

- **Hotel spas** at many country house hotels, which have enabled hotels to tap into the rapidly expanding UK spa breaks market.

- The development of **alternative accommodation options at luxury country house and golf hotels** e.g. tree houses at Chewton Glen in Hampshire, eco pods at the Old Thorns Manor golf hotel at Liphook in Hampshire, luxury self-catering apartments at the Four Pillars Cotswold Water Park hotel in Gloucestershire, luxury woodland holiday homes at The Cornwall Hotel & Spa at St Austell in Cornwall.

- The development of **cookery schools** at a number of luxury country house hotels with a strong reputation for their cuisine e.g. Lucknam Park, near Bath, Northcote in Lancashire, Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxfordshire and Swinton Park in North Yorkshire.

- The opening of **on-site specialist sport and leisure facilities at luxury country house hotels** e.g. equestrian centres at the Four Seasons Hampshire, Lucknam Park and Coworth Park in Berkshire and falconry centres at Stapleford Park in Leicestershire, Lainston House near Winchester, and Peckforton Castle in Cheshire.

- The re-establishment of **Luxury Family Hotels** in 2011 with the purchase of the Polurrian Hotel in Cornwall and the re-acquisition out of administration of 7 hotels that had previously been sold by the company to Von Essen Hotels in 2006.

- The development of **boutique hotels** in market towns and rural locations e.g. The White Horse in Romsey in Hampshire, The Feversham Arms in Helmsley in North Yorkshire and The William Cecil in Stamford in Lincolnshire. Some regional boutique hotel chains that are focusing on market town and rural locations have also emerged e.g. The Pig boutique hotel company with two hotels in the New Forest and Southampton and two hotels under development at Studland Bay in Dorset and near Bath (formerly Hunstrete House); East Anglia-based boutique hotel group The House Collection which launched in 2013 with the opening of its first two hotels in Ely and Newmarket in Cambridgeshire; and Milsom Hotels, which has 4 boutique hotels in Suffolk and Essex.

- The development of **golf resorts** e.g. Mere Golf Resort in Knutsford in Cheshire, Rockcliffe Hall near Darlington. Wiltshire does not have any major 150+ room branded golf resorts along the lines of those found in comparator counties such as Cheshire (De Vere Carden Park and Macdonald Portal Hotel, Golf & Spa), Shropshire (Hawkstone Park and Macdonald Hill Valley), Hampshire (Macdonald Botley Park, Marriott Meon Valley and Old Thorns Manor at Liphook), Northamptonshire (Hellidon Lakes, Staverton Park and Whittlebury Park) Lincolnshire (De Vere Belton Woods and Q Hotels Forest Pines) and East Sussex (East Sussex National) None of the leading golf resort brands (De Vere, Macdonald, Marriott and Q Hotels) are represented in Wiltshire. A number of proposals have come forward for new golf resorts in various locations across the UK, including Kent (at the London Golf Club), Hertfordshire (at the Hertfordshire Golf & Country Club), Surrey (a proposal for a 100-bedroom Hilton hotel as part of the new regional headquarters of the PGA at Wildwood Golf & Country Club in Cranleigh), North Yorkshire (the Flaxby Country Resort on the existing Flaxby Golf Course near Knaresborough) and the Wirral (at Hoylake), together with a number of proposals in Scotland.

- **Hotels at theme parks and visitor attractions** e.g. Legoland Windsor, Alton Towers, Drayton Manor Park at Tamworth and Gulliver's Kingdom in Warrington. The West Midland Safari Park was granted planning permission in 2013 for a £20 million 250-bedroom hotel, 1,000 seater conference centre and indoor waterpark. Chester Zoo also has plans for a 150-bedroom hotel.

- **Spa hotels,** with The Lifehouse Spa & Hotel at Thorpe Le Soken in Essex and The Spa Hotel at Ribby Hall Village in Lancashire opening in 2011.

Other Hotel Development Trends

3.3.4. The key overarching trend in hotel development in the UK is the '**squeezing of the middle'**. New supply has focused on both high end and budget offers, this polarisation impacting from both sides on mid-market hotels struggling to differentiate themselves.

3.3.5. In terms of **budget hotel development**:

- Market leaders Premier Inn and Travelodge have continued to open hotels apace across the UK, although Travelodge has cut back on its development programme as a result of its financial restructuring, prioritisation of investment in existing hotels and focus on London for new hotel development. It opened 14 new hotels across the UK in 2013, with a total of almost 1,600 bedrooms. Premier Inn opened 4,000 new hotel bedrooms in the UK in 2013 and is aiming to open a further 4,500 in 2014. The company's target is to open 170 new hotels over the next 4 years, taking it to a total of 830 hotels and 75,000 bedrooms by 2018.

- French hotel chain Accor has relaunched its budget hotel offer under three brands – Ibis, Ibis Budget (replacing Etap) and Ibis Styles for franchised independent hotels. At the upper-tier budget level, the Hampton by Hilton, Ramada Encore and Holiday Inn Express brands have continued to become more established, with new hotels across the UK in locations such as Luton, St Albans, Birmingham and London. The Malaysian budget hotel operator Tune Hotels has rapidly established itself in London and is now targeting other UK cities, with plans announced for hotels in Liverpool and Newcastle.

- A more recent trend has been the emergence of **budget boutique hotels** in major cities from companies such as Z Hotels, Sleeperz, Citizen M, Yotel and QBic. These are limited service hotels that feature contemporary interior design and a high-tech fit out. Whitbread has just launched its new Hub by Premier Inn brand to compete in this market. The German budget boutique hotel operator Motel One is also looking at entering the UK market in London, Newcastle and Liverpool. Marriott has announced plans to introduce its new Moxy budget boutique hotel brand into the UK. These companies are focusing essentially on major cities with strong hotel markets. They are unlikely to look at Swindon or Salisbury.

- Another recent trend is the development of **hostel chains**, including Eurohostel (which has opened in Edinburgh and Newcastle) and most recently boutique hostel operators Hoax (which opened its first hostel in Liverpool in 2013) and Safestay (which has opened a 410 bed hostel in London and recently announced plans for a new hostel in York). As with budget boutique hotel companies these hostel chains are focusing primarily on larger cities with strong youth leisure markets, so are unlikely to be interested in Salisbury or Swindon.

3.3.6 At the top end of the market a key trend has been the development of **boutique and lifestyle hotels** in key cities from some of the major hotel chains. Leading the field in this has been IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group) with its Hotel Indigo brand, with openings in Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham, Edinburgh and London, and hotels under construction or planned in Manchester, York and Brighton. Starwood has opened its first UK Aloft boutique hotel at London ExCel and will open a second in Liverpool in 2014. Accor has launched its MGallery boutique brand with its first UK franchised hotel in Bath. The Malmaison and Hotel du Vin boutique brands may be further developed in the UK now that they have a new owner. A new Malmaison hotel will open in Dundee in 2014. Rezidor has recently launched its Radisson Red lifestyle brand and Hilton has just introduced a new boutique brand in the US called Curio, which it may introduce in the UK. Smaller boutique hotel chains have also been established in UK cities and larger towns . Bespoke Hotels has opened new boutique hotels in London and Leeds and is currently looking for new boutique hotel opportunities in other UK cities. Bonne Nuit Hotels was launched in 2013 as a new boutique hotel company with the acquisition of The Balmoral Hotel in Harrogate. The company has ambitions to expand across the UK in the next 5 years and is currently looking at new opportunities in Yorkshire, Chester and Bristol.

3.3.7. **4 star hotel development** has focused primarily on major cities. Hilton has rapidly expanded its Doubletree by Hilton brand in the UK through franchise deals. This has included the rebranding of the Mint Hotels chain of eight 4 star hotels following its acquisition in 2011 by Blackstone, together with deals with other franchisees for Doubletree by Hilton hotels in locations such as Lincoln, Newcastle Airport, Liverpool, Chester, Milton Keynes, Bristol and Cambridge. IHG is expanding its Crowne Plaza brand in the UK, with a new hotel having recently opened in Oxfordshire, a hotel under construction in Newcastle and a Crowne Plaza proposed for Sheffield. Rezidor has plans for a new Radisson Blu 4 star hotel in Hull. Millennium & Copthorne Hotels has taken on a management contract for a Copthorne hotel in Sheffield. Luxury international hotel operator Hyatt has plans to introduce its upscale Hyatt Place brand into major UK cities. The German Steigenberger hotel company is looking at introducing its InterCity Hotels 4 star brand into the UK, while Spanish operator Melia has plans to open its first UK Innside hotel in Manchester. Accor is expanding its upscale Pullman brand with a second UK hotel planned for Liverpool.

3.3.8. **5 star hotel development** has focused on London, with a number of international 5 star brands having opened here in recent years or with hotels under development in the capital. There are very few provincial cities that can deliver sufficient high-rated business to support 5 star hotels, other than major heritage cities such as Edinburgh, Bath, Oxford, Cambridge, York and Chester. Achieved hotel room rates in Salisbury and Swindon are certainly a long way from the levels that are required to support 5 star hotel provision.

3.3.9. At the **midmarket** level, De Vere has announced plans to further develop its Village Urban Resorts brand, with a new hotel planned for Portsmouth. Three new Holiday Inn hotels are under construction in Huntingdon, Watford and Glasgow. Marriott is looking at rolling out its redefined Courtyard mid-scale brand. Hilton's Garden Inn brand has been slow to develop in the UK however, although a Garden Inn is currently proposed for Sunderland. Rezidor opened a new Park Inn by Radisson in Glasgow in 2013.

3.3.10. Another key trend has been the development of **aparthotels and serviced apartments**. The InterContinental Hotel Group (IHG) has opened Staybridge Suites aparthotels in Liverpool, Newcastle and Stratford (East London) and is currently developing a new Staybridge Suites aparthotel in London Vauxhall. Accor has recently opened its first Adagio aparthotel in Liverpool. Plans have been unveiled for new Urban Villa aparthotels in Stratford (East London) and Portsmouth. The Roomzzz aparthotel chain has expanded with new units in Newcastle and Manchester and will open in Chester in 2014. Serviced apartment operators SACO, Spires, Max, Premier Apartments, Blue Rainbow, StayCity and Bridgestreet have all recently opened new operations in a number of UK cities. These types of hotel have proved popular with business and leisure tourism markets, and in many cities are achieving extremely high occupancies and often 4 star equivalent rates. Some focus primarily on the extended stay corporate market, while others compete more directly in the general hotel market.

3.4 Hotel Developer & Operator Interest in Wiltshire

3.4.1 As an additional test of market potential, a survey of hotel and serviced apartment developers, operators and investors was undertaken. 26 companies were approached, and 19 potential expressions of interest received. As a number of these companies operate multiple brands at different levels in the market, the potential brand interest in Swindon and Wiltshire was higher than this, and is detailed in the table overleaf. Whilst some consultees knew specific locations like Salisbury and Swindon well, and in some cases had been actively looking for sites, in other cases the interest was based upon limited knowledge and a need and willingness to assess specific site opportunities on an individual basis. A fuller report can be found at Appendix 9.

HOTEL DEVELOPER/OPERATOR INTEREST BY TYPE OF OFFER

COMPANY/BRAND	NATURE OF REQUIREMENT	LOCATION
HOTEL		
Abode	Boutique hotel	Salisbury
Bespoke	Boutique hotel	Salisbury/Marlborough
Cyrpress Hotels	Boutique hotel	Salisbury
Days Inn	Limited service hotel	Salisbury/Swindon
Delicious Dining	Boutique hotel/gastropub	Any Wiltshire
Doubletree (Hilton)	4 star hotel (conversion)	Swindon
Hampton by Hilton	Limited service hotel	Salisbury/Swindon/Chippenham
Hilton Garden Inn	3 star hotel	Salisbury/Swindon/Chippenham
Hyatt Place	Lifestyle hotel	Swindon
Ibis	Limited service hotel	Salisbury/Swindon/Chippenham
Limewood	Boutique/country house hotel	Any Wiltshire
Luxury Family Hotels	Country house hotel	Salisbury/Rural area
Novotel	4 star hotel	Swindon
Park Inn	3 star hotel	Swindon
Premier Inn	Budget hotel	Salisbury/Swindon
Radisson Blu	4 star hotel	Swindon
Ramada	3 or 4 star hotel	Salisbury/Swindon
Travelodge	Budget hotel	Salisbury/Chippenham/Trowbridge
Tryp	3 or 4 star hotel	Swindon
Tulip Inn	Limited service hotel	Salisbury/Swindon/Chippenham
Wyndham Garden	4 star hotel	Swindon
SERVICED APARTMENT		
Adagio	Aparthotel	Swindon
Bridge Street Worldwide	Serviced apartments	Swindon
Hawthorn Suites	Serviced apartments	Swindon
Spires	Serviced apartments	Swindon

3.5 Hotel Development Opportunities in Wiltshire

3.5.1. The following paragraphs summarise our conclusions regarding the potential for hotel development in Swindon, Salisbury and the rest of Wiltshire in the next 10-12 years based on:

- Current hotel performance, market demand and supply shortages;
- The prospects for future growth in demand for hotel accommodation;
- Hotel provision and development trends in comparator destinations;
- Hotel operator and developer interest in Swindon and Wiltshire.

3.5.2. We have also prepared projections of potential future growth in hotel demand and requirements for additional hotel supply for Salisbury using our Hotel Futures hotel demand forecasting model. The results or the projections and methodology and assumptions used to run the model are set out at Appendix 8. The budget for the study was not sufficient to allow hotel demand projections to be prepared for Swindon or other parts of Wiltshire.

3.5.3. Our conclusions regarding the potential and priorities for hotel development in Swindon, Salisbury and the rest of Wiltshire are set out below.

Swindon

3.5.4. The assessment of current hotel performance and potential in Swindon shows a need for additional hotel provision in Swindon to meet the current and growing corporate demand on the peak nights of Tuesday and Wednesday. The town's hotels are consistently filling and turning business away on these nights. Additional hotel supply will however dilute the market on the other nights of the week and will maintain the current price competition, reducing the potential to grow achieved room rates and revpar. New hotel development in Swindon therefore needs to be carefully managed.

3.5.5. The priority in locational terms is town centre hotel development in order to:

- Capitalise on the developments that are currently taking place and planned here;
- Maximise the contribution that hotels can make to town centre development and vitality, the evening economy, and the development of Swindon as a leisure and business tourism destination;
- Support the development of conference and exhibition business at the Oasis Leisure indoor events arena and STEAM. These venues will need to be better supported by sufficient hotel provision within walking distance if they are to attract such business.

3.5.6. The priority from a destination development point of view would be a 4 star hotel in the town centre in order to:

- Help drive up achieved room rate and revpar performance;
- Support the development of the Kimmerfields central business district;
- Develop Swindon as a leisure and business tourism destination.

3.5.7. A 4 star hotel may be a requirement to enable the Oasis Leisure indoor events arena and STEAM to attract major conferences, exhibitions and business events. This requires further research

3.5.8. There was some potential interest from 4 star hotel companies (5 brands) in being represented in Swindon, though some concerns about whether the market could support a new build, as the comments below illustrate.

> *'In terms of a 4 star hotel, the market is soft so a challenge to drive sufficient value to warrant building a new 4 star hotel'*

> *'I don't believe a genuine 4-star product in Swindon would be a viable investment in the current market. We may consider the conversion of an existing hotel but as an out-and-out new build, I think most hotel lenders would take a very conservative view on the loan-to-project cost ratio'.*

The ability to structure a deal in a way that cut cost out of a scheme is likely to be important therefore to making a hotel at this level work in the current market.

3.5.9. An aparthotel or serviced apartment complex could find a good market in Swindon in terms of long stay corporate demand, which would help to boost weekend occupancies as well as generating midweek demand. There was some interest from serviced apartment operators in Swindon (2 brands); however, others were concerned about achievable rates and felt the requirement here would be at more of a budget level.

3.5.10. A boutique hotel might be an option for the Locarno buildings in the Old Town. There was no interest from national boutique hotel operators in Swindon however.

3.5.11. Swindon is most likely to attract further budget/ limited service hotels, given the anticipated growth in contractor and corporate demand and the relatively low achieved room rates for hotels in the town. Five limited service brands expressed interest in the town at budget and upper tier budget level. Premier Inn have a requirement for a100-bedroom hotel in Swindon. A Hampton by Hilton has been mooted for the Paragon Laundry site. New hotels at these levels in the market are likely to maintain the current price competition in the Swindon hotel market, although brands like Premier Inn and Hampton by Hilton could well bring new business to the town through their loyalty and marketing programmes, brand strength and customer bases.

3.5.12. The Swindon hotel market is unlikely to be able to support new 4 star or boutique hotels for some time to come, given the currently low achieved room rates and revpar figures. Public sector intervention in terms of funding will be required to bring forward hotels at these levels in the short to medium term. The Borough Council and Swindon & Wiltshire LEP will need to consider whether their direct investment in strategically important hotel projects could be feasible and justified in order to accelerate the development of Swindon as a business and leisure tourism destination and to support the development of the town's economy.

Salisbury City

3.5.13. The growth projections (Appendix 8) show potential for some additional supply in Salisbury at the 4 star/boutique level. This is most likely to be delivered in terms of:

- The expansion of existing 4 star hotels;
- The upgrading/repositioning of existing 3 star hotels;
- The development of new boutique hotels, most likely through the conversion of suitable buildings.

3.5.14. There are already a number of proposals along these lines in the city:

- The Mercure White Hart has plans for an additional 28 bedrooms;
- The Legacy Rose & Crown has planning permission for an additional 12 bedrooms;
- The new owners of the Red Lion reportedly have plans to upgrade and possibly expand the hotel. This may be to a 4 star or boutique standard.
- Planning permission has been granted to convert the post office building on Castle Street into an Abode boutique hotel.

3.5.15. There may be scope for the city's other 4 star hotels to expand and could be other buildings in the city that would lend themselves to conversion to boutique hotels. The developer survey did establish some interest from boutique hotel companies in Salisbury.

3.5.16. There could also be scope for the city's 4 star hotels to develop additional facilities such as leisure and spa facilities, meeting rooms, additional restaurants and bars or function rooms, in order to enhance their offer and enable them to cater more effectively for existing markets and/or attract new markets. Milford Hall, for example, is currently developing a spa to enable it to attract spa break business, and the proposed extension to the Mercure White Hart includes a new function room.

3.5.17. The growth projections for the Salisbury hotel market show that the city would not be able to support the development of a sizeable (100 bedrooms +) new 4 star hotel.

3.5.18. The projections show immediate potential for a budget hotel in Salisbury city. The proposed Premier Inn would adequately meet this requirement. The projections suggest that the city would be able to support a second budget hotel by 2020. Salisbury is a target location for Travelodge. This is most likely to be the brand for a second budget hotel in Salisbury, if the company can find a suitable site to meet its requirements. We are doubtful that Salisbury would be able to support an upper-tier budget hotel brand, such as Holiday Inn Express or Hampton by Hilton, for the foreseeable future. These tend to be larger hotels of at least 100 bedrooms. There might be scope for a budget hotel of this scale by 2025, in addition to the proposed Premier Inn and a Travelodge, if the High Growth forecast scenario is achieved. Critical to achieving this high level of growth will be strong growth in the corporate market alongside growth in leisure demand. There was some potential interest from upper tier budget hotel brands in Salisbury , subject to more detailed investigation. However, the evidence would suggest that the size and location of the city and the seasonal and leisure-driven nature of the hotel market could impact on the viability of a hotel of scale at this level in the market.

3.5.19. In terms of a location for further budget hotels in Salisbury we would suggest that they should ideally be in the city centre in order to maximise the contribution that they could make in terms of supporting the development of the city's evening economy through generating business for restaurants and bars, and in terms of minimising unnecessary traffic movements from an edge of city hotel. The currently proposed Premier inn would meet this requirement.

3.5.20. Based on our understanding of the levels of demand for budget hotel accommodation currently being lost from Salisbury; our knowledge of how budget hotel openings have impacted on hotels, guest houses and B&Bs in other historic cities; our assessment of likely future growth in demand for budget hotel accommodation in Salisbury; the likelihood of a new Premier Inn generating new business for the city; and the fact that its impact will be spread across the city's serviced accommodation supply, we are doubtful that the proposed Premier Inn will have anything other than a marginal impact on any single accommodation business. A second additional budget hotel could have a greater impact, depending on its scale and when it comes on stream. Our growth projections suggest that Salisbury should be able to absorb a second budget hotel of around 60 bedrooms by 2020. Travelodge's current stated requirement for the city is for a 60-bedroom hotel, which the projections suggest the city should be able to absorb without significant detriment to the trading performance of the city's accommodation businesses unless it comes forward more quickly.

3.5.21. The impact of new budget hotels in the city is likely to be greatest during the winter, when demand for accommodation is much lower. Experience in other destinations suggests that less well located and poorer quality hotels and guest houses/B&Bs are likely to be most affected. Some such establishments may seek to exit the market as a result.

3.5.22. Our growth projections for 3 star/ budget hotel demand in Salisbury suggest scope for the expansion of existing 3 star hotels in the city as the market grows. Grasmere House Hotel already has planning permission for an additional 15 bedrooms, and the Red Lion could bring additional, currently unused bedrooms into operation (although may also upgrade to 4 star or boutique standard). The progression of such expansion projects is likely to depend on the extent, speed and impact of budget hotel development in the city.

3.5.23. There is scope for some further serviced apartments in Salisbury to cater for extended stay, project-related MoD and corporate business. The leisure break, overseas tourist and VFR markets are also gradually starting to understand and discover this type of accommodation. None of the major branded serviced apartment operators expressed interest in Salisbury however, as it lacks the critical mass of corporate long stay demand. The potential is more likely to be for smaller scale units developed by local and regional operators.

Wiltshire (beyond Salisbury)

3.5.24. Elsewhere in Wiltshire (beyond Salisbury) a key priority is the upgrading of existing 3 star hotels to provide the more contemporary style of accommodation and hotel facilities that the market is increasingly looking for. While this has begun to happen with a number of 3 star hotels seeing investment, primarily under new owners, there remain a number of 3 star hotels in the county that have seen little recent investment. With hotel performance starting to improve as the country comes out of recession, hotel owners will hopefully be more confident about investment.

3.5.25. There is scope for some 3 star hotels to upgrade to 4 star or to reposition as boutique hotels. Beechfield House in Melksham has for example just been awarded 4 stars after a gradual refurbishment and upgrading programme.

3.5.26. There is potential for new bedrooms to be added to 3 star hotels in Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Malmesbury and Marlborough. 3 star hotel occupancies are high in these locations and there is evidence of frequent shortages of hotel accommodation in these parts of the county on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, particularly during the summer.

3.5.27. The development of additional facilities in terms of leisure and spa facilities at 3 star hotels would boost their appeal for leisure break stays and banqueting facilities to help them develop weddings and functions trade. There is no particular need for 3 star hotels to develop conference and meeting facilities to help develop residential conference business as this market offers little growth potential for these offers.

