

# COASTAL WEST SUSSEX

## Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Development Opportunities

Prepared for:  
Coastal West Sussex Partnership

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## **COASTAL WEST SUSSEX – HOTEL & VISITOR ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

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### **1. Introduction**

The following report provides an assessment of the potential opportunities for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Coastal West Sussex and the possible actions that the Coastal West Sussex local authorities and their partners might wish to consider to accelerate hotel and visitor accommodation development in Coastal West Sussex going forward. The assessment is based on:

- A review of the previous studies that have been undertaken to assess the potential for hotel and visitor accommodation development, improvement and retention in Coastal West Sussex;
- A review of national hotel and visitor accommodation development trends of relevance to Coastal West Sussex.

Four hotel and visitor accommodation studies have been completed for different parts of Coastal West Sussex in the last 11 years (all by Hotel Solutions):

- Coastal West Sussex Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures (2008)
- Adur & Worthing Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures (2013)
- Chichester Hotel Futures (2005)
- South Downs National Park Visitor Accommodation Review (2014)

The coverage of these studies varies from just hotels (in the case of the Chichester Hotel Futures Study), to the full range of visitor accommodation offers. While some of the studies are now somewhat out of date, the review provides an indication of the types of visitor accommodation there could still be potential for in Coastal West Sussex. Where we have more current information or insight, we have updated the findings. All of the studies were commissioned primarily to inform planning policy development for hotel and visitor accommodation development and retention.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the four hotel and visitor accommodation studies.

The review of national hotel and visitor accommodation development is presented at Appendix 2.

We have also provided at Appendix 3 a glossary of definitions of different types of tourist accommodation.

We provide below some thoughts on the key messages from the reviews of the previous studies and national trends, and a potential forward programme of action to build on the insight they provide to accelerate hotel and visitor accommodation development and improvement across Coastal West Sussex.

## **2. Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Demand**

All of the previous studies show a similar picture in terms of demand for hotel and visitor accommodation in terms of:

- A largely leisure-driven and seasonal accommodation market, characterised by strong weekend and summer demand with clear shortages of all forms of visitor accommodation at these times, but weaker midweek and winter demand;
- Strong demand for Premier Inn and Travelodge budget hotels, which consistently fill and turn business away throughout the year, both during the week and at weekends.
- A tougher market for full-service 3 star hotels due to the lack of midweek corporate demand: 3 star hotel performance is relatively weak as a result, in terms of both room occupancy and achieved room rates.
- Strong demand for high quality pub accommodation;
- Good demand for B&Bs and guest houses;
- High demand for self-catering accommodation between April and October and frequent shortages during the peak summer months, when most self-catering units are fully booked;
- Strong demand and frequent shortages of provision for touring caravanning and camping during the main summer months and at weekends between May and September if the weather is good;
- A stable market for caravan holiday home purchase and hire.
- Very high demand for family holidays and breaks at the Butlins Bognor Regis resort.

While some of the studies are now very out of date, national trends in staying tourism suggest that demand for hotel and visitor accommodation across Coastal West Sussex is likely to have strengthened, both during the recession (2009-2012) as a result of the growth in staycation demand, and since 2013 as a result of the recovery and growth in the economy. The Brexit vote has also proved to be very positive for the UK holiday industry during the 2016 summer season, particularly as a result of the fall in the pound, which has encouraged British people to holiday in the UK this year, and attracted more overseas visitors, taking advantage of the more favourable exchange rates. With relatively little change in overall accommodation supply, the shortages of accommodation identified in the previous studies are likely to have remained and may have become more acute.

### **3. Accommodation Development Opportunities**

All of the previous studies and the review of national hotel and visitor accommodation development trends, show similar opportunities for accommodation development in terms of:

- Budget hotel development in the main towns and resorts: Bognor Regis Seafront, Littlehampton Seafront and Chichester East remain targets for Premier Inn, while Shoreham-by-Sea is a target for Travelodge. There could also be potential for a third budget hotel in Worthing, most likely as part of the Teville Gate scheme or another major regeneration project;
- Possible scope identified in the 2008 Coastal West Sussex Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study for midmarket upper-tier budget or 3 star hotels in Bognor Regis and Worthing, given anticipated growth in corporate demand. The 2013 Adur & Worthing Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study did not however reaffirm the potential for a hotel of this standard in Worthing, as the growth in corporate demand had not materialised in the way that had been expected before the 2008-2012 recession. This could also be the case in Bognor Regis;
- Potential for the acquisition of 3 star hotels in Bognor Regis and Worthing by coaching holiday companies. This has happened in Bognor Regis, with the acquisition by Leisureplex Hotels on the Royal Norfolk Hotel, but not in Worthing, where the resort's 3 star hotels remain in private ownership;

- Scope possibly for the development of small boutique hotels in Arundel, Chichester, Worthing, Littlehampton and Shoreham-by-Sea, most likely through the repositioning of existing small hotels, large guest houses or pubs with rooms, but potentially also through the conversion of suitable properties. The 2008 Coastal West Sussex Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Study did not identify potential for boutique hotels in Bognor Regis however;
- Potential for further hotels at the Butlins Bognor Regis resort and scope possibly for hotels on some of the area's larger holiday parks;
- A need for the ongoing upgrading of existing hotels;
- The likelihood of some small, low quality hotels coming forward for conversion to residential use where all reasonable efforts to find new owners that are prepared to invest have been exhausted. This has happened in Bognor Regis with the closure of the Royal Hotel on the seafront for conversion to residential apartments, and the recent granting of planning permission by Worthing Borough Council for the conversion of The Kingsway Hotel on Worthing seafront into residential apartments;
- The possible opening of country house hotels in the rural hinterland of Coastal West Sussex, if suitable properties become available for conversion;
- The development of hotels on golf courses;
- The development of good quality pub accommodation, including boutique inns, and new-build pub restaurants with adjacent lodge accommodation on the edge of some of the main towns;
- The opening of restaurants with rooms;
- The upgrading of guest houses and B&Bs, including some to a contemporary/boutique style;
- The opening of new B&Bs to replace those that close as owners retire;
- Potential for guesthouses and B&Bs to develop family rooms and suites to cater for the family market;
- Possible opportunities in the rural hinterland for farmhouse B&Bs if there are farming families here that wish to provide such accommodation;
- The development of facilities for walkers and cyclists at rural B&Bs;
- The opening of B&B for Horses establishments in the rural hinterland;
- The development of hotel and/or B&B accommodation linked to wedding venues;
- The development of wellness retreats;
- Potential for the development of serviced or self-catering apartments in Worthing, and in the longer-term at Shoreham Harbour in terms of the letting of residential apartments, the full or partial conversion of hotels, or purpose-built serviced or self-catering apartment blocks;

- Additional holiday cottages through the letting of residential properties and conversion of barns and other agricultural buildings, including holiday cottage complexes with leisure, large 'super' cottages for family and friend get togethers, 5 star and boutique holiday cottages, and access exceptional self-catering properties suitable for use by independent wheelchair users;
- Holiday lodge development, in terms of individual lodges, small lodge complexes, and woodland, lakeside or marina-side holiday lodge parks, with units for rental and/or outright or timeshare purchase;
- The development of eco lodges, small complexes of eco lodges and eco lodge parks;
- The opening of fishing lodges associated with fishing lakes, golf lodges on golf courses, and possibly lodge accommodation at equestrian centres;
- The ongoing upgrading, development and possible expansion of holiday parks, including the replacement of caravan holiday homes with holiday lodges and the introduction of other forms of accommodation such as camping pods and glamping units;
- The development of new holiday parks, given suitable sites that can achieve planning permission;
- Some self-catering treehouse developments in suitable woodland or forest settings;
- The improvement, development and expansion of existing touring caravan and camping sites, and extension of operating seasons, including potentially year-round operation;
- The development of new touring caravan and camping sites, given suitable sites that can achieve planning permission;
- Glamping provision;
- The development of small camping pod sites;
- A possible opportunity for a surfing pod development at Shoreham or Lancing Beach;
- Scope potentially for a children's activity holiday centre, given a suitable property and site;
- Potential for residential activity centres linked to outdoor pursuits and water sports centres, including the proposed hostel and watersports centre at Lancing Beach.

## **4. Planning Policy Recommendations**

All of the previous studies make similar recommendations regarding planning policy for hotel and visitor accommodation development and retention in terms of:

- Planning for accommodation growth and recognising the full range of hotel and visitor accommodation offers that there is potential for, in particular the need for additional provision in terms of budget hotels, self-catering accommodation, touring caravan and camping sites, caravan holiday homes, and holiday lodges.
- A policy approach that recognises the locational requirements for different types of hotel and visitor accommodation and makes provision for appropriate accommodation development on the coastal strip and in the rural hinterland, including developments of scale on suitable sites that can meet other planning policy considerations regarding visual, environmental, community and traffic impacts.
- A consistent planning policy approach to visitor accommodation development in the South Downs National Park 5km Buffer.
- A planning policy approach that facilitates year-round operation of accommodation businesses.
- Policies that recognise the need for on-site staff accommodation for rural accommodation businesses.
- The need for robust accommodation retention policies that clearly set out the evidence that applicants need to provide to support change of use applications, whilst allowing a degree of flexibility to allow poor quality and less well located accommodation businesses that have been unable to secure investment or new owners to exit.
- A simple and responsive planning application process, without stringent planning conditions that will add significant cost to hotel and visitor accommodation development schemes, to the point that they are no longer viable.
- Consideration of enabling development to achieve viable accommodation development projects.

## **5. Recommendations for Proactive Public Sector Interventions to Support and Accelerate Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Development**

All of the studies make similar recommendations regarding more proactive public sector intervention to support and accelerate hotel and visitor accommodation development and help grow staying tourism;

- Proactive local promotion of the opportunities for accommodation development
- Work to identify and market suitable sites and properties for hotel development and larger scale visitor accommodation schemes;
- The provision of tailored business support and quality improvement initiatives for the visitor accommodation sector, including if possible grant aid or other financial assistance;
- Destination marketing and events and product development focused on boosting off-peak business;
- The development of the corporate market for hotel accommodation through the progression of office and business park development projects and the attraction of occupiers that will generate strong demand for hotel stays;
- Periodic reviews of studies to ensure up-to-date information, evaluate the impact of any interventions, and establish ongoing opportunities and priorities.

While most of the studies are now out-of-date, accommodation demand across Coastal West Sussex is likely to have continued to grow since they were completed, both during the recession as a result of the staycation trend, and subsequently as the economy has strengthened, inbound tourism has grown, and online booking channels have boosted demand. All of the recent hotel and visitor accommodation studies that Hotel Solutions has completed in other parts of the country have shown strong and growing demand for all types of accommodation, with many accommodation businesses reporting record levels of performance; continuing shortages of all types of accommodation at peak times; and improving off-peak performance through investment and marketing to attract business at quieter times. It is not unreasonable to assume that many of the opportunities for accommodation development that the studies identified are still valid and that there remains a need to boost peak season accommodation capacity, whilst endeavouring to grow off-peak demand. This perhaps needs checking through new research however.

## **6. Potential Forward Actions**

Going forward there are a number of actions that the Coastal West Sussex local authorities and their partners could consider in order to bring forward, support and encourage the types of hotel and visitor accommodation provision that the previous studies identified potential for, in terms of:

1. Progressing the major regeneration schemes that could incorporate hotels in Bognor Regis (the redevelopment of the Regis Centre site and Hothampton Car Park) and Worthing (Teville Gate).
2. Work to identify and investigate potential budget hotel sites in Littlehampton, Chichester and Shoreham-by-Sea that can be put to Premier Inn and Travelodge.
3. Consideration of direct council investment in new budget hotel projects. Local authorities are increasingly looking at direct investment in hotel projects and potentially also other large-scale accommodation development as a means of generating an ongoing income stream for the council. There could be merit in progressing work to help Coastal West Sussex local authorities to better understand such opportunities. We have provided at Appendix 4 a review of how local authorities, LEPs and other public sector bodies have been investing in and supporting hotel schemes in the UK.
4. Work to identify and investigate potential sites for major accommodation development schemes on the coast and in the rural hinterland, including holiday parks, holiday lodge parks and touring caravan and camping sites. This could include work to further investigate the potential for the proposed holiday village at the Shoreham Cement Works.

5. Undertaking or commissioning new research to check that the hotel and visitor accommodation development opportunities that the previous studies have identified remain valid, and assess whether there are any barriers that are holding back accommodation development in Coastal West Sussex. There is not necessarily a need to update all aspects of the previous studies. Priorities should be in terms of:
  - Updating the information on hotel performance to confirm that there is still potential for new budget hotels and to assess the need/ potential to retain and improve existing 3 star hotels;
  - Assessing whether there are still shortages of self-catering accommodation and touring caravanning and camping provision;
  - Understanding and supporting the future investment and expansion plans of holiday park operators and assessing the potential for new holiday parks and holiday lodge parks, if potential sites can be identified.
6. Work to raise awareness of visitor accommodation development opportunities in Coastal West Sussex, particularly in terms of B&B provision, pub accommodation, boutique places to stay, self-catering, glamping, touring caravan and camping sites, holiday lodges, hotels and lodges on golf courses, fishing lodges and farm accommodation.
7. Work to secure and focus the allocation of potentially available funds for visitor accommodation development in Coastal West Sussex through the Sussex Downs and Coastal Plain LEADER Programme, Coast to Capital LEP EAFRD Programme, and possible future rounds of funding through the Coastal Communities Fund.

## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1

### **COASTAL WEST SUSSEX HOTEL & VISITOR ACCOMMODATION STUDIES 2005-2016 – SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. COASTAL WEST SUSSEX HOTEL & VISITOR ACCOMMODATION FUTURES (2008)**

The Coastal West Sussex Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study was commissioned in March 2008 by the 5 Towns Network on behalf of Arun District Council, Worthing Borough Council and Adur District Council, with funding support through the Coastal West Sussex Area Investment Framework and Tourism South East. The purpose of the study was to provide the three councils with a detailed assessment of the future for the hotel and visitor accommodation sector in the four main towns along Coastal West Sussex (Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing and Shoreham-by-Sea). The study looked at both the potential for the upgrading, development and retention of existing hotels and visitor accommodation businesses and the scope for new hotel and visitor accommodation development in each town.

In terms of hotel and visitor accommodation performance and market demand, the study showed the following:

- Relatively low hotel and guest house occupancies and achieved room rates in Bognor Regis, primarily as a result of a lack of midweek and winter corporate demand: the hotel and guest house market in Bognor Regis is primarily leisure-driven, and as a result seasonal and weather dependent. The exceptions here are the Premier Inn budget hotel and the hotels on the Butlins Bognor Regis resort, which trade at very high occupancies throughout the year.
- High occupancies for the budget hotels at Littlehampton, which were consistently filling and turning business away both during the week and at weekends.
- Stronger hotel and guest house performance in Worthing due to the base of corporate demand from the major companies based here, although there is insufficient corporate demand to fill all of the town's hotels midweek.
- A shortage of hotel and good quality guesthouse accommodation in Shoreham-by-Sea to service the requirements of local companies.
- Strong demand for self-catering holidays in Coastal West Sussex between April and October, and a clear shortage of self-catering accommodation during the peak summer months.

- High demand for touring caravanning and camping during school holiday periods and Bank Holiday weekends, and a shortage of this type of accommodation at these times.
- Steady demand for caravan holiday home purchase and hire.
- Very high demand for family holidays and breaks at the Butlins Bognor Regis resort.

Potential was identified for the following in terms of hotel development:

- Budget hotels at Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing and Shoreham by Sea;
- Upper tier budget or possibly 3 star hotel development at Bognor Regis and Worthing linked to growth in corporate demand, and given the right deal for a hotel operator;
- The possible repositioning of existing hotels to boutique hotels at Worthing;
- Potential scope for new boutique hotels at Littlehampton, Worthing and Shoreham;
- The possible acquisition of existing hotels at Bognor and Worthing by coaching holiday companies;
- The continued development of hotels at Butlins Bognor Regis to replace the resort's chalet accommodation.

