



New research reveals strong growth and recovery for Hertfordshire's tourism and hospitality industry



Image Credit: Visit Herts

12 December 2023

Visit Herts has published its latest economic data today which shows that Hertfordshire's tourism and hospitality industry continues to recover strongly from the impact of the pandemic.

The data shows that by the end of 2022:

- The value of the county's visitor economy had increased to over £2.2 billion – a 40% increase compared to 2021 and just behind the value of the visitor economy in 2019 which topped £2.4 billion.
- The number of tourism related jobs supported by the visitor economy across the county increased by 15% to 38,936 jobs (when compared with 2021), accounting for 6% of total employment in Hertfordshire. The number of tourism related jobs supported by the visitor economy in 2019 was 43,390 which accounted for 7% of total employment in the county.
- Business travel had bounced back to 16% of all visits to Hertfordshire compared with 3% of all visits in 2021. In 2019, business travel accounted for 19% of all visits to the county.
- There were just over 25 million combined day and overnight trips compared with 19.6 million in 2021. In 2019 there were 29 million day and overnight trips.
- Spend per head for an overnight trip had increased by 37% when compared with 2021 and by just under 14% compared with 2019.

The tourist board commissioned the study which uses the industry-respected Cambridge Economic Impact Model to measure the volume and value of tourism within a destination and the effect of visits and visitor expenditure on the local economy.

Visit Herts Chief Executive, Deirdre Wells OBE, said: *“It is gratifying to know that our tourism and hospitality industry is thriving across the county particularly as many businesses were still recovering financially from the impact of the pandemic last year and also grappling with a sudden sharp rise in inflation.*

“The preference for many UK residents to travel and stay within the UK last year rather than go abroad has helped to contribute to Hertfordshire’s visitor economy in addition to strong growth from international markets such as the USA and Germany. Expedia’s latest travel trends report also confirms that they have seen a 40% increase in demand from travellers to visit and stay in our beautiful county when compared with the previous year calling Hertfordshire ‘a top hidden gem!’

“Although the volume of overnight stays and trips is not quite there yet compared to before the pandemic, it is great to see that the length of stay in Hertfordshire and spending per head has increased compared with 2019 – a key focus for us. The data also tells us that business travel is bouncing back in Hertfordshire and this is due primarily to many accommodation providers in the county adapting their offer as the nature of business travel has changed substantially. Staying with family and friends also appears to be a major draw for both UK and international visitors to come to Hertfordshire and our Big Weekend initiative which sees local tourism and hospitality businesses giving out free tickets to local residents is really helping to grow this segment of the visitor market.”

Councillor Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council and Chair of Hertfordshire Growth Board, said: *“Tourism and hospitality are integral to our fabulous local economy, so we are delighted to see significant number of visitors returning to the county. We have marvellous attractions and places to eat and stay, and we know that many people also visit for our beautiful countryside and historic towns. We will continue to work with local businesses to make sure that Hertfordshire continues to be a popular destination with a wide variety of things to see and do for, both local visitors and those from further afield.”*

Chetan Bhanot, Group General Manager at Pendley Manor Hotel, Tring commented on the results: *“It is very encouraging to see the positive data that Visit Herts has collated and certainly reflects the trend we have seen at Pendley Manor. We witnessed a huge boom in staycations post Covid, and we saw the same trend in the first half of 2023 although we saw a slight decline in our leisure business due to the very wet summer months. Our wedding business has also soared since the pandemic. In terms of our corporate conferences - the economic crisis over the last year has resulted in a slowdown although guest numbers have gradually increased as confidence in the hospitality industry grows. We have also seen our filming*

business suffer due to the writers' strike, but fortunately this has now been lifted and we are confident that our filming contracts and opportunities will return into 2024."

Norman Jennings, Operations Director at Hertfordshire LEP, said: "We are delighted to see such positive progress being made in terms of the sector's recovery, with growth nearly returning to pre-pandemic levels when Hertfordshire's visitor economy was booming.

"Earlier this year, Visit Herts was one of the first destination management services in England to be awarded 'Local Visitor Economy Partnership' status in recognition of its impact to date. It plays a key role in strengthening the sector through targeted support, research and placemaking, working with local partners including our Hertfordshire Film Office to maximise the potential of film tourism, and Hertfordshire Growth Hub, to help SMEs to diversify and increase their resilience.

"There are major opportunities for growth within the sector, and we encourage all businesses to unlock their potential by taking advantage of the support on offer."

To access the full county report and infographic for 2022, please visit:

<https://www.visithertsbusiness.co.uk/insights-and-resources/hertfordshire-s-cambridge-economic-impact-model/>

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Notes to Editors

For further media information on Visit Herts, please contact the Visit Herts Press Team at press@visitherts.co.uk

About Visit Herts

Visit Herts is the destination management organisation for the county of Hertfordshire and was awarded Local Visitor Economy Partnership status by VisitBritain in April 2023. Visit Herts works with a range of public and private sector businesses and organisations to raise the county's profile as a leading destination. Activities include targeting UK and overseas markets through consumer marketing and PR campaigns, forging strong relationships with the travel trade, improving quality and skills within the industry, and growing investment in tourism.

Visit Herts is a public/private sector partnership supported by Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and is delivered by destination management specialists Go to Places. For further information tweet @visithertsuk or visit: www.visitherts.co.uk

About the Cambridge Economic Impact Model

The figures were derived using the Cambridge Economic Impact Model undertaken by Destination Research on behalf of Visit Herts. The Cambridge Economic Impact Model is an industry respected tool for measuring the economic impact of tourism in a given area. It utilises information from national tourism surveys and regional/local data (e.g., accommodation stock, domestic and inbound trips) of the level of tourism activity within a given local area.

Please note that all figures in the research reports have been rounded, therefore there might be marginal discrepancies in subtotals and totals.