3.5.28. There is potential for additional budget hotel provision in Amesbury and Chippenham, based on the performance of the existing budget hotels in these locations and the levels of business that they are currently turning away. There is a proposal currently for a 102-bedroom hotel at Langley Park in Chippenham. Demand evidence indicates this is most likely to a budget or upper-tier budget hotel (e.g. a Holiday Inn Express or Hampton by Hilton), and that Chippenham would not be able to support the development of a new 3 or 4 star hotel. A new 102-bedroom budget or upper-tier budget hotel in the town is likely to have an impact on the performance and profitability of the Angel Hotel, and possibly its owner's ability and willingness to invest in the hotel in the future. It could also affect the town's guest houses, possibly leading to the closure of some if they are unable to compete with a new budget hotel in the town. There was some potential interest from budget and upper tier budget operators in being represented in Chippenham and Trowbridge.

3.5.29. There is potential for the development of small boutique hotels in Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Malmesbury, Marlborough and Devizes, to cater for leisure stays and the top end of the local corporate market. The corporate and leisure market for Chippenham however is already satisfied by a number of high quality country house hotels and boutique inns. The developer survey found some boutique hotel interest in Marlborough, and some other 'footloose' boutique hotel interest in Wiltshire generally given a suitable opportunity to acquire and re-position or convert a property.

3.5.30. The development of further luxury 4 and 5 star country house hotels in the county is supported by the market analysis, given the availability of suitable properties for conversion. Such existing hotels are trading strongly and turning away significant business at weekends and during the summer. They have strong appeal for the top end of the leisure break market. They act as destinations in their own right so would generate entirely new business for the county. There is strong and growing demand for these types of hotel from London, particularly at weekends, which Wiltshire is well placed to attract. One well-known destination hotel operator expressed interest in such opportunities, preferably on the outskirts/within easy reach of market towns.

3.5.31. There is also scope for existing 4 and 5 star country house hotels to add bedrooms and/or develop additional facilities such as spas, sports and leisure facilities, function rooms, additional restaurants and bars or facilities such as cookery schools, equestrian centres, falconry centres, wellness rooms, or snooker rooms. There may also be potential for luxury country house hotels to develop alternative forms of accommodation, such as tree houses, eco pods, self-catering apartments and holiday lodges.

3.5.32. Given the strong performance of 4 star golf hotels and resorts in competitor destinations and the lack of such an offer of scale in Wiltshire, there is potential for such development, either in terms of the development of hotels on established golf courses or the development of entirely new golf resorts, given suitable sites that would be acceptable in planning terms.

3.5.33. Similarly, there is also potential for the development of other destination hotel offers in Wiltshire, such as a spa hotel, given a suitable property for conversion. This includes potential for a second luxury family hotel in the county. Luxury Family Hotels indicated that they could be interested in a suitable opportunity in the Salisbury area if a country mansion were to become available here that would lend itself to conversion to such a hotel. Another adult only hotel however seems unlikely given that Warner Leisure Hotels already has a hotel in Wiltshire (Littlecote House),

3.5.34 There is potential for key sites in Wiltshire to take advantage of the emerging trend for hotels to be developed alongside or within existing attractions and visitor draws. Longleat and Center Parcs offer two potential opportunities.

4. INNS & RESTAURANTS WITH ROOMS

4.1. Current Supply

Inns/Pub Accommodation

4.1.1 The audit identified 115 inns and pubs offering accommodation in Wiltshire and Swindon with a total of 828 letting bedrooms. We have also identified a number of pubs that provide accommodation purely for contractors but do not see these as being part of the visitor accommodation supply.

4.1.2 Wiltshire has a good supply of boutique inns, such as the Lamb at Hindon, the Beckford Arms at Tisbury, the Three Daggers at Edington and the White Hart at Ford.

4.1.3. The Wiltshire and Swindon pub accommodation supply is otherwise largely ungraded. While we have not undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the quality of such establishments, it would appear that the standard of accommodation that they offer varies significantly. Some have been refurbished to provide a good standard of contemporary style accommodation, while others seem to provide rather tired, outdated and low quality bedrooms. In some cases we suspect that the accommodation element of the business is operated largely as a secondary source of income to the pub operation. In such circumstances pub landlords may not have the time or interest to operate a professionally run and well marketed accommodation operation. Others are being more actively promoted.

4.1.4. The supply of pub accommodation is spread across urban, village and rural locations. There are concentrations of supply in and around Salisbury, Swindon, Warminster and Chippenham. Almost all of the supply in Swindon is in ungraded establishments, which appear to offer a variable standard of accommodation judging by the content of their websites and Tripadvisor reviews: some appear to be of a good standard, others less so.

4.1.5. Pub accommodation operations range in size from 1 to 21 bedrooms, but most are small, typically with 3-6 bedrooms. Wiltshire has a good supply of inns with around 8-12 bedrooms.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON– CURRENT SUPPLY OF INNS – JUNE 2014

Location	Boutique		4 Star		3 Star		Ungraded		TOTAL	
	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms
Avebury area							1	5	1	5
Bradford on Avon & surrounds	1	4	2	16			1	3	4	23
Calne							3	33	3	33
Chippenham & surrounds	3	28	1	5			5	42	9	75
Corsham & Box	2	17					1	1	3	18
Cricklade			1	5			3	30	4	35
Devizes & surrounds			1	3	1	3	4	22	6	28
Malmesbury & surrounds	1	5					1	12	2	17
Marlborough & surrounds	2	15			1	6	10	52	13	73
Melksham & surrounds	1	8					1	10	2	18
Mere			1	3			2	7	3	10
Pewsey & surrounds	1	5					5	17	6	22
Purton							1	4	1	4
Royal Wootton Bassett & surrounds							4	37	4	37
Salisbury & surrounds	3	44					12	77	15	121
Swindon Borough			1	5	1	3	15	136	17	144
Tidworth area							1	6	1	6
Tisbury	1	8					1	4	2	12
Trowbridge & surrounds							3	14	3	14
Warminster & surrounds	2	27	1	5			9	79	12	111
Westbury & surrounds	1	2					1	7	2	10
Wilton	1	8			1	4			2	12
TOTAL	**19**	**172**	**8**	**42**	**4**	**16**	**84**	**598**	**115**	**828**

4.1.6 The majority of inns and pub accommodation businesses in Wiltshire and Swindon are independently owned and operated. Just over a third are owned by breweries or pub, restaurant or hotel companies. Arkell's owns most of the pub accommodation businesses in the Swindon area, including some in Cricklade and Royal Wootton Bassett. Wadworth owns a number of pubs with rooms in Devizes and some of the surrounding towns and villages. Dorset brewer Hall & Woodhouse owns a number of inns in the south of Wiltshire. As far as we have been able to establish most of the brewery owned inns are run by tenants. Wadworth owns two hotels in Devizes and Arkell's owns the Lansdowne Strand Hotel in Calne. Greene King operates the Castle & Ball in Marlborough under its Old English Inns brand. We have included this as a hotel rather than an inn however. The J D Wetherspoon pub company owns the Kings Head Inn in Salisbury and operates it under its Wetherspoon Hotels brand. We have also included this property as a hotel rather than an inn. None of the other pub accommodation chains (Marston's Inns, Good Night Inns, Thwaites Inns of Character) are represented in Wiltshire.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON SUPPLY OF INNS - CORPORATE OWNERSHIP

Company	Number of Inns	Number of Bedrooms
Arkell's	17	160
Brakespear	2	10
Hall & Woodhouse	5	21
Longleat Hotel Group	1	15
Revere Pub Company	1	11
Stonegate Pun Company	1	17
Upham Group	1	12
Wadworth	13	52
Wheeler's Restaurants	2	13

Changes in Pub Accommodation Supply

4.1.7 Our research has not involved a detailed assessment of recent and proposed changes in the supply of pub accommodation in Wiltshire. From the research that we have undertaken however we have identified the following pub accommodation development and refurbishment projects that have been completed across Wiltshire and Swindon in the last 3 years.

- Arkell's refurbished the Saracen's Head Hotel in Highworth in 2012.
- Brakespear has recently refurbished the Shears Inn at Collingbourne Ducis.
- Arkell's opened a new-build extension of 10 guest bedrooms adjacent to the Sun Inn at Coate Water on the outskirts of Swindon in 2013.
- The Pembroke Arms at Wilton re-opened in April 2013 following a full refurbishment to reposition it as a boutique inn under the management of Hilbrooke Hotels. It has since changed management at the beginning of 2014.
- The Revere Pub Company (owned by Marston's) refurbished the White Hart at Ford, near Chippenham to a boutique standard in 2013.
- The Lamb at Hindon added 6 bedrooms in 2011.
- The Still family acquired the Methuen Arms in Corsham in 2010 and has since refurbished as a boutique inn.
- The Bath Arms at Horningsham near Warminster added 2 new bedrooms in 2012. It was acquired by the Longleat Hotel Group at the beginning of 2014.
- Wheeler's Restaurants acquired the Horse & Groom at Charlton, near Malmesbury in 2012 and has refurbished it to a boutique standard.
- The Beckford Arms in Tisbury reopened as a boutique inn in June 2011 after a complete rebuild and refurbishment programme following a fire in 2010.
- The Three Daggers at Edington opened its three boutique bedrooms in 2011.
- The Bell at Ramsbury was refurbished and developed in 2011 as a boutique inn with 9 bedrooms.
- The boutique Castle Inn at Castle Coombe was fully refurbished in 2011.
- Arkell's refurbished the King's Arms Hotel in Malmesbury in 2011.
- The Swan at Stoford has been refurbished over the last 2 years under its new owners.
- The Upham Group refurbished The George Inn at Longbridge Deverill near Warminster in 2013 to a boutique standard.
- The Stonegate Pub Company re-opened the Goddard Arms in Swindon in March 2014, that it acquired as part of its 2013 takeover of the Bramwell Pub Company, under its Classic Inns brand following a refurbishment programme.

4.1.8. There are undoubtedly other examples of recent investment in inns and pub accommodation businesses in Wiltshire and Swindon that our research has not identified.

4.1.9 A number of inns and pub accommodation establishments have closed across Wiltshire and Swindon. We have identified the following:

- The Old Ship Inn at Mere (9 bedrooms) is currently closed;
- The Bell Hotel in Swindon Old Town has closed;
- The Pembroke Arms at Fovant, near Salisbury is currently closed. It has 3 letting bedrooms. It is currently on the market;
- The Pheasant Hotel at Winterslow was converted to flats in 2012.

4.1.10. Planning records show a much larger number of pubs that have applied and in many cases succeeded in being granted permission for change of use, primarily to residential. However, it has not been possible to track which of these might have offered accommodation, nor which permissions have been implemented.

4.1.11 In terms of proposals for the development of pub accommodation, little has been identified via the planning system, and small numbers of rooms within/above an existing pub would not necessarily require planning permission so would fall under the radar from this point of view. The only specific proposal that we came across was a possible project by the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust to refurbish the Peterborough Arms at Dauntsey Lock to include accommodation.

Restaurants with Rooms

4.1.12 There are two restaurants with rooms in Wiltshire in Lacock and Melksham. The lease for At the Sign of the Angel in Lacock is currently being marketed.

WILTSHIRE – RESTAURANTS WITH ROOMS – JUNE 2014

Restaurant	Location	Grade	Bedrooms
At the Sign of the Angel	Lacock	N/A	6
The Conigre Rooms and Restaurant	Melksham	N/A	8

4.2. Current Performance and Markets

Boutique Inns

4.2.1 Boutique inns in Wiltshire are generally achieving very high average annual room occupancies, typically of at least 75-80%, and in some cases even higher. They are able to command high room rates at weekends and during the summer, in many cases up to £150-175 B&B for a double room and even higher for feature rooms and suites. Room rates tend to be lower during the week and in the winter.

4.2.2. Wiltshire's boutique inns attract very strong demand at weekends. Most consistently fill and turn business away on Friday and Saturday nights for much of the year. Some have a minimum 2-night stay policy at the weekend. The key weekend market for the county's boutique inns is career couples from London and the Home Counties coming for a weekend away in a country pub that offers high quality accommodation, good food and access to good walking. Bath, Lacock, Castle Coombe, Longleat and Stonehenge are also key draws for weekend break stays. Some boutique inns also cater for wedding parties at the weekend. Events including the Badminton Horse Trials, Castle Coombe motor racing and Bath Christmas Market drive some weekend demand.

4.2.3. Some of the county's boutique inns achieve strong midweek occupancies during the shooting season between September and January. Demand from shooting parties is high in the main shooting areas of Cranborne Chase and around Marlborough. Boutique inns in these locations are often fully booked with shooting parties during the season and turn shooting party enquiries away on a frequent basis.

4.2.4 Boutique inns are generally achieving high midweek occupancies between April and September and frequently fill and turn midweek business away in the peak summer months. Emptynester and retired couples coming for a midweek break are the key market at these times. Good food and walking are again the key draws, alongside the opportunity to visit Bath, Longleat, Salisbury and Stonehenge. Inns also attract some local corporate demand, depending on where they are located. Other midweek markets are single night stop-overs from UK holidaymarkers and overseas tourists travelling en-route to and from the West Country and people attending the Marlborough College Summer School.

4.2.5. The only quieter months for boutique inns are February and March, after the shooting season has finished and before the tourist season gets underway.

4.2.6. Occupancies have steadily been increasing for Wiltshire's boutique inns over the last three years. With most inns trading at or close to full capacity at weekends, during the peak summer months and in the shooting season, their focus has been on driving midweek, winter and shoulder season trade through online travel agents and flash sale sites and by targeting the corporate market.

4.2.7. The county's boutique inns are all very positive about their future prospects. They are clearly finding strong demand from customers that are prepared to pay for the quality of food and accommodation that they offer. There is no reason to think that they will not continue to achieve high occupancies at weekends and during the summer tourist and shooting seasons. With scope to boost off peak business through online marketing and targeting the corporate market there are good prospects for even stronger performance results for boutique inns going forward.

Other Inns and Pub Accommodation

4.2.8. The other inns and pub accommodation establishments that we interviewed reported high average annual room occupancies, in some cases up to 80-90%. Room rates are lower than for boutique inns. Most establishments are able to achieve high rates weekends during the summer, typically of at least £85-100 B&B for a double room. Midweek and winter room rates are much lower.

4.2.9. Inns and pub accommodation businesses generally attract strong demand at weekends, particularly during the summer months when most are fully booked and turning business away on a consistent basis. Weekend occupancies are lower in the winter. Most establishments focus primarily on catering for wedding parties at weekends. They also attract weekend break stays during the summer months but not to the same extent as boutique inns. Overseas tourists are a significant market for inns that are close to Stonehenge. Other weekend markets are people attending events and the parents of students at the University of Bath, Marlborough College and some of the other boarding schools in Wiltshire.

4.2.10. Midweek demand is more seasonal. Most inns and pub accommodation establishments achieve good midweek occupancies between April and September. Midweek occupancies dip in some locations in July and August. Weekday occupancies are generally very low in the winter. The core midweek markets are business visitors and contractors. Inns and pub accommodation establishments attract some midweek break business during the summer but not to the same extent as boutique inns. Other midweek markets are overseas tourists and UK holidaymakers and overseas touring visitors stopping off en-route to the West Country.

4.2.11. The last three years have seen a gradual improvement in occupancy for many inns and pub accommodation businesses in Wiltshire. Prices have remained largely unchanged however. Most of the pub accommodation operators that we spoke to were optimistic about the future prospects for their business. Most are planning to focus on growing off peak business through marketing via the online travel agents.

4.3. Sector and Comparator Destination Development Trends

4.3.1 Recent and emerging development trends in the UK pub accommodation sector are as follows:

- There has been a growth in the supply of boutique inns in terms of the conversion of pub premises to gastropubs with boutique guest bedrooms. This type of pub accommodation has developed most rapidly in the South East.

- A number of national pub companies have developed branded portfolios of inns:

    - Greene King has continued to expand its Old English Inns brand and has upgraded many of the inns in this portfolio;
    - Daniel Thwaites has embarked on the development of its Thwaites Inns of Character chain of quality country inns;
    - Marston's operates a portfolio of 41 inns across the country under its Marston's Inns brand. It has opened lodges alongside the new-build pubs that that it opened in Chepstow and Aberystwyth in 2013 and has secured sites for the development of similar lodges alongside other new-build pubs that it will be opening in 2014 and 2015. The company launched the Revere Pub Company in 2013 as a premium pub brand, so far including 4 inns with boutique accommodation in Hampshire, West Sussex and Wiltshire (the White Hart at Ford, near Chippenham).

- Dorset-based brewer Hall & Woodhouse operates 33 hotels and inns in Dorset, Devon, Hampshire, Somerset, Surrey, Hertfordshire, West Sussex and Wiltshire. It has recently opened a new inn in the New Forest.
- Shepherd Neame operates 14 hotels and inns in Kent.
- Fuller's operates 26 hotels and inns in London, Hampshire, West Sussex and the Home Counties. It has upgraded the accommodation at a number of its pubs over the last few years, including the development of luxury boutique bedrooms at a number of them.
- Swindon-based brewer Arkell's operates 41 hotels and inns in Swindon, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Gloucestershire. It is investing in the refurbishment of these properties, as well as adding bedrooms to some of its pub estate.
- The Spirit Pub Company operates the budget Good Night Inns brand alongside 29 of its pubs across the country.
- Brakespear has a portfolio of 28 inns across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Wiltshire and Kent, a number of which have seen recent investment to upgrade their bedrooms.

- A number of regional pub accommodation companies have developed in some parts of the country, acquiring and upgrading inns with rooms e.g. Sussex Pub Group, Cotswolds Inns & Hotels, Cozy Pubs in Essex and the Peach Pub Company across the Midlands.

4.4. Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire

4.4.1 There is clear potential for the development of further boutique inns across Wiltshire through the upgrading, repositioning and possible expansion of existing inns and addition of boutique bedrooms to refurbished and existing high quality pubs. There is also scope for existing boutique inns to develop additional bedrooms where they have space and suitable buildings to convert. Existing boutique inns in the county are trading at very high levels of occupancy and consistently turning business away for much of the year. There is clearly strong demand for this type of accommodation in Wiltshire. The county is losing business at present because it does not have a sufficient supply of boutique inns to cater for demand. There is a clear need and opportunity for additional boutique inn provision in the Marlborough area and Cranborne Chase to cater for demand from shooting parties.

4.4.2. There is also market potential for further good quality pub accommodation in Wiltshire and Swindon both in terms of the upgrading of existing well located, characterful pub accommodation businesses and the potential for pubs to refurbish, modernise and re-open letting bedrooms within their premises and/or provide accommodation through the conversion of suitable outbuildings and possibly new-build bedroom extensions. Providing accommodation can provide a valuable source of additional income to help sustain a pub business.

4.4.3. Care is needed not to over-encourage boutique inn and pub accommodation development. While there are shortages in supply at weekends and during the main summer season, most locations have spare capacity during the week and in the winter. Too rapid an increase in pub accommodation supply could therefore dilute midweek and low season trade.

4.4.4 The developer survey identified interest in pub accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon in terms of adding guest bedrooms onto existing pubs and upgrading and expanding established pub accommodation businesses. The interest varied from traditional historic inns to contemporary boutique bedrooms linked to gastropubs and budget hotel lodges alongside new-build pub restaurants. The interest came from both national chains and more local and regional independents, of which there are undoubtedly many more in the market than we were able to identify. Wadworth is reportedly making accommodation a primary focus for its future investment plans. It sees pubs with rooms as a real opportunity at the moment. Arkell's has also been investing in upgrading its hotels and pub accommodation stock and has added bedrooms to a number of pubs in recent years.

4.4.5 There is also scope for the development of budget hotel lodges and bedroom blocks alongside new-build pubs, as operators such as Marston's and Arkell's have recently begun to put in place, on the edge of Chippenham, Trowbridge, Melksham, Warminster and Salisbury, given suitable development sites. Where city/town centre hotel and pub accommodation development is more of a priority, e.g. Salisbury and Warminster, there may be a case for resisting such edge of city/town proposals.

5. GUEST HOUSE AND B&B ACCOMMODATION

5.1. Current Supply

Current Guest house and B&B Supply

5.1.1. We have undertaken a detailed audit of the current guest house and B&B supply across Wiltshire and Swindon, based on VisitWiltshire's accommodation stock records, the regional accommodation audit completed by South West Tourism in 2010/11 and our own internet searches to double-check the information from these two sources. While the budget and timescale for the study has not allowed us to check that every single identified guest house and B&B is still operating, we are confident that our audit gives a comprehensive picture of the current guest house and B&B supply .

5.1.2. The audit has identified a total of 270 guest houses, B&Bs and farmhouse B&Bs across Wiltshire and Swindon, with a total of 994 letting bedrooms. This supply is analysed by location and standard in the table overleaf.

5.1.3. Wiltshire has a total of 239 guest houses and B&Bs, with 870 letting bedrooms. The county has a good supply of 4 star properties: 44% of establishments are of this standard. It has very few boutique and 5 star B&Bs. 37% of establishments are ungraded. This includes many that appear to be of a high standard and that are receiving high customer ratings on Tripadvisor: the lack of a grading does not necessarily signify poor quality. Having said this there also appear to be some ungraded guest houses and B&Bs, and some 2 and 3 star establishments that provide a somewhat old fashioned style of accommodation. In the course of our research we spoke to a number of ungraded guest houses and B&Bs and some that have recently dropped out if the national grading scheme. Reasons cited for not being graded were either that the scheme is too expensive and more commonly that guest houses and B&Bs are able to secure enough business without being graded through the online travel agents such as booking.com, LateRooms, Tripadvisor and Expedia. Many ungraded operators feel that achieving good customer reviews on these sites is more relevant than being graded.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON– CURRENT SUPPLY OF GUEST HOUSES AND B&Bs – JUNE 2014

Location	Boutique		5 Star		4 Star		3 Star		2 Star		Ungraded		TOTAL	
	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms	Estabs	Rooms
Amesbury					3	26	2	5					5	31
Avebury area					1	2					2	5	3	7
Bradford on Avon & surrounds					5	16	1	3			10	38	16	57
Calne					1	3					2	5	3	8
Chippenham & surrounds					12	35	5	22	3	10	8	45	28	112
Corsham & surrounds	1	4			10	30			1	5	6	14	18	53
Devizes & surrounds	1	4	2	5	8	21			1	2	7	20	19	52
Malmesbury & surrounds					5	15	1	3	1	3	5	13	12	34
Marlborough & surrounds			1	2	11	31	1	10			7	23	20	66
Melksham & surrounds					3	10	1	1			6	40	10	51
Mere					2	8					1	3	3	11
Pewsey & surrounds					2	7	1	3			6	18	9	28
Royal Wootton Bassett							1	12					1	12
Salisbury & surrounds	1	2	2	6	31	127	11	46			22	80	67	261
Swindon Borough			2	4	9	30	3	8			17	82	31	124
Trowbridge & surrounds	1	4			4	12	1	8	2	7	4	15	12	46
Warminster & surrounds					5	14					5	12	10	26
Westbury & surrounds	1	2			2	13							3	15
TOTAL	**5**	**16**	**7**	**17**	**114**	**400**	**28**	**121**	**8**	**27**	**108**	**413**	**270**	**994**

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON GUEST HOUSE AND B&B SUPPLY BY STANDARD – JUNE 2014

Standard	Percentage of Total Bedrooms %	
	Wiltshire	Swindon
Boutique	1.9	-
5 Star	1.5	3.2
4 Star	42.8	24.2
3 Star	13.1	6.5
2 Star	3.1	-
Not Graded	37.6	66.1
TOTAL	**100.0**	**100.0**

5.1.4. There are concentrations of guest houses and B&Bs in Salisbury and the surrounding villages and rural areas, the Chippenham area, and to a lesser extent in and around Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Devizes, Marlborough, Melksham and Trowbridge. Salisbury has a good supply of 4 star guest houses and B&Bs.