Key sites and locations for hotel development were identified as:

- At Bognor Regis, the Regis Centre site; Butlins; the proposed marina (if progressed); and the arterial routes into and through the town;
- At Littlehampton, the A259 and potentially Harbour Park (if the site is ever redeveloped);
- At Worthing, the Tevillegate/Station Gateway site, the Retail Core, the Aquarena site, arterial routes into and through the town/Borough, and the East Worthing Access Route (is ever progressed);
- At Shoreham-by-Sea, the Parcelforce site, DSS site for a small boutique hotel, restaurant with rooms, or pub accommodation operation; and in the longer term Shoreham Harbour.

Progress since 2008 has been as follows:

- The Royal Norfolk Hotel in Bognor Regis has been acquired by Leisureplex Hotels, part of the Alfa Travel coaching holiday company.
- Plans to redevelop the Regis Centre site and Hothampton Car Park in Bognor Regis, which included two hotels (one with 59 bedrooms, the other with 48 bedrooms) were rejected by Arun District Council in March 2016.
- Arun District Council granted planning permission in November 2015 for the conversion of the Royal Hotel on Bognor Regis seafront into residential apartments.
- Butlins has plans to build more hotel accommodation along the seafront edge of its Bognor Regis resort.
- Outline planning permission was granted in January 2013 for the North Littlehampton Strategic Development Area mixed-use development, which includes a proposal for a 100-bedroom hotel.
- The Beach Hotel in Worthing has been demolished and replaced with a new Premier Inn budget hotel and residential apartments.
- Worthing Borough Council granted planning permission in June 2016 for the conversion of The Kingsway Hotel to residential apartments

In terms of potential for the development of other forms of visitor accommodation, the study identified scope for:

- Potential for the development of serviced apartments in Worthing and longer-term in Shoreham Harbour in terms of:
  - Residential apartments being let as serviced apartments;
  - Full or partial conversion of hotels to serviced apartments;
  - Purpose-built serviced apartment operations.
- Potential for additional self-catering accommodation in terms of:
  - Residential properties being let as self-catering holiday accommodation;
  - Full or partial conversion of hotels to self-catering apartments;
  - Purpose-built self-catering accommodation operations.
- Potential for new touring caravan and camping sites and a need to retain the current level of provision for this type of accommodation.
- Potential for existing holiday parks to upgrade and/or expand.
- Possible scope for new holiday parks.

The Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study identified the following key implications for consideration by the three councils as they progressed the preparation of Local Development Frameworks for their areas:

- The need for strategies and policies that positively encourage and support the development of the types of hotel and visitor accommodation that the study identified potential for in the four towns. It was recommended that as far as possible this should include the avoidance of stringent planning conditions and restrictions that could stifle the development of hotels and visitor accommodation businesses, recognising that the four towns are not priority development locations for most hotel companies.
- The development of locational strategies and site allocations for hotels in line with market and hotel developer requirements, reflecting the priority locations and sites identified for each town.
- The need to recognise that there is likely to be a need for some rationalisation of the existing hotel and guesthouse supply in each town (particularly if/as new budget hotels open) and a need for robust hotel and guesthouse retention policies to effectively manage this process of rationalisation.
- The need for ongoing monitoring of changes in hotel and guesthouse supply and demand in order to support the implementation of retention policies.
- A need for Arun and Worthing to consider policies for the retention of existing touring caravan and camping sites and/or allocations for replacement sites for the Northbrook Farm and Daisy Fields sites.
- Consideration of the need for a retention policy for holiday parks in Arun.
- Possible specific mention of the development plans for Butlins in the Arun LDF.

In moving forward, the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Study made the following recommendations for consideration by the three councils:

- A need for each council to decide on the strategy it wishes to pursue for new hotel development in each town in terms of:
  - Proactively encouraging budget hotel development, as the best chance of securing new hotels for each town and recognising the impact that such hotels are likely to have on existing hotels and guesthouses;
  - Targeting and possibly incentivising upper-tier budget, 3 star and/or boutique hotel development instead of, or alongside budget hotel development;
  - Resisting budget hotel development / holding out for higher standard hotels on sites that they control;
  - Leaving new hotel development entirely to market forces.
- A need for each council to decide how important and realistic it is for each town to develop as a leisure break destination.
- Research to assess the potential corporate demand for a new hotel in Worthing.
- Support for existing hotels and guesthouses to assist them in upgrading and/or repositioning.
- Work to develop the hotel and guesthouse market in each town in terms of:
  - Attracting the sort of companies to new offices and business parks that will generate good demand for hotels and guesthouses;
  - Developing the leisure offer of each town in terms of major attractors of leisure break business; bars, restaurants and nightclubs; speciality shopping; the cultural and arts offer; new visitor attractions; events and festivals; and possibly a gay scene.
  - Effective marketing of the towns for leisure breaks;
  - Possible renewed marketing of Worthing as a destination for association conferences, together with investment in upgrading the Assembly Hall as a conference venue.

## **2. ADUR & WORTHING HOTEL & VISITOR ACCOMMODATION FUTURES (2013)**

The Adur & Worthing Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study was commissioned in September 2013 by Adur & Worthing Councils to update the Adur and Worthing sections of the 2008 Coastal West Sussex Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study. The study provided an up-to-date assessment of the opportunities and requirements for the future development of all forms of hotel and visitor accommodation across Adur & Worthing. The findings have been used to inform planning policy formulation for hotels and visitor accommodation; guide the assessment of planning applications for hotel and visitor accommodation development and change of use proposals; and identify other interventions that the Councils can make to support and encourage hotel and visitor accommodation development and improvement and build market demand for overnight stays in the area.

In terms of current market demand for hotel and visitor accommodation in Adur and Worthing, the study showed the following:

- Strong demand in Worthing for budget hotels, guesthouses and B&B accommodation, with such establishments generally achieving high midweek and weekend occupancies for much of the year and frequently filling and turning business away between April and October, both during the week and at weekends.
- Weaker demand for full service 3 star hotels and relatively low room rates for hotels of this standard. The local corporate market is very cost conscious and does not deliver sufficient volumes of midweek business to support all of the town's hotels. One hotel consequently caters for lower-rated coach holiday groups during the week. Weekend demand for full service hotels is highly seasonal and predominantly just for Saturday night stays, with hotels achieving low Friday and Sunday occupancies, particularly during the winter months.
- Evidence of latent demand in Shoreham-by-Sea from the contractors market, long stay business visitors working on projects for local companies, people on training courses, and people attending weddings and family parties or visiting friends and family locally.

- Leisure break demand for all types of serviced accommodation is relatively low, both in volume and price terms. Such business is primarily from people using accommodation in Adur & Worthing as a base for visiting Brighton: far fewer leisure break stays seem to be motivated by a specific desire to visit Worthing or Shoreham-by-Sea. Some hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs have successfully attracted leisure stays through the online travel agents, albeit at discounted room rates. Other markets for serviced accommodation establishments are event visitors, overseas tourists stopping off en-route to/from the West Country, language school teachers and the families of students studying at the language schools in Worthing.
- Strong demand for self-catering accommodation in Adur & Worthing between April and October and frequent shortages during the peak summer months, when most self-catering units are fully booked. Higher quality, modern self-catering generally attracts the strongest demand. Key markets are holiday visitors, people visiting friends and relatives and long stay business visitors working on projects. Demand is lower during the winter months but self-catering units still attract weekend break stays and long stay corporate business at this time of year.
- Strong demand for touring caravanning and camping in Sussex during the main summer months and at weekends between May and September if the weather is good. There are frequent shortages of provision at such times. Occupancy levels have dropped for the Northbrook Farm Caravan Club site in Worthing due to the lack of investment in the site in recent years. The Caravan Club is however keen to invest in the site to achieve stronger occupancy levels, if it can secure a long lease from Worthing Borough Council.
- Some demand for holiday home ownership at the Beach Park holiday park in Lancing. Other holiday parks in Sussex have found a growing market for holiday home rental in recent years.

The study showed the following potential opportunities for the development of different types of visitor accommodation in Adur & Worthing:

### **Hotels**

- The redevelopment of the Beach Hotel on Worthing seafront, which opened as an 81-bedroom Premier Inn budget hotel in December 2015;
- Potential interest from other national budget/ limited service hotel operators that might be interested in a hotel operating opportunity as part of one of the major regeneration schemes, most likely on a franchise basis;
- Scope possibly for a small, upmarket boutique hotel in Worthing, possibly through the repositioning of an existing small hotel or large guest house;
- A need for the existing hotels in Worthing to modernise their offer to meet customer expectations and compete effectively. The Ardington and Chatsworth were already progressing investment plans to meet this requirement. The Burlington was considering a possible bedroom extension and spa development.
- Potential in the rural parts of Worthing/the South Downs National Park for the Worthing or Hill Barn Golf Clubs to develop some form of hotel accommodation, subject to environmental considerations and the views of the South Downs National Park Authority.
- Potential for a budget hotel in Shoreham-by-Sea

### **Pub Accommodation**

- Scope for some additional pub accommodation provision in Worthing, Shoreham-by-Sea and Lancing.
- A need for some existing pub accommodation establishments to upgrade the quality of their guest bedrooms to meet market expectations.
- Potential for a gastropub with boutique bedrooms in Shoreham-by-Sea.
- Scope for national pub companies to develop hotel bedrooms in conjunction with pub/restaurant development projects that they may progress in Worthing, Shoreham-by-Sea or Shoreham Harbour.

### **Guesthouses and B&Bs**

- A clear case for seeking to retain existing good quality, well located guesthouses in Worthing unless the opening of new budget/limited service hotels significantly erodes the demand for guesthouse and B&B accommodation in the town.
- Scope for additional guesthouses and B&Bs in Worthing to meet current shortages and replace any that close – subject to the impact of new budget/limited service hotels that open in the town.
- Potential for additional guesthouse and B&B provision in Shoreham-by-Sea, again subject to the impact of a budget hotel opening here.
- A need for the continual upgrading of existing guesthouses and B&Bs and for new operators to provide high quality accommodation, to meet constantly rising customer expectations.
- Scope possibly for some 5 star and boutique B&B accommodation in Worthing and Shoreham-by-Sea.
- Potential for guesthouses and B&Bs to develop family rooms and suites to cater for the family market.
- Scope possibly for farmhouse B&Bs in the rural parts of Adur & Worthing/ the South Downs National Park, if there are farming families here that wish to provide such accommodation.

### **Self-Catering Accommodation**

- Potential for additional high quality, modern self-catering apartments, holiday homes and beach houses.
- Scope for some serviced apartments to meet long stay corporate demand.
- Potential for some boutique self-catering apartments and holiday homes and luxury/boutique beach houses.
- An opportunity for some 'super' holiday homes that can cater for large family and friends get togethers.
- Potential for some 'Access Exceptional' self-catering accommodation, purpose-designed for independent wheelchair users.
- Possible opportunities in the rural parts of Adur & Worthing/ the South Downs National Park for the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to self-catering accommodation.

### **Touring Caravan & Camping Sites**

- A clear market potential for, and Caravan Club interest in, the continued operation and upgrading of the Northbrook Farm touring caravan site, subject to a new long-term lease from Worthing Borough Council.
- Potential in the rural parts of Adur & Worthing/the South Downs National Park for additional small scale caravanning and camping provision in terms of certificated sites; small touring caravan and camping sites; eco camping sites; small camping pod operations; and camping barns/ bunkhouse accommodation.
- A possible opportunity for a surfing pod development at Shoreham or Lancing Beach.

### **Glamping**

- Scope for some glamping provision in the rural parts of Adur & Worthing/the South Downs National Park.

### **Holiday Parks**

- A need for continued investment in Beach Park to meet customer expectations.
- Potential for the introduction of holiday homes for hire at Beach Park to cater for demand from holidaymakers, kite surfers and other watersports enthusiasts.
- Possible scope for Beach Park to operate over a longer season and possibly year-round, given adequate safeguards to prevent permanent residential occupation of caravan holiday homes and lodges.

### **Hostel Accommodation**

- The development of the proposed hostel, watersports centre and café at Beach Green could help to develop the market for accommodation from kite surfers and watersports markets and may attract other group markets that may require low-cost accommodation in the Shoreham-by-Sea area.

The study made a number of recommendations in relation to planning policy and process for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Adur and Worthing:

- The study endorsed the Visitor Economy Policy (Policy 39) in the Worthing Core Strategy as providing adequately for hotel and visitor accommodation development in Worthing Borough, particularly in terms of focusing hotel development on Worthing town centre and seafront.
- The study supported the ongoing case for seeking to retain visitor accommodation in Worthing through the Sustainable Economy SPD, although suggested a need for some flexibility over the next few years, while the country has been coming out of the recession, and depending on the impact of the new Premier Inn on the seafront.
- The study endorsed the Visitor Economy Policy (Draft Policy 26) in the Revised Draft Adur Local Plan 2013. It was suggested that the supporting text to the policy could be usefully updated to include reference to the findings of the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study.
- The study suggested that Adur District Council might wish to reconsider its planning policy approach to Shoreham Airport in terms of the potential to allow a hotel here. It also recommended that Adur should reconsider whether a hotel should be encouraged in the Western Harbour Arm of Shoreham Harbour, given the challenges of bringing forward other uses here, and the potential for hotels to come forward on other sites in Shoreham-by-Sea.
- The study showed no clear need for a visitor accommodation retention policy in Adur and no clear need to allocate sites for hotel development in either Adur or Worthing.
- It was recommended that the opportunities for visitor accommodation development in those parts of Adur & Worthing that fall within the South Downs National Park should be communicated to the National Park Authority for its consideration in the drafting of the South Downs National Park Local Plan.

In addition to these planning policy recommendations, the study identified a number of other roles that Adur & Worthing Councils and their public sector partners can play to more proactively support the development of the hotel and visitor accommodation sector in terms of:

- Disseminating the study findings to existing and prospective new accommodation business operators, perhaps reformatted as a series of Accommodation Development Fact Sheets;
- Circulation of the report to all relevant Council officers and members and appropriate interested public sector bodies and other agencies;
- The provision of tailored business support and quality improvement initiatives for the visitor accommodation sector;
- The development of the corporate market through the progression of office and business park development projects and the attraction of occupiers that will generate strong demand for accommodation;
- Product development in Worthing to attract off-peak leisure break business in terms of events and festivals outside the main summer season and indoor and wet weather attractions and activities aimed at markets that have the propensity to visit at off peak times;
- The development of the evening economy in Worthing and in Shoreham-by-Sea to enhance the town as a base for visiting Brighton;
- The development of facilities for kite surfing and other watersports at Shoreham and Lancing. Further research is first needed to better understand the accommodation requirements of kite surfers and watersports enthusiasts and to more clearly identify the scale and nature of opportunity that these markets present for accommodation operators in Adur & Worthing;
- Effective marketing to attract off peak leisure break business, possibly using events and festivals as the key hook to motivate visits and encourage extended stays;
- A review of the potential to secure a hotel as part of one of the major regeneration schemes in Worthing;
- Discussions with Premier Inn and Travelodge and the owners of potential hotel sites in Shoreham-by-Sea to present them with information on the market opportunity for a budget hotel in the town;
- A decision on the future of the Northbrook Farm Caravan Club site;
- An ongoing need to monitor hotel and visitor accommodation development in the District and periodically update the Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Futures Study.

### **3. CHICHESTER HOTEL FUTURES (2006)**

The Chichester Hotel Futures Study was commissioned in 2005 by Chichester District Council, with funding support from Tourism South East. The purpose of the study was to identify the need for new hotel development across Chichester District through until 2023, to coincide with the Local Development Framework timeframe. The study was used to inform the Council's planning policy approach to hotel development and retention.

