# Cotswolds punches above its weight as UK's business density hotspot outside London



The Cotswolds has emerged as one of the United Kingdom’s most densely business-filled rural areas, placing