5.1.5. B&Bs account for almost 60% of Wiltshire's guest house and B&B supply. Just over 16% of the supply is in farmhouse B&Bs.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON GUEST HOUSE AND B&B SUPPLY BY TYPE – JUNE 2014

Type of Establishment	Percentage of Total Bedrooms %	
	Wiltshire	Swindon
Guest House	24.2	41.9
B&B	59.7	45.2
Farmhouse B&B	16.1	12.9
TOTAL	**100.0**	**100.0**

5.1.6 Swindon has 31 guest houses and B&Bs with a total of 124 letting bedrooms. Two thirds of the supply here is ungraded. These establishments are primarily in the town and judging from their websites appear to offer a variable standards of accommodation (although we have not undertaken a detailed assessment of guest house and B&B quality as part of the study). The Borough's 4 and 5 star guest houses and B&Bs are predominantly located in the villages and rural areas that surround Swindon.

Recent Changes in Guest house and B&B Supply

5.1.7 The study has not included a detailed audit of changes in the supply of guest houses and B&Bs in Wiltshire and Swindon. From our research we have however identified a number of guest houses and B&Bs that have ceased trading in the last 4 years and some that have opened since 2011. This is typical of the churn factor in this sector of the visitor accommodation market: people generally enter the sector pre-retirement and run a guest house or B&B for a period of around 10 years before retiring and either selling up or closing down. While we do not have hard data to show how the supply of guest houses and B&Bs has changed in recent years in Wiltshire and Swindon, we suspect that there has been a net reduction in overall supply as we identified a greater number of establishments that have closed compared to new ones that have opened.

5.1.8. A number of the guest houses that we spoke to have added bedrooms in the last three years and some have plans to open new bedrooms if they can secure finance. There are undoubtedly other guest houses across Wiltshire and Swindon that have expanded or have future expansion plans.

5.2. Current Performance and Markets

Occupancies and Patterns of Demand

5.2.1. Very few guest house and B&B owners record their occupancy levels and are able to provide accurate occupancy data. Guest house and B&B occupancy also varies substantially depending on how busy owners want to be, how commercially they want to operate, and how well established the business is in the market. The well established commercially operated guesthouses that we spoke to in Salisbury that could provide occupancy data reported average annual room occupancies of 60-74% in 2013. Some reported a drop in occupancy whilst others reported an improvement. Elsewhere in Wiltshire guest house and B&B owners that could provide occupancy figures reported a wide range of average annual room occupancies from 30% to 88% in 2013. These levels of performance are typical of the sector, and reflect also the fact that many are lifestyle businesses. For these reasons occupancy is not necessarily a good indicator of the strength of the market.

5.2.2. The guest house and B&B market is highly seasonal in Salisbury and Wiltshire. Most of the guest house and B&B owners that we spoke to reported high occupancies between May and October. Many establishments are frequently full and turning business away during these months, both during the week and at weekends, particularly between June and September. Occupancies are generally lower and more variable between November and April, typically running at 40-70%. Occupancies can be very low in January and February. December is generally a good month for establishments in the vicinity of Bath as a result of people coming to stay for Bath Christmas Market. Demand can be strong around Easter. Guest house and B&B owners are often happy to be quieter in the winter months to give themselves time off and the opportunity to redecorate.

5.2.3. Some guest houses and B&Bs achieve high weekend occupancies for most of the year, other than during January and February. This is particularly the case for some establishments in Salisbury and for 5 star and boutique B&Bs that attract strong year-round demand from career couples travelling from London and the Home Counties.

Key Markets

5.2.4. Key midweek markets for guest houses and B&Bs across Wiltshire are as follows:

- Midweek breaks;
- Overseas tourists;
- People stopping off en-route to and from the West Country;
- Business visitors;
- MoD contract workers;
- Contractors.

5.2.5. Business visitors and contractors are the main source of midweek demand for guest houses and B&Bs in Devizes, Melksham and Trowbridge and probably also in Chippenham and Swindon. Guest houses and B&Bs in the Amesbury area attract strong demand from contractors working for the MoD.

5.2.6. Other midweek markets are:

- Shooting parties;
- People attending the Marlborough College Summer School;
- People on art courses and IT training courses;
- People attending funerals

5.2.7. Key weekend markets are:

- Weekend breaks;
- Wedding parties;
- Overseas tourists
- People stopping off en-route to and from the West Country.
- People attending family parties;
- People visiting friends and relatives;
- Event visitors.

5.2.8. Some guest houses and B&Bs only take 2-night bookings at weekends during the summer. This can block them out to wedding parties that often only want to stay for one night.

5.2.9. Other weekend markets are:

- Parents of students at the University of Bath, Marlborough College and some of the boarding schools in Wiltshire;
- Walkers and cyclists.

5.2.10. Two farmhouse B&Bs that also provide stabling and pasture for horses indicated that they have had a few bookings from horse riders bringing their horses with them. This is a very small market however.

5.2.11. Key draws for domestic leisure break and overseas tourist stays are Stonehenge, Salisbury Cathedral, Avebury, crop circles, Bath, Longleat, Lacock and Marlborough. These markets are generally using guest houses and B&Bs in Wiltshire as a base for a few days while they visit these destinations and attractions. Wiltshire is also a good stopping off point for UK holidaymakers and overseas tourists that are travelling to and from the West Country.

5.2.12. Demand from overseas tourists coming to see Stonehenge is very strong during the summer for guest houses and B&Bs in and around Amesbury and Salisbury. Guest houses and B&Bs close to Bath also attract strong demand from overseas tourists. The German market appears to be particularly strong, with a number of guest houses and B&Bs working with German travel agents that frequently fill their rooms in the summer. Other key generating countries for overseas tourist stays are the Netherlands, Italy, France, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. A few guest house and B&B operators also reported demand from China.

5.2.13. Events also generate business for guest houses and B&Bs in their surrounding area. The degree to which they generate overnight demand depends on the scale and duration of the event, and its ability to attract visitors from more than a day trip distance.

Trends and Future Prospects

5.2.14. Feedback from accommodation operators identified the following trends in the markets for guest house and B&B accommodation in Wiltshire:

- Customers are increasingly booking through online travel agents such as booking.com, LateRooms and Expedia. Some guest houses and B&Bs now derive most of their business through these channels.
- The boutique B&Bs that have opened in Wiltshire have quickly attracted strong demand from career couples, particularly for weekend breaks.
- A number of guest house and B&B owners reported strong growth in demand from overseas tourists in 2013 but a downturn in the summer of 2012 as a result of the London Olympics which appears to have discouraged many overseas visitors from coming to the UK.
- Some guest house and B&B owners reported a decline in business from retired people staying for leisure breaks, which they attribute to the lower returns that people have been getting on their investments and pensions. Other operators reported an increase in this market however.
- MoD business has reduced for some guest houses and B&Bs in the Amesbury and Salisbury areas.
- Business demand has declined for many guest houses and B&Bs in Salisbury and around Trowbridge as a result of companies having downsized or closed their operations. This has affected trade during the winter when guest houses and B&Bs are more reliant on business demand during the week.

5.2.15. The majority of guest house and B&B operators are very positive about the prospects for their business in 2014. Most expect occupancies to remain broadly in line with 2013 and perhaps a little higher. Demand is expected to continue to be highly seasonal. Most guest houses and B&Bs across the county are trading at or very close to capacity during the summer months and the majority see little scope to grow winter trade. Some are aiming to target the retired market for midweek breaks and others are targeting business visitors to boost their midweek occupancies in the winter. Some guest houses and B&Bs are putting their prices up in 2014, many for the first time in a number of years. Others feel that the market is still not strong enough to support a rate increase.

5.2.16. Many of the guest house owners in Salisbury are very concerned about the prospect of a Premier Inn opening in the city centre. Some view this prospect more positively however. We received varying views as to how guest house owners think that they can respond to this new competition. Some indicated that they would invest to take their property more upmarket so as not to compete directly with the Premier Inn. Others felt that they would have to drop their prices. Some intend to increase their marketing. A few indicated that they thought that they would possibly close down. Experience from other historic cities where budget hotels have opened has found the impact of budget hotels on existing supply to be less detrimental than anticipated (depending of course on the scale of new budget hotel provision and how quickly it comes on stream). The impact of a 65-bedroom Premier Inn is likely to be spread across all of Salisbury's hotels and guest houses/B&Bs. While it may result in lower occupancies for some establishments during the winter it should not have an exceptionally adverse effect on any single guest house / B&B. Establishments that are likely to suffer the most are those that offer a lower standard of accommodation and those that are less well located.

5.2.17. Guest houses and B&Bs could be affected by the opening of new budget hotels in Swindon (where additional budget hotels could come forward in the town centre) and other locations in Wiltshire, such as Chippenham (where a 102 bedroom hotel is currently proposed, which could well come forward as a budget hotel) and Amesbury (which our research suggests could support another budget hotel).

5.2.18. A number of guest house and B&B owners in and around Amesbury and Salisbury expect to see growth in demand from Stonehenge visitors, building on the 18% increase in visitor numbers at Stonehenge in 2013 and the longer length of visits to the site that the new visitor centre is producing, resulting in more visitors wanting to stay overnight in the area.

5.3. Sector and Comparator Destination Development Trends

5.3.1 The guest house and B&B sector is characterised by a continual churn of establishments as people enter and exit the sector, often pre-retirement. The last 20 years have seen a continuous improvement in the quality of guest houses and B&Bs in the UK, particularly in terms of the provision of en-suite bathrooms. Existing operators and new entrants have responded to rising customer expectations. It is now rare to find guest houses and B&Bs that are not fully or mostly en-suite.

5.3.2 An emerging trend in the South of England, Wales and some major historic cities (e.g. Bath, Chester, and Edinburgh) is the development of boutique B&Bs, offering luxury bedrooms and bathrooms that feature contemporary interior design; high quality, locally sourced breakfasts; and in some cases spa treatments. Examples in neighbouring areas include:

- Flowerdews, Winchester www.flowerdews.com
- Grays, Bath www.graysbath.co.uk
- The Malt House, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire www.thecotswoldmalthouse.co.uk
- 62 Middlebridge Street, Romsey, Hampshire www.62middlebridgestreet.co.uk

5.3.3. Examples in Wiltshire include:

- Quidhampton Mill, Salisbury www.quidhamptonmill.co.uk
- Forge House, Southwick, Trowbridge www.forgehousebedandbreakfast.co.uk

5.4 Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire & Swindon

5.4.1 There is an ongoing need to encourage the opening of new guest houses and B&Bs to meet current peak season shortages and to replace those that close as owners retire or exit the market for other reasons. Care will be needed however to avoid the opening of too many new establishments, which could dilute midweek and low season trade.

5.4.2 There is a need to encourage the continual upgrading of existing guest houses and B&Bs and to encourage new operators to provide the highest quality of accommodation that they can, to meet constantly rising customer expectations. Most guest house and B&B operators seem to recognise this. Justifying investment can however be difficult given the level of income that a guest house or B&B operation can generate. Financial support to enable upgrading could be helpful therefore to accelerate improvement in the overall quality of the Wiltshire and Swindon guest house and B&B product.

5.4.3 There is potential for the opening of further 5 star guest houses and B&Bs and boutique B&Bs to meet increasing demand for higher quality offers. Such establishments that have opened in Wiltshire have quickly found a strong market. Boutique B&Bs are attracting a new, younger, affluent career couple market that is looking for this style of accommodation and prepared to pay for it. The further development of this style of B&B accommodation can thus help to attract a new market.

5.4.4 The development of B&B for Horses establishments in Wiltshire and rural Swindon - B&Bs that also provide stabling and pasture for horses – is an opportunity that should be further explored. In particular, work will be needed to identify whether there is a sufficiently developed bridleway network for horse riding holidays to be actively promoted, and to identify farms along these routes that could be suitable for such provision.

5.4.5 Given the importance of the walking and cycling markets to Wiltshire, B&B and guest house providers should be encouraged to develop walker and cyclist friendly policies and facilities, particularly those located close to key walking and cycling routes.

6. HOLIDAY COTTAGES

6.1. Current Supply

Current Supply in Wiltshire and Rural Swindon

6.1.1 The study has not included a detailed audit of the current supply of holiday cottages in Wiltshire and rural Swindon. Our analysis of holiday cottage letting websites and the websites of holiday cottage letting agencies (listed at Appendix 4)shows a total of 450 holiday cottages in Wiltshire, although there could be some duplication if cottages are being marketed through more than one website. There are however also likely to be other holiday cottages that are not being marketed through these channels. In total we estimate that there are currently around 500 holiday cottages spread across Wiltshire and rural Swindon

6.1.2 The current holiday cottage supply appears to be a mix of residential properties that are being let out as self-catering holiday accommodation and barns that have been specifically converted to holiday cottages. We would expect there to be a wide range of standards of holiday cottage across Wiltshire and Swindon. There appear to be very few 5 star properties and very little in terms of boutique self-catering provision - stylish, chic self-catering accommodation that features contemporary interior design; luxury kitchens with high quality kitchen appliances and cooking gadgets; luxury en-suite bathrooms and bedrooms with feature baths; top quality beds and bed linen; and the latest TV, home entertainment and music systems. The only examples that we came across in Wiltshire are as follows:

- Lamplighter Farm, Seend, Devizes http://www.uniquehomestays.com/unique/details.asp?id=1890
- Scudamore, Upton Scudamore, Warminster http://www.uniquehomestays.com/unique/details.asp?id=561
- Alma Barn, Aldbourne, Marlborough www.almabarn.co.uk

6.1.3 The vast majority of holiday cottages in Wiltshire and rural Swindon are likely to be individual units. There are some holiday cottage complexes, mostly barn conversions. Examples include:

- Church Farm Cottages, Winsley www.churchfarmcottages.com
- Manor Farm Holiday Cottages www.manorfarmholidaycottageswiltshire.co.uk
- Maunditts Park Farm www.maundittsparkfarmcottages.co.uk

6.1.4 Wiltshire does not appear to have any luxury 5 star holiday cottage complexes similar to those that are available in other rural destinations such as The Cotswolds, Shropshire, Northumberland, East Sussex, Norfolk and Suffolk. It also appears to have very few holiday cottage complexes that offer leisure facilities.

6.1.5 Holiday cottages in Wiltshire and rural Swindon are most likely to be 1,2 and 3-bedroom units. There are likely to be far fewer units with 4 or more bedrooms. Our research has identified a number of 'super cottages' in Wiltshire with 7/8+ bedrooms that can cater for large family and friendship celebrations and get togethers. Examples include:

- Ashe Cottage, Bradford on Avon www.ashecottage-holidaylets.co.uk
- Bridge Farmhouse, Britford, Salisbury www.bridgefarm.co.uk
- The Wilderness www.big-cottages.com/Wiltshire/wil3282/

6.1.6. Wiltshire and rural Swindon appear to have very few holiday cottages that have been adapted for disabled guests and no 'Access Exceptional' holiday cottages that are fully adapted for independent wheelchair users. Tripadvisor lists 28 holiday rentals that are wheelchair accessible. While we have not undertaken a detailed assessment of these units the majority appear only to offer ground floor bedrooms and bathrooms, rather than fully adapted facilities for wheelchair users. The only holiday cottage that we came across that has been specifically adapted is The Old Stables at Britford, near Salisbury www.old-stables.co.uk .

6.1.7. The audit of holiday cottage letting agency websites shows that 176 holiday cottages in Wiltshire and rural Swindon (about 35% of all units) are currently let through holiday cottage letting agencies.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON – REPRESENTATION OF HOLIDAY COTTAGE LETTING AGENCIES - JUNE 2014

Letting Agency	No. Properties in Wiltshire
The Hoseasons Group (Wyndham Vacation Rentals) (Cottages 4 You, English Country Cottages, Welcome Cottages)	89
Hideaways	56
Sykes Cottages	22
Mulberry Cottages	6
Rural Retreats	1
Unique Home Stays	2
Total	**176**

Changes in Supply

6.1.8 The study has not involved an audit of recent changes in the supply of holiday cottages in Wiltshire and rural Swindon. From the anecdotal evidence that we have picked up through our consultations with holiday cottage operators and holiday cottage letting agencies it would appear that Wiltshire's supply of self-catering cottages has increased in recent years. This may be due to the downturn in the residential property market during the recession. In other destinations that we have worked in recently we have found evidence of property owners deciding to let houses and cottages as holiday accommodation in preference to selling them at a low price. With the residential property market now starting to strengthen this trend could well reverse, leading to a loss of some holiday cottage stock. The changes to permitted development rights could also make residential use an attractive option for farmers, unless they are looking for an on-going income stream. Funding is likely to be a key barrier to an increase in new build self-catering supply. A headline review of the planning records for Wiltshire over the past 5 years shows a reasonable level of interest (60 applications), a significant proportion of which involve the conversion of farm buildings. As a further indicator of potential future increases in holiday cottage supply, all of the holiday cottage letting agencies that we spoke to indicated that they would be interested in marketing further holiday cottages in Wiltshire, of all standards and sizes.

6.2 Current Performance and Markets

Lettings and Key Markets

6.2.1 There is a strong but seasonal market for holiday cottages in Wiltshire. The holiday cottage operators and letting agencies that we spoke to reported average annual lettings ranging from 21 to 43 weeks in 2013. Demand is highest between April and September and peaks in July and August, the May half term week and the Christmas and New Year period, when the majority of good quality holiday cottages in Wiltshire are fully booked and turning business away. Outside of these peak periods demand is strong for weekend lets in the shoulder months and for full week lets in the February half term, Easter school holidays and October half term.

6.2.2 Demand is strongest for holiday cottages in South Wiltshire and near Bath and Longleat, high quality 4 and 5 star properties, holiday cottage complexes with leisure facilities and dog-friendly cottages. One of the holiday cottage letting agencies that we spoke to reported lower levels of demand for holiday cottages in North Wiltshire.

6.2.3 Lettings between April and October are split roughly evenly between full week lets for holidays primarily during school holidays, and short lets for weekend breaks, and to a lesser extent midweek breaks at other times. The majority of holiday and short break customers are from the UK. Overseas tourists are a lesser market for most holiday cottages. Key draws for holidays, short breaks and overseas tourist stays are Bath, Longleat, Stonehenge and the Cotswolds. Other markets are wedding parties, people visiting friends and relatives (a key market for the Christmas and New Year period) and business visitors and contractors working on projects in the local area. This latter market is more dominant for some holiday cottages in the Swindon area. Holiday cottage complexes and larger properties attract good demand for family and friendship celebration weekends and reunions throughout the year.

6.2.4 Winter demand is much lower and predominantly for weekend break lets, other than for the February half term when holiday cottages can attract full week lets for family holidays. Some holiday cottages cater for long lets during the winter period from people working in the area and those requiring temporary accommodation while relocating or when work is being done on their houses. A number of the barn conversion holiday cottage complexes that we spoke to reported that conditions in their planning permission that require a month-long period of closure in the winter restrict their ability to take this long let business in the winter.

Recent Trends

6.2.5 The major trend in the last 3-4 years has been an acceleration in the long term shift in the market towards short lets away from full weeks. This has been as a result of the growing demand for self-catering short breaks and a reduction during the recession in requirements for week-long lets as people have reduced their holiday budgets and taken fewer and shorter holidays. Demand for long winter lets has also reduced as a result of lower levels of business and contractor demand. A number of holiday cottage operators reported tough trading conditions in the last 3 years as a result of these factors: lettings have reduced; there has been a switch to more last minute bookings, which make business planning more difficult; and holiday cottage operators have generally been unable to increase their prices. A number of operators reported a noticeable drop in bookings in the summer of 2012 as a result of the London Olympics and the poor weather. Many of the operators that we spoke to are more optimistic about the prospects for their business in 2014, with signs of recovery and renewed growth in demand and scope to begin to push up prices.

6.3 Sector Development Trends

6.3.1 In terms of holiday cottage sector development trends, the housing market has a significant impact on **residential properties let as holiday accommodation**, which form the largest proportion of the stock of self catering holiday accommodation in the UK. The downturn in the residential property market over the past 5 years has resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of residential properties that have become available to rent as holiday accommodation. With lower house prices owners have become more interested in making their properties available as holiday lets than selling at a reduced price. With the residential property market now starting to recover this trend could reverse in the next few years.

6.3.2 The overall **quality** of the UK self-catering offer has improved significantly over the last 10-20 years. Customers are demanding ever higher quality and are prepared to pay for it. Many are now looking for standards of décor, furnishings, appliances and equipment that are at least as good as, if not better than what they have at home. Customers are increasingly looking for self-catering accommodation that can deliver a 'wow' factor. Self-catering property owners are recognising that they can achieve increased lettings and higher prices if they offer high quality accommodation. The supply of 4 and 5 star self-catering accommodation has thus been increasing. Specific quality improvements in self-catering accommodation have included:

- High quality fitted kitchens, kitchen appliances and equipment, dishwashers and washer/dryers;
- En-suite bathrooms, luxury bathrooms and wet rooms, power showers and whirlpool baths;
- Flat screen TVs and DVD and Blu Ray players, Sky Plus TV, broadband Wi-Fi, gaming stations, iPod docks and sound systems;
- Hot tubs and saunas.

6.3.3 At the top end of the market self-catering operators have started to offer **extra services** such as the provision of meals, food hampers, private chefs and butlers for hire, daily cleaning services, beauty treatments and accepting online shopping deliveries for guests.

6.3.4 The **conversion of redundant farm buildings** to self-catering accommodation has been a key trend over the past 30 years, fuelled by farm diversification grants and a planning policy framework that has generally supported the re-use of redundant agricultural buildings. The supply of this form of self-catering accommodation continues to grow and looks set to increase further. Farmers have converted barns as single self-catering units and in some cases as self-catering complexes of 2-5 units. There are also examples of more extensive self-catering barn conversion complexes that often include leisure facilities such as games rooms, swimming pools, gyms and tennis courts. More recent self-catering barn conversions have tended to be of a high quality, usually achieving a 4 or 5 star grading and sometimes other quality awards.

6.3.5 **Boutique self-catering** is an emerging product development trend, mirroring the development of boutique hotels, guest houses and B&Bs. Such accommodation trades at the top end of the UK holiday market and typically commands premium prices. Examples include:

- The Folly, Didmarton, Gloucestershire http://thefollyluxurycottage.com/
- Agra Cottage, Healey, near Ripon (www.selfcateringcottages.net)
- The Reading Room, Long Compton, Warwickshire (www.compton-house.co.uk/#/reading-room/4573650024)
- The Peren, near Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire (www.theperen.com)
- Windfall Cottage, Beckford, Gloucestershire (www.windfallcottage.com)
- Culls Cottage, Southdrop, the Cotswolds http://www.cullscottage.net/

6.3.6 Examples of letting agencies specialising in boutique self catering include:

- Unique Home Stays (www.uniquehomestays.com)
- Boutique Getaways (www.boutiquegetaways.com)
- Boutique Retreats (www.boutique-retreats.co.uk) – specialising in boutique self-catering in Cornwall.