In terms of hotel performance and market demand, the study showed:

- Average annual room occupancies and achieved room rates for Chichester's 3/4 star hotels that were broadly on a par with national averages, but varied depending on hotel quality, with higher quality hotels performing much better. Demand for full-service hotels in Chichester is seasonal, with hotels busy and often filling between April and September, particularly at weekends. The Chichester hotel market is largely leisure driven. Chichester is a popular weekend break destination: hotels are able to command high room rates at weekends.
- 3 star hotels in Midhurst were achieving low levels of occupancy. Demand here is highly seasonal and leisure-focused.
- Chichester's budget hotels were achieving very high room occupancies and consistently filling and turning away significant business, both during the week and at weekends. They attract a mix of corporate and contractor demand during the week, and a mix of leisure break stays and demand from people attending weddings and family occasions or visiting friends and relatives at the weekend.
- High quality boutique inns were achieving very high room occupancies and room rates.
- The market for hotel accommodation on the Manhood Peninsula did not appear to be particularly strong and was largely seasonal. Demand was mainly from people visiting friends and relatives or attending weddings and family celebrations. There was also some demand for leisure breaks on the coast and some business and contractor demand.

The study identified potential for the following in terms of new hotel development in the District over the 5-18-year period that followed its publication (now 9 years ago):

- A boutique hotel of around 50 bedrooms in Chichester city centre, and possibly longer term potential for further boutique hotels in the city, given suitable properties for conversion;
- A second sizeable (100 + room) budget hotel in Chichester, and possible scope for a third budget hotel in the longer term;
- Possible scope for luxury country house hotels, given suitable properties;
- Potential for further high quality pub accommodation;
- Scope for bedroom extensions to existing hotels, and the development of conference, function, leisure and spa facilities;
- Potential possibly for more niche hotel offers such as Warner's adult only hotels and luxury family hotels, given the strong performance of these types of hotel elsewhere.

Locationally, the greatest opportunities for new hotel development were identified as being in Chichester, due to its strength as a leisure break destination, and its role as the main focus of corporate activity and possible future business development. The study did not identify any clear potential for new hotel development in Midhurst. The opportunities here were considered to be more in terms of the upgrading and further development of existing hotels, and possibly some high quality pub accommodation. It was suggested that there could be scope for a small quality hotel or quality pub accommodation operation in Petworth, primarily to cater for leisure break business and local weddings trade.

The study made a number of recommendations for the District Council to:

- Plan positively for hotel growth through the Local Development Framework (now superseded by the Local Plan 2014-2029, which includes positive planning policies for tourist accommodation development);
- Introduce a hotel retention policy in the Local Development Framework in order to resist the loss of hotels to alternative uses, in particular residential. The current Local Plan 2014-2029 includes such a policy;
- Undertake work to identify, bring forward and possibly allocate in the Local Plan suitable sites for hotel development: the lack of hotel sites and pressure on land from alternative uses, especially residential development, was identified as a key barrier to realising the potential for hotel development in Chichester;
- Progress work to build a dialogue with potentially interested target hotel companies;

- Strengthen the demand for hotel accommodation in the District through attracting companies and business uses that will generate demand for corporate hotel stays and developing off-peak leisure business.

Since 2006, the only significant addition to Chichester's hotel stock has been a 100-bedroom Travelodge budget hotel in the town centre, meeting the requirement for such a hotel that the Hotel Futures Study identified. There have however been a number of changes in terms of the repositioning of existing hotels. Harbour Hotels reopened the former Ship Hotel in the city centre in March 2016 as the luxury boutique Chichester Harbour Hotel. This hotel meets the sort of requirements that was identified in the Hotel Futures Study for a boutique hotel in the city centre. The Goodwood Estate has ended its management contract with Marriott Hotels and now operates The Goodwood Hotel as an independent 4 star hotel. The former Ramada hotel is also now operated as an independent hotel – the Chichester Park Hotel.

#### **4. SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK VISITOR ACCOMMODATION REVIEW (2014)**

This study was commissioned by the South Downs National Park Authority to inform the development of the emerging South Downs National Park Local Plan and the delivery of the Partnership Management Plan regarding the opportunities and requirements for building the future capacity, quality and profitability of the visitor accommodation sector across the National Park.

The study provided evidence of:

- A visitor accommodation sector that is performing very strongly at weekends and during the week in the peak summer months, with frequent shortages of all types of accommodation at these times.
- Strong demand for high quality accommodation, which generally trades at the highest levels of occupancy and price.
- Clear prospects for future growth in the demand for all types of visitor accommodation in the National Park.
- Good potential for the South Downs to capitalise on many of the current and emerging rural visitor accommodation development trends.
- Some clear gaps in current accommodation provision.
- Strong interest from national, regional and local visitor accommodation developers, operators and investors, as well as from land and property owners interested in visitor accommodation development.
- A largely leisure driven and seasonal market for visitor accommodation in the National Park, suggesting a need for incremental supply growth in order to avoid overly diluting winter trade.

The study showed the following opportunities and priorities for investment in existing accommodation businesses:

##### **Hotels**

- Refurbishment and upgrading, including repositioning to boutique hotels in some cases;
- Bedroom extensions to meet peak period demand;
- The development of leisure and spa facilities to boost appeal for leisure breaks.
- The development of banqueting facilities to help develop weddings and functions trade.
- Expanded or new restaurant capacity.

### **Inns/Pub Accommodation**

- Refurbishment and upgrading, including repositioning to boutique inns in some cases;
- The opening of additional en-suite guest bedrooms.

### **B&Bs/ Guest Houses**

- Refurbishment and upgrading, including repositioning to a boutique standard in some cases;
- Expansion in terms of opening up additional en-suite bedrooms or the provision of accommodation units in gardens and grounds e.g. camping pods or glamping units.
- Development of facilities for walkers and cyclists e.g. drying rooms and cycle storage.

### **Holiday Cottages**

- Refurbishment and upgrading;
- The opening of additional units;
- The development of leisure facilities, e.g. swimming pools, games rooms, saunas, at holiday cottage complexes.

### **Touring Caravan and Camping Sites**

- Continuous investment in site infrastructure, landscaping, toilet and shower blocks, and other on-site facilities such as laundry rooms and children's play areas.
- 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.
- The introduction of eco-activities e.g. nature study, foraging.
- Improving green credentials through measures such as the use of biomass, solar or wind energy, composting, recycling, and planting to improve biodiversity.
- The provision of more hard standings for touring caravans and motor homes to enable sites to extend their season and allow trading during periods of wet weather and into the winter months.

- Additional seasonal tourer pitches<sup>1</sup>, which can provide sites with a good base of guaranteed income, whatever the weather.
- The introduction of camping pods and/or some form of glamping units.
- The development of permanent on-site accommodation for site managers for the purposes of winter opening, site security and maintenance.
- The extension of site operating seasons into the winter months and possibly year-round operation.

### **Glamping Operations**

- Expansion through the provision of additional glamping units.
- The extension of the operating season for glamping sites, including perhaps to year-round trading.
- The development of facilities such as shops, meeting rooms and indoor leisure facilities.
- The provision of staff accommodation to help glamping sites develop midweek and winter business.

The research findings also showed good potential for the development of new accommodation businesses of all types in order to meet current peak period shortages and capitalise on rural visitor accommodation development trends: without new accommodation supply tourism growth in the National Park will clearly be constrained.

In terms of the opportunities for new visitor accommodation development in those parts of Coastal West Sussex that fall within, or border the National Park, the research findings show the following:

### **Hotels**

- Scope for a boutique hotels in Arundel, through the repositioning of an existing hotel or the conversion of a suitable building.
- Potential for the development of luxury and/or boutique country house hotels, given suitable country house properties for conversion. This could also include conversion to luxury family hotels and/or spa hotels.
- Scope for the development of hotels on golf courses.

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

### **Inns/Pub Accommodation**

- Clear potential for further pubs in, and surrounding the National Park to offer letting bedrooms either within their premises, through the conversion of suitable outbuildings, or possibly in terms of small-scale new-build guest bedroom extensions. This includes the development of new boutique inns.

### **Restaurants with Rooms**

- Potential for the development of high quality, possibly boutique guest bedrooms linked to existing or new restaurant operations.

### **B&Bs/ Guest Houses**

- A need for new B&Bs and guest houses to replace those that close as their owners retire. The priority will be high quality, en-suite B&Bs and guest houses, including some 5 star and boutique establishments.
- Possible scope for the development of B&B for Horses businesses in the rural parts of the National Park. These are B&Bs that also provide stabling and pasture for horses.

### **Holiday Cottages**

- Clear potential for additional holiday cottages to meet peak season demand, in terms of barn conversions and the letting of residential properties. There could be potential for all standards of holiday cottage but the priority should be for high quality accommodation, including some 5 star, fully en-suite and boutique holiday cottages.
- Scope for some 5 star holiday cottage complexes with leisure facilities.
- Potential for more 'super cottages' that can cater for the growing demand for large family and friendship get togethers, celebrations and house parties.
- Scope for some 'access exceptional' self-catering cottages that are specially designed for independent wheelchair users. The market for such accommodation is quite niche however, so significant provision is not warranted.

## **Holiday Lodges**

- Potential for holiday lodge development in terms of:
  - Individual rental holiday lodges or small complexes of them;
  - Woodland or lakeside holiday lodge parks with lodges for ownership and/or rental. Relatively modest scale holiday lodge parks are likely to be most appropriate in the National Park. It is likely to be difficult to find sites where large-scale holiday lodge parks could be acceptably developed in planning terms.
  - Eco lodges, small complexes of eco lodges and eco lodge parks;
  - Fishing lodges associated with existing or new fishing lakes;
  - Golf lodges on golf courses, for rental, timeshare or purchase.
  - Shooting lodges on country sports estates.

## **Treehouses**

- Scope potentially for some treehouse developments in suitable woodland and forest settings.

## **Caravan Holiday Home Parks**

- Likely interest from national holiday park operators in developing new caravan holiday home parks in the South Downs for ownership and/or rental if potential development sites are available. Given the sensitivity of the landscape in the National Park and the fit with the wider offer and target markets, encouraging suitable scale holiday lodge park developments might be deemed more appropriate however.

## **Wellness Retreats**

- Scope for the development of wellness retreats in the South Downs.

### **Touring Caravan and Camping Sites**

- Potential for:
  - Further small scale touring caravan and camping sites in the National Park (of up to 30-50 pitches) and further certificated sites<sup>2</sup>, particularly on farms and next to country pubs.
  - More camp sites;
  - The development of eco camping sites - small, low impact, environmentally-friendly, off-grid sites.

### **Camping Pods**

- Potential for small camping pod sites.

### **Glamping**

- Clear scope for the development of further glamping sites.

### **Group & Youth Accommodation**

- Scope for the development of residential activity centres linked to outdoor pursuits and water sports centres.
- Potential for further children's activity holiday centres, given suitable properties and sites.

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<sup>2</sup> 5 pitch sites that are certificated to operate by the Caravan Club or Camping and Caravanning Club without the need for planning permission

The study sets out a clear case for the National Park Authority to support visitor accommodation development in order to:

- Improve the vitality of the National Park's towns and villages, particularly in terms of helping to boost their evening economies;
- Keep village and country pubs open and viable, maintaining them as a resource for local communities;
- Improve farming and country estate incomes and thus supporting agriculture and land management;
- Create jobs for local people and self-employment opportunities;
- Sustain existing tourism and leisure businesses, such as golf courses, fishing lakes, horse riding stables, wedding venues and visitor attractions;
- Find new uses for redundant and even derelict buildings and sites.

The study makes a series of planning policy recommendations in terms of:

- Planning positively for the development of the full range of potential visitor accommodation offers that there is potential for in the National Park;
- Formulating an appropriate planning policy for static caravan parks;
- Developing a consistent planning policy approach in the South Downs 5km Buffer;
- A planning policy approach that facilitates year-round operation of accommodation businesses;
- Policies that recognise the need for on-site staff accommodation for rural accommodation businesses;
- The need for a robust accommodation retention policy;
- A simple and responsive planning application process;
- Consideration of enabling development to achieve viable accommodation development projects.

The study ends with a series of recommendations for public sector intervention to help accelerate investment in visitor accommodation in the National Park and boost off-peak accommodation demand, including:

- Identifying suitable sites for large-scale visitor accommodation schemes;
- A South Downs pub accommodation development programme;
- A glamping development programme;
- Business support for the visitor accommodation sector;
- A clearly articulated tourism strategy for the South Downs;
- Destination marketing to boost off-peak business;
- Product development with off-peak appeal;
- Periodic reviews of the study to evaluate the impact of any interventions and establish ongoing opportunities and priorities.

# **COASTAL WEST SUSSEX**

## Relevant National Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Development Trends

Prepared for:  
Coastal West Sussex Partnership

**August 2016**



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## HOTEL & VISITOR ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN THE UK

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### Hotels

#### Hotel Development in Historic Towns & Cities

National trends in hotel development in historic towns and cities of a comparable size to Chichester and Arundel have been as follows:

- **Premier Inn and Travelodge budget hotels** have opened in many historic towns and cities over the last three years, including Winchester, Canterbury, Lincoln, Worcester, Dorchester, Exeter, Colchester, Beverley, Lewes, Cheltenham and Harrogate, and one or other, or both companies continue to target other similar sized historic towns and cities, including Salisbury, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Rye and Guildford, together with second or third hotels in the major historic cities of Bath, York, Chester, Cambridge and Oxford. Chichester is target for a second hotel for Premier Inn.
- **Other budget hotel brands** (Ibis, Holiday Inn Express, and Hampton by Hilton) tend to build larger hotels and have so far only opened in, or targeted the larger historic cities. Exceptions are Lincoln, which has an Ibis budget hotel and a Holiday Inn Express upper-tier budget hotel, and Canterbury, which has a Holiday Inn Express and a proposed 130-bedroom Hampton by Hilton upper-tier budget hotel that was granted planning permission in August 2015.
- The other key trend in historic town and cities has been the opening of **boutique hotels**, either through the repositioning of existing hotels, or the conversion of suitable properties. Hotel du Vin opened its first boutique hotel in Winchester in 1994 ([www.hotelduvin.com/locations/winchester](http://www.hotelduvin.com/locations/winchester)). The company has since gone on to open hotels in other historic towns and cities, including Tunbridge Wells, Cheltenham, Exeter and Harrogate, and is currently progressing a new hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon. Other examples of boutique hotels in comparable historic towns and cities include:
  - One Warwick Park in Royal Tunbridge Wells ([www.onewarwickpark.co.uk](http://www.onewarwickpark.co.uk) )
  - The George in Rye ([www.thegeorgeinrye.com](http://www.thegeorgeinrye.com) )
  - Pelham House, Lewes ([www.pelhamhouse.com](http://www.pelhamhouse.com) )
  - Greyfriars in Colchester (<http://greyfriarscolchester.co.uk> );
  - Charlotte House Hotel, Lincoln ([www.charlottehouseinlincoln.com](http://www.charlottehouseinlincoln.com) )
  - ABode Canterbury ([www.abodecanterbury.co.uk](http://www.abodecanterbury.co.uk) )
  - The William Cecil, Stamford ([www.hillbrookehotels.co.uk/the-william-cecil](http://www.hillbrookehotels.co.uk/the-william-cecil) )

- Major hotel companies are also starting to look at opening **branded boutique** hotels in historic cities. InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has opened a Hotel Indigo in York and is currently progressing Hotel Indigo boutique hotels in Bath and Durham. In Cheltenham, Frasers Hospitality has rebranded the Montpelier Chapter boutique hotel that it acquired in 2015 under its Malmaison boutique hotel brand.

## Hotel Development in Seaside Resorts

National trends in hotel development in UK seaside resorts are as follows:

- **Budget hotels** have continued to open in UK resorts. Premier Inn has opened new hotels in 2015 and 2016 in Sandown on the Isle of Wight, Worthing, Clacton-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Exmouth, Tenby and Southend-on-Sea, while Travelodge has opened in Weston-Super-Mare and Ryde on the Isle of Wight. Target seaside resorts and towns in Coastal West Sussex for one or other of these brands are Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Shoreham-by-Sea.
- Other budget hotel brands have opened in larger resorts, including an Ibis Styles budget boutique hotel in Blackpool; a Hampton by Hilton upper-tier budget hotel in Bournemouth and another planned to open in Blackpool in 2017; and a new Ibis budget hotel that opened in Brighton in 2013. These brands tend to operate larger hotels, typically of 100-150 bedrooms. They are unlikely to look at the seaside resorts and towns in Coastal West Sussex therefore, other than possibly Worthing.
- Another key trend has been the development of **small, independent boutique hotels**, primarily through the repositioning of existing hotels and guest houses, but in a few cases through the conversion of suitable properties. Examples include:
  - The Mercer Collection of 7 small boutique hotels in Southsea ([www.themercercollection.co.uk](http://www.themercercollection.co.uk));
  - The Crescent Victoria Hotel in Margate ([www.crescentvictoria.co.uk](http://www.crescentvictoria.co.uk)) and Crescent Turner in Whitstable ([www.crescentturner.co.uk](http://www.crescentturner.co.uk));
  - Sands Hotel, Margate ([www.sandshotelmargate.co.uk](http://www.sandshotelmargate.co.uk));
  - Albion House, Ramsgate ([www.albionhouseramsgate.co.uk](http://www.albionhouseramsgate.co.uk));
  - Hotel Alexandra, Lyme Regis ([www.hotelalexandra.co.uk](http://www.hotelalexandra.co.uk));
  - Artist Residence, Penzance ([www.artistresidencecornwall.co.uk](http://www.artistresidencecornwall.co.uk));
  - The Pig on the Beach, Studland, Dorset ([www.thepighotel.com/on-the-beach](http://www.thepighotel.com/on-the-beach)).
  - Idle Rocks, St Mawes, Cornwall ([www.idlerocks.com](http://www.idlerocks.com));
  - Cliff House Hotel, Southbourne, Dorset ([www.cliffhouse-hotel.com](http://www.cliffhouse-hotel.com)).

- There has been some activity in terms of **branded boutique hotels**, but only in major resorts. InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) is opening a Hotel Indigo boutique hotel in Brighton later in 2016, while the former Hotel Seattle at Brighton Marina has been converted to a Malmaison boutique hotel.
- There has been some recent activity in terms of new **4 star hotel** openings and development proposals in larger seaside resorts. A £60m, 172-bedroom Hilton 4-star hotel opened in Bournemouth in December 2015. In Blackpool, plans have been unveiled for a 96-bedroom luxury hotel on the site of the former Palantine Hotel.
- Another trend in seaside resorts has been the **acquisition of resort hotels by coach holiday companies**. Daish's acquired two hotels in Weymouth in 2014, following its acquisition of The Claremont in Eastbourne in 2013. Britannia Hotels acquired The Cavendish in Eastbourne in 2015 and two hotels in Scarborough in 2012. Leisureplex Hotels acquired the Shanklin Hotel on the Isle of Wight in 2014.
- Another trend that could be relevant for coastal locations in Coastal West Sussex has been the development of **hotels at holiday parks and holiday centres**. Butlin's has now opened three contemporary hotels at its holiday centre in Bognor Regis. Park Resorts' Southview Holiday Park in Skegness in Lincolnshire has an on-site 3 star hotel with 59 bedrooms. Weymouth's Waterside Holiday Group is currently developing a boutique hotel at its Osmington Holiday Park. The Richardson's Group has unveiled plans for a 260-bedroom hotel as part of the redevelopment of the Seacroft Holiday Village at Hemsby on the north Norfolk coast.

## Rural Hotel Development

Hotel development trends in rural locations are as follows:

- 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 22-bedroom, 5 star Villa Levens country house hotel to the south of Kendal in Cumbria that opened in October 2015; the Barton Hall Hotel that opened in Northamptonshire in 2014; the opening of the Ellenborough Park Hotel & Spa near Cheltenham in 2011; the redevelopment in 2012 of Wood Norton Hall near Evesham as a country house hotel; and the £30million development of The Cornwall Hotel, Spa and Estate at St Austell. Plans have also been unveiled for the development of new luxury country house hotels in Surrey (the conversion of Cherkley Court near Leatherhead); West Yorkshire (involving the conversion of Bretton Hall near Wakefield); Wigan (the transformation of the Haigh Hall stately home into a luxury boutique hotel; Cheshire (the restoration and conversion of Doddington Hall near Nantwich into a 120-bedroom 5 star country house hotel); North Yorkshire (the conversion and extension of Grantley Hall near Harrogate into a 51 suite luxury hotel and spa); the Lake District (the 22-bedroom Villa Levens near Kendal, converted from a former nuns retreat); Herefordshire ( Brooks Country House at Ross-on-Wye); and North Wales (the conversion of Palé Hall into an 18-bedroom luxury hotel and restaurant) .
- A number of country house hotel companies have 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 near Bath and in Guernsey and Northamptonshire. Laura Ashley Hotels has opened two country house hotels in Elstree in Hertfordshire in 2013 and Windermere in the Lake District in 2014. The Northamptonshire-based Hazleton Group of Companies opened the Barton Hall Hotel near Kettering in Northamptonshire in 2014 to add to the Rushton Hall Hotel that it opened in 2006.
- **Hotel spas** have been developed at many luxury country house hotels, enabling them to tap into the rapidly expanding UK spa breaks market.

- There has been some activity in terms of 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;
  - Eco lodges for ownership or rental adjacent to the Barnsdale Lodge hotel in Rutland;
  - An eco-friendly prefabricated lodge at The Pig in the New Forest;
  - Bubble domes at the Finn Lough Resort in Fermanagh, Northern Ireland;
  - Luxury spa lodges at Gilpin Hotel & Lake House at Windermere in the Lake District;
  - Cedar lodge suites at the Alexander House Hotel in West Sussex.
- A number of luxury country house hotels with a strong reputation for their cuisine have opened **cooking schools** e.g. Lucknam Park, near Bath; Northcote in Lancashire; Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxfordshire and Swinton Park in North Yorkshire.
- Recent years have also seen 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.

- Recent years have also seen the development of a number of smaller **boutique country house hotels through** the conversion of country mansions, upgrading and repositioning of existing hotels, or development of redundant outbuildings at country house properties. Examples include:
  - The Cranleigh at Bowness-on-Windermere in the Lake District ([www.thecranleigh.com](http://www.thecranleigh.com) )
  - Thyme House, Southdrop, Gloucestershire ( [www.thymeatsouthrop.co.uk](http://www.thymeatsouthrop.co.uk) )
  - The Coach House Hotel, Middleton Lodge, near Richmond, North Yorkshire ([www.middletonlodge.co.uk](http://www.middletonlodge.co.uk) )
  - Visit England's 'Best Small Hotel' 2014, The Old Rectory Hotel, Martinhoe, Exmoor National Park ([www.oldrectoryhotel.co.uk](http://www.oldrectoryhotel.co.uk) )
  - The Clive at Bromfield, near Ludlow in Shropshire ([www.theclive.co.uk](http://www.theclive.co.uk) )
  - Tottenham Mill, near Newmarket in Suffolk ([www.tuddenhammill.co.uk](http://www.tuddenhammill.co.uk) )
  - Forest Side in the Lake District ([www.theforestside.com](http://www.theforestside.com) )
- In market towns, a number of hotel have been repositioned as **boutique and town house hotels**, in some cases with hotel spas, e.g.
  - The George Hotel at Stanbrook ([www.thegeorgehotelkent.co.uk](http://www.thegeorgehotelkent.co.uk) );
  - The Priory Hotel, Wareham ([www.theprioryhotel.co.uk](http://www.theprioryhotel.co.uk) )
  - The White Horse in Romsey in Hampshire ([www.thewhitehorseromsey.co.uk](http://www.thewhitehorseromsey.co.uk) );
  - The Feversham Arms in Helmsley in North Yorkshire ( [www.fevershamarmshotel.com](http://www.fevershamarmshotel.com) );
  - The 'country chic' Kings Head hotel that the Vineyard Group opened in Cirencester in September 2014 ([www.kingshead-hotel.co.uk](http://www.kingshead-hotel.co.uk) );
- 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 five hotels in the New Forest, Southampton, Studland Bay in Dorset, Honiton in Devon, and near Bath; Milsom Hotels, which has 4 boutique hotels in Suffolk and Essex; Hillbrooke Hotels, which operates 4 'quirky luxury' hotels in the New Forest, Berkshire and Lincolnshire; and Flat Cap Hotels in Cheshire, which operates one hotel in Holmes Chapel and is progressing plans for a second hotel in Knutsford.

- **Luxury Family Hotels** was re-established 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 company focuses on the upper end of the family break market with a luxury country house hotel product that is geared towards children.
- **Warner Leisure Hotels**, the company that specialises in hotels catering for the adult-only leisure break market has unveiled plans for a £30m redevelopment and extension of Studley Castle in Warwickshire into a new hotel. It has also invested heavily in its existing hotels in 2015, with the addition of 45 luxurious garden lodges at Bodelwyddan Castle in North Wales and a £12.5 m investment to upgrade and expand its Alvaston Hall Hotel in Cheshire, which has included the opening of an additional 113 guest bedrooms.,
- **Golf resorts** have opened in some counties e.g. Mere Golf Resort in Knutsford in Cheshire, Rockcliffe Hall near Darlington. 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.
- On a smaller scale there has also been some activity in terms of the development of **hotels on golf courses** e.g. a 43-bedroom hotel at the Bowood golf course, near Chippenham in Wiltshire in 2009; a 50-bedroom hotel at The Oxfordshire Golf Club near Thame in 2010; a 30-bedroom Best Western Plus hotel at the Magnolia Park Golf and Country Club in Buckinghamshire in 2014; a 40-bedroom hotel at the Sandford Springs Golf Club near Basingstoke in 2014; the Cotswolds Club opened the 34-bedroom Cotswolds Hotel & Spa at the Chipping Norton Golf Club in Oxfordshire in November 2015.
- There has been some activity in terms of the development of **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. In Scotland, Ballogie Estate Enterprises is developing the site of a former hotel into the Ballogie Hotel & Spa, with 40 guest bedrooms and a £1.7m standalone spa facility. The project is due to open in 2016.

## Inns/ Pub Accommodation

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 historic towns and cities, market towns and rural villages, in terms of the conversion of pub premises to gastropubs with boutique guest bedrooms. Examples are:
  - No 5 Bridge Street, Winchester ([www.idealcollection.co.uk/no5bridgestreet](http://www.idealcollection.co.uk/no5bridgestreet) )
  - The Lion & Pheasant, Shrewsbury ([www.lionandpheasant.co.uk](http://www.lionandpheasant.co.uk) )
  - The Grasshopper Inn at Moorhouse on the Surrey/Kent border near Westerham ([www.grasshopperinn.co.uk](http://www.grasshopperinn.co.uk) )
  - The Five All, Filkins, Gloucestershire ([www.thefiveallsfilkins.co.uk](http://www.thefiveallsfilkins.co.uk) );
  - The Lord Crewe Arms, Blanchland, Northumberland ([www.lordcrewearmsblanchland.co.uk](http://www.lordcrewearmsblanchland.co.uk) )
  - The Packhorse Inn, Moulton, Suffolk ([www.thepackhorseinn.com](http://www.thepackhorseinn.com) );
  - The Bell at Ramsbury, Wiltshire ([www.thebellramsbury.com](http://www.thebellramsbury.com) );
  - The Victoria, Holkham, Norfolk ([www.holkham.co.uk/victoria](http://www.holkham.co.uk/victoria) );
  - Royal Oak, East Lavant, near Chichester, West Sussex ([www.royalookeastlavant.co.uk](http://www.royalookeastlavant.co.uk) );
  - Cromwell Arms, Mainstone, near Romsey in Hampshire ([www.thecromwellarms.com](http://www.thecromwellarms.com) );
  - The Wild Rabbit, Kingham, Cotswolds ([www.thewildrabbit.co.uk](http://www.thewildrabbit.co.uk) );
  - The Hand and Flowers at Marlow in Buckinghamshire ([www.thehandandflowers.co.uk](http://www.thehandandflowers.co.uk) );
  - The Pheasant at Gestingthorpe in Suffolk ([www.thepheasant.net](http://www.thepheasant.net) );
  - The Plough, Kelmscott, Oxfordshire ([www.theploughinnkelmscott.com](http://www.theploughinnkelmscott.com) );
  - Inn on the Square, Keswick, Cumbria ([www.innonthesquare.co.uk](http://www.innonthesquare.co.uk) );
  - Woolpack Inn at Warehorne, near Ashford in Kent (<http://woolpackinnwarehorne.com>) – Alastair Sawday's Pub with Rooms 2016/17.
  - Swan House, Beccles, Suffolk (<http://swan-house.com> )

- A number of **national pub companies have developed branded portfolios of inns:**
  - Greene King has upgraded many of the inns in its Old English Inns portfolio and is starting to look at the development of lodge accommodation alongside its existing and future Hungry Horse and Farmhouse Inn branded pub restaurants;
  - Daniel Thwaites has embarked on the development of its Thwaites Inns of Character chain of quality country inns;
  - Marston's operates a portfolio of 38 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 is planning to open. It is targeting around 5 new budget hotel openings per year. The company launched the Revere Pub Company in 2013 as a premium pub brand, so far including 8 inns with boutique accommodation in Hampshire, West Sussex, Sheffield, Kent, Derbyshire, Worcestershire, East Yorkshire and Wiltshire.
  - 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 and is currently developing The Duchess of Cornwall boutique inn in Poundbury in Dorchester.
  - 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, now part of Greene King, operates the budget Good Night Inns brand alongside 29 of its pubs across the country.
  - JD Wetherspoon operates 45 hotels and inns throughout the UK under its Wetherspoon Hotels brand. Its latest hotel openings are the 18-bedroom Crown Hotel in Worcester in August 2015; 9-bedroom Golden Lion in Rochester in Kent in November 2015; 12-bedroom Greenwood Hotel in Northolt in June 2016; and 22-bedroom Sandford House in Huntingdon in October 2016.
  - London-based brewer Young's operates 20 hotels and inns in London, Surrey, Hertfordshire and Wiltshire, including a number of boutique properties. It acquired the boutique Lamb at Hindon in Wiltshire in 2014 as part of the expansion of its hotel portfolio.

- 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, including The George Townhouse in Shipston-on-Stour and Sheep on Sheep Street in Stow-on-the-Wold in 2016.
  - Shepherd Neame operates 14 hotels and inns in Kent.
  - The Coaching Inn Group has grown from two to ten sites since launching in 2007 as the Bulldog Hotel Group. It acquired three coaching inns in 2015, including two in North Yorkshire, and is planning to expand to 15 sites over the next 5 years after receiving a £20m investment from the Commer Group in January 2015. The Group acquired the 25-bedroom Golden Lion in St Ives, Cambridgeshire in April 2016.
  - Leased pub owner Punch is progressing plans to boost its accommodation business across the UK after a successful pilot scheme on the Isle of Skye, which involves an income sharing arrangement with the tenant. It has appointed two area managers with hotel expertise to push forward the accommodation side of the business in terms of hotels or pubs with rooms, depending on the number of rooms involved, segmented into value, mainstream and premium accommodation. Approximately 300 Punch sites have bedrooms, although not all would be suitable for the new model.
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- 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; The Agellus Collection in Suffolk; The Chestnut Group and Anglian Country Inns in East Anglia; the Peach Pub Company across the Midlands; Oakman Inns & Restaurants with pubs and inns across Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire; Bedfordshire-based Epic Pubs; Miller's Collection, with three inns in Hampshire and Berkshire; The Inn Collection in the North East; Town & Village Hotels, which has two hotels in North Yorkshire, one in County Durham and one in Cheshire; Draco Pub Co in Somerset; Provenance Inn & Hotels in North Yorkshire; Ramblinns in Kent; and London-based pub company Faucet Inns, which has opened boutique inns in Southampton and Surrey. The London-based pub company Distinct Group acquired the Cromwell Hotel in Stevenage in December 2015, which it intends to reposition as a boutique hotel and gastropub. Cheltenham-based Lucky Onion acquired the Wild Duck in the village of Ewen in Gloucestershire in November 2015 to add to its No 131 The Promenade boutique hotel in Cheltenham and 14-bedroom Wheatsheaf Inn gourmet pub-restaurant with rooms in Northleach.