6.3.7 Another emerging product development trend in the UK has been the growth in the supply of large **'super' cottages** that can accommodate parties of up to 20-30 guests. These can be large residential properties, e.g. manor houses that are let out as self-catering accommodation or large purpose-designed self-catering barn conversions. Such properties have developed to cater for the growing demand for family and friendship get togethers, celebrations and house parties. They generally trade at the top end of the market, offering high quality, luxury accommodation. They will include large living spaces and dining areas and usually feature the latest in home entertainment systems. Some also have leisure facilities in terms of swimming pools, games rooms and snooker rooms. Examples include:

- Marris Barn, Thorganby Hall, Lincolnshire (www.thorganbyhall.co.uk/marris-barn)
- Tregulland in Cornwall (www.tregulland.co.uk)
- Treasury Barn at Ickham in Kent (www.mulberrycottages.com/cottage/holiday-cottages-in-kent/52477-the-treasury)
- Pedington Manor in Gloucestershire (http://bigcottage.com/houses/pedington-manor)
- Cliff Barns in Norfolk (www.cliffbarns.com)

6.3.8. A number of agencies and web-based directories have been established in the UK specialising in the letting and marketing of large self-catering properties. The key ones currently are as follows:

- Unique Home Stays (www.uniquehomestays.com)
- The Wow House Company (www.thewowhousecompany.com)
- House Party Solutions (www.housepartysolutions.co.uk)
- Acacia Cottages (www.acaciacottages.co.uk)
- The Country Castle Company (www.thecountrycastlecompany.co.uk)
- The Big Domain (www.thebigdomain.com)
- Group Accommodation (www.groupaccommodation.com)
- The Big Cottage Company (www.bigcottage.com)

6.3.9 The development of **Access Exceptional self-catering cottages** that are fully adapted for use by independent and assisted wheelchair users is a trend that has been very slow to develop in the UK, particularly given the growing numbers of wheelchair users that are looking to take holidays. Access Exceptional holiday cottages should include most of the following features:

- Wide doorways and corridors;
- Extra space for wheelchair users;
- Wheel-in showers, possibly with hoist rails;
- Bathrooms and toilets adapted for wheelchair users;
- Low-level kitchen counters;
- Ramps, lifts or stair lifts if needed.

Examples include:

- The Calf Shed, Bardown Farm, Stonegate, East Sussex (www.bardownfarm.co.uk)
- Mellwaters Barn, Bowes, County Durham (www.mellwatersbarn.co.uk)
- Treworgans Farm Holidays, Cornwall (www.treworgans.co.uk)
- The Hytte, Northumberland (www.thehytte.com)
- Windrush Barn, Manor Farm Holidays, Cumbria (www.manorfarmholidays.co.uk)
- Mitchelland Farm, Lake District (www.lakedistrictdisabledholidays.co.uk)

6.4. Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire

6.4.1 There is a clear requirement for additional holiday cottages in Wiltshire to meet current shortages of provision during the peak summer months, over the Christmas and New Year period, at weekends during the shoulder season months and to some extent in the February, May and October half term holidays. The holiday cottage agencies that we spoke to are all seeking additional 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties of all standards to meet demand at these times. They specifically identified requirements for additional properties in the following locations:

- Salisbury
- Marlborough
- Bath
- Bradford on Avon
- Longleat
- Castle Coombe
- Lacock
- Pewsey Vale
- Wylye Valley
- Cranborne Chase
- Chalke Valley

6.4.2. The opportunities for additional holiday cottage supply are both in terms of the letting of residential properties as holiday accommodation and the conversion of farm and other buildings to holiday lets. Care must however be taken not to encourage too great an increase in holiday cottage supply as this could dilute shoulder season and winter lettings. The priority we suggest should be for high quality 5 star, fully en-suite and boutique holiday cottages that can help to attract a new market to Wiltshire that is willing to pay for the 'wow' factor that these types of property offer. Accommodation of this standard is finding a strong market in neighbouring rural destinations. Wiltshire will need more of it if the county is to compete for this market in the future.

6.4.3 There is scope for a few large 5 star self-catering complexes with leisure facilities, along the lines of those that have opened in other rural destinations. As far as we have been able to establish there are no such complexes currently in Wiltshire. They generally trade at high levels of lettings but are expensive to develop so care is needed in assessing the feasibility of such developments.

6.4.4 There is also scope for additional 'super cottages' in Wiltshire and rural Swindon given their relatively limited supply of such properties currently and the growing demand for properties that can cater for large family and friendship groups.

6.4.5 The development of 'Access Exceptional' self-catering cottages in Wiltshire and rural Swindon should also be encouraged. As far as we have been able to establish there are currently no such properties in the area and very little self-catering accommodation that is adapted for wheelchair users. This is a niche market however, so significant provision is not warranted.

6.4.6 While all of these opportunities could provide alternative uses for redundant farm buildings it remains to be seen how far the new permitted development rights to convert agricultural buildings to residential dwellings will impact on the future conversion of barns to holiday accommodation. We suspect that it will slow down the future development of this type of visitor accommodation but probably not stop it entirely.

7. HOLIDAY LODGE/HOLIDAY HOME COMPLEXES &PARKS

7.1 Current & Proposed Supply

Holiday Lodges for Rental

7.1.1 The audit identified 4 small holiday lodge complexes in Wiltshire that offer timber lodges or log cabins for holiday rental:

CURRENT SUPPLY OF HOLIDAY LODGES FOR RENTAL - WILTSHIRE - JUNE 2014

Establishment	Location	Number of Lodges	Grade
Wickham Green Farm	Urchfont, Devizes	3	N/A
Wayside Lodges	Chittoe Heath, Bromham	4	N/A
Hunters Moon	Henfords Marsh, Warminster	15	N/A
Willowbank Lodges	Pewsey	5	N/A

7.1.2. Three of the complexes (Wickham Green Farm, Wayside Lodges and Hunters Moon) are marketed exclusively through Hoseasons Lodges.

7.1.3. The Hunters Moon holiday lodges are located around a fishing lake complex. The site opened a new contemporary lodge in 2013.

Holiday Homes for Ownership

7.1.4 There are two complexes of owned holiday homes on golf courses in Wiltshire:

- Messenger Leisure has developed The Wiltshire Leisure Village at the Wiltshire Golf & Country Club at Royal Wootton Bassett, alongside the expansion of the golf course, the construction of a new leisure centre and the opening of the hotel on the site. The first phase of 44 New England style holiday homes was completed in 2008 and is now fully sold. A second phase of 30 larger holiday homes is currently under construction. The company has retained 6 holiday homes for rental and operates a rental service for private owners. It has recently sold the hotel to concentrate on developing the holiday homes.

- Oaksey Country Park and Golf Club near Malmesbury has 20 privately owned contemporary holiday cottages. The business went into administration in June 2011. Some of the cottages had previously been available for rental but we understand that they have now all been sold for use by private owners. We understand that the site has planning permission for a further 12 holiday cottages and that at one stage the former owner was intending to apply for permission for another 25 units. We have not been able to verify either of these matters however, and do not know whether the current owners are contemplating future expansion.

7.2. Current Performance

Holiday Lodge Rental

7.2.1. Demand for holiday lodge rental in Wiltshire is the same as for holiday cottages. It is strong between June and September, when holiday lodge complexes are generally fully booked and denying business. There is also strong demand in the shoulder months for short lets, particularly at weekends, when holiday lodge complexes can be fully booked. Demand in the winter is much lower.

7.2.2. Holiday lodges attract a mix of full week holiday lets during school holiday periods and short break lets at other times. Key draws for holiday and short break lets are Longleat, Stonehenge, Salisbury, crop circles and walking and cycling. The fishing lakes at Hunters Moon are a key draw for its holiday lodges. Holiday and short break customers are primarily from the UK, comprising families during school holidays and older couples at other times of the year . One holiday lodge complex attracts strong demand from Holland through Hoseasons.

7.2.3. Other markets are family and friendship get togethers, people attending the Marlborough College Summer School, people visiting friends and relatives and long lets in the winter to contractors working in the area and for temporary housing requirements.

Holiday Home Ownership

7.2.4. The first phase of holiday homes at The Wiltshire Leisure Village is sold out. The marketing of the second phase of holiday homes has not yet started so it is too early to tell how well they will sell. We understand that the holiday homes at Oaksey Country Club have all been sold.

7.3 Sector Development Trends

7.3.1 **Holiday lodge parks** offering timber holiday lodges for outright or timeshare purchase and/or rental are a new offer to emerge over the past 20 years. They have developed primarily in inland locations, often woodland or waterside settings and/or associated with other developments and activities such as marinas, golf courses (golf lodges), fishing lakes (fishing lodges), watersports or alongside hotels. Most holiday lodge parks are small – the average holiday lodge park covers 32.2 acres and has 35 lodges. Timber holiday lodges are generally seen as a more up-market and exclusive alternative to the traditional caravan holiday home: they are particularly popular with older and more affluent customers. Most holiday lodges have two or three bedrooms. Holiday lodge parks increasingly have a number of on-site leisure facilities, including restaurants, bars, swimming pools, gyms and children's play areas. Holiday lodges are generally purchased as second homes for holiday purposes. Most park operators offer a holiday rental service to owners and many make participation in such a service a condition of purchasing a lodge. Lodge owners typically live within 3 hours of their holiday lodge and are aged over 50. The lodge rentals market attracts a younger clientele, with rental holidaymakers most typically aged 31-50. The recession has resulted in a significant slowdown in UK holiday lodge sales, with the reduced consumer confidence and falling house prices resulting in far fewer buyers for such holiday properties. Some operators have changed their strategy to holiday letting as a result. With the economy now starting to recover there is likely to be renewed interest in holiday lodge ownership.

7.3.2. There are a growing number of holiday lodge letting agencies and websites. The leading one is Hoseasons (www.hoseasons.co.uk/lodges), which has also developed the sub-brands of Autograph Lodge Holidays (www.autographlodgeholidays.co.uk) and Evermore Lodge Holidays (www.evermorelodgeholidays.co.uk).Others include Book Holiday Cottages (www.bookholidaylodge.co.uk) and its sister brand Lodges With Hot Tubs (www.lodgeswithhottubs.org.uk) and Just lodges (www.justlodges.com).

7.3.3 Key holiday lodge park operators/developers in the UK are as follows:

- The Dream Lodge Group (www.thedreamlodgegroup.co.uk) – 9 sites in East Sussex, Essex, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Devon and Cornwall;
- Lodge Retreats (www.lodge-retreats.co.uk) – part of Bourne Leisure – 7 sites in Yorkshire, Northumberland, Dorset, Somerset and Wales;
- Forest Holidays – part of the Forestry Commission (www.forestholidays.co.uk/choose-a-cabin) – offers Golden Oak Cabins at 9 sites in Scotland, Wales, Gloucestershire, Hampshire and Nottinghamshire. Its most recent development has been a complex of 60 cabins in Blackwood Forest.).Planning permission was secured in October 2013 for a development of 78 forest cabins in Delamere Forest in Cheshire;
- Natural Retreats (www.naturalretreats.co.uk)has developed eco lodge parks in the Yorkshire Dales and North Scotland and luxury holiday home developments in Cornwall and North Wales.
- Darinian Leisure Resorts (www.darinian.co.uk) has two holiday lodge parks in Essex and the Yorkshire Dales offering luxury, contemporary lodges for rental and ownership.
- Tom Hartley Park Homes (www.tomhartleyparkhomes.co.uk), a holiday park operator with sites in the East Midlands and Home Counties is currently developing Ashby Woulds Lodges (www.ashbywouldslodges.co.uk) as a boutique leisure park with a first phase of 17 luxury holiday lodges for holiday home ownership.
- Lancashire-based holiday park operator Pure Leisure Group (www.pureleisuregroup.com) operates the South Lakeland Leisure Village holiday lodge park and two golf lodge developments in Cambridgeshire and East Yorkshire alongside 6 caravan holiday home parks in the Southern Lake District, Northamptonshire and East Anglia, some of which also offer holiday lodges for ownership or rental.

7.3.4 Examples of recent and current holiday lodge park developments include:

- Scampston Park Lodges, Malton, North Yorkshire (www.scampston.co.uk/park-lodges.html) – a development of 75 luxury holiday lodges for sale
- Westholme Estate (www.westholme-estate.co.uk) – Darinian Leisure Resorts' £10 million development of a former caravan holiday home park;
- The Lakes by yoo, Cotswolds (www.thelakesbyyoo.com) – a development of luxury second homes around a series of lakes
- The Cornwall, St Austell (www.thecornwall.com/stay/self-catering-woodland-homes.aspx) – 22 architect-designed 5 star woodland self-catering homes developed alongside a boutique hotel and spa
- The Sherwood Hideaway, Nottinghamshire (www.sherwoodhideaway.com)

7.3.5 **Fishing lodges and lodge parks** are a particular type of holiday lodge accommodation that has developed across the UK. These are clusters of timber lodges that are developed around fishing lakes for sale or rental. They can range in size from 2-3 lodges up to more extensive developments of 40-50 lodges. They vary in standard but are frequently high quality, luxury 4 and 5 star lodges. Examples include:

- Heron Lakes, East Yorkshire (www.heron-lakes.co.uk) – 50 lodges
- Thornham Lake, Thetford, Norfolk (www.thornhamlake.co.uk)
- Celtic Lakes Resort, Lampeter, Wales (www.celticlakesresort.com) – sixteen 5 star lodges developed around 6 fishing lakes

7.3.6. Similarly, golf lodges, built on golf courses, for sale, timeshare purchase or rental, have been another emerging sector trend. Similar to fishing lodge developments they can range from a small number of lodges up to major golf lodge complexes. Golf lodges generally offer a high standard of accommodation. They are often developed alongside golf hotels. Examples include:

- Rutland Lodges, Greetham Valley Golf Course, Rutland (www.greethamvalley.co.uk/self-catering/rutland-lodges)
- South Winchester Lodges, South Winchester Golf Course, Hampshire (www.southwinchesterlodges.co.uk)
- Overstone Park, Northamptonshire (www.overstonepark.com/lodges) - 114 golf lodges alongside a clubhouse, leisure club and 31 bedroom hotel
- Lakeside Lodge, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire (www.lakeside-lodge.co.uk) – seven 2-storey timber lodges alongside a 64 bedroom hotel, health club and conference and banqueting suite

- De Vere Luxury Lodges (www.devereluxurylodges.co.uk) – luxury golf lodges for sale or rent have been developed as part of De Vere's Belton Woods and Slaley Hall golf resorts in Lincolnshire and Northumberland.
- KP Lodges at The KP at Pocklington in East Yorkshire (www.kpclub.co.uk/accommodation/lodges)

7.3.7 **Eco lodges and eco lodge parks** are a more recent product development. These are individual timber lodges or complexes of lodges that are built to the highest possible environmental sustainability standards and designed and operated to minimise their carbon footprint. Eco lodges will typically include features such as the use of sustainable materials in their construction, grass or sedum roofs, renewable energy sources, waste recycling, energy conservation measures and water conservation systems. Their green credentials are a key part of their marketing and many customers are increasingly choosing these types of accommodation because they want to go an eco-friendly holiday and reduce their carbon footprint. Eco lodge operators will usually also encourage their guests to take part in green activities in terms of car-free days out, walking and cycling, nature study, foraging, bird and wildlife watching, and buying local produce. Examples include:

- Natural Retreats' Yorkshire Dales eco lodge park development near Richmond (www.naturalretreats.co.uk/yorkshire-dales/self-catering-holidays.php)
- Brompton Lakes, Yorkshire (www.bromptonlakes.co.uk/log-cabins-yorkshire.asp)
- Mill Meadow Eco Homes, Somerset (www.millfieldecoprojects.co.uk)
- Rosehill Lodges, Cornwall (www.rosehilllodges.com)
- Wheatland Farm Eco Lodges, Devon (www.wheatlandfarm.co.uk)
- Ludlow Ecolog Cabins, Shropshire (www.ludlowecologcabins.co.uk)

7.3.8. An interesting although very niche self-catering accommodation product that has emerged in the UK in recent years is self-catering **treehouses**. A number of these have been developed across the UK, primarily as individual units. They are generally very high quality. They clearly have appeal to the family market. Center Parcs has opened a small number of luxury two-storey treehouses at its holiday villages in Sherwood Forest and Longleat Forest. Aimed primarily at the family market the treehouses include 4 en-suite bedrooms; an open plan kitchen, dining and living area; a games den (accessed along a timber walkway) with plasma TV, pool table, games console, Blu Ray player and a bar area with fridge; and a private hot tub. (www.centerparcs.co.uk/accommodation/By_Type/treehouse.jsp). Forest Holidays (the Forestry Commission) has introduced luxury Golden Oak Treehouse Cabins at its forest cabin holiday sites in Cornwall, Forest of Dean, Sherwood Forest and North Yorkshire (www.forestholidays.co.uk/cabins/cabins/treehouse.aspx). Other examples in the UK include:

- The Treehouse at Lavender Hill Holidays, Somerset (www.lavenderhillholidays.co.uk/properties.asp?id=101)
- Bryn Meurig Bach, Powys, Wales (www.canopyandstars.co.uk/find-a-place/living-room/bryn-meurig-bach)

7.4 Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire and Rural Swindon

7.4.1. There is good potential for the development of additional holiday lodge accommodation in Wiltshire and rural Swindon in terms of:

- Individual holiday lodges for rental, including contemporary and boutique lodges;
- Small holiday lodge complexes for rental;
- Holiday lodge parks for ownership and/or rental;
- Golf lodges on golf courses for ownership or rental;
- Fishing lodges at fishing lakes for rental;
- Eco lodge development for ownership or rental;
- Possibly some treehouse developments.

7.4.2. Wiltshire and rural Swindon should be able to support the development of the type of woodland and lakeside holiday lodge parks that have successfully been developed elsewhere in the country, given suitable sites that can secure planning permission, particularly now that the economy and residential property market are beginning to recover. The consultation work has not identified any such sites other than possibly Thoulstone Park, near Warminster, which we think could be suitable for an eco lodge development (although we have not visited the site to assess its suitability for this type of use).

7.4.3. There has been past interest in this type of development in a woodland setting (Manor Farm, Landford, Salisbury – 109 lodges, lakes leisure), and a smaller scheme at Highworth, Swindon (20 units). The planning register also shows a number of applications for small groups of holiday lodges linked to activities such as golf (Woodbridge Park Golf Club, Brinkworth), shooting (West Farm Barn, Fovant), agri-tourism (Potterne Park Farm, Potterne), and the Kennet & Avon Canal waterways (Devizes Marina). One of the touring caravan and camping site operators that we spoke to indicated that he has planning permission for 12 holiday lodges for rental. One of the hotel owners that we interviewed advised us that he is currently looking at developing a complex of 4-8 holiday lodges and 4-10 yurts around a lake near Cricklade.

7.4.4. The developer testing identified interest from three holiday lodge park operators that are prepared to consider sites suitable for holiday lodge park development. Holiday lodge parks would generate significant economic and employment benefits and possibly environmental benefits if they involve landscape restoration, e.g. through the development of worked out gravel pits or quarries, and where an eco-development approach is adopted.

8. CARAVAN HOLIDAY HOME PARKS

8.1 Current & Proposed Holiday Park Supply

8.1.1 There are no caravan holiday home parks currently in Wiltshire and Swindon. The only caravan holiday homes that we came across are 4 mobile homes that are available to rent at Lower Foxhangers Farm at Rowde, near Devizes and 4 static caravans for hire at Coombe Caravan Park, next to Salisbury Race Course at Netherhampton. They offer low cost accommodation that attracts high demand from regular customers for weekly lets between April and October and short lets at the beginning and end of the season, alongside long lets to contractors working in the area and people requiring temporary accommodation during house moves.

8.2 Sector Development Trends

8.2.1 The market for caravan holiday home parks has remained relatively robust during the economic downturn, with relatively few holiday parks going into administration compared to other elements of the visitor accommodation sector such as hotels. However, the Credit Crunch has affected the sales of holiday parks, as despite market interest prospective buyers have had difficulty in securing finance.

8.2.3 National holiday park operators will develop new holiday parks if they can find suitable sites that might be acceptable in planning terms. The difficulty of obtaining planning permission for a new holiday park has generally constrained the development of new sites however. The majority of local authorities across the country have planning policies that resist the development of new holiday parks because of their visual impact on the landscape. Flood risk issues are also a major barrier to new holiday park development. These constraints on the development of new holiday parks have however been a key factor in the robustness of the sector as it has meant that market demand has generally exceeded supply in most parts of the country.

8.3 Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire

8.3.1 While one of the national holiday park operators that we spoke to expressed interest in Wiltshire as a location for caravan holiday home park development we would suggest that this is not the most appropriate form of accommodation to be encouraging in Wiltshire and Swindon, especially in more environmentally sensitive locations. The development of holiday lodge parks would in most locations be more appropriate in terms of market fit and environmental impact. Having said this caravan holiday home park development should not be entirely discounted if suitable sites were to become available, given the potential operator/developer interest and the impact in terms of job creation, visitor numbers and spending, and supply chain development of large-scale caravan holiday home parks.

8.3.2. Our research did not identify any potential sites for caravan holiday home park development.

9. CENTER PARCS LONGLEAT FOREST

9.1.1. Center Parcs opened its third UK holiday village in Longleat Forest in 1994. The site has a total of 4,000 bedspaces. The company's holiday villages trade at an average annual unit occupancy of 97% and achieved an average daily rental per unit of £148 in 2012/13, catering predominantly for the family break market. 96% of customers rate their break at Center Parcs as excellent or good.

9.1.2. Center Parcs opens its fifth UK holiday village at Woburn Forest in Bedfordshire on 6 June 2014. The company's focus for its existing holiday villages will be ongoing investment in upgrading their accommodation units, introducing new restaurant concepts and adding new activities. It spent £40million on the four holiday villages in 2012/13. At Longleat Forest this included upgrading lodges, the introduction of three luxury treehouses, two new restaurant formats, and the extension of the pottery painting studio and aerial adventure park. Center Parcs' head office advised us that there are no major development plans for the Longleat Forest holiday village at present. The company will however continue to invest in maintaining and further improving the quality of the site and may well look to introduce new ideas and innovations in the future.

10. TOURING CARAVAN & CAMPING SITES

10.1 Current Supply

Touring Caravan & Camping Sites – Current Supply

10.1.1 The audit identified 67 touring caravan and camping sites in Wiltshire and Swindon with a total of 1,903 pitches. This supply is a mix of large and small caravan and camping sites, two caravan sites, three camp sites and 39small certificated sites[1]. Most sites take touring caravans, motor homes and tents. Some only take touring caravans and motor homes and some are only available for camping.