## Restaurants with Rooms

The number of restaurants with rooms in coastal, historic and market towns and rural locations across England and Wales has gradually been increasing, with several new openings in the last 2 years, mostly with boutique bedrooms and in some cases self-catering accommodation. Examples include:

- Rocksalt in Folkestone [www.rocksaltfolkestone.co.uk](http://www.rocksaltfolkestone.co.uk)
- The Seaside Boarding House, Bridport, Dorset [www.theseasideboardinghouse.com](http://www.theseasideboardinghouse.com)
- Restaurant James Sommerin, Penarth, South Wales  
[www.jamesommerinrestaurant.co.uk](http://www.jamesommerinrestaurant.co.uk)
- The Gallivant, Camber Sands <http://thegallivant.co.uk>
- Rick Stein's Seafood Restaurant and St Petroc's Hotel in Padstow, Cornwall  
([www.rickstein.com/stay](http://www.rickstein.com/stay) )
- The Marquis at Alkham in Kent [www.themarquisatalkham.co.uk](http://www.themarquisatalkham.co.uk)
- The Bakery at Tatsfield on the Surrey/Kent border near Westerham  
[www.thebakeryrestaurant.com](http://www.thebakeryrestaurant.com)
- JSW Restaurant in Petersfield, Hampshire [www.jswrestaurant.com](http://www.jswrestaurant.com)
- Mr Underhill's, Ludlow, Shropshire [www.mr-underhills.co.uk](http://www.mr-underhills.co.uk)
- The Whitebrook, near Monmouth in Wales [www.thewhitebrook.co.uk](http://www.thewhitebrook.co.uk)
- The County, Aycliffe Village, County Durham [www.thecountyaycliffevillage.com](http://www.thecountyaycliffevillage.com)
- The Painswick in the Cotswolds town of Painswick [www.thepainswick.co.uk](http://www.thepainswick.co.uk)
- Reads Restaurant with Rooms, Faversham, Kent ([www.reads.com](http://www.reads.com) )
- White Vine House, Rye, East Sussex ([www.whitevinehouse.co.uk](http://www.whitevinehouse.co.uk) )
- La Fosse, Cranborne, Dorset [www.la-fosse.com](http://www.la-fosse.com)

## Country House Wedding & Events Venues with Accommodation

Recent years have seen the opening of an increasing number of country house wedding venues with accommodation and the emergence of a number of companies that specialise in the development and operation of such venues. Examples include:

- The Tabor Group has converted the former South Downs Hotel at Trotton, near Petersfield into the Southdowns Manor wedding and events venue, with 8 guest bedrooms and suites and a honeymoon suite ([www.southdownsmanor.co.uk](http://www.southdownsmanor.co.uk)). The group also operates 4 other wedding venues that have accommodation in Essex, Warwickshire and Suffolk ([www.thetaborgroup.co.uk](http://www.thetaborgroup.co.uk))
- The Nicolas James Group has redeveloped Froyle Park, near Alton in Hampshire into a wedding and events venue with 14 self-catering apartments ([www.froylepark.co.uk](http://www.froylepark.co.uk)). The company also operates Northbrook Park in Farnham, Surrey as a wedding venue with 10 adjacent eco-cottages ([www.northbrookpark.co.uk](http://www.northbrookpark.co.uk))
- AmaZing Venues has opened Stanbrook Abbey in Worcestershire in 2015 as a wedding and events venue with 52 luxury bedrooms and a private bridal suite ([www.amazingvenues.co.uk/venue/stanbrook-abbey](http://www.amazingvenues.co.uk/venue/stanbrook-abbey)). The company operates 5 other luxury wedding and events venues in Scotland, Wales and Hampshire ([www.amazingvenues.co.uk](http://www.amazingvenues.co.uk))
- Clevedon Hall in Somerset opened as a wedding and events venue in November 2014 following a £2m makeover. It has 25 luxury bedrooms and suites ([www.clevedonhall.co.uk](http://www.clevedonhall.co.uk)).
- The former Mariners Hotel at Millbridge, near Frensham in Surrey has been converted into the Millbridge Court wedding venue, offering 7 boutique hotel bedrooms for the exclusive use of wedding parties ([www.millbridgecourt.co.uk](http://www.millbridgecourt.co.uk))
- The former Mannings Heath Hotel, near Horsham in West Sussex was converted into the Brookfield Barn wedding venue in 2015 ([www.brookfieldbarn.co.uk](http://www.brookfieldbarn.co.uk)). It has 7 boutique guest bedrooms for the use of wedding parties.
- The Percy Arms Hotel in Otterburn in Northumberland is currently being converted into a French chateau inspired wedding venue – Le Petit Chateau (<http://le-petit-chateau.com>). Once complete the venue will be able to accommodate weddings of up to 160 guests, and will offer 30 guest bedrooms.

- The Cooling Castle Barn wedding venue near Rochester in Kent offers 15 luxury bedrooms for the use of wedding parties  
([www.coolingcastlebarn.com/page/accommodation](http://www.coolingcastlebarn.com/page/accommodation) )

## Guest Houses and B&Bs

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.

More recent years have seen a reduction in commercial B&B and guest house supply in many destinations, with fewer people entering the sector to replace those that have retired or exited for other reasons. Although the reasons for this trend have not been researched, our research suggests that it could be to do with increasing competition from budget hotels; the establishment of airbnb, which provides people with a more informal way to let spare bedrooms to visitors; and the regulatory burden that can deter people from setting up a B&B.

An emerging trend in historic towns and cities, and rural and coastal destinations 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 include:

- Flowerdews, Winchester [www.flowerdews.com](http://www.flowerdews.com)
- Hannah's B&B, Winchester <http://hannahsbedandbreakfast.co.uk>
- Grays, Bath [www.graysbath.co.uk](http://www.graysbath.co.uk)
- Quidhampton Mill, Salisbury [www.quidhamptonmill.co.uk](http://www.quidhamptonmill.co.uk)
- The Barn at Roundhurst, Lurgashall, West Sussex [www.thebarnatroundhurst.com](http://www.thebarnatroundhurst.com)
- The Linen Shed, Faversham, Kent [www.thelinenshed.com](http://www.thelinenshed.com)
- Field Green Oast, Cranbrook, Kent [www.fieldgreenoast.com](http://www.fieldgreenoast.com)
- The Reading Rooms, Margate [www.thereadingroomsmargate.co.uk](http://www.thereadingroomsmargate.co.uk)
- Chapel House, Penzance [www.chapelhousepz.co.uk](http://www.chapelhousepz.co.uk)
- No 98 Boutique Hotel, Weymouth [www.no98boutiquehotel.com](http://www.no98boutiquehotel.com)
- Hastings House, St Leonards-on-Sea [www.hastingshouse.co.uk](http://www.hastingshouse.co.uk)
- The Cloudesley, St Leonards-on-Sea [www.thecloudesley.co.uk](http://www.thecloudesley.co.uk)
- The Relish, Folkestone [www.therelish.co.uk](http://www.therelish.co.uk)

## Holiday Cottages

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 during the recession resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of residential properties available to rent as holiday accommodation. With lower house prices owners were more interested in making their properties available as holiday lets than selling at a reduced price. With the residential property market now having recovered this trend has started to reverse.

The overall **quality** of the UK self-catering offer has improved significantly over the last 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, whirlpool baths, and increasingly full en-suite properties;
- 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.

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.

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.

Examples of luxury holiday cottage complexes with leisure facilities include:

- Bardown Farm, Wadhurst, East Sussex [www.bardownfarm.co.uk](http://www.bardownfarm.co.uk)
- Poppinghole Farm Cottages, Robertsbridge, East Sussex  
[www.poppingholefarm.co.uk/cottages](http://www.poppingholefarm.co.uk/cottages)
- Breamish Valley Cottages, Alnwick, Northumberland [www.breamishvalley.co.uk](http://www.breamishvalley.co.uk)
- Frith Farm House at Otterden, near Faversham [www.frithfarmhouse.co.uk](http://www.frithfarmhouse.co.uk)
- Pilgrim Nook Holiday Cottages at West Studdal, near Dover [www.pilgrimsnook.co.uk](http://www.pilgrimsnook.co.uk)
- Manor Farmhouse at Milstead, near Sittingbourne [www.themanorformhouse.com](http://www.themanorformhouse.com)

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

- Honeypot, Petham  
[www.mulberrycottages.com/cottage/holiday-cottages-in-kent/93406-honeypot](http://www.mulberrycottages.com/cottage/holiday-cottages-in-kent/93406-honeypot)
- The Butlery, Sandwich Bay [www.uniquehomestays.com/unique/details.asp?id=2585](http://www.uniquehomestays.com/unique/details.asp?id=2585)
- The Folly, Didmarton, Gloucestershire <http://thefollyluxurycottage.com/>
- Agra Cottage, Healey, near Ripon [www.selfcateringcottages.net](http://www.selfcateringcottages.net)
- The Reading Room, Long Compton, Warwickshire  
[www.compton-house.co.uk](http://www.compton-house.co.uk)
- The Peren, near Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire [www.theperen.com](http://www.theperen.com)
- Windfall Cottage, Beckford, Gloucestershire [www.windfallcottage.com](http://www.windfallcottage.com)
- Culls Cottage, Southdrop, the Cotswolds [www.cullscottage.net](http://www.cullscottage.net)

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

- Unique Home Stays [www.uniquehomestays.com](http://www.uniquehomestays.com)
- Boutique Retreats [www.boutique-retreats.co.uk](http://www.boutique-retreats.co.uk) – specialising in boutique self-catering in Cornwall.

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:

- Manor Farmhouse, Milstead, near Sittingbourne <http://themanorfarmhouse.com/>
- Finchcocks Oast, Goudhurst [www.finchcocksoast.co.uk](http://www.finchcocksoast.co.uk)
- The Canterbury Barn, Canterbury [www.mulberrycottages.com/cottage/holiday-cottages-in-kent/80338-the-canterbury-barn](http://www.mulberrycottages.com/cottage/holiday-cottages-in-kent/80338-the-canterbury-barn)
- Marris Barn, Thorganby Hall, Lincolnshire ([www.thorganbyhall.co.uk/marris-barn](http://www.thorganbyhall.co.uk/marris-barn) )
- Tregulland in Cornwall ([www.tregulland.co.uk](http://www.tregulland.co.uk))
- Pedington Manor in Gloucestershire (<http://bigcottage.com/houses/pedington-manor>)

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](http://www.uniquehomestays.com))
- The Wow House Company ([www.thewowhousecompany.com](http://www.thewowhousecompany.com))
- House Party Solutions ([www.housepartysolutions.co.uk](http://www.housepartysolutions.co.uk))
- Acacia Cottages ([www.acaciacottages.co.uk](http://www.acaciacottages.co.uk))
- The Country Castle Company ([www.thecountrycastlecompany.co.uk](http://www.thecountrycastlecompany.co.uk))
- The Big Domain ([www.thebigdomain.com](http://www.thebigdomain.com))
- Group Accommodation ([www.groupaccommodation.com](http://www.groupaccommodation.com))
- The Big Cottage Company ([www.bigcottage.com](http://www.bigcottage.com))

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](http://www.bardownfarm.co.uk) )
- Mellwaters Barn, Bowes, County Durham ([www.mellwatersbarn.co.uk](http://www.mellwatersbarn.co.uk) )
- Treworgans Farm Holidays, Cornwall ([www.treworgans.co.uk](http://www.treworgans.co.uk))
- The Hytte, Northumberland ([www.thehytte.com](http://www.thehytte.com))
- Windrush Barn, Manor Farm Holidays, Cumbria ([www.manorfarmholidays.co.uk](http://www.manorfarmholidays.co.uk))
- Mitchelland Farm, Lake District ([www.lakedistrictdisabledholidays.co.uk](http://www.lakedistrictdisabledholidays.co.uk))
- Chestnut Lodge, Rosliston Forest lodges  
([www.roslistonforestrycentre.co.uk/home/lodges/chestnut-lodge/](http://www.roslistonforestrycentre.co.uk/home/lodges/chestnut-lodge/) )
- Hoe Grange Holidays at Brassington in Derbyshire  
([www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk/accessible-holidays](http://www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk/accessible-holidays) )
- Our Bench, Lymington, New Forest, Hampshire ([www.ourbench.co.uk](http://www.ourbench.co.uk) )
- Nutley Edge Cottages, Uckfield, East Sussex  
([www.nutleyedge.org.uk/categories/accessible-cottages](http://www.nutleyedge.org.uk/categories/accessible-cottages) )

## **Holiday Lodges/ Holiday Lodge Parks**

**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 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 changed their strategy to holiday letting as a result. With the recovery in the economy interest in holiday lodge ownership has returned.

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

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

- The Dream Lodge Group ([www.thedreamlodgegroup.co.uk](http://www.thedreamlodgegroup.co.uk)) – 7 sites in East Sussex, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Devon and Cornwall, and an eight under development in Berkshire.
- Forest Holidays – part of the Forestry Commission ([www.forestholidays.co.uk/choose-a-cabin](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.
- Habitat First Group ([www.habitatfirstgroup.com](http://www.habitatfirstgroup.com)) is a family-run development company that focuses on developing luxury sustainable holiday home communities. The company's first project was the Lower Mill Estate at the Cotswolds Water Park in Gloucestershire, which was first launched in 1998. It is currently developing a second site for up to 1,000 holiday homes – Silverlake in Dorset – and has a number of other projects in the pipeline.

Examples of recent and current holiday lodge park developments include:

- Scampston Park Lodges, Malton, North Yorkshire ([www.scampston.co.uk/park-lodges.html](http://www.scampston.co.uk/park-lodges.html)) – a development of 75 luxury holiday lodges for sale
- Westholme Estate ([www.westholme-estate.co.uk](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.sherwoodhideaway.com))
- Flowery Dell Lodges, Richmond, North Yorkshire ([www.flowerydell-lodges.com](http://www.flowerydell-lodges.com)) - 15 pine lodges for rental.
- Lakes Leisure at Tarleton in West Lancashire has secured planning permission at appeal for the development of 49 holiday homes alongside the existing outdoor pursuits, water sports and caravan park.
- Yorkshire-based Luxury Lodge Group is planning to develop the £12m Forest Lakes holiday lodge park at Sutton-on-the-Forest, near Easingwold in North Yorkshire, with 46 luxury lodges, a spa, clubhouse, brasserie, delicatessen and shop.
- Windsor-based holiday company Haulfryn was granted planning permission by Wiltshire Council in August 2016 to redevelop Brokerswood Country Park, near Westbury into a luxury holiday resort with 90 wooden holiday lodges, 20 touring caravan pitches and 10 camping pods.
- London-based property developer, Eider Homes, is currently progressing plans to redevelop the site of the former Upland Park Hotel in Droxford, with 36 woodland holiday lodges, a central leisure facilities building and a day spa. The company is currently seeking pre-application advice from the South Downs National Park Authority.

A development that stands out from anything previously seen in the UK is the newly opened **Soho Farmhouse** luxury holiday village on the Great Tew Estate in Oxfordshire. Developed by Soho House & Co at a cost of £50m, the site offers 40 rustic cabins of various sizes, a 7-bedroom farmhouse and a 4-bedroom cottage, spread across the 100-acre estate. The village has five eating venues, a fleet of 19 retro milk floats delivering food and drink across the estate, and a wide range of leisure activities, including a swimming pool complex, tennis, horse riding, cycling, boating, crazy golf, five-a-side football and ice skating in winter. What makes the development unique is the village community feel that has been created.

Another major holiday home development that is currently under development is Habitat First Group's **Silverlake** sustainable vacation community on the 560-acre Warmwell Quarry site at Crossways in Dorset. Planning permission was granted in November 2014 for up to 1,000 environmentally sustainable holiday homes, cottages and lodges, a country club, leisure facilities and a hotel. The first phase of holiday homes is currently being marketed for sale.

**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 for sale or rental 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:

- Eye Kettleby Lakes, near Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire ([www.eyekettlebylakes.com](http://www.eyekettlebylakes.com)) - 12 luxury log cabins around a complex of eight fishing lakes
- Heron Lakes, East Yorkshire ([www.heron-lakes.co.uk](http://www.heron-lakes.co.uk)) – 50 lodges
- Thornham Lake, Thetford, Norfolk ([www.thornhamlake.co.uk](http://www.thornhamlake.co.uk))
- Celtic Lakes Resort, Lampeter, Wales ([www.celticlakesresort.com](http://www.celticlakesresort.com)) – sixteen 5 star lodges developed around 6 fishing lakes
- Rural Roosts, near Market Rasen in Lincolnshire ([www.ruralroosts.co.uk](http://www.ruralroosts.co.uk)) - 8 luxury pine lodges around two fishing lakes.