10.1.2. There are 5 large sites in Wiltshire with over 150 pitches:

- Blackland Lakes, Calne - 180 pitches
- Postern Hill Camping in the Forest, Marlborough - 150 pitches
- Green Hill Farm Caravan & Camping Park, Landford - 160 pitches
- Salisbury Camping & Caravanning Club Site - 150 pitches
- Longleat Caravan Club Site - 165 pitches

10.1.3. The Caravan Club has two club sites in Wiltshire at Salisbury and Longleat. The Camping and Caravanning Club also has two club sites in the county, at Devizes and Salisbury. The Camping in the Forest partnership between the Forestry Commission and Camping and Caravanning Club has one site in Wiltshire at Postern Hill. Touring caravan and camping sites in Wiltshire and Swindon are otherwise privately owned. A number of pubs across Wiltshire have small caravan and camping fields or certificated sites. Many of the certificated sites are otherwise on farms.

[1] Small 5-pitch sites that are certificated to operate by the Caravan Club or Camping and Caravanning Club, without the need for planning permission

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON – CURRENT TOURING CARAVANNING & CAMPING PROVISION – JUNE 2014

Location	Caravan & Camping Sites		Caravan Sites		Camp Sites		Certificated Sites		TOTAL	
	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches	Sites	Pitches
Amesbury & surrounds	3	95							3	95
Bradford on Avon & surrounds					1	10	4	30	5	40
Calne & surrounds	1	180					3	25	4	205
Chippenham & surrounds	2	93			1	30	4	30	7	153
Cranborne Chase	1	26							1	26
Cricklade & surrounds	1	22							1	22
Devizes & surrounds	4	135					5	60	9	195
Landford/Nomansland & surrounds	2	165					1	5	3	170
Malmesbury & surrounds	1	33					2	10	3	43
Marlborough & surrounds	1	10			1	150	5	65	7	225
Melksham & surrounds							1	20	1	20
Pewsey & surrounds	1	30					3	15	4	45
Salisbury & surrounds	3	241	1	46			4	40	8	327
Swindon & surrounds							3	15	3	15
Trowbridge & surrounds	2	46					1	10	3	56
Warminster & surrounds			1	165			2	20	3	185
Westbury & surrounds	1	70					1	11	2	81
TOTAL	**23**	**1146**	**2**	**211**	**3**	**190**	**39**	**356**	**67**	**1903**

10.1.4. While the study has not involved a detailed assessment of the quality of touring caravan and camping provision across Wiltshire and Swindon, the insight that we have built up through our research and consultations suggests that standards are variable. The supply ranges from sites that have electric hook up facilities on all pitches, high quality toilet and shower blocks, site shops and in some cases children's play areas and indoor leisure facilities, to more basic grass sites with minimal facilities. Ten sites are graded under the Visit England star rating scheme or the AA pennant scheme. Wiltshire only has one 5 star caravan site - the Longleat Caravan Club Site. Most of the other graded sites in the county have 3 or 4 star or 3 or 4 pennant ratings.

10.1.5. Many of the touring caravan and camping sites have hard standing pitches that enable them to take touring caravans and motor homes during the winter and in periods of wet weather when grass pitches may be unusable. The Longleat Caravan Club Site consists almost entirely of hard standing pitches. A few sites have a small number of fully serviced pitches with mains water and sewerage connection. A number of sites have some seasonal tourer pitches[1]. Some sites offer caravan storage over the winter. A number of sites have fields that they can use for a limited number of days for caravan and camping rallies.

10.1.6. Two sites (The Blackberries Camping Park at Monkton Farleigh and the Stonehenge Camp Site) have a small number of camping pods. Two sites (The Blackberries Camping Park and Rocks East Woodland at Ashwicke, near Chippenham) have glamping units. Two sites (Lower Foxhangers Farm at Rowde and Coombe Caravan Park at Netherhampton) offer a small number of static caravans for hire. Brades Acre Caravan Site at Tilshead has three touring caravans on the site available to rent.

10.1.7. The touring caravan and camping sites in Wiltshire and Swindon are a roughly even mix between sites that operate all year round and seasonal operations that are typically open between March and October.

[1] Where touring caravan owners leave their caravans on a site for the season to use at weekends and for holidays throughout the season

10.1.8. Locations with the most significant supply of touring caravan and camping pitches are Calne, the Chippenham area, around Devizes, the edge of the New Forest, Salisbury, the Stonehenge area and Longleat. Marlborough is well served for camping (by the Postern Hill Camping in the Forest site) but has limited provision for touring caravans and motor homes. Swindon only has three certificated sites. Current provision in Wiltshire is limited at Bradford on Avon, Malmesbury, Melksham and Cranborne Chase.

Touring Caravan & Camping Sites – Recent Changes in Supply

10.1.9 The audit has not identified any significant recent changes to touring caravan and camping provision in Wiltshire and Swindon. The only new site to have opened is the Stonehenge Camp Site , which officially opened in 2011 with 15 year-round pitches and 20 grass pitches for summer camping. A number of the sites that we spoke to have invested in upgrading site roads, put in hard standings and fully serviced pitches, new toilet and shower blocks and reception buildings, the installation of Wi-Fi, and green energy measures such as biomass boilers and solar power. There appear to have been some changes in the supply of certificated sites, with some no longer operating and others having opened.

Touring Caravan & Camping Sites - Planned & Proposed Developments

10.1.10.The audit did not identify any proposals for new touring caravan and camping sites in Wiltshire or Swindon. The planning register shows a steady trickle of applications relating to additional pitches, hard standing pitches and the addition of facility blocks, all of apparently small scale. One of the site operators that we spoke to indicated a desire to expand and improve his site with additional pitches, a new shower block, on-site accommodation for the site warden and hard standings to support winter operation. Another site indicated plans to introduce more hard standings to help extend the season. One site operator indicated a desire to expand but a lack of available land to do so. Most of the operators of seasonal sites that we spoke to showed little interest in extending their operating season into the winter months either because they felt that there would be insufficient demand to justify winter operation or because they use the winter months for site maintenance and improvement work.

Camping Pods

10.1.11. Camping pods are insulated wooden tents with double glazed windows and French doors, heaters, electricity and sometimes outside decking areas. They range from standard pods sleeping two people to family, super or mega pods sleeping 4 people. Glamping pods that are fully equipped with beds, tables and chairs, seating, kettles, microwave ovens, barbecues and cooking utensils are also starting to emerge. There are three sites currently in Wiltshire that offer this type of accommodation - Stonehenge Camp Site, which has two fully equipped glamping pods; The Blackberries Camping Park at Monkton Farleigh, near Bradford -on-Avon; and Foxfield Glamping at Bradford on Avon, which has two luxury glamping pods with toilets and wet rooms.

10.2 Current Performance & Markets

Levels and Patterns of Demand

10.2.1 The touring caravanning and camping market is highly seasonal and weather dependant. Wiltshire's touring caravan and camping sites attract strong demand during the summer months between mid-May and September. Given good weather, most sites are fully booked and turning business away for six weeks during the summer school holidays, the May half term week, the Early May Bank Holiday weekend, weekends in June, early July and September, and for major events. Adult only sites generally achieve lower pitch occupancies than child-friendly sites.

10.2.2. Weekend demand is strong in the shoulder season months of April, the first half of May and October, when sites can fill and turn business away if the weather is good. Midweek demand is relatively low during these months however.

10.2.3. Roughly half of Wiltshire's touring caravan and camping sites close during the winter. Those that remain open attract some demand at weekends if the weather is good and business over the Christmas and New Year period from people visiting friends and relatives. Midweek demand is very limited in the winter.

Key Markets

10.2.4. The key market for most of Wiltshire's touring caravan and camping sites, particularly at weekends, is short break stays of 2-3 nights. There is a strong local market of regular customers for such stays. Sites also attract significant short break demand from London and the Home Counties. Key draws for short breaks are Longleat, Stonehenge, Salisbury, the New Forest and Peppa Pig World at Paulton's Park.

10.2.5. The other two main markets for the county's touring caravan and camping sites are 1/2 night stopovers by people travelling to and from the West Country and one, and sometimes two week holidays. There is strong stopover demand from overseas caravanners and motor homers, particularly the Dutch and German markets, together with other European nationalities and Australians and New Zealanders who are primarily visiting friends and relatives. People staying for one and two week holidays are from both the UK and overseas, with Dutch and German visitors again being key markets, particularly in June and July. Some of the county's touring caravan and camping sites actively target these nationalities through the Dutch ANWB caravanning and camping organisation (www.anwb.nl) and the ACSI Eurocampings website (www.eurocampings.co.uk). Holiday visitors generally use sites in Wiltshire as a base for visiting Stonehenge, Salisbury, the New Forest, Bath, Longleat, the Cotswolds and Stourhead.

10.2.6. Holiday, short break and stopover customers tend to be families in the school holidays and for weekends in the summer and older couples for short breaks in the shoulder months.

10.2.7. Other markets for Wiltshire's touring caravan and camping sites are contractors working in the area, special interest visitors e.g. 4x4 drivers and model aircraft enthusiasts on the Salisbury Plain, walkers, cyclists and fishermen; and event visitors. Key events that generate strong demand for the county's touring caravan and camping sites are Badminton Horse Trials, the Summer Solstice at Stonehenge, WOMAD, Salisbury Races, the Blandford Steam Rally and events at Longleat.

Demand and Market Trends

10.2.8. Demand for touring caravanning and camping holidays and breaks is very weather dependent and fluctuates therefore from one year to the next according to weather conditions. Most of the touring caravan and camping sites that we spoke to reported a downturn in pitch occupancies in 2012 due to the poor summer weather and the impact of the London Olympics, particularly on overseas visits. Pitch occupancies were also down in the first part of the 2013 season due to the cold spring weather but improved substantially during the summer and autumn when weather conditions were very favourable. Although touring caravan and camping site performance is weather dependent there are number of underlying trends that have resulted in a general increase in demand in recent years:

- Demand for touring caravan, motor home and camping breaks has steadily increased, particularly at weekends;
- A number of sites have been able to boost their shoulder season pitch occupancies through marketing, investment in improvements such as hard standings, site roads and heated toilet and shower blocks, and the introduction of activities and things to do on site;
- Winter demand has grown as a result of the higher specifications for touring caravans and motor homes. Demand has particularly increased for the Christmas and New Year period from people visiting friends and relatives;
- There has been strong growth in the demand for camping as a result of people looking for cheaper holiday options during the recession coupled with the improved quality, availability and ease of use of tents. Camping holidays also appear to have gained a much cooler image than they once had.

10.2.9. The only negative trend has been a reduction in demand from older couples that have seen a reduction in their pension and investment incomes, though changes in the recent budget may have a positive effect in releasing pension funds from 2015. Midweek occupancies in the shoulder season have dropped for some sites that rely on this market for these times.

10.2.10. Most of the touring caravan and camping site operators that we spoke to are very optimistic about the future prospects for their business given good weather. A number see potential to grow shoulder season occupancies through the introduction of hard standings and on-site activities and the promotion of special offers. Winter events at Longleat are helping to extend the season for sites in this area. Most site operators see little scope to extend the season for camping however.

10.3 Sector Development Trends

10.3.1 The focus of product development in the UK touring caravan and camping sector has been primarily on the **upgrading** and development of existing sites and the **extension of opening periods**, rather than on new site development. Where new sites have been developed they have generally been relatively small sites. Planning constraints impose a significant barrier on the development of large new touring caravan and camping sites in many parts of the UK, particularly for schemes that involve new buildings and/or winter caravan storage. Achieving commercially viable large touring caravan and camping site development projects is also very difficult. The Caravan Club and Camping and Caravanning Club are the main operators that have opened large new sites. They are motivated more by providing additional choice for their members than entirely commercial considerations. The Camping and Caravanning Club is continually looking for opportunities for new club sites. Sites associated with visitor attractions and leisure and sports facilities are of particular interest, for example the Club's site at the Gulliver's Kingdom theme park in Milton Keynes. The Caravan Club has acquired established touring parks in a number of locations and upgraded and developed them into new club sites. These have included sites in West Sussex, Cheshire, Lincolnshire and Scotland. The Caravan Club also opened entirely new club sites in Barnard Castle in County Durham in 2010 and Bridlington, East Yorkshire in 2011.

10.3.2 Both the Caravan Club and the Camping and Caravanning Club are investing substantially in improving their sites. The Caravan Club typically invests in excess of £10million annually in site improvement and development, while the Camping and Caravanning Club embarked on a 5-year, £29 million investment programme in 2009 to position its site network amongst the best in the UK by 2015.

10.3.3 Many independent touring caravan and camping parks are also investing in improving and developing their sites and facilities. The sorts of investments that are being made include the following:

- The installation of electric hook-up points;
- The development of hard standing pitches, which allow winter use by tourers and motor homes;
- The development of fully serviced pitches with water and drainage connection;
- Investment in site infrastructure e.g. drainage, roads, lighting, signage, entrances;

- Improvements to landscaping and site layouts;
- Better quality, heated toilet and shower blocks;
- New laundry facilities;
- Leisure facilities e.g. games rooms, saunas, gyms, internet rooms;
- The development of children's play areas and improvements to existing play areas;
- Catering operations;
- On-site shops;
- Installation of Wi-Fi;
- Improved access and facilities for disabled guests;
- The introduction of camping pods and glamping units.

10.3.4 The **'greening' of touring caravan and camping parks** in terms of promoting biodiversity, reducing environmental impact and encouraging guests to engage in environmentally sustainable activities has also been a key trend in the sector that looks set to continue. Examples include investing in environmentally sustainable technologies for electricity generation, water heating and waste recycling; promoting bio-diversity through creating wildlife areas and planting to encourage butterflies and bees; and providing nature and orienteering trails, cycle hire and wildlife watching activities. The Caravan Club now has 43 sites that have signed up to its Boosting Biodiversity programme.

10.3.5 The other key development trend in the sector has been the **lengthening of the season** with many site operators now wanting to operate over a longer period and increasing numbers of sites looking to stay open throughout the year. The higher specifications of today's touring caravans and motor homes is resulting in growing numbers of owners wanting to use their caravans and motor homes throughout the year. Sites are increasingly investing in hard standing pitches to enable them to cater for this demand. Planning restrictions have not necessarily kept pace with this market demand, underpinned by concerns about permanent residential use.

10.3.6, The recession, together with innovations in easy-to-erect tents and camping equipment, have stimulated strong growth in demand for camping in the UK, despite the poor summer weather in 2011 and 2012. In a survey undertaken by Campsites UK in 2013, 23% of campers indicated that the current economic climate had made them more likely to choose a camping holiday in the UK and nearly two thirds said that wet weather would not force them to pack up and go home.

10.3.7. Another emerging trend is the development of **eco camping** sites. These are small, low impact, environmentally friendly, off-grid camp sites with solar or wind powered showers and eco/ compost toilets. They often have a central campfire area and/or allow campers to have their own campfires. Some sites offer secluded and isolated pitches for individual camping. Sites may have wildlife areas and some offer nature study and environmental activities and courses. Examples are Cerenety Camp Site in Cornwall (www.cerenetycampsite.co.uk), Northlodge in Pembrokeshire (www.eco-camping.co.uk) and Comrie Croft in Perthshire (www.comriecroft.com/sleep/eco-camping.html). In some cases eco camping sites also offer glamping units or glamping sites have opened eco camping sites. Eco Camp UK (www.ecocampuk.co.uk), for example, offers fully equipped bell tents alongside forest tent pitches at its Beech Estate ecological woodland camp site in East Sussex

Camping Pods

10.3.8. Camping pods were first introduced in the UK at the Eskdale Camping & Caravanning Club site in the Lake District in 2008. The site has 10 camping pods priced at £43.75 per night. They are made from locally sourced timber and insulated with sheep's wool. They have hard foam floors, French windows, wooden decking areas, heaters and electric lighting. Each pod sleeps 4 people. They have proved extremely popular and have even attracted demand during the winter. The Camping and Caravanning Club has now introduced camping pods and dens at its club sites in Bellingham, Northumberland; Hayfield in the Peak District; Ravenglas in Cumbria; Skye; Gulliver's Kingdom at Milton Keynes; and Thetford Forest www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/ukcampsites/club-glamping/camping-pods. Newfoundland Leisure Lodges, the company that manufactured the pods for these sites reports huge interest in the concept, which is rapidly developing throughout the UK. The company has now supplied camping pods to over 70 sites across the country. The YHA has introduced camping pods alongside its hostels at Reeth in the Yorkshire Dales, Hawkshead and Borrowdale in the Lake District and its new South Downs hostel at Lewes in East Sussex (www.yha.org.uk/places-to-stay/alternative-accommodation/camping-pods). The National Trust is another organisation that has started to offer camping pods at three sites in the Lake District, Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire and a site in Northern Ireland www.nationaltrust.org.uk/holidays/camping/camping-pods . Holiday parks, holiday lodge parks, touring caravan and camping sites and hotels are increasingly introducing camping pods as an alternative accommodation option. Examples are:

- The Pure Leisure Group has introduced camping pods at three of its holiday parks (http://www.pureleisuregroup.com/holidays/camping-pods).
- The Hillcrest Park touring caravan park at Caldwell in County Durham (www.hillcrestpark.co.uk/pods)introduced 3 camping pods in August 2011, increasing this to 5 pods in March 2012 and 10 in October 2012 due to the strength of demand.
- The Old Thorns Manor Hotel and Golf Club at Liphook has developed a number of luxury eco pods adjacent to the hotel as an alternative accommodation option (www.oldthorns.com/home/accommodation-old-thorns-hotel-hampshire/luxury-eco-pods).
- Woodland Park Lodges at Ellesmere in Shropshire (www.woodlandparklodges.co.uk/camping-huts.html) has 5 camping huts alongside 11 holiday lodges.

10.4 Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire and Swindon

10.4.1. There is a market requirement for, and operator interest in the ongoing upgrading of Wiltshire's touring caravan and camping sites in terms of:

- Electrical upgrades;
- The provision of hard standing pitches for touring caravans and motor homes to enable sites to trade during periods of wet weather and into the winter months;
- The development of fully serviced pitches;
- The improvement and development of toilet and shower blocks, including heating to support winter opening;
- New reception and amenity buildings e.g. laundry rooms, drying rooms, site shops, catering facilities;
- Indoor leisure facilities e.g. games rooms, gyms, saunas;
- The introduction of on-site leisure facilities and activities e.g. natural trails, outdoor gym equipment, cycle hire;
- The development of children's play areas;
- Improved access and facilities for disabled people;
- Improvements to landscaping, site layouts, roads and site infrastructure;
- Waste recycling facilities and energy and water conservation measures;
- Enhanced biodiversity;
- The installation of Wi-Fi.

10.4.2. Some sites will prefer to remain as quiet sites with minimal facilities. Others may look to develop a more extensive range of facilities for guests.

10.4.3. There is potential for the expansion of existing touring caravan and camping sites in Wiltshire (if they have land available) to cater for demand at peak times. Many sites are frequently full and turn business away at weekends and during school holiday periods if the weather is good. The expansion of sites may make them more viable and allow investment in site facilities.

10.4.4. There is also scope for the development of additional small to medium-sized touring caravan and camping sites and certificated sites in Wiltshire and rural Swindon, given suitable sites that can achieve planning permission, especially in terms of visual impact on the landscape. This could present opportunities particularly for farms and possibly pubs if they have land available.

10.4.5. There is potential for the development of a few new larger touring caravan and camping sites in Wiltshire and rural Swindon, given suitable sites that would be acceptable for this use in planning terms. It is often difficult however to make large new touring and camping sites stack up financially because of the level of investment required for what is a largely seasonal, weather dependent and price sensitive business. Large new sites are most commonly developed by the Caravan Club and Camping and Caravanning Club, primarily to provide additional choice to their members. The Camping & Caravanning Club have indicated that they do not have any plans to further develop their existing sites in Wiltshire and that they are not looking for additional representation here. At the time of writing we have been unable to establish whether the Caravan Club has any interest in developing further sites in Wiltshire or rural Swindon. Neither of them have a club site in the vicinity of Bath, in the southern Cotswolds or close to the Cotswold Water Park. Suitable sites in Wiltshire and Swindon that could service demand for these destinations and attractions might therefore be of interest to them.

10.4.6. Given the growing popularity of camping and relatively limited current provision in many locations, the development of additional camp sites should be encouraged in Wiltshire and Swindon.

10.4.7. There is also potential for the development of further eco camping sites in Wiltshire and rural Swindon, which would have good fit with aspirations for sustainable tourism and concern for impact on sensitive landscapes.

10.4.8. Key locations where additional provision for touring caravanning and camping is most warranted (due to the limited supply at present) are the Marlborough area for touring caravans and motor homes and Bradford on Avon, Malmesbury and Cranborne Chase for touring caravanning and camping.

10.4.8. While there is a requirement and potential for additional touring caravan and camping provision to meet currently unsatisfied demand at peak periods, care must be taken not to encourage too great an increase in supply as this could dilute off peak business for existing and new sites.

10.4.9. Given the strong and growing demand for seasonal tourer pitches, there is potential for touring caravan and camping sites to increase this provision, at the same time providing sites with a guaranteed income whatever the weather.

10.4.10. Some sites may need to develop some form of permanent on-site accommodation for site managers for the purposes of winter operation and site security and maintenance in the winter.

10.4.11. There is scope for existing touring caravan sites to extend their operating season and possibly to open all year, given the growing interest in year round use of touring caravans and motor homes as specifications improve to allow use during cold weather. Those sites in Wiltshire that currently open all year attract some weekend demand in the winter months and business over the Christmas and New Year period. Some of the current seasonally operating sites may look to follow suit. Our research suggests however that the majority will continue to operate on a seasonal basis, as owners appear not to be confident of sufficient business to justify the investment required for winter opening and/or require a period of winter closure to undertake site maintenance and improvement work.

10.4.12. There is also potential for existing touring caravan and camping sites to introduce camping pods and/or some form of glamping accommodation (see Section 11). In addition there is potential for the development of separate camping pod sites and the provision of camping pods at other sites such as fishing lakes, golf courses, hotels, B&Bs, pubs and self-catering operations. The potential to develop a network of camping pods along the Kennet & Avon Canal and long distance walks e.g. The Ridgeway National Trail should be explored as a route to encouraging walking, cycling and canoeing holidays and breaks.

11. GLAMPING

11.1. Current & Proposed Supply in Wiltshire and Swindon

11.1.1. The audit identified 14 glamping sites in Wiltshire, with a total of 35 glamping units, including yurts, glamping pods, canvas lodges, bell tents, shepherd's huts and gypsy caravans. The majority of these sites appear to have opened in the last 3 years. Two (The Blackberries Camping Park at Monkton Farleigh near Bath and the shepherd's huts at Rockley Manor near Marlborough) are new for 2014 and The Farm Camp at Winsley, near Bradford on Avon opened in July 2013, with three bell tents. The first glamping site to be established in Wiltshire is Mill Farm Glamping at Poulshot, near Devizes. It started as the Belle Vue Farm Feather Down Farm[1] site but is now independently operated and marketed as Mill Farm Glamping.

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON – CURRENT SUPPLY OF GLAMPING SITES – JUNE 2014

Site	Location	No. Glamping Units	Type of Glamping Units
The Blackberries Camping Park	Monkton Farleigh, Bradford on Avon	3	Glamping pods/ Shepherd's hut
Foxfield Glamping	Bradford on Avon	2	Glamping pods
The Farm Camp	Winsley, Bradford on Avon	3	Bell tents
Rocks East Woodland	Ashwicke, Chippenham	2	Yurts
Daubeneys	Colerne	1	Shepherd's hut
Alpaca Yurt Holidays	Leigh, Cricklade	1	Yurt
Mill Farm Glamping	Poulshot, Devizes	4	Canvas lodges
Whychurch Farm	Malmesbury	2	Shepherd's hut/Bell tent
Rockley Manor	Rockley, Marlborough	2	Shepherd's huts
White Horse Gypsy Caravans	Alton Priors, Marlborough	1	Gypsy caravan
The Wagon	Puckshipton, Pewsey	1	Wagon
Marshwood Farm	Dinton, Salisbury	1	Shepherd's hut
Stonehenge Camp Site	Berwick St James, Stonehenge	2	Glamping pods
Botany Camping	Warminster	10	Bell tens

[1] Feather Down Farms (www.featherdown.co.uk) is a concept that has been operated in the UK since 2005 by the Feather Down Farm Days company as a seasonal luxury camping holiday option. Originally developed in Holland, the concept involves Feather Down Farm Days providing working farms with 5-10 fully equipped Feather Down tents for erection between Easter and October. The farmer is responsible for providing a cold water supply to each tent and connection to a mains sewer or septic tank, together with the provision of a communal hot shower facility. Feather Down Farm Days runs a national marketing, advertising and PR campaign and provides a central booking system.

11.1.2. A number of the glamping sites are a diversification of existing touring caravan and camping sites, B&Bs and holiday cottages, providing them with an additional accommodation option to offer to guests. The majority are on farms or in woodland settings.

11.1.3. Most of the county's glamping sites are year round operations, with units that have heating. Three sites that offer bell; tents and yurts are seasonal operations.

11.1.4. Four of the glamping operators that we spoke to in Wiltshire indicated an interest in adding a few further glamping units in the future because of the strength of demand that they have found. All intend to stay as small glamping sites as they see their small-scale nature as being a key part of their market appeal.

11.1.5. In the course of our research we spoke to one hotelier that is looking to establish a yurt glamping site at Cricklade.

11.1.6. Our research did not identify any glamping sites in rural Swindon or any glamping development proposals.

11.2. Current Performance

11.2.1. All of the glamping sites that we spoke to in Wiltshire that have opened in the last 3 years have quickly found a strong market at weekends and during the summer school holidays. They are generally fully booked and turn away significant business at weekends between April and September and midweek in July and August. Weekday demand is lower in the shoulder season months. Sites that operate year-round attract some weekend demand in the winter but no business during the week.

11.2.2. Prices for glamping units in Wiltshire are generally around £70-100 per night.

11.2.3 The key market for the county's glamping sites is ABC1 families staying for short breaks at weekends and during school holidays, career couples coming for weekend breaks and older couples staying for midweek and weekend leisure breaks. Demand is strong from London and the Home Counties. Some sites also attract group bookings e.g. for hen parties and family celebrations. Other markets are wedding guests and people visiting friends and relatives.

11.2.4. Glamping sites are primarily attracting business through the specialist glamping websites such as Canopy & Stars (www.canopyandstars.co.uk), Go Glamping (www.goglamping.net), Glamping UK (www.glamping-uk.co.uk), Cool Camping (www.coolcamping.co.uk)and One Off Places (www.oneoffplaces.co.uk/find/glamping.aspx).

11.3. Sector Development Trends

11.3.1. A key trend in recent years has been the rapid growth of glamping (glamorous camping) offers, in terms of ready-erected, fully-equipped tents, yurts, tipis and other unusual forms of camping and caravanning accommodation such as geodesic domes, gypsy caravans, retro caravans, safari tents, glamping pods and tree camping. These types of accommodation have proved to be highly popular with more affluent families that want to experience camping holidays but without the hassle of having to bring their own tents and camping equipment. As a new form of accommodation they have attracted significant media coverage and wherever they have opened such accommodation operations have quickly attracted strong demand. Go Glamping (www.goglamping.net), the leading online directory of luxury camping sites, now lists 128 locations in the UK.

11.3.2. Key luxury camping products that have so far emerged in the UK are as follows:

- **Feather Down Farms** (www.featherdown.co.uk) is a concept that has been operated in the UK since 2005 by the Feather Down Farm Days company as a seasonal luxury camping holiday option. Originally developed in Holland, the concept involves Feather Down Farm Days providing working farms with 5-10 fully equipped Feather Down tents for erection between Easter and October. The tents provide spacious, ready-to-use camping accommodation including beds, bedding, a toilet, wood-burning cooking stove, cool chest and cooking equipment. The farmer is responsible for providing a cold water supply to each tent and connection to a mains sewer or septic tank, together with the provision of a communal hot shower facility. Feather Down Farm Days runs a national marketing, advertising and PR campaign and provides a central booking system. The company now has 36 sites across the UK. Their development strategy has focused initially on locations that are within a 2 hour drive time of London, as this is their core market. These holidays require some affluence, at circa £1000 for the week, and they recognise that they are aiming at the educated city dweller wanting rural family ‘experience’ for themselves and their children.

- **Ready-pitched luxury camps:** Jolly Days Luxury Camping (www.jollydaysluxurycamping.co.uk) in North Yorkshire is a boutique campsite that offers the ultimate in luxury camping, with 8 large lodge tents with four poster beds, sofas and chandeliers, 7 vintage style tents and 7bell tents. Shieling Holidays (www.shielingholidays.co.uk) on the Isle of Mull provides 16 fully equipped Shieling cottage tents, which take their name from the summer cottages that Highland shepherds traditionally use. The tents are equipped with proper beds and fully equipped kitchens and have electricity and gas heaters. Some also have shower and toilet facilities. Dandelion Hideaway (www.thedandelionhideaway.co.uk) in Leicestershire offers a number of canvas cottages.

- **Yurts**, based on the Mongolian yurt, are wooden frame, insulated circular tents that are usually furnished with beds, wood burning stoves and kitchen equipment. The Bivouac (www.thebivouac.co.uk) on the Swinton Estate in the Yorkshire Dales has 8 yurts and six timber frame shacks. Each yurt sleeps 5 and comes with beds, bed linen, a terracotta cold store, wood burning stove and gas burner for outdoor cooking on a wooden veranda. Lincoln Yurts at Welton in Lincolnshire (www.lincolnyurts.com) offers 5 themed yurts that are fully equipped with beds, bedding, a gas stove, BBQ and decked seating area and supported by a bathroom cabin with a Jacuzzi bath. Another example is Hidden Valley Yurts in Monmouthshire (www.hiddenvalleyyurts.co.uk).

- **Tipi** sites offer a similar set up. Examples include Wild Northumbrian Tipis & Yurts (www.wildnorthumbrian.co.uk); Lincolnshire Lanes Camp Site in the Lincolnshire Wolds (www.lincolnshire-lanes.com); Eco Retreats in Powys, Wales (www.ecoretreats.co.uk); and 4 Winds Lakeland Tipis (www.4windslakelandtipis.co.uk) in the Lake District.

- Wooden **wigwams** rented out at around 20 sites in Scotland and the North East of England are another alternative. Northumbria's Pot-a-Doodle-Do (www.northumbrianwigwams.com) has 12 wooden wigwams sleeping 4/5 people. Each wigwam is fully insulated and has electric lighting and heating. Foam mattresses are provided. The site has a central shower and toilet block, kitchen for guests' use and licensed restaurant on site. Springhill Farm in Northumberland (www.springhill-farm.co.uk/wigwams) offers a number of wooden wigwams alongside self-catering cottages and a touring caravan and camping site.

- Other examples of luxury camping offers include:
  - **Geodesic domes** e.g. The Dome Garden (www.domegarden.co.uk) at Coleford in Gloucestershire has 10 geodesic ecodomes equipped with wood burning stoves, beds, private flushing toilets, a fully-equipped outside kitchen area with fridge and timber en-suite hot shower. Another example is Ekopod (www.ekopod.co.uk) in Cornwall.
  - **Persian alachigh tents** , similar to yurts e.g. Penhein Glamping near Chepstow in Monmouthshire (www.penhein.co.uk)
  - **Gypsy caravans** e.g. Gypsy Caravan Breaks in Somerset (www.gypsycaravanbreaks.co.uk) and Roulotte Retreat in the Scottish Borders (www.roulotteretreat.com), which has 4 French roulette gypsy caravans for hire.
  - **Retro caravans** e.g. Vintage Vacations on the Isle of Wight (www.vintagevacations.co.uk), which has a collection of 13 vintage American Airstream and Spartan caravans for hire. Happy Days Retro in East Dorset (www.happydaysrv.co.uk) has 4 airstream caravans available for hire for holidays.
  - **Shepherds Huts** e.g. Herdy Huts in the Lake District (www.herdyhuts.co.uk) and Shepherds Huts South East (www.shepherdshuts-southeast.com) in Kent.
  - **Safari Tents** e.g. Port Lympne Wild Animal Park in Kent (www.aspinallfoundation.org/short-breaks) has development two safari tent encampments - Livingstone Lodge and Elephant Lodge overlooking the elephant paddocks.
  - **Tree camping** in tents and structures suspended in trees e.g. Red Kite Tree Tent in Mid Wales (www.sheepskinlife.com/relax-at/red-kite-tree-tent) and Treehotel in Sweden (www.treehotel.se), which features 5 quirky, individually designed 'treerooms' and a tree sauna.
  - **Bubble camping** in transparent inflatable tents was introduced in France in 2010 but has yet to come to the UK.
  - **Cargo pods** , converted from shipping containers have been introduced at the Lee Wick Farm glamping and touring site at St Osyth, near Clacton-on-Sea in Essex (www.leewickfarm.co.uk).

11.4. Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire and Swindon

11.4.1. There is good potential for the development of further glamping sites in Wiltshire and rural Swindon and scope for existing sites to add further glamping units. While it is rapidly growing, glamping is still its infancy in the UK and represents only a tiny proportion of the total accommodation supply. The glamping sites that have so far opened in Wiltshire are all achieving high occupancies during the summer months and at weekends and turning away significant business at these times. There is clearly potential for more glamping provision in the county and rural parts of Swindon Borough. Care should however be taken not to encourage too rapid a growth in supply as this could dilute midweek demand.

11.4.2. There is also scope for year round operation of glamping sites with heated units, and a need therefore to avoid planning conditions that require a period of winter closure.

11.4.3. Some glamping sites may look to develop permanent buildings such as shops, cafes, meeting rooms and indoor leisure facilities to allow them to develop other income streams and assist them in developing midweek and winter business. Glamping site operators may also need some form of permanent on-site accommodation to enable them to operate their site on a full year basis.

11.4.4. The developer survey identified interest from Featherdown Farms in being represented in Wiltshire. As the largest national glamping operator, representation would help put Wiltshire on the map with their audience, and provides an opportunity to attract and give exposure to the sort of up-market, high-spending groups that would add real value to the Wiltshire visitor economy. The quality of the farm partner and farm activity would be important, particularly as the company has a reasonable density of sites in the South/South West.

12. GROUP & YOUTH ACCOMMODATION

12.1. Current Supply and Demand

12.1.1. There are two **youth hostels** in Wiltshire - the 2 star YHA Salisbury hostel (70 bedspaces in dormitory and private bedrooms and a 10-pitch camp site) and the independent 4 star Cholderton (Stonehenge) Youth Hostel at the Cholderton Charlie's Farm rare breeds farm (70 bedspaces in private and dormitory bedrooms sleeping 2-10 people, some with en-suite facilities), which is part of the YHA Enterprise Scheme that allows independent hostels to benefit from YHA's booking system.

12.1.2. As part of its review of all of its hostels over the last 6 years the YHA decided in 2012 to dispose of its Salisbury hostel as it is unable to justify the investment needed to bring it up to the standard now required by its customers. The organisation still sees Salisbury as a key location and has indicated a desire to find a more sustainable replacement site in the city centre, where (unlike the existing site) footfall would enable them to operate a cafe to help improve the viability of a new hostel. The site was marketed for sale in September 2012. Other than residential property developers the only tourism operator that expressed interest in the hostel was the locally-based activity trip organiser Discover Adventure. For a number of reasons the YHA rejected their offer and decided to sell the site to a property developer for conversion into 15 retirement homes. Wiltshire Council has recently refused the planning application for this change of use under its policies to retain tourist accommodation. It remains to be seen whether YHA will appeal this decision and what the outcome of such an appeal could be.

12.1.3. In terms of **children's activity holiday centres,** the leading UK operator PGL opened the PGL Liddington centre near Swindon in 2010 through the conversion of the former Liddington Hotel. The centre has 192 en- suite bedrooms that can take 3-6 children. It is set in 150 acres of grounds that provide a comprehensive range of outdoor activities. One of the other main UK children's activity holiday operators, JCA, works with the Cholderton (Stonehenge) Youth Hostel to run a programme of 2-4 night midweek holidays for school trips and children's groups at centres. The 2014 programme will run for an 8-week period from mid May to mid July.

12.1.4. As far as we have been able to establish there are no **camping/ bunkhouse barns** currently in Wiltshire or Swindon and no **outdoor activity centres**.

12.1.5. Wiltshire Council's **Braeside Education and Conference Centre** at Devizes provides 1-4 night residential outdoor activity, history and geography courses for school and youth groups from Wiltshire and the surrounding counties. It is also available for hire by private groups during school holiday periods. It can accommodate up to 89 students and 7 teachers and is run on a not-for-profit basis. There are no plans currently to develop, expand or upgrade the centre, other than ongoing upkeep and minor improvements.

12.1.6. **Group accommodation** is provided at **Sarum College** Christian education and conference centre in Salisbury Cathedral Close, which has 40 en-suite bedrooms and 12 bedrooms with shared bathrooms. During the week it caters primarily for theological students on its short course programmes, together with church groups, choirs and religious, charity and association conferences. It is available for individual B&B guests at weekends and during July and August. A bedroom refurbishment programme was completed in 2014, with new en-suites installed in some bedrooms.

12.2 Current Performance & Markets

12.2.1 Each of the group and youth accommodation establishments in Wiltshire and Swindon has a different market focus. The two youth hostels cater primarily for families and individuals during the summer months and at weekends and school and youth groups in the shoulder season months. PGL Liddington attracts mainly primary school groups in the week during term time and youth groups at weekends. It also caters for children's and family adventure holidays and breaks during school holiday periods. The key market for Sarum College is theological students on its short course programmes. The Braeside Education and Conference Centre caters primarily for school and youth groups from Wiltshire and neighbouring counties.

12.2.2. The Salisbury and Cholderton youth hostels and Sarum College attract strong demand from UK and overseas tourists during the summer months, most typically for 2-3 night stays. Weekend demand is generally stronger than midweek. YHA Salisbury and Sarum College achieve very high occupancies in July and August and are frequently fully booked and turn business away during these two months. They also attract tourist demand at weekends during the shoulder season months and to some extent also during the winter and are sometimes fully booked and turning business away at weekends in the shoulder season. Cholderton Youth Hostel generally has some availability. 85% of YHA Salisbury's guests do not have a car and unable therefore to travel to the Cholderton hostel if there is no availability in Salisbury.

12.2.3. Most of the group and youth accommodation establishments in Wiltshire concentrate on school and youth groups during the shoulder season months. They also attract some demand for private hire from family groups; adult study groups e.g. crop circle groups; and walking, cycling and canoeing groups. Braeside Education and Conference Centre is generally fully booked throughout the year.

12.3 Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire

Youth Hostels

12.3.1. There is a clear need to resolve future hostel provision in Salisbury either in terms of finding a viable city centre option for a new YHA hostel and/or finding a workable solution for the existing YHA hostel. There is clear evidence of strong demand for hostel accommodation in Salisbury between April and October and a shortage of hostel provision in the city in the peak summer months. The closure of the current YHA hostel would result in a significant loss of business for the city and would further exacerbate the current peak season shortage of this type of accommodation. With the majority of guests staying at the YHA hostel not having cars most could not be redirected to the Cholderton hostel. With most of the city's B&Bs trading at or close to capacity for most of the summer guests could also not be redirected to this type of accommodation. We would suggest that the priority should be a new modern city centre hostel that would fully meet current and future market requirements in terms of en-suite bedrooms and overall quality. YHA has indicated an interest in securing an opportunity for such a hostel in Salisbury. The city is too small to attract interest from the new breed of luxury hostel operators Such as Smart City Hostels, Hoax and Euro Hostel, that have opened hostels in other UK cities, and this was confirmed via the developer survey. Finding a solution that will work for YHA is thus likely to be the strongest option for a new hostel in Salisbury. The retention of the existing YHA hostel would also be beneficial in terms of meeting the current peak season requirement and potential future growth in demand for hostel accommodation in Salisbury. The case for resisting the loss of this hostel (assuming that the refusal of the recent change of use application is not overturned at appeal) might not be as strong however if a new city centre YHA hostel is developed.

12.3.2. The opportunity to develop a new youth hostel at Devizes most likely through the conversion of a suitable building, should be further explored,, to cater for walking, cycling and canoe touring groups, overspill and denied group business from the Braeside Education and Conference Centre and other groups and individual tourists during the summer and at weekends. Such an opportunity is most likely to be taken forward by a private operator, possibly working through the YHA Enterprise Scheme.

Bunkhouse / Camping Barns

12.3.3. This market potential could also be met through the development of a bunkhouse barn. If suitable barns and agricultural buildings were available further along the Kennett & Avon Canal and in locations that are popular for watersports and outdoor activities such as the Cotswold Water Park, the development of bunkhouse or camping barns could serve these markets. The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust indicated that this was a form of accommodation they were investigating for some of their reserves, which would enable them to offer overnight wildlife experiences. It can however be difficult to make a commercially viable case for the development of a camping barn or bunkhouse, so growth in this type of accommodation is likely to be limited and focused on locations of strong demand for outdoor activities or linked to busy long distance walking and cycling trails.

Residential Activity Centres

12.3.4. There is scope for the development of outdoor activity centres with accommodation in Wiltshire and rural Swindon. There are no such centres currently in the area, yet they are successfully operating in other parts of the country.

Children's Activity Holiday Centres

12.3.5. The children's activity holiday centre sector is rapidly expanding in the UK and is identified as having good potential for further expansion[1]. The sector is made up of many different operators, from those with multiple centres across several countries to smaller, family-run independents. Centres range in size from 50 to 900 beds and are operated largely by the private sector but also by local authorities and charitable organisations.

12.3.6. PGL, is one of the main players in the sector already has a centre at Liddington, so would not be interested in opening another centre in Wiltshire. The other leading provider, Kingswood has no centres in the South West, and indicated they would look at a suitable opportunity in the study area, most likely in rural Swindon. It currently has 9 centres in the UK and one in France. It was acquired by DJL Merchant Banking (a division of Credit Suisse Bank) in July 2008 for £100m. The company clearly has money to spend. It invested £16million in refurbishing, upgrading and developing its existing centres in 2013 and is further investing in them in 2014. The other main operator, JCA, already runs an activity holidays programme with Cholderton Youth Hostel. It might consider developing a JCA-owned centre along the lines of the Condover Hall centre in Shropshire that it opened in 2011. At the time of writing we have not had a response from the company to know if this is something that they might want to look at in Wiltshire. These children's activity holiday centre operators would require properties of a substantial size within their own formal grounds ideally with access to lakes, rivers and woodland. They will consider leaseholds and freeholds in rural and semi-rural locations. A residential institution use class (C2) on properties such as former boarding schools or residential colleges can be an advantage but is not essential.

[1] The information provided on the UK children's activity holiday centre sector is taken from an article published in Strutt & Parker's Leisure Comment journal in 2009 – 'Room to Grow. Duncan Willard

13. FARM STAY

13.1.1 Farm Stay UK is a farmer owned consortium and national membership organisation that promotes farm tourism and helps members expand their businesses through proactive marketing and sales support. It markets member accommodation through a very powerful and productive website. There are currently over 1200 members co-ordinated through 94 groups. Quality is regarded as fundamental and all properties are inspected under the national Tourist Boards' accommodation classification and grading schemes.

13.1.2 Wiltshire Farm Stay is a very active group which makes a valuable contribution to the tourism offer of Wiltshire and rural Swindon, but also adds value to the rural economy. The group estimates that over the past 30 years, £4 million has been added to the rural economy as a result of guests staying on farm locations though Wiltshire Farm Stay. A search of the website identifies 44 properties; these offer a mixture of farmhouse B&Bs, holiday cottages, touring caravan and camping sites and glamping accommodation. The majority of the Wiltshire Farm Stay properties are at least 4 star standard, some with silver and gold awards. Self-catering properties include both individual and multiple units, from 2 up to 8 units, many from barn conversions. Some offer central facilities such as an indoor pool (Church Farm, Bradford on Avon). There are some signs of innovative product development including glamping at Mill Farm (Devizes) and a shepherd's hut at Marshwood Farm (Salisbury).

13.1.3 The Wiltshire Farm Stay properties are all covered in this report in the relevant sections by accommodation type. The market potential identified through this research presents numerous opportunities for the farm-based community to respond and further develop the rural accommodation offer. This is particularly significant as farmers and landowners control both property and land resources that could have potential for visitor accommodation development, and identifying site opportunities will be an important forward action in implementing the study findings.

14. CANAL BOATS

14.1 Current Supply

Canal Boat Holiday Hire Operations

14.1.1 The audit has identified 8 canal boat holiday hire companies that currently operate year-round on the Kennett & Avon Canal with a total of 74 holiday hire narrowboats between them. These companies are predominantly based on the western stretch of the canal through Wiltshire from Devizes to Bradford on Avon. There are only two small operations on the eastern stretch of the canal from Devizes to Great Bedwyn - the 5 star Moonraker Canalboats at Honeystreet, near Pewsey and The Bruce Trust that provides canal boat holidays for disabled people from its bases at Great Bedwyn Wharf (3 boats) and Lower Foxhanger Farm at Rowde, near Devizes (1 boat). A number of the canal boat companies in the county market themselves through national canal and waterways holiday companies such as Hoseasons, Waterways Holidays and Anglo Welsh.

CANAL BOAT HOLIDAY HIRE OPERATIONS IN WILTSHIRE - JUNE 2014

Operator	Base	Number of Boats
Black Prince Holidays	Bradford on Avon	5
Sally Narrowboats	Bradford on Avon	13
Wiltshire Narrowboats	Bradford on Avon	7
White Horse Boats	Devizes	3
The Bruce Trust	Great Bedwyn Wharf	4
ABC Leisure Group	Hilperton	22
Moonraker Canalboats	Honeystreet, Pewsey	5
Foxhangers	Rowde, Devizes	15

14.1.2 In terms of recent changes to the supply of canal boats for holiday hire on the Kennet & Avon Canal, Black Prince Holidays started operating from Bradford on Avon in 2013 with 5 boats, Wiltshire Narrowboats reduced its fleet in Bradford on Avon by one boat in 2013, and Moonraker Boats is planning to bring a new boat into service from its Honeystreet base in July 2014.