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](http://www.greethamvalley.co.uk/self-catering/rutland-lodges))
- South Winchester Lodges, South Winchester Golf Course, Hampshire ([www.southwinchesterlodges.co.uk](http://www.southwinchesterlodges.co.uk))
- Overstone Park, Northamptonshire ([www.overstonepark.com/lodges](http://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](http://www.lakeside-lodge.co.uk)) – seven 2-storey timber lodges alongside a 64-bedroom hotel, health club and conference and banqueting suite

- Q Lodges ([www.qhotels.co.uk/luxury-lodges](http://www.qhotels.co.uk/luxury-lodges)) – luxury golf lodges for sale or rent have been developed as part of Q Hotels' Belton Woods, Slaley Hall and Cameron House golf resorts in Lincolnshire, Northumberland and Scotland.
- KP Lodges at The KP at Pocklington in East Yorkshire ([www.kpclub.co.uk/accommodation/lodges](http://www.kpclub.co.uk/accommodation/lodges))

**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 on 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.com/uk/destinations/england/yorkshire-daales](http://www.naturalretreats.com/uk/destinations/england/yorkshire-daales))
- Brompton Lakes, Yorkshire ([www.bromptonlakes.co.uk/log-cabins-yorkshire.asp](http://www.bromptonlakes.co.uk/log-cabins-yorkshire.asp))
- Mill Meadow Eco Homes, Somerset ([www.millmeadow.co.uk](http://www.millmeadow.co.uk))
- Rosehill Lodges, Cornwall ([www.rosehilllodges.com](http://www.rosehilllodges.com))
- Wheatland Farm Eco Lodges, Devon ([www.wheatlandfarm.co.uk](http://www.wheatlandfarm.co.uk))
- Ludlow Ecolog Cabins, Shropshire ([www.ludlowecologcabins.co.uk](http://www.ludlowecologcabins.co.uk))
- Eagle Brae in Invernesshire ([www.eaglebrae.co.uk](http://www.eaglebrae.co.uk))
- The Emerald, Carnon Downs, near Truro, Cornwall ([www.emeraldcornwall.co.uk](http://www.emeraldcornwall.co.uk))

## **Holiday Villages and Resorts**

The fifth UK Center Parcs holiday village opened at Woburn Forest in Bedfordshire in June 2014. It has 625 holiday villas, a 75-bedroom hotel, an indoor sub-tropical swimming complex, a choice of on-site restaurants, a spa and a wide range of indoor and outdoor leisure and sports facilities. Developed at a cost of £250 million it has been one of the largest ever leisure projects in the UK. Center Parcs was granted planning permission in February 2016 for its first holiday village in Ireland. The €233m holiday village will include 470 lodges, 30 apartments and over 100 indoor and outdoor activities.

A new luxury 5-star holiday resort is currently being developed in Carbis Bay at St Ives in Cornwall. Una St Ives opened in August 2014 with a first phase of 29 holiday lodges for sale. Each lodge has been constructed with wood from sustainable sources and includes sheep's wool insulation, triple glazing, sedum roofs and solar panels. The site has planning permission for a further 94 lodges. The resort also has an on-site restaurant, a delicatessen selling organic Cornish food and drink products, a spa and an infinity swimming pool and leisure complex.

Plans for major holiday villages and resorts have been unveiled for a number of other locations in the UK:

- The Lightwater Valley theme park near Ripon in North Yorkshire secured planning permission in 2013 for the development of a log cabin resort with 106 holiday units.
- Planning permission was granted in 2013 for the development of the Penrhos Leisure Village on the site of the former Anglesey Aluminium works near Holyhead. The scheme includes the development of 815 holiday lodges and cottages on two separate sites, together with a 75-bedroom hotel, an indoor sub-tropical swimming complex, spa, water sports centre and restaurants.
- Cornwall Council has granted planning consent for the redevelopment of the abandoned Spirit of the West theme park at St Columb into a luxury holiday resort with 325 rental holiday homes and an indoor leisure village with swimming pool, gym, restaurants and cafes. The plans, which also include a self-catering training academy, are being progressed by the owners of the Retallack Resort & Spa near Padstow.
- Planning consent has been granted to redevelop the 84.5 acre former Cookswood Quarry in the Mendip Hills in Somerset into a holiday village with 143 holiday chalets, a swimming pool and spa complex, restaurant, recreational lake, sports facilities and play areas. The site is currently being marketed for sale.

- Forestry Commission Scotland and Highlands & Islands Enterprise are planning to develop a £25million holiday resort next to Ben Nevis that will comprise a 5 star hotel and spa, a bunkhouse, up to 50 holiday lodges and a campsite.
- Plans were unveiled in January 2015 for the development of a £450m all-weather holiday resort at the site of Loudon Castle in Galston, East Ayrshire. The project includes 450 luxury lodges, 12 glamping units and a large indoor leisure complex with a sub-tropical pool and various sports facilities.
- In Derbyshire, plans have been unveiled for the £400m Peak Resort year-round holiday resort to be developed on a reclaimed opencast mining site in Chesterfield on the edge of the Peak District National Park. The plans include 600 holiday apartments, a hotel, hostel units, 250 woodland lodges alongside an 18-hole golf course, golf academy, sports centre, spa, conference centre, indoor adventure sports park, covered lawn games arena and bike tracks.
- In the South Downs National Park plans were unveiled in July 2015 for a £104million eco resort on the 118-acre site of the disused Shoreham Cement Works, to the north of Shoreham-on-Sea in West Sussex. The proposals include 600 eco-friendly holiday pods, an eco-hotel and conference centre, and a range of leisure attractions including natural swimming ponds, a watersports lake, rock climbing, high ropes course, mountain biking trails, an outdoor amphitheatre and Indoor auditorium for live performances and music festivals, and a range of cafes and restaurants. Plans have subsequently been unveiled in April 2016 for the development of an eco-village on the site, with 2,200 homes, office space, restaurants, shops, a visitor centre for the National Park and a range of community facilities.

## Treehouses

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](http://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, Blackwood Forest in Hampshire, Sherwood Forest, Thorpe Forest in Norfolk and North Yorkshire ([www.forestholidays.co.uk/cabins/cabins/treehouse.aspx](http://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](http://www.lavenderhillholidays.co.uk/properties.asp?id=101))
- Gwdy Hw, Powys, Wales ([www.canopyandstars.co.uk/britain/wales/powys/living-room/gwdy-hw](http://www.canopyandstars.co.uk/britain/wales/powys/living-room/gwdy-hw) )
- In June 2015 the Aspinall Foundation opened the Treehouse Hotel at its Port Lympne Reserve wild animal park in Kent. It offers 10 two-bedroom lodges sited at the top of an escarpment overlooking a tree canopy, rather than actually in the trees ([www.aspinallfoundation.org/short-breaks/treehouse-hotel](http://www.aspinallfoundation.org/short-breaks/treehouse-hotel) ).
- The Yurt Retreat at Crewkerne in Somerset added The Bird House treehouse to its accommodation offer in 2015 ([www.theyurtretreat.co.uk/treehouse](http://www.theyurtretreat.co.uk/treehouse) )

## Holiday Parks

The market for caravan holiday home parks 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 did affect the sales of holiday parks, as despite market interest prospective buyers had difficulty in securing finance. The improved market conditions over the last three years and positive outlook going forward, together with the return of key lenders and interest in the sector from new investors has seen a significant upturn in holiday park sales and investment in 2015 and so far in 2016. All of the major holiday park operators have acquired additional holiday parks and invested heavily in them and their existing sites. Many smaller holiday park operators have expanded and invested. Many independent holiday park operators have also invested in their sites but with more limited access to commercial funding, investment in the independent holiday park sector has generally been at a slower pace. Some of the key improvements and investments that have been made include:

- The replacement of caravan holiday homes (both for ownership and hire) with new, larger, higher quality caravan holiday homes that include such features as double glazing, central heating, en-suite bathrooms, large lounge areas and outdoor decking areas and verandahs.
- New and up-graded leisure facilities including indoor pools, entertainment centres, indoor and outdoor sports, children's play areas, club houses, bars and restaurants.
- Layout improvements with cul-de-sacs replacing long rows, and larger plots with direct access, landscaping and private patios, resulting in lower density parks. This can however create commercial challenges for holiday park operators as it reduces total capacity. Many holiday parks are looking to expand their footprint to compensate for this.
- The introduction of luxury lodges for sale and/or rental, which are of a very high specification, with contemporary design and the latest technology.
- Environmental improvements, with better screening, the development of wildlife areas, recycling schemes and the use of solar power. Over 600 holiday parks now have the David Bellamy Conservation Award for nature and environmental conservation management.
- The conversion of touring caravan and camping pitches to caravan holiday home plots, as this is usually much more profitable for holiday parks.
- The introduction of glamping units e.g. safari tents, canvas cottages, bell tents, vintage caravans, and camping pods.

Investment activity by leading holiday park operators has been as follows:

- Bourne Leisure spent £55m on its portfolio of 36 Haven holiday parks during winter 2015/16. This included enhanced pools and entertainment complexes, new food and drink outlets, landscaping and infrastructure works, and new accommodation units. Bourne Leisure acquired two holiday parks in East Yorkshire from Flamborough Holidays in April 2015. It reopened one of them as the Haven Thornwick Bay Holiday Park in March 2016, following a £10m investment, which included a refurbished swimming pool complex, new restaurant, an activity barn and new play park.
- Park Holidays acquired holiday parks in Suffolk and Kent in 2014 and 2015. It has invested heavily in 2015/16 in the refurbishment of clubhouses, new swimming pools, and new and upgraded accommodation units, including luxury lodges. It has also reopened the Landscope Holiday Park at Brixham in Devon, following a complete refurbishment.
- Park Resorts has acquired seven holiday parks in the Lake District, North West and Lincolnshire. It invested £20m in 2015 in new bars and restaurants at four parks, new entertainment complexes at two sites, improved layouts at a number of parks, and the introduction of glamping cottages at its two holiday parks on the Isle of Wight.
- Parkdean Holidays has introduced 11 new, extra-wide, top-of-the-range caravan holiday home models across its 23 UK holiday parks, and new lodge units at two parks.
- Park Resorts and Parkdean Holidays merged in 2015 to become the UK's largest holiday park operator with 73 holiday parks.
- 5 star holiday park operator Park Leisure has opened what it is calling the UK's first boutique holiday park – Oyster Bay in North Cornwall. It offers luxury caravan and lodge holiday homes, together with an on-site spa and leisure suite and a range of personal services including a fleet of chauffeur driven Mercedes Benz cars to take guests to local beaches and attractions. The group acquired its 12<sup>th</sup> holiday park in 2015 in North Wales.
- Pontins was acquired by Britannia Hotels in 2011. The company has since embarked on a multi-million-pound refurbishment programme to raise the standard of accommodation at the group's 6 holiday parks.
- Bridge Leisure Management completed a management buyout of Bridge Leisure Parks in 2015, with the support of Phoenix Equity Partners, acquiring a holiday park in Scotland at the same time. It acquired another holiday park in 2015, bringing its total portfolio to 9 caravan holiday home and holiday lodge parks across the UK.
- Best of British Holiday Parks has converted 11 of its 50 holiday parks to 'adult-only' parks.

- Family-run Hoburne Holiday Parks has completed its largest ever investment programme ahead of the 2016 season. A total of £6million has been spent across all seven of its holidays parks, which are located across South West England. Improvements have included new-look entertainment and leisure complexes at three parks, brand new accommodation units at three parks, and free Wi-Fi across all parks.
- Away Resorts acquired the Cosways Holiday Park in Essex in April 2015, bringing its total portfolio of holiday parks up to five. The company is backed by private equity investor LDC. As part of its long term plan to invest in the development of all of its holiday parks, it is currently implementing a 3-year, £12m improvement plan at its Tattershall Lakes Holiday Park in Lincolnshire, which includes new caravan holiday home pitches, a major expansion of the park's bar and restaurant, and the introduction of various leisure facilities including adventure golf, an indoor activity marquee, a toddlers play area, and an outdoor wet play area. Away Resorts is also investing in its Whitecliff Bay Holiday Park on the Isle of Wight, with the introduction of additional caravan holiday home pitches and glamping units, including canvas cottages, bell tents and 1970s caravans.
- Weymouth holiday park operator Waterside Holiday Group, has introduced a number of new, larger luxury caravan and lodge models at its three 5 star holiday parks. This has included the development of a complex of luxury cedar-clad lodges at its park at Osmington. The group also has planning permission for a village of safari tents at its Waterside Holiday Park.
- Bunn Leisure completed a £17m beach nourishment and breakwater development coastal protection scheme in 2014 to help protect its 4 holiday parks on the Selsey Peninsula and support further investment in their improvement.

Whilst some holiday parks have expanded in response to the growth in demand for holiday home ownership and rental over the last 20 years, many are constrained by land availability, the ability to secure planning permission and flood risk, although there are examples of more positive approaches being adopted provided that adequate flood mitigation and evacuation measures can be introduced.

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.

## **Touring Caravan and Camping Sites**

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. It also opened entirely new club sites in Barnard Castle in County Durham in 2010, Bridlington in East Yorkshire in 2011, Strathclyde Country Park near Glasgow in 2012 and Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire in 2013. The development of Caravan Club sites is carried out using local suppliers and contractors where possible, and with an emphasis on landscaping using native species to promote biodiversity. The Club has developed an expertise in land reclamation, with a number of new sites having been developed on brownfield sites such as worked-out quarries, former railway stations and ex-service camps.

Both the Caravan Club and the Camping and Caravanning Club are investing substantially in improving their sites. The Caravan Club invested £4.5 million during the 2015/16 winter season in the development of 10 of its sites. This included refurbishing or rebuilding six toilet blocks, adding 40 serviced pitches, converting 68 grass pitches to hard standings, and upgrading three children's play areas. The Camping and Caravanning Club invested £4.8million in 2014/15 and £4million in 2015/16 in site improvements including upgrading toilet and shower blocks, new reception buildings and site shops, resurfacing site roads, more hard standing and electric hook-up pitches, new children's play areas, and site security measures.

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.

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 is firmly committed to boosting its green credentials with a number of policy initiatives across its sites network, including using biodegradable and environmentally-friendly products, building with timber from sustainable sources, shredding tree prunings on site to use as mulch, and using low-energy lighting. The Club has made a major commitment to eco-friendly caravanning through a £1.8 million investment in its Poolsbrook Country Park Club site near Chesterfield in Derbyshire, including trialling a whole range of energy and water efficient technologies such as solar panels and photovoltaic cells, wind turbines, rain water harvesting and grey water recycling, geothermal energy and heat recovery ventilation systems, for possible roll out to other sites. The Club also has 43 sites that have signed up to its Boosting Biodiversity programme.

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 and visual impact in the winter.

The recession, together with innovations in easy-to-erect tents and camping equipment, have stimulated strong growth in demand for **camping** in the UK.

## Eco Camping

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](http://www.cerenetycampsite.co.uk)); Northlodge in Pembrokeshire ([www.eco-camping.co.uk](http://www.eco-camping.co.uk)); The Secret Campsite in East Sussex ([www.theseecretcampsite.co.uk](http://www.theseecretcampsite.co.uk)); and Comrie Croft in Perthshire ([www.comriecroft.com/sleep/eco-camping.html](http://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](http://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

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; Eskdale and Ravenglas in Cumbria; Skye; Gulliver's Kingdom at Milton Keynes; and Thetford Forest [www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/ukcampsites/club-glamping/camping-pods](http://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 Malham and Grinton in the Yorkshire Dales, Hawkshead and Borrowdale in the Lake District, Stratford-upon-Avon, Manorbier in Pembrokeshire, and its South Downs hostel at Lewes in East Sussex ([www.yha.org.uk/places-to-stay/alternative-accommodation/camping-pods](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.woodlandparklodges.co.uk/camping-huts.html)) has 5 camping huts alongside 11 holiday lodges.