Hotel Boats

14.1.3. There are three hotel boats that currently operate on the Kennet & Avon Canal. The main one is the luxury 5 star Wessex Rose, which started operating a continuous programme of scheduled cruises of 3-7 nights between April and October along stretches of the canal between Bath and Hungerford in May 2013. The boat can take 6 passengers. The Tranquil Rose runs a 7 night cruise on the Kennett & Avon Canal in August. Isabella River Cruises offers tailored cruises on the Kennett & Avon Canal alongside cruises on the River Thames, Grand Union Canal and the Rivers Lee and Stort in Hertfordshire.

Narrowboat Marinas

14.1.4. There are three narrowboat marinas on the Kennett & Avon Canal that have recreational moorings - Devizes Marina (100 recreational moorings), Caen Hill Marina (250 residential and recreational moorings) and Hilperton Marina (number of moorings unknown). The Caen Hill Marina is the most recently developed marina, opening in October 2011. It has won the Yacht Harbour Association's Inland Marina of the Year award in 2014.

14.1.5. There have been long standing plans for a new marina at Hungerford. Planning permission was granted in 2004 for a 120-berth marina with a hotel, restaurant and heritage museum. A succession of owners have been unable to progress the scheme. The site was acquired in 2012 by Lakeland Leisure Estates, which currently operates inland marinas in Cheshire, Staffordshire and Gloucestershire. We did not find any published information about the company's timescales for developing the marina.

14.2 Current Performance & Markets

Canal Boat Holiday Hire

14.2.1 The Kennett & Avon Canal is one of the most popular waterways for narrowboat holidays because it passes through such beautiful countryside and attractive towns and cities in Bath, Bradford on Avon, Devizes and Hungerford. The canal boat hire companies that we spoke to reported strong demand for full week holidays, and in some cases 2-3 week holidays, in July and August, primarily from the family market. The strongest demand is for holidays on the western stretch of the canal from Devizes, Hilperton and Bradford on Avon to Bath and Bristol. Demand for eastbound holidays through to Hungerford is lower. The Pewsey Vale section of the canal is consequently much quieter. There are only two small hire companies on this stretch of the canal. The one that we spoke to is frequently operating at full capacity and turning business away between March and October. Canal boat hire operators on the western stretch of the canal also reported that they can be fully booked and turn business away during these peak summer months. In the shoulder months operators reported strong demand for weekend breaks from families and couples, mostly going into Bath. Caen Hill Locks are a barrier for eastbound breaks due to the time it takes to get through them. A number of operators reported strong and growing demand for larger boats from stag and hen parties going into Bath and for groups and friends and larger family groups.

14.2.2. Most canal boat holiday hire operators reported a downturn in demand in 2012 and 2013 as a result of the continuing recession, poor weather in the summer of 2012 and the first half of 2013, and increased competition from cottage holidays, overseas holidays and cruises. The London Olympics was also a factor in 2012. Forward bookings are looking stronger for 2014 but the market continues to be very price sensitive.

Hotel Boats

14.2.3. Many of the Wessex Rose's 2014 cruises and a few of its 2015 cruises are fully booked. The company has clearly quickly established itself in the market since launching in May 2013.

14.3 Sector Development Trends

14.3.1 We have not found any published reports on current development trends in the canal holiday boat sector. We would expect that the trends in this sector are likely to mirror those in other sectors i.e. a drive for higher standards of accommodation. One of the national canal holiday companies that we spoke to indicated that its customers are generally expecting higher quality narrowboat accommodation and increasingly require Wi-Fi. Demand for top-end narrowboats with power showers and jacuzzi baths is growing. Boutique narrowboats are also starting to emerge although this appears to be a very niche market at present. There may well also be a trend towards more eco-friendly boats. Castle Narrowboats in Abergavenny is the first company in the UK to offer electric narrowboats for its holidays on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Other operators may follow suit.

14.3.2. As well as a requirement for higher quality boats, the market also appears to be looking for better quality facilities at visitor moorings. Advice from the Canal & River Trust in its inland marina development guide states that there is growing evidence of demand for more sophisticated services and security at popular visitor moorings.

14.4. Sector Development Potential in Wiltshire

14.4.1. There is scope for another small canal boat holiday hire operation on the Pewsey Vale stretch of the Kennet & Avon Canal in view of the currently limited provision and frequent shortages in supply to meet demand. This is likely to remain a much quieter stretch of the canal so a significant increase in supply is not warranted. Our discussions with existing canal boat holiday hire operators that use this section of the canal suggest that work needs to be undertaken to dredge some stretches of the canal, improve the towpath and provide a wider range of things for people to do off their boats. Some operators also commented about a need for better information on what there is to see and do along and off the canal.

14.4.2. Some of the canal boat operators that we spoke to advised us that they understand that the western end of the Kennett & Avon Canal from Bradford on Avon to Bath is pretty much at capacity in terms of boat movements and that the Canal & River Trust is not granting any new boat licences for this section of the canal. We have been unable to speak to the Trust to verify this. This stretch of the canal is clearly well served with canal boats for holiday hire although our discussions with operators showed evidence of unsatisfied demand at peak times. The priority for this part of the canal appears to be more in terms of upgrading existing holiday hire boat fleets rather than increasing supply. There could also be opportunities for the introduction of more larger boats to cater for the growing demand from stag and hen parties and larger family and friend groups. Improvements to facilities and services at visitor moorings may also be needed, although this is not something that we have been able to investigate in detail.

14.4.3. The audit and consultations did not identify any current proposals for new marinas on the Kennet & Avon Canal in Wiltshire. The proposed marina at Hungerford is likely to satisfy any requirements for recreational moorings on Wiltshire's eastern stretch of the canal.

14.4.4. There is an opportunity for an additional hotel boat to operate on the Kennet & Avon Canal, based on the success of the Wessex Rose.

15. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Identified Accommodation Development Potential

15.1.1 The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study identifies market potential for the development of a wide range of different types of hotel and visitor accommodation business across Wiltshire and some additional hotel and serviced apartment/aparthotel provision in Swindon town centre in order to:

- Meet currently unsatisfied demand at weekends and throughout the summer season in Wiltshire - hotels and visitor accommodation businesses of all types are trading at or close to full capacity at these times in many parts of the county and business is being lost as a result;
- Cater for presently unmet demand for hotel accommodation on peak midweek nights in Swindon; better service the long stay corporate market here; and capitalise on the pipeline and planned investment in the town centre office, business events space, leisure and retail offer.
- Capitalise on the latest trends and innovations in hotel and visitor accommodation product development in the UK and help grow the market and attract new market segments;
- Ensure that Wiltshire has a modern, competitive accommodation offer to meet the market's constantly evolving requirements for higher quality and new and different hotel and visitor accommodation products.

15.1.2. Investment to modernise, upgrade and reposition some of the county's existing hotels and visitor accommodation businesses is a key requirement, alongside the introduction of new, high quality and innovative accommodation offers to add depth and diversity to keep existing markets coming back and attract new visitor markets.

15.1.3. This needs to be a gradual process. Too rapid an expansion of supply could dilute off-peak business and potentially undermine the sector's viability in the process. The opportunities are nevertheless there for significant further development of the Wiltshire accommodation sector and Swindon hotel supply over the next 10 years as market demand grows.

Market Potential by Accommodation Type

Hotels

Swindon

15.1.4. There is a need for additional hotel provision in Swindon to meet current and growing corporate demand on the peak nights of Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Additional hotel supply will however dilute the town's hotel market on the other five nights of the week and will maintain the current highly price competitive market in the town. In terms of the type of offer to be developed:

- Swindon is most likely to attract further budget hotels if left to the market alone; given current activity in the market and levels of performance;
- From a destination development perspective, a town centre 4 star hotel would be a more attractive proposition, particularly in terms of developing Swindon as a business tourism destination, and in terms of attracting occupiers to the Kimmerfields Business District. The Swindon hotel market is however unlikely to be able to support a new 4 star hotel for some time to come. The Borough Council and Swindon & Wiltshire LEP will need to decide whether their direct investment in such a hotel could be feasible and justified in order to accelerate the development of Swindon as a business tourism destination and to support the development of the town's economy;
- A boutique hotel is an option for the Locarno buildings in the Old Town, although we did not identify any interest in Swindon from leading boutique hotel companies;
- There is scope for the development of an aparthotel or purpose-built serviced apartment complex in Swindon town centre to serve the long stay corporate market.

Salisbury (City Centre)

15.1.5. Current performance and the growth projections for the Salisbury hotel market show potential in the city for:

- Additional supply at the 4 star/ boutique level in terms of:
  - The expansion of existing 4 star hotels;
  - The upgrading/repositioning of existing 3 star hotels;
  - The development of new boutique hotels, most likely through the conversion of suitable buildings.
- The development of additional facilities at existing 4 star hotels in terms of leisure and spa facilities, meeting rooms, additional restaurants and bars or function rooms;
- At least two city centre budget hotels by 2020;
- The expansion of existing 3 star hotels as the market grows, depending on the scale, speed and impact of budget hotel development in the city ;
- Further serviced apartments, primarily to cater for extended stay, project-related MoD and corporate business.

15.1.6. Locationally additional hotel provision in the city centre would do most to boost Salisbury's leisure tourism market and evening economy and would be more sustainable in terms of minimising unnecessary traffic movements from edge of city hotels.

15.1.7. Salisbury should be able to absorb the currently proposed Premier Inn budget hotel together with a second budget hotel of around 60 bedrooms by 2020, without a significantly detrimental impact on the city's existing accommodation stock, other than possibly on some poorer quality and less well located establishments.

15.1.8. The growth projections show that the city is unlikely to be able to support the development of a sizeable (100 bedrooms +) new 4 star hotel with conference facilities or a 100 bedroom+ upper-tier budget hotel for the foreseeable future. Key to accelerating growth in demand for the hotel sector will be corporate market growth and the requirement to achieve a critical mass of corporate users in terms of both breadth and depth.

Wiltshire (beyond Salisbury)

15.1.9. Elsewhere in Wiltshire a key priority is the upgrading of existing 3 star hotels to provide the more contemporary style of accommodation and hotel facilities that the market is increasingly looking for. There is scope for some 3 star hotels to upgrade to 4 stars or reposition as boutique hotels, as well as potential for the expansion of 3 star hotels in Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Malmesbury and Marlborough, where there is evidence of frequent shortages of hotel accommodation, particularly during the summer months. There is also scope for 3 star hotels to develop leisure and spa facilities to boost their appeal for leisure break stays and banqueting facilities to help them develop weddings and function trade. There is no clear requirement for 3 star hotels to develop conference facilities however.

15.1.10 There is potential for existing 4 and 5 star country house hotels to add bedrooms and/or develop additional facilities such as spas, sports and leisure facilities, function rooms, additional restaurants and bars or facilities such as cookery schools, equestrian centres, falconry centres, wellness rooms, or snooker rooms. Expansion and diversification might also include developing alternative forms of accommodation in their grounds, such as tree houses, eco pods, self-catering apartments and holiday lodges.

15.1.11.In terms of the development of new hotels, there is potential for:

- Additional budget hotel provision in Amesbury and Chippenham. New budget supply in these locations is however likely to have an impact on existing hotels and guest houses;
- Small boutique hotels in Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Devizes and possibly Warminster;
- Further luxury 4 and 5 star country house hotels, given suitable properties for conversion;
- Additional 4 star golf hotels and resorts;
- A spa hotel, given a suitable property for conversion or site for a new-build spa hotel;
- A luxury family hotel in the Salisbury area if a country mansion were to become available here that would lend itself to conversion to such a hotel;
- The possible development of a hotel at Longleat, as other major attractions have developed.

Inns, Pub Accommodation & Restaurants with Rooms

15.1.12. There is good potential in Wiltshire and rural Swindon for:

- The development of further boutique inns/ gastropubs with boutique guest bedrooms;
- The expansion of existing boutique inns;
- The upgrading of existing well located, characterful pub accommodation operations;
- Pubs to refurbish, modernise and re-open letting bedrooms within their premises and/or possibly through the conversion of suitable outbuildings or new-build extensions;
- The development of high quality, possibly boutique guest bedrooms linked to restaurants;
- A new build pub with adjacent budget hotel bedrooms on the outskirts of Chippenham and possibly at Melksham and Trowbridge. There could also be scope for this type of development on the outskirts of Salisbury and Warminster. City/town centre accommodation development is more of a priority in these locations however.

Guest Houses and B&Bs

15.1.13. In terms of requirements and opportunities for guest house and B&B development in Wiltshire and Swindon:

- There is potential for additional guest house, B&B and farmhouse B&B provision in most parts of Wiltshire to meet peak demand during the summer months and to replace those that close, due to the natural churn in this sector. The priority will be to encourage existing and new guest house and B&B operators to provide the highest quality of accommodation that they can, to meet constantly rising customer expectations.
- There is also potential for the opening of 5 star guest houses and B&Bs and possibly some boutique B&Bs, particularly in locations such as Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Salisbury, Warminster, most parts of rural Wiltshire and the rural areas of Swindon Borough.

- Low quality and less well located guest houses could be affected by budget hotel openings in locations such as Salisbury, Swindon, Chippenham and Trowbridge. Much will depend on the level and pace of budget hotel development and the extent to which guest house operators are able to combat the increase in competition through the quality of welcome and accommodation they provide and the effectiveness of their marketing.
- There is scope for the development of B&B for Horses establishments in rural Wiltshire - B&Bs that also provide stabling and pasture for horses, subject to bridleway infrastructure and development. Further research is required to establish whether there is a product and market for this type of B&B accommodation in the county.
- Given the importance of the walking and cycling markets to many parts of rural Wiltshire, B&B and guest house providers should be encouraged to develop walker and cyclist friendly services and facilities.

Holiday Cottages

15.1.14. Based on the analysis of supply, performance and potential, the following opportunities for holiday cottage development across Wiltshire and rural Swindon should be prioritised:

- Additional holiday cottages to meet peak season demand in terms of barn conversions and the letting of residential properties. Self-catering letting agencies are looking for additional properties in the following locations:
    - The Bath area;
    - Bradford on Avon;
    - Castle Coombe;
    - Chalke Valley;
    - Cranborne Chase;
    - Lacock;
    - Longleat;
    - Marlborough;
    - Pewsey Vale;
    - Salisbury;
    - Wylye Valley.

- The above list is not exhaustive, however there is no clear need for additional holiday cottages in the rural areas around Swindon and Royal Wootton Bassett.
- There is potential for all standards of holiday cottage but the priority is for high quality accommodation.
- This includes further 5 star and fully en-suite self-catering cottages and boutique holiday cottages, which generally attract high levels of demand and can attract new high spending markets.
- There is a need for additional 2, 3 and 4 bedroom holiday cottages but less so for further one-bedroom units.
- There is scope for more 'super cottages' that can cater for large family and friend get-togethers, celebrations and house parties.
- There is scope for some 5 star holiday cottage complexes with leisure facilities and ideally large communal areas to cater for larger groups that want to book a number of units.
- There is also potential for more dog-friendly self-catering.
- Given the absence of any 'access exceptional' self-catering cottages in Wiltshire and Swindon - specially designed for independent wheelchair users – this is a product to encourage.. This is a niche market however, so significant provision is not warranted.

Holiday Lodges & Holiday Lodge Parks

15.1.15. There is good potential in Wiltshire and rural Swindon for:

- Further small complexes of holiday lodges for rental and scope possibly for the expansion of existing holiday lodge sites.
- The development of the type of woodland or lakeside holiday lodge parks that have opened in other parts of the country. These are relatively small developments of timber holiday lodges that are most typically available for holiday ownership. Most holiday lodge park operators will provide a letting service on behalf of owners and may have some lodges for holiday rental. A number of national holiday lodge park operators showed interest in developing in the county given suitable sites.
- The development of eco lodges and eco lodge parks, for ownership and/or rental.
- The development of holiday lodges linked to specific outdoor activities e.g.

    - Fishing lodges associated with existing or new fishing lakes.
    - Golf lodges on golf courses either for rental, timeshare or outright purchase.
    - Holiday lodges alongside horse riding stables.
    - Shooting lodges on country sports estates.

Longleat Forest Center Parcs Holiday Village

15.1.16. As a company Center Parcs is committed to the ongoing improvement and development of its existing holiday villages and will continue to innovate and introduce new ideas and activities to its existing sites. While the company has no immediate plans to expand or develop the Longleat Forest holiday village it will continue to invest in improving the site.

Caravan Holiday Home Parks

15.1.17. The developer survey indicated potential interest in suitable sites in Wiltshire and rural Swindon from national holiday park for the development of caravan holiday home parks for ownership and/or rental. However, given the sensitivity of the landscape in Wiltshire, and the fit with the wider offer and target markets, encouraging holiday lodge parks should be the priority.

Touring Caravan & Camping Sites

15.1.18. With regard to touring caravanning and camping provision in Wiltshire and rural Swindon, there is a market requirement for:

- The ongoing upgrading of existing touring caravan and camping sites to meet rising customer expectations. Continuous investment is needed in site infrastructure, landscaping, toilet and shower blocks, and other on-site facilities such as laundry rooms and children's play areas. A key requirement now is for Wi-Fi.
- The expansion of existing touring caravan and camping sites, where they have land available, to cater for demand at peak times. Many sites are frequently full and turn business away at weekends and during school holiday periods. The expansion of sites may make them more viable and allow investment in site facilities.
- The development of existing larger child-friendly sites in terms of adding leisure facilities, games rooms and children's activities.
- Sites to introduce eco-activities e.g. nature study, foraging
- Existing operators to improve their green credentials through measures such as the use of biomass, solar or wind energy, composting, recycling, and planting to improve biodiversity.
- Sites to develop more hard standings for touring caravans and motor homes to enable them to extend their season and allow trading during periods of wet weather and into the winter months.
- Additional seasonal tourer pitches[1], which can provide sites with a good base of guaranteed income, whatever the weather.

[1] Where owners leave touring caravans on a site for the season to use them periodically for weekend stays, midweek breaks and holidays.

- Further small touring caravan and camping sites and certificated sites[1], particularly on farms and next to pubs.
- A few larger touring caravan and camping sites.
- More camp sites.
- The development of eco camping sites - small, low impact, environmentally friendly, off-grid camp sites with solar or wind powered showers and compost toilets.
- Existing touring caravan and camping sites to introduce camping pods and/or some form of glamping units.
- The development of camping pod sites.
- The development of a camping pod network along the Kennett & Avon Canal to support the development of walking, cycling and canoeing breaks along the canal.
- The development of permanent on-site accommodation for site managers for the purposes of winter opening, site security and maintenance.
- Touring caravan and camping sites to extend their operating season into the winter months and possibly consider year-round operation.

Glamping

15.1.19. There is good potential for:

- Existing glamping sites to add further units.
- The development of further glamping sites.
- Year-round operation of glamping sites.
- The development of facilities such as shops, meeting rooms, indoor leisure and possibly staff accommodation to help glamping sites to develop midweek and winter business.

15.1.20. The development of a safari tent encampment along the lines of those that have been established at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park in Kent could be a specific opportunity at Longleat Safari Park.

[1] 5 pitch sites that are certificated by the Caravan Club or Camping and Caravanning Club without the need for planning permission.

Group & Youth Accommodation

15.1.21. There is potential for the following group and youth accommodation development in Wiltshire:

- A contemporary hostel in central Salisbury. Salisbury is a key location for YHA but its current hostel in the city does not meet the requirements of its individual customers and the organisation is unable to justify investment in the site because of its location lacking footfall and its listed building status. YHA would be interested in operating a new 80-bedroom hostel and cafe in Salisbury city centre. It has sold its current hostel site for redevelopment into retirement homes, subject to planning, which has so far been refused but may be the subject of an appeal. An activity holiday operator, Discover Adventures, has expressed interest in buying the hostel but the price that it offered did not meet the value expectations of YHA. There is a need now to resolve the future of the existing YHA hostel and find a new city centre site.
- The potential to develop a hostel or bunkhouse barn in Devizes to serve activity tourism markets should be further explored.
- The development of camping and bunkhouse barns in other locations along the Kennet & Avon Canal to cater for walking, cycling and canoe touring groups, subject to feasibility assessment.
- There is scope for the development of both a residential activity centre and a children's activity holiday centre in Wiltshire and rural Swindon, given the availability of suitable properties and sites.

Farm Stay

15.1.22 There is potential for many of the types of visitor accommodation identified in this study to be developed on farms and estates across the Wiltshire and Swindon countryside, particularly given access to land and property and the availability of funding streams for diversification of farms/the rural economy.

Canal Boating

15.1.23. The Kennet and Avon Canal offers the following opportunities for the development of canal boating:

- Another relatively small canal holiday boat hire operation on the Vale of Pewsey stretch of the canal alongside the development of more places to eat and drink and things to do off the boat.
- The western end of the Kennet & Avon Canal, going into Bath, is at capacity in terms of boat movements. The opportunity here is primarily in terms of the introduction of some luxury holiday hire boats and additional larger holiday hire boats to cater for group bookings.
- Scope for one or two more hotel boat operations on the canal.

15.2 Implications for Planning Policy Development and Application

15.2.1 A positive, flexible and enabling planning framework will be vital to support the future development of the Wiltshire and Swindon hotel and visitor accommodation sector in line with the opportunities identified in the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study. The draft Wiltshire Core Strategy and Swindon Borough Local Plan are both at the final stages of examination before adoption in 2014. The Wiltshire Core Strategy includes two policies covering tourist accommodation - Core Policy 39 on Tourist Development, including tourist accommodation, and Core Policy 40 on Hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, Guest Houses and Conference Facilities. Both policies support hotel and visitor accommodation development in the principal settlements, market towns, local service centres and villages. Accommodation development in the countryside will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances subject to a series of criteria relating to landscape impact, scale, design and access. There appears to be a presumption in favour of development at existing countryside attractions and the re-use of existing buildings rather than new-build. The evidence base for Core Policy 40 is the 2005 Tourism Strategy for South Wiltshire, which is considerably out of date and its aspirations not substantiated by detailed feasibility appraisals. The Swindon Borough Local Plan has no policies on hotel or visitor accommodation development and makes only one reference to tourist accommodation in the supporting text on farm diversification.

15.2.2. On the basis of our assessment of these draft policies (which are likely to be adopted) and feedback that we have received from hotel and accommodation business owners during our consultations we highlight the following considerations that we feel need to be taken on board by planning policy and development control teams going forward:

- Planners need to recognise the full range of different types of hotel and visitor accommodation business that the study has identified market potential for and developer interest in. Current policies, where they exist, are based on scant and out-of-date evidence.

- There is a need for locational strategies that promote hotel development in Salisbury city centre and Swindon town centre in order to maximise the contribution that hotels can make to the development of Salisbury as a leisure tourism destination and Swindon as a business tourism destination, and to support city/town centre vitality and development. This can be achieved through the robust application of the sequential test to resist hotel development on the outskirts of Salisbury and outer areas of Swindon.

- Encouraging town centre hotel development in Wiltshire's other towns would also be desirable, however there may not be suitable sites available for new build hotels in some towns, so edge of town hotel development may be the only option in certain locations of new-build hotel potential.

- The study identifies opportunities for the development of a wide range of different types of hotel and visitor accommodation business in Wiltshire's countryside and rural Swindon, including some developments of scale and some that could involve new buildings. There is a case, we feel, for a more flexible and enabling planning framework and application of policy that can allow positive consideration of hotel and visitor accommodation development proposals in the countryside, particularly in terms of their economic and employment benefits, subject to satisfying environmental impact and traffic safety considerations.

- There is no clear evidence of a need for major conference facilities in Salisbury as the supporting text to Core Policy 40 suggests (although this is not something that the study has specifically researched).

- There is a need to avoid occupancy conditions that will restrict the ability of accommodation businesses to attract winter business and operate year round e.g. forced periods of closure.

- There is also a need to recognise that rural hotels and accommodation businesses may need some form of permanent on-site staff accommodation to support year round operation and assist in attracting and retaining key staff.

- Clearly set out criteria and evidence requirements for the assessment of change of use applications for hotels and visitor accommodation establishments would provide greater clarity for applicants and development control teams. Core Policy 40 in the draft Wiltshire Core Strategy includes a policy that resists the loss of existing hotels, public houses or conference facilities to alternative uses unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need for them in their current use or an alternative tourism, leisure, arts, entertainment or cultural use. The Council does not however have any clearly set our criteria for applying this element of Core Policy 40. Although Core Policy 21 relating to community facilities is drawn upon, more sector specific guidance would be beneficial and give clearer direction, and would enable more direct operational and other contributory factors to be built into the assessment. On a general note, marketing for 6-9 months during a market downturn is unlikely to solicit the true potential of a site for re-positioning and investment under new owners when finance for the acquisition is difficult to secure. There is no clear need for a hotel retention policy for Swindon.

- It will be important to ensure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charges to be applied to hotel and visitor accommodation development schemes are proportionate and affordable. Many local authorities in other parts of the country have decided to apply a nil charge following research to assess the level of charge that hotel and visitor accommodation development schemes can realistically afford. CIL charges can seriously impact upon hotel and visitor accommodation viability and deliverability. The currently proposed charge for hotel development projects of £70 per sq m could put Wiltshire at a competitive disadvantage in its efforts to attract inward investment into new hotels in the county. VisitWiltshire and its partners thus need to make urgent representations to Wiltshire Council on this issue.

- VisitWiltshire should be consulted on planning applications for significant hotel and visitor accommodation development proposals to draw on their tourism expertise.

- Hotel and visitor accommodation developers would welcome a positive planning policy process where they can engage with planners to achieve workable schemes on a timely basis. Pre-application discussions are valued in this respect. Requirements for technical studies need to be proportionate and affordable. Planning conditions can sometimes add significant costs to schemes, possibly pushing them to a point where they are no longer viable.

15.2.3. In terms of disseminating the findings of this study to the planning community, the preparation of a planning policy guidance note is recommended. This would cover all of these issues and give planning officers clear guidance on how best to support hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon. The councils may wish to look at eventually adopting such guidance as an SPD (Supplementary Guidance Document).

15.2.4. Workshops for planning officers and planning committee members would be an additional and more hands-on route to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the opportunities for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon and how they can positively support the future development of the sector and avoid unnecessary planning barriers to growth.

15.2.5. Some of the Wiltshire planners that we consulted identified a need for guidance on how to assess the potential impact of new hotels and visitor accommodation businesses on existing stock. It is very difficult to give general guidance on this. It is possible to model the impact on hotel and guest house occupancy of a new hotel where current industry performance is known, however this can only be done on a case by case basis. Where required we would suggest that independent expertise be sought. As far as we understand it such commercial issues are not a material consideration in the determination of planning applications however.

15.2.6. It will be important to monitor hotel and visitor accommodation development activity to assess the effectiveness of planning policies in achieving their objectives. We understand that this will be done in Wiltshire through the Wiltshire Monitoring Framework. It would add value to the process and outputs if the system was set up so that it was possible to search by type of visitor accommodation as well as area, and also if implementation of schemes was monitored to understand what has actually happened on the ground.

15.3 Other Requirements for Public Sector Intervention and Support

15.3.1 In addition to a positive planning policy framework for hotel and visitor accommodation development there are other roles that VisitWiltshire and its partners can play to more proactively support the development of the hotel and visitor accommodation sector in Wiltshire and Swindon.

a) A Hotel Investment Strategy for Swindon Town Centre

15.3.2 The rationale for additional hotel development in Swindon town centre is to meet currently unsatisfied corporate demand on Tuesday and Wednesday nights and capitalise on, and in turn support, the potential new drivers of demand for hotel accommodation in the town centre - conferences, exhibitions and events that might be attracted to the Oasis indoor events arena and STEAM; the development of the leisure and evening offer; and corporate business from companies attracted to the Kimmerfields business district and other new office developments in the town centre. There are a number of sites in central Swindon where hotels have been mooted. If left entirely to the market the town centre is most likely to see additional budget hotel provision. A full service 4 star hotel would however contribute more to destination development and employment creation, and may be a requirement for Swindon to develop as a conference and exhibition destination. A hotel of this standard is however unlikely to be secured without some form of public sector investment support, as hotel performance in Swindon is currently a long way from the target levels that 4 star hotel developers would need to see. The market may however be able to support the development of a town centre aparthotel or serviced apartment complex to service long stay corporate demand from Swindon companies.

15.3.3. Further research is needed to inform the hotel investment strategy for Swindon town centre in terms of:

- Understanding the potential to attract conference and exhibition business to the Oasis indoor events arena and STEAM, and the need for a 4 star hotel in the town centre to support these venues in winning conference and exhibition business. This might take the form of research with conference buyers, and evaluation of existing comparator conference and exhibition venues;
- Establishing the potential, need, case and support for public sector investment in a 4 star hotel in the town centre, through detailed consultations with Council stakeholders and research to put together case studies of public sector intervention elsewhere;
- Developing a strategy to secure an aparthotel or serviced apartment complex in the town centre, involving more detailed research with operators, developers and landowners, and additional market research with local companies to more accurately quantify long stay demand and potential usage.

15.3.4. We would suggest that budget hotel development in the town centre can be left for the market to determine.

15.3.5. Consideration should also be given to a longer term hotel investment strategy for Swindon town centre, depending on what the new Wiltshire & Swindon Destination Management & Development Plan recommends, particularly in terms of the further development of the town centre leisure and business tourism product. If a conference and exhibition centre were to be recommended for the town centre, for example, consideration would need to be given to how it will need to be supported by hotel provision to ensure its success.

15.3.6. The development of a town centre 4 star hotel, additional budget hotel provision and a serviced apartment complex in Swindon town centre could create 180-200 new jobs directly and support a further 60-80 indirect and induced jobs.

b) Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Site Search & Matching

15.3.7. The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study has identified market potential for, and developer interest in, a wide range of different types of hotel and visitor accommodation operations across Wiltshire and Swindon, but has only identified a few sites and properties that could meet the identified market opportunities and satisfy developer requirements. A programme of work is thus now required to identify sites and buildings that could be available, suitable and acceptable in planning terms for:

- Additional budget hotels in Amesbury and Salisbury;
- Boutique hotels in Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Salisbury and Warminster;
- Luxury country house and spa hotels;
- A luxury family hotel in the Salisbury area;
- Golf hotels and resorts;
- Holiday lodge parks;
- Eco lodge developments;
- Fishing lodge complexes;
- A modern city centre youth hostel in Salisbury and possibly a hostel in Devizes;
- Large touring caravan and camping sites;
- Children's activity holiday centres.

15.3.8. This will require contact with land and property owners, commercial property agents, golf courses, country house conference centres, wedding venues, fishing lakes, visitor attractions, educational institutions and other relevant businesses and organisations. It will also require the involvement of Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council planning, development control, estates, economic development and inward investment officers. There could also be merit in local PR activity to encourage land and property owners to come forward with suggested sites and opportunities. The objective would be to compile a portfolio of hotel and visitor accommodation development sites and opportunities to be promoted to potentially interested developers and investors alongside the findings of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study, possibly re-presented in a more succinct and accessible format. There may also be a need to undertake research to more fully understand the requirements of target hotel and visitor accommodation developers to match them effectively with suitable sites and opportunities in the portfolio. Such a programme of work would clearly require resourcing and leadership.

15.3.9. A site search and matching programme would create around 800-1,000 direct jobs and 300-400 indirect and induced jobs over the next 5 years if sufficient sites can be found and successfully marketed for these types of hotel and visitor accommodation development.

c) Encouraging Pub Accommodation Development

15.3.10. There is good potential for the further development of high quality pub accommodation and boutique inns in Wiltshire and the rural parts of Swindon Borough. Existing businesses of this nature are trading at high levels of occupancy at weekends, during the summer, and in some parts of Wiltshire during the shooting season between September and January. They are often fully booked at these times and generally achieve high room rates. There are many other pub accommodation businesses that could be upgraded and further developed and many pubs that could add guest bedrooms. This would be a good way of expanding the rural accommodation offer in Wiltshire and Swindon's countryside. Adding guest bedrooms can also help to ensure the commercial sustainability and future of pubs. We would suggest therefore that there is scope for some form of Pub Accommodation Development Programme for Wiltshire and Swindon. Elements of such a programme might include:

- User-friendly business development guidance for pub owners and tenants on rooms development, including key performance indicators and case studies to inform the business planning process. Hotel Solutions has previously prepared similar guidance for Tourism South East as part of its Great Country Pubs project that could be built upon, up-dated and enhanced;
- Training in accommodation development project planning, welcome, and marketing;
- Targeting breweries and pub companies to inform their pub development teams of the potential for pub accommodation development;
- A Wiltshire Country Inns marketing initiative;
- Working with Pub Is The Hub to develop some of the identified opportunities and explore other potential support available;
- Exploring routes to funding for pub accommodation development through the RDPE, banks, breweries and other potentially available sources.

15.3.11 Support and funding for the marketing initiative should be sought from Wadworth's, Arkell's and some of Wiltshire's micro breweries.

15.3.12. There is also an opportunity to broaden such a programme to include the development of restaurants with rooms and possibly accommodation linked to food producers and other food-related businesses e.g. vineyards, organic farms, orchards, fisheries and cookery schools.

15.3.13. Inn and pub accommodation development across Wiltshire and Swindon could create and safeguard around 300 direct jobs and support in the order of 100 indirect and induced jobs over the next 3 years.

d) Glamping Development

15.3.14. Glamping is rapidly growing in popularity in the UK. Wiltshire has a small supply of glamping accommodation at present. Glamping businesses that have opened in the county have quickly found a strong market. We believe that there is scope for significant expansion of this type of accommodation, which would be entirely appropriate to encourage in rural Wiltshire and Swindon's countryside, and have good fit with an eco-related product development strand. VisitWiltshire and its partners could play a role to encourage and support the development of the glamping sector in Wiltshire and Swindon through some form of Glamping Development Programme. This might include the following:

- A Glamping Development Advice Sheet with guidance on the various types of accommodation this covers; the rationale and potential for development; typical performance indicators; planning and legal requirements; sources of advice; and suppliers;
- A glamping exhibition of the suppliers of bell tents, yurts, tipis, wigwams, camping pods etc., which would also present an opportunity for supply chain development in terms of supporting existing, and encouraging the development of new, glamping product suppliers. Plain Huts, for example is a shepherd's hut manufacturer based on the Salisbury Plain that could benefit from such an initiative;
- Training workshops for people considering setting up a glamping operation covering issues such as planning, customer expectations, set up costs, running costs and marketing;
- A Wiltshire Glamping marketing campaign.

15.3.15. The development of glamping in Wiltshire could create around 60 direct jobs and 20 indirect and induced jobs.

e) Tailored Business and Quality Improvement Support

15.3.16. The provision of tailored business support and quality improvement initiatives would be beneficial for existing and prospective visitor accommodation operators in Wiltshire and Swindon and would contribute to capitalising on the visitor accommodation development opportunities across the area. VisitWiltshire already signposts its tourism partners to business information that is currently available online from bodies such as VisitEngland, VisitBritain, Quality in Tourism, the South West Tourism Alliance and Sustainability South West, and provides links to training and skills organisations that provide courses and workshops for hospitality and tourism businesses. Further support could be helpful, we feel, in terms of for example:

- Accommodation Development Fact Sheets - drawing on the information in the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study on the performance and market demand for different types of accommodation
- Business advice visits from suitably qualified and experienced advisers;
- Training seminars and workshops;
- Business advice surgeries;
- Business mentoring programmes;
- Business networking opportunities;
- Quality awareness days;
- Quality awards schemes;
- Grants or other forms of financial assistance.

15.3.17. Key requirements for advice and training for accommodation operators are most commonly to do with marketing, especially digital marketing. Some destinations have successfully implemented Walkers & Cyclists Welcome training workshops to help accommodation operators to understand how they can cater for and attract people for walking and cycling breaks. Green Tourism Business Scheme training would have good fit with sustainable tourism product development. A number of the accommodation businesses that we interviewed identified a lack of finance as holding back improvements that they would like to make to their facilities. Grant assistance is likely to be welcomed by such operators. Awards schemes have been shown to be effective in other destinations as a means of encouraging higher standards.

15.3.18. The development of other forms of visitor accommodation in Wiltshire could generate around 100 direct jobs and 40 indirect and induced jobs over the next 3 years.

f) Destination Marketing

15.3.19. Consultations with hotel and visitor accommodation businesses provided the following insights into the accommodation sector's requirements from destination marketing for Wiltshire and Swindon:

- The clear priority for hotel and visitor accommodation businesses is a focus on boosting off-peak demand in terms of additional business in the spring, autumn and winter, especially during the week, for accommodation businesses in Salisbury and Wiltshire, and a focus on boosting weekend demand for Swindon hotels. Many Salisbury and Wiltshire hotels and accommodation businesses frequently fill and turn business away during the summer months as well as throughout the shooting season between September and January in certain parts of the county. There is no particular need to drive business for these times therefore. Weekend demand is a challenge in Swindon, so a clear priority for destination marketing here. This suggests a need to focus on markets that will visit at off peak times (emptynesters, retired people, career couples, pre-school families and group visits), and the promotion of attractions, activities and events that will generate off-peak business for hotels and accommodation businesses.

- Key motivations for short breaks, overseas visits and group visits are Stonehenge, Salisbury Cathedral, Bath, Longleat, the Cotswolds and the New Forest; people tend to use Wiltshire and Swindon hotels and accommodation establishments as a base or stopping off point for visiting these iconic attractions and destinations, for which there is already high awareness. It makes sense therefore for destination marketing for Wiltshire and Swindon to focus on raising awareness of the wider Wiltshire and Swindon visitor offer, particularly in terms of countryside activities, food and drink, green tourism, attractions, events and festivals and interesting towns and villages to visit, in order to encourage people to stay longer and spend more within the county and borough. There will also be opportunities for specific marketing programmes linked to the suggested country inns and glamping development programmes (if progressed).

- Marketing to attract weekend group tour business is a priority for Swindon hotels, primarily in terms of groups using them as a base for visiting Bath, Oxford, the Cotswolds and Stonehenge. A number of 3 star hotels and some 4 star country house hotels in Wiltshire and some 3 and 4 star hotels in Salisbury also expressed some interest in attracting small, higher paying private, special interest and overseas groups. VisitWiltshire is already actively targeting this market through its group visits and travel trade marketing programme.

- There could be scope for a business tourism marketing campaign focused primarily on attracting major conferences, trade exhibitions and business events to the new Oasis indoor events arena and STEAM in Swindon and residential conference business and day meetings for Swindon's 3 and 4 star hotels. This could be extended to include the luxury country house and golf hotels in Wiltshire that have potential to develop residential conference business, although their target markets are likely to differ from those for Swindon hotels. There is very little potential for 3 and 4 star hotels in Salisbury and other parts of Wiltshire to develop strong residential conference business, due to issues of access and supporting infrastructure requirements.

g) Developing the Corporate Market for Hotel Accommodation

15.3.20. Growth in corporate demand is needed to strengthen hotel performance in Swindon and Salisbury and will be the key driver of new hotel development in these locations and other towns in Wiltshire, such as Chippenham and Trowbridge. Hotel schemes in these locations will require a solid base of year round, higher-rated midweek corporate business to achieve the levels of occupancy and room rate that are required to ensure commercially viable hotel development. Key requirements therefore will be to progress business park and office development schemes and attract the sort of occupiers that will deliver high levels of demand for hotel accommodation in terms of national and international headquarters operations and companies in the fields of professional and business services, ICT and digital, media, telecommunications and pharmaceuticals.

h) Developing the Leisure Tourism Product

15.3.21. Our research and consultations with hotel and visitor accommodation business owners and managers suggest an ongoing need to further develop critical mass in the leisure tourism offer of Wiltshire and Swindon, particularly with a view to helping to boost off peak demand. Our suggestions and those made by accommodation operators include:

- More events and festivals at quieter times of the year;
- Major events with drawing power from further afield and for longer periods;
- New all-weather, year-round visitor attractions;
- The development of Wiltshire's food and drink tourism offer in terms of high quality restaurants and gastropubs; food and drink attractions, events and festivals; and cookery schools, demonstrations and courses – all of which can have year-round appeal;
- The development of the walking, cycling and horse riding product in Wiltshire.
- The development of further high quality, independent, speciality retail in Bradford on Avon, Corsham, Devizes, Malmesbury and possibly Warminster, comparable to the retail offer of Marlborough.
- The ongoing development of the cultural, retail and evening offer in Swindon town centre and Salisbury city centre.
- Further development and promotion of Wiltshire's arts and culture product

15.3.22 Potential has also been identified to develop and promote the Kennet & Avon Canal as a linear destination for boating, cycling, walking and canoeing breaks, through the development of canalside accommodation e.g. caravan and camping sites, a camping pod network, a hostel or bunkhouse in Devizes, camping barns in other locations along the canal, and holiday lodges; new attractions along the canal; canalside pubs, cafes and restaurants; cycle hire; canal holiday boat hire; visitor moorings; day boat hire; trip boats; circular walks and cycle rides from key stopping off points and accommodation bases; and events and festivals.

i) Keeping a Finger on the Pulse

15.3.23 This Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study provides a snapshot of the Wiltshire and Swindon hotel and visitor accommodation sector and market at one point in time. Moving forward it will be important for VisitWiltshire and its partners to monitor how the sector is developing and performing over time to establish ongoing priorities for the further development of hotel and visitor accommodation, and to evaluate the impact of any interventions to proactively support the development of the sector.

15.3.24. This will firstly require the compilation of more accurate records of accommodation stock in Wiltshire and Swindon. As part of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study Hotel Solutions has undertaken a comprehensive audit of the current supply of hotels, inns, guest houses and B&Bs, touring caravan and camping sites, glamping accommodation and group and youth accommodation in Wiltshire and Swindon. We have not however undertaken an audit of self-catering accommodation, which is a significant and very time-intensive task. This will need to be done to provide an accurate baseline of the supply of this type of accommodation.

15.3.25. Going forward VisitWiltshire will need to establish a process for keeping these records up to date as new information comes to light on hotels and visitor accommodation businesses that have opened, expanded or closed. It should be possible to draw on the Wiltshire Monitoring Framework for this purpose, and to build on this to compile a more detailed narrative of investment in the Wiltshire and Swindon hotel and visitor accommodation offer, possibly in the form of a twice yearly hotel and visitor accommodation development bulletin or newsletter. This would assist in demonstrating what has been achieved by specific interventions to support the sector, and also raise awareness of hotel and visitor accommodation investment activity, to create confidence in the market and hopefully stimulate further investment.

15.3.26. Monitoring hotel and visitor accommodation performance on an ongoing basis is expensive and notoriously difficult to achieve in terms of getting accommodation operators to contribute to regular industry surveys. The periodic updating of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study, or elements of it, e.g. in relation to hotels or specific categories of visitor accommodation, is likely to be a more achievable way forward.

15.4 Moving Forward – Next Steps

15.4.1 In moving forward the following next steps actions will be needed to disseminate and act on the study findings in order to capitalise on the identified opportunities for hotel and visitor accommodation development and market growth in Wiltshire and Swindon:

a) Informing Planning Policy and Strategy Development and Implementation

15.4.2 The study findings will need to be shared with all of the relevant officers and members of Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and other bodies that are involved in preparing and implementing planning policy and strategy documents that are of relevance to hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon, including:

- The Swindon & Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plan
- The Wiltshire Core Strategy and planned Partial Review;
- The Swindon Borough Local Plan;
- The Swindon Masterplan;
- The Wiltshire CIL Charging Schedule;
- Additional planning guidance that may be prepared by Wiltshire Council e.g. for town centres;
- Planning and development briefs for specific sites e.g. Devizes Wharf;
- Neighbourhood plans;
- AONB management plans.

b) Informing the Wiltshire & Swindon Destination Management & Development Plan

15.4.4 The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study report includes a number of recommendations for specific projects to support, encourage and accelerate hotel and visitor accommodation development in Wiltshire and Swindon, together with a number of suggestions for destination marketing, leisure tourism product development and destination development that have come out of our research and discussions with hotel and visitor accommodation business owners and managers. These recommendations need to be fed into the process to help inform the Destination Management & Development Plan for Wiltshire and Swindon.

c) Translating the Recommendations into Action

15.4.5 The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study puts forward a series of recommended projects and actions for supporting the development of hotels and visitor accommodation businesses in Wiltshire and Swindon. These recommendations will be developed into a Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Investment Action Plan for Wiltshire and Swindon. VisitWiltshire will need to consider how best to progress this Action Plan within the context of the Destination Management & Development Plan and potentially available funding from different sources. Key to this will be discussions with the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and other bodies such as the AONB Offices, Canal & River Trust. LEADER groups and town and private sector partners to identify and secure partnership and funding support and to agree roles, responsibilities and priorities for developing and progressing projects.

d) Spreading the Word

15.4.6 The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study includes a great deal of very detailed information that will be of interest to a wide range of audiences. Work will be needed to build awareness of the study and its findings. This may include re-packaging the report into different formats for specific audiences e.g. location specific extracts or the suggested Accommodation Development Fact Sheets for particular types of accommodation. This process should include providing feedback to the hotel and visitor accommodation businesses that contributed to the study.

15.5 Concluding Thoughts

15.5.1. The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study identifies significant potential to grow Wiltshire and Swindon's visitor economy through capitalising on a wide range of opportunities for visitor accommodation development across Wiltshire and Swindon. These opportunities represent a mixture of new-build developments, conversion and redevelopment of existing buildings, and the up-grading and re-positioning of existing visitor accommodation businesses. They can bring not inconsiderable economic benefits as well as providing opportunities for farm diversification and new uses for country houses, residential institutions, and redundant agricultural and office buildings.

15.5.2. Whilst sensitive development is required - both in terms of the visual and environmental impact of schemes and the commercial impact on existing accommodation businesses - there remains a real opportunity for the development of the hotel and visitor accommodation product across the county and borough as part of a joined up approach to the wider development of tourism through the implementation of the new Destination Management & Development Plan.

15.5.3. However, realising the potential will require action on a number of fronts – most notably in terms of the planning policies and process that provide the framework for development; the future inward investment strategy and action for the sector; and support for the sector in terms of destination development, marketing and business support. Putting these frameworks in place will enable the hotel and visitor accommodation sector to play a critical role in destination development, and together with the wider visitor economy, to make a significant contribution to economic development and employment growth across Wiltshire and Swindon.