- Sumners Ponds caravan and camping sites, near Horsham in West Sussex introduced 5 camping pods in 2010 ([www.sumnersponds.co.uk](http://www.sumnersponds.co.uk) ).
- Higher Moore Farm Campsite at Nottingham, near Weymouth introduced 6 boutique micro pod lodges in 2015  
( [www.highermoorfarm.co.uk/pod-boutique-luxury-camping](http://www.highermoorfarm.co.uk/pod-boutique-luxury-camping) )

## Glamping

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](http://www.goglamping.net) ), the leading online directory of luxury camping sites, now lists 342 locations in the UK.

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

- **Feather Down Farms** ([www.featherdown.co.uk](http://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 currently has 29 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.

- In November 2014 Feather Downs Farms launched a sister brand, **Country Retreats** ([www.featherdown.co.uk/country-retreats](http://www.featherdown.co.uk/country-retreats)) in order to offer the Feather Down Farm model to a wider range of country estates. Under the new scheme, land, country estate and vineyard owners choose new, fully collapsible log cabins and/or luxury canvas lodges and become part of The Country Retreats Collection that Feather Down Farms is marketing. Owners are encouraged to personalise the interiors of the cabins/lodges and to offer a range of interesting activities for guests. Five Country Retreats sites have opened so far, in Essex, Shropshire, Cornwall, Lancashire and Scotland. The aim is to eventually expand to 50 sites across the UK.
- **Lantern and Larks** ([www.lanternandlarks.co.uk](http://www.lanternandlarks.co.uk)) is a new glamping operator, established in 2013 as a subsidiary company of The Holiday Property Bond. It operates in a similar way to Feather Down Farms, working with land owners to develop complexes of up to 8 luxury, fully furnished and equipped glamping tents. It has 4 sites so far in Lancashire, Rutland, Somerset and Suffolk, and is looking for further opportunities in the South East, including in Sussex.
- **Ready-pitched luxury camps:** Jolly Days Luxury Camping ([www.jollydaysluxurycamping.co.uk](http://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 7 bell tents. Shielling Holidays ([www.shiellingholidays.co.uk](http://www.shiellingholidays.co.uk)) on the Isle of Mull provides 16 fully equipped Shielling 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](http://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](http://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](http://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. Other examples are Hidden Valley Yurts in Monmouthshire ([www.hiddenvalleyyurts.co.uk](http://www.hiddenvalleyyurts.co.uk)) and Yurtshire ([www.yurtshire.co.uk](http://www.yurtshire.co.uk)) which has two yurt camps in North Yorkshire and one in Warwickshire.
- **Tipi** sites offer a similar set up. Examples include Wild Northumbrian Tipis & Yurts ([www.wildnorthumbrian.co.uk](http://www.wildnorthumbrian.co.uk)); Lincolnshire Lanes Camp Site in the Lincolnshire Wolds ([www.lincolnshire-lanes.com](http://www.lincolnshire-lanes.com)); Eco Retreats in Powys, Wales ([www.ecoretreats.co.uk](http://www.ecoretreats.co.uk)); and 4 Winds Lakeland Tipis ([www.4windslakelandtipis.co.uk](http://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](http://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.

**Wigwam Holidays** is a national wigwam holiday franchise that now offers 70 sites across the UK. The company manufactures the wigwams and sells them to franchisees who then pay a franchise fee to cover the use of the Wigwam Holidays brand, marketing through the Wigwam Holidays website and online booking system, and ongoing IT, marketing and operational support.

Springhill Farm in Northumberland ([www.springhill-farm.co.uk/wigwams](http://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](http://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](http://www.ekopod.co.uk)) in Cornwall.
  - **Persian alachigh tents**, similar to yurts e.g. Penhein Glamping near Chepstow in Monmouthshire ([www.penhein.co.uk](http://www.penhein.co.uk))
  - **Gypsy caravans** e.g. Gypsy Caravan Breaks in Somerset ([www.gypsyncaravanbreaks.co.uk](http://www.gypsyncaravanbreaks.co.uk)) and Roulotte Retreat in the Scottish Borders ([www.roulotte retreat.com](http://www.roulotte retreat.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](http://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](http://www.happydaysrv.co.uk)) with 4 airstream caravans available for hire for holidays; and Mad Dogs and Vintage Vans in Herefordshire ([www.maddogsandvintagevans.co.uk](http://www.maddogsandvintagevans.co.uk)), which has 4 vintage caravans.
  - **Shepherds Huts** e.g. Herdy Huts in the Lake District ([www.herdyhuts.co.uk](http://www.herdyhuts.co.uk)) and Shepherds Huts South East ([www.shepherdshuts-southeast.com](http://www.shepherdshuts-southeast.com)) in Kent.
  - **Safari Tents** e.g. Port Lympne Wild Animal Park in Kent ([www.aspinallfoundation.org/short-breaks](http://www.aspinallfoundation.org/short-breaks)) has developed two safari tent encampments - Livingstone Lodge and Elephant Lodge overlooking the elephant paddocks, and the Camping and Caravanning Club has 4 safari tents for hire at its club site at Gulliver's Kingdom theme park at Milton Keynes and one at its club site at Teversal in Nottinghamshire. ([www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/ukcampsites/club-glamping/safari-tents/](http://www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/ukcampsites/club-glamping/safari-tents/)). Another example is A Little Bit of Rough at Uppingham in Rutland ([www.alittlebitofrough.co.uk](http://www.alittlebitofrough.co.uk))
  - **Medieval Glamping** e.g. Warwick Castle has 41 ready-to-bed medieval-themed tents and guests are served breakfast at medieval-styled tables in a banqueting tent. They are also offered medieval-themed evening entertainment, including archery, a jester's school and knight's school and medieval games ([www.warwick-castle.com/accommodation/mediaeval-glamping-at-warwick-castle.aspx](http://www.warwick-castle.com/accommodation/mediaeval-glamping-at-warwick-castle.aspx)). Leeds Castle in Kent offers 8 striped canvas pavilions based on a medieval design as its Knight's Glamping site ([www.leeds-castle.com/Accommodation/Knight%92s+Glamping](http://www.leeds-castle.com/Accommodation/Knight%92s+Glamping))

- **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](http://www.sheepskinlife.com/relax-at/red-kite-tree-tent) ), The Tree Tent at The Secret Campsite in East Sussex ([www.theseecretcampsite.co.uk/secret-shelters](http://www.theseecretcampsite.co.uk/secret-shelters) ), and Treehotel in Sweden ([www.treehotel.se](http://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 ([www.bubblecabins.com](http://www.bubblecabins.com) )
- **VW camper van pop-up camps** e.g. Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles partnered with booking website LateRooms in 2014 to provide 6 VW California camper vans for hire on a nightly basis at Temple Island in Henley-on-Thames
- **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](http://www.leewickfarm.co.uk) ).
- **Converted train carriages** e.g. Long Hill Carriage at Cucklington in Somerset is a restored 1882 Great Western Railway carriage that provides a living space and kitchen alongside an en-suite double bedroom in an adjacent converted 1950s goods wagon ([www.longhillcarriage.co.uk](http://www.longhillcarriage.co.uk) )
- **Converted lorries** e.g. Cedar Valley in the Meon Valley in Hampshire offers a converted horse lorry as a glamping unit sleeping 3 people, alongside safari tents, a yurt and a campsite ([www.cedarvalley.co.uk/betty/about-betty](http://www.cedarvalley.co.uk/betty/about-betty) )
- **Champing** (camping in a church) - the Churches Conservation Trust offers champing at four of its churches in Kent, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. Guests enjoy a full breakfast delivered to the church in the morning, made using local produce. The Trust also arranges activities for champing guests, including walks, canoe trips, storytelling and meditation ([www.visitchurches.org.uk/champing](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk/champing)).

## **Youth Hostels**

The Youth Hostels Association has been going through a programme of network renewal since 2006. This saw the disposal of 32 hostels between 2006 and 2008 and reinvestment of the proceeds in upgrading the remaining hostels in the network and some new hostel openings, including a new hotel in Eastbourne in 2009. A number of the hostels that YHA sold subsequently re-opened as independent hostels, in some cases benefiting from YHA marketing support through the YHA Enterprise scheme. A new capital strategy was launched in 2010. This has focused on further rationalisation of the YHA hostel network to generate £40million for reinvestment in hostel improvements and some new hostels. This has included the development of the new YHA South Downs hostel at Itford Farm near Lewes in 2013 and the YHA Eden Project in Cornwall in 2014, which was built by portable hotel company Snoozebox and is made entirely from shipping containers. It offers 54 contemporary en-suite bedrooms for 2 to 4 guests. YHA's latest hostel openings are the new YHA Brighton in the former Royal York Hotel, which opened in November 2014, and the new YHA Cardiff, which opened in March 2015. YHA is currently progressing plans for a new 86-bed hostel as part of The Sill landscape discovery centre project in the Northumberland National Park, due to open in summer 2017.

## **Children's Activity Holiday Centres**

The children's activity holiday centre sector is rapidly expanding in the UK and is identified as having good potential for further expansion<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

The two main players in the sector are PGL and Kingswood. Both companies have been the subject of high profile acquisitions. PGL was acquired by Holidaybreak plc. in May 2007 for £100m. Kingswood was acquired by DJL Merchant Banking (a division of Credit Suisse Bank) in July 2008, also for £100m. Both companies have since nearly doubled in size and now handle around 500,000 children each year. PGL opened the former Windmill Hill Place Tennis Centre near Herstmonceux in East Sussex as a children's activity holiday centre in May 2009 following a £7m revamp. The centre now offers activity courses for school and youth groups, together with summer camps and family activity holidays during the summer. The centre can accommodate up to 450 guests in bunk-bedded accommodation and new 4-6 person en-suite lodges. Facilities include a sports hall, swimming pool, climbing tower and zip wires and a multi-sports area. Existing lakes are used for canoeing and raft building. The centre has created 130 jobs. PGL also opened a new holiday centre at Liddington, near Swindon in 2010 through the conversion of the former Liddington Hotel. It can accommodate up to 1,000 children and employs 250 staff. Kingswood is currently looking for a site for a new centre in the Oxfordshire/Berkshire/Buckinghamshire/Wiltshire area/

The other key player in the children's activity holiday centre market is JCA Adventure, which became part of TUI Travel plc. in 2007. It works with 13 UK centres and two centres in France to provide multi-activity courses of 2-4 nights, netball tournaments and summer camps for young people. The company launched its first JCA-owned activity holiday centre at Condover Hall in Shropshire in 2011.

For new centres these 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.

Another operator in this sector is the West Sussex-based charity CCHF All About Kids, which specialises in giving disadvantaged 7-11-year-old children residential activity and respite breaks. It has been looking for a site in South East England for the development of a residential activity centre for up to 80 children.

## Wellness Retreats

A nascent trend that may develop further in the UK is the development of wellness retreats. Current examples include:

- ecoYoga in Argyll ([www.ecoyoga.org](http://www.ecoyoga.org)) runs yoga courses, retreats and holidays in self-catering accommodation. The site offers a range of bathing facilities including rainforest showers, a large hot tub, artisan sauna and two wild river hot baths.
- Slimmeria Retreat in Crowhurst in East Sussex ([www.slimmeria.com](http://www.slimmeria.com)), which offers detox, fitness and weight loss holidays in a Georgian country house offering boutique hotel bedrooms and a luxury health spa.
- Tofte Manor at Sharnbrook in Bedfordshire ([www.toftemanor.co.uk](http://www.toftemanor.co.uk)) is a manor house wedding and events venue that offers a range of wellness retreats and inspirational workshops including massage, meditation, yoga and labyrinth walking. It has 12 luxury guest bedrooms and can also offer accommodation in yurts and tents with outdoor hot water showers for larger groups.
- Brightlife ([www.brightlife.com](http://www.brightlife.com)) is a country house on the outskirts of Ramsey on the Isle of Man, which offers a range of wellness courses and retreats, from yoga and pilates to chakra healing and life coaching. It has 12 luxury guest bedrooms and opened a new spa in 2015.
- The Reynolds Retreat health, fitness and wellbeing centre at Borough Green, near Sevenoaks in Kent is in the process of adding accommodation ([www.reynoldsgroup.co.uk/retreat/accommodation](http://www.reynoldsgroup.co.uk/retreat/accommodation)).

Spafinder's State of Wellness Travel Report 2016 found that wellness elements, from healthy food to fitness classes and spiritual healing, are ranked as more important for Gen X and Millennials, with these age groups increasingly seeking more out-in-nature adventure and fitness opportunities, rather than luxury spa resorts.

## APPENDIX 3

### GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS – TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

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#### Types of Hotel

##### Budget

Branded limited service hotels with clean and comfortable standardised en-suite bedrooms with TV and tea and coffee making facilities and paid for Wi-Fi but otherwise limited in-room provision or services such as guest toiletries or room service. Will locate in a wide range of locations from major cities to smaller towns, seaside resorts and airport locations. Size will vary significantly by location. Tend to be larger hotels (100-200 bedrooms) in major cities and smaller hotels (50-60 bedrooms) in provincial town locations.

Key budget hotel brands in the UK are Travelodge, Premier Inn, Ibis, Days Inn

Economy budget brands (with a more basic bedroom product) include Ibis Budget, Campanile and Metro Inns

##### 3 Star

A full service hotel that offers a restaurant and bar also open to the public, usually function/conference/banqueting facilities, and often leisure. Branded offers would tend to be 120-150 rooms+, but independent hotels may be smaller in size. Will locate in city centres and out of town where there are significant drivers of demand such as business parks.

Brand examples include Holiday Inn, Ramada, Village Urban Resort, Jury's Inn, Park Inn

##### 4 Star

A full service hotel but with a higher specification and larger bedrooms than 3 star hotels, usually offering bath and shower, telephone, internet connection, and a wider range of services including full room service and portage, and 24-hour reception. A quality restaurant, bar, a range of meeting rooms and business services, and a health and fitness centre. These tend to be large hotels, over 150 rooms, and sometimes up to 250 rooms+. Major city centres are the preferred locations.

Brand examples include Marriott, Crowne Plaza, Hilton, Radisson Blu, Novotel, Doubletree by Hilton, Copthorne, Millennium, Pullman, Macdonald

### **Boutique**

Relatively small (30-50 rooms), high quality, individual hotels that feature contemporary design and a good food offer. They are often independent hotels or part of small chains that bear the signature of their founder. However, national brands are beginning to emerge that are larger format units (100+ rooms) and compete with 3 and 4 star hotels but achieve a premium on their rate due to their style and service.

Brand examples include Malmaison, Hotel du Vin, Abode, Bespoke, Chapter, Hotel Indigo

### **Country House Hotels**

A quality hotel, often a building of character, set in extensive grounds in a rural setting. Most are luxuriously appointed and the rooms frequently have special features often targeted at the leisure rather than the business guest. Some may have health and fitness facilities, swimming pools and spas and may be able to offer or arrange country sport activities such as clay pigeon shooting and fishing. The atmosphere of a country house hotel should be one of relaxation, comfort and style.

### **Golf Hotels and Resorts**

Hotels attached to or developed with a golf course that can range considerably in their standard and the facilities on offer. Usually they would be at least 3 star in standard, and can be developed to 4 star and luxury standards, especially if in association with a championship course. As with country house hotels and other destination hotel offers that are more remotely located, most would usually offer, restaurants, bars, function/banqueting rooms, full leisure centres, often spas, and may also have other specialist facilities such as golf academies. Some also have shared ownership lodges in their grounds.

Brand Examples include De Vere Hotels, MacDonald Resorts, Marriott Hotels & Country Clubs.

### **Luxury Family Hotels**

Luxury country house hotels that focus primarily on catering for the family breaks market. Luxury Family Hotels is the only national hotel company trading in this market. A number of luxury country house hotels also actively target the family market.

### **Adult Only Hotels**

Country house hotels that cater exclusively for adults on short breaks. Warner Leisure Hotels is the only national company offering this type of hotel. Their hotels offer a wide range of sports and leisure facilities and activities as well as evening entertainment programmes.

### **Spa Hotels**

Hotels with extensive spa and wellness facilities that focus on the spa break market.

### **Other Types of Accommodation**

#### **Inn**

Bed and breakfast accommodation within a traditional inn or pub.

#### **Boutique Inn**

Inns that feature contemporary interior design, furnishings and fittings in guest bedrooms and public areas.

#### **Restaurant with Rooms**

Guest bedrooms provided above or alongside a restaurant operation. The restaurant is normally the most significant element of the business and is usually open to non-residents as well as staying guests. Breakfast is normally provided.

#### **Guest House**

A guest house normally has at least 4 letting bedrooms with en-suite or private bathroom facilities. It is usually run as a commercial business and will have been granted planning permission as such. Breakfast is usually provided and evening meals may also be offered.

#### **B&B**

Accommodation offering bed and breakfast, usually in a private house. B&Bs normally accommodate no more than 6 guests and may or may not serve an evening meal. Will not usually require planning permission unless the primary use of a property.

#### **Boutique B&B**

Luxury bed and breakfast accommodation that features contemporary, chic interior design, furnishings and fittings.

#### **Farmhouse B&B**

Bed and breakfast accommodation provided on a working farm.

### **Homestay**

Where householders let out rooms in their home to tourists or language school and exchange programme students. This type of accommodation has been significantly boosted by the airbnb website and other similar websites such as Wimdu and One Fine Stay.

### **Holiday Cottage**

Cottages, houses and converted barns that are let out for self-catering holidays and short breaks and other short stay purposes. They can be residential properties that are let by owners or through holiday cottage letting agencies or purpose-designed barn conversions that have been given planning permission for holiday use.

### **Boutique Self Catering**

Luxury self-catering accommodation that features contemporary interior design

### **Super Cottages**

Large self-catering properties 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.

### **Access Exceptional Self Catering Cottages**

Self-catering accommodation that is fully adapted for use by independent and assisted wheelchair users, usually including 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.

### **Holiday Lodges**

Timber lodges and log cabins that are let out for self-catering holidays and short breaks or used as second homes by their owners.

### **Holiday Lodge Parks**

Complexes of timber holiday lodges for outright or timeshare purchase and/or rental. 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.

### **Fishing Lodges**

Holiday lodges around fishing lakes, usually for rental.

### **Golf Lodges**

Holiday lodges on golf courses for outright or timeshare purchase or rental.

### **Eco Lodges/ Eco Lodge Parks**

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.

### **Treehouses**

Luxury wooden treehouses that are rented out for self-catering holidays and short breaks

### **Touring Caravan & Camping Sites**

Sites that offer pitches for touring caravans, motor homes and tents. They can range in size from small, independently operated sites with minimal facilities and mainly grass pitches to extensive sites with central facilities and mostly hard standing pitches with electric hook up. National operators are the Caravan Club and Camping and Caravanning Club, which offer club sites across the country for their members, which in many cases are also open to non-members.

### **Certificated Sites**

Small touring caravan and camping pitches that are certificated to operate by the Caravan Club and Camping & Caravanning Club, without the need for planning permission. Caravan Club certificated sites are for 5 touring caravan or motor home pitches. Camping & Caravanning Club certificated sites are usually for 5 touring caravan pitches and up to 10 tent pitches.

### **Eco Camping/ Wild Camping**

Camping on small, basic, off-grid sites - usually grassed or forest sites with minimal facilities, often in isolated locations.

### **Camping Pods**

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**

Glamping (glamorous camping) involves camping in 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.

### **Youth Hostels**

Simple accommodation in private, shared or dormitory rooms with double, single and bunk beds. Most hostels will have a self-catering kitchen. Some also provide meals. More modern hostels may have en-suite family rooms.

### **Bunkhouses**

Basic self-catering accommodation provided in converted barns. Bedrooms are mainly dormitory-style with bunk beds, but can also include private family rooms. Bunkhouse usually include shared toilets and showers and small kitchens.

### **Camping Barns**

Sometimes known as 'stone tents', Camping Barns vary in facilities ranging from a basic roof over your head to the more luxurious, which include a shower and cooking facilities. Sleeping areas tend to be communal. Typically found on working farms.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING OF HOTEL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES IN THE UK**

#### **1. Introduction**

Public sector funding in one form or other is increasingly being used to support hotel development schemes across the UK in terms of:

- Local authority borrowing at preferential rates;
- Growth fund grants;
- Heritage grants for the conversion of historic buildings to hotels;
- Local authority freehold purchase of a building for hotel conversion;
- The contribution of local authority owned land or properties for hotel development;
- Local authority partnerships with universities.

Such public sector investment in hotel schemes is being justified in terms of:

- Finding a new use for a redundant building;
- Enabling a strategically important hotel that cannot secure bank finance to proceed;
- Kick starting and enabling key regeneration schemes that include a hotel as a component;
- Generating an income stream for a local authority at no cost to the tax payer;
- Helping to boost tourism growth;
- Job creation.

Examples of these types of public sector funding of hotel projects are given in the following paragraphs.

## **2. Local Authority Borrowing at Preferential Interest Rates**

A number of local authorities across England have used their prudential borrowing powers to take out preferential rate loans to help fund hotel schemes, typically entering into a lease arrangement with a hotel operating company to generate a rental income to repay the loan and in some cases generate a surplus profit for the authority. This has enabled a number of hotel schemes that have been unable to secure commercial funding to go ahead, at no cost to Council tax payers and in some cases giving an investment return to the council. Examples are as follows:

### **Travelodge Partnerships with Local Authorities**

Travelodge has been working in partnership with a number of local authorities to develop new hotels with funding from low interest government loans from the Treasury through the Public Works Loans Board. The hotels are built on local authority land and leased to Travelodge on a 25-year term, with the councils repaying the debt using the rental income from Travelodge and any other tenants. Travelodges have so far been developed using this mechanism in Eastleigh and Aylesbury, and are currently being progressed in Bicester, Thetford and Redhill. When complete the local authority can choose whether to retain ownership of the hotel or to sell it with Travelodge as the operator.

### **Pullman Hotel, Liverpool**

Liverpool City Council is currently funding the £66m Exhibition Centre Liverpool and Pullman Hotel adjacent to the Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre (ACC Liverpool) on Liverpool's waterfront, through borrowing that will be supported directly from the revenue generated by the expanded ACC Liverpool campus. The scheme will thus be funded at no cost to tax payers. The hotel will have 216 bedrooms and be of an upscale 4 star standard. It will act as the headquarters hotel for conferences and exhibitions taking place at convention and exhibition centres. Exhibition Centre Liverpool is one of Mayor Anderson's priority projects. Having an on-site 4 star hotel is seen as critical to its success. After initial investigations to find a private sector partner to fund and develop the hotel failed the City Council decided to fund the hotel directly itself alongside its funding of the exhibition centre. The hotel will be wholly owned by the City Council and operated under management contract by Branded Hotel Management through a franchise agreement with Accor Hotels.

### **Crowne Plaza Newcastle**

Newcastle City Council has borrowed £30m to help fund the development of the 250-bedroom 4 star Crowne Plaza hotel as part of the first phase of the Stephenson Quarter business district scheme in Newcastle city centre. This is a key regeneration project that the City Council sees as being of vital importance to the future development of Newcastle. The developers, Silverlink Holdings (now renamed as the Coulston Group) had secured commercial backing for other elements of the scheme but were unable to secure a loan for the hotel as the banks were reluctant to fund this type of use. With the hotel being a key element of the scheme, the City Council stepped in to borrow the money to help progress the hotel. It has lent a large slice of the money that it has borrowed to the developer to fund the construction of the hotel. The Council will use the rest of the money to buy plots of land near the hotel and kick-start work on buildings that will be sold on at commercial rates. The hotel is due to open in July 2015. It will be operated under management contract by the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). The hotel will add a major new business conferencing and banqueting facility to the city. Its main conferencing suite will seat and cater for around 400 people. The hotel will also offer eight adaptable meeting rooms that can accommodate small seminars of 12 people up to large private meetings of 32 and delegate meetings of 100. Combining the large conference suites and meeting rooms, the hotel can provide more space to become an ideal venue for exhibitions.

### **Hilton Ageas Bowl, Hampshire**

Eastleigh Borough Council has recently purchased the now completed 175-bedroom, 4 star Hilton hotel at the Ageas Bowl cricket ground near Southampton, home of Hampshire County Cricket Club. In a deal signed in 2012, the Council agreed to pay £27.5m for the completed hotel to enable it to go ahead. Its construction was funded by Omni Capital. The investment has required the Council to take out a loan, which will be repaid with the revenue from the hotel. The Leader of the Borough Council, Cllr Keith House, has consistently said that the surplus income, particularly in the longer-term once the loan has been cleared, will be used to keep Council Tax down.

### **Lancashire County Cricket Club 4 Star Hotel**

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council have stepped in to help bridge the funding gap for a proposed 150-bedroom 4 star hotel at Lancashire County Cricket Club's Emirates Old Trafford ground after the club failed to secure a bank loan for the project. A meeting of the Combined Authority in February 2015 agreed a loan of £5m towards the £12m hotel from the Greater Manchester Growth and Growing Places Funds, while Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council agreed to a loan of £4m in March. The Cricket Club turned to these public sector bodies after being turned down for funding by its bank. The Club had also rejected an offer of a loan from the Greater Manchester Pension Fund because the level of fees and proposed interest rate of 9% could not be supported by the hotel scheme. Trafford Council will borrow the £4m from the Public Works Loan Board resulting in an annual interest cost of £106,000. The Cricket Club will pay the Council £221,000 over the loan period, leading to a net profit for the Council of £115,000.

### **Stockport Exchange**

Stockport Council is using its prudential borrowing powers to access an £18.5m preferential rate loan to forward fund the construction of a 115-bedroom hotel and 50,000 sq ft office building as the second phase of the Stockport Exchange mixed-use development scheme in Stockport town centre in conjunction with its development partner Muse Developments. The Council bought the 10.4 acre site in January 2011. The first phase of the development, which included highways improvements and a 1,000 space multi-storey car park was completed in 2014. The Council sees the scheme as being crucial to the success of Stockport town centre. It took the decision to use its preferential rates of borrowing to kick start phase 2 and attract further investment at a time when commercial funding has proved difficult to secure. The income generated will cover the cost of the loan. The Council has done extensive research and financial modelling to ensure its financing of the hotel and office development will be at no extra cost to the Council Tax payer.

### **3. Grants for Hotel Projects**

Grants from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), UK Government Growing Places Fund and Regional Growth Fund, Welsh Government, Scottish enterprise agencies and individual local authorities have helped to fund a number of hotel schemes across the UK. Heritage Lottery Fund grants have also been secured to support the conversion of a number of historic buildings into hotels. Examples of grant schemes and grant assisted hotel projects are as follows

#### **Welsh Government Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS)**

The Welsh Government operates a discretionary capital grant scheme, which is available to both existing and new tourism businesses of all sizes (SMEs and large companies) that are looking to undertake capital investment. Support is available for the purpose of upgrading the quality of existing tourism business premises and increasing capacity where there are clear gaps in the market. The scheme has two elements offering grants of up to £75,000 and £500,000. Grants are non-repayable up to £25k, but may be repayable over £25k, subject to appraisal. The guideline intervention rate is 25% but up to 50% can be considered. A wide range of hotel projects have been supported, including a grant of £500k to support the upgrading of the Ruthin Castle Hotel to 4 stars and a £1.1m investment in the St Brides Hotel at Saundersfoot.

#### **Highlands & Islands Enterprise**

Highlands & Islands Enterprise offers a range of financial assistance to support capital investment projects, including grants, loans and direct equity investment, and works with Scottish Development International to develop investment propositions to take to market. The agency has funded a number of hotel projects including investments in 2015 of £217,500 to support a £1.4million expansion of the Isle of Eriska Hotel near Oban, and a £200,000 investment to support the expansion of the Kylesku Hotel in the Highlands.

### **Titanic Hotel, Liverpool**

Liverpool City Council provided a £5.5m grant from the Regional Growth Fund to enable developers Harcourt to progress the conversion of the North Warehouse at Stanley Dock in north Liverpool into a 150-suite 4-star hotel at a cost of £30m. The project is part of the first phase of a £130m plan to regenerate the entire Stanley Dock site. The regeneration of north Liverpool is a key priority for the city's Mayor. The City Council decided that investment in the hotel was justified as a statement of confidence in the area, a means of finding a new use for a building that had been derelict for many years, and in terms of the new jobs that it has created. The hotel has also benefitted from BPRA. It opened in June 2014.

### **Premier Inn Blackburn**

A 60-bedroom Premier Inn budget hotel opened in November 2015 as part of the £25 million Blackburn Cathedral Quarter development in Blackburn town centre, Lancashire. The scheme also includes an office block, restaurants, shops, a new bus interchange and housing for Cathedral staff. It has been funded by the Homes and Communities Agency (£4.75m), European Regional Development Fund (£3.6m), Blackburn with Darwen Council (£3.8m), Blackburn Cathedral (£1.7m), Lancashire LEP's Growing Places Fund (£3.9m) and commercial developer Maple Grove (£7.8m). The hotel has been let to Premier Inn.

### **Hampton by Hilton Humberside Airport**

North Lincolnshire Council is part funding the development of a £7m, 103-bedroom Hampton by Hilton hotel at Humberside Airport through a Regional Growth Fund grant. The hotel is being developed by regional hotel operator Nightel, who will operate it under a franchise agreement with Hilton Worldwide. It is due to open in mid-2016. The Council has supported the development of the hotel on the basis of the contribution it will make to the development of the airport, the continuing expansion of the offshore oil, gas and renewable energy sectors and the new jobs that it will create.

### **Belfast Titanic Hotel**

The derelict office building in which RMS Titanic was designed is to be developed into an 84-bedroom 4 star hotel thanks to a £4.9m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Titanic Foundation will use the grant to restore the B+ listed Harland and Wolff headquarters building on Queen's Island, Belfast, which has been vacant since 1989. The grant has been awarded through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme. It is designed to help when the cost of repairing an historic building is so high that restoration is not commercially viable. Grants of £100k to £5million bridge the financial gap, funding the vital repairs and conservation work needed to convert derelict, vacant buildings into new, usable commercial spaces that can have a positive impact on local economies.

### **Buxton Crescent Hotel**

The £46m redevelopment of the former St Ann's Hotel in Buxton's Grade I listed Georgian Crescent into a 79-bedroom, 5 star hotel incorporating the neighbouring natural baths into a state-of-the-art thermal natural mineral water spa, is currently being progressed with funding support from a variety of public sector sources, including the Heritage Lottery Fund (£23.8m), English Heritage (£0.5m), Derbyshire County Council (£2.7m), High Peak Borough Council (£2m) and D2N2 LEP (£2m). The developers, the Trevor Osborne Property Group, are contributing £15m. The project first commenced 10 years ago, but stalled after £5m of funding from the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) was withdrawn with the demise of the agency in 2011. The delay caused by losing the EMDA funding meant that because of the financial climate at the time the developers were unable to borrow the amount that they needed from the banks. Given the importance of the project to Buxton and the rest of Derbyshire the County Council stepped in with a loan to help bridge the funding gap. Further funding was also secured from the D2N2 LEP and HLF awarded an additional £11.3 m for the completion of the project in November 2014. Construction has now restarted with the hotel due to open in 2016. It is projected to generate an additional annual contribution of £4m into Buxton's visitor economy.

#### **4. Local Authority Freehold Purchase**

##### **Aloft Liverpool**

Liverpool City Council facilitated the conversion of the historic Royal Insurance building in Liverpool city centre into a 116-bedroom Aloft budget boutique hotel by purchasing the freehold of the building for £1.95 million. This unlocked £18million of private sector investment in the project, which has been progressed by Runcorn-based developer Ashall Property. The City Council was keen to bring this landmark building back into use. It had been unoccupied for 20 years and was on the National Buildings at Risk Register. English Heritage also supported the scheme with a grant of £297,500. The hotel opened in November 2014. It is operated by BDL Management under a franchise agreement with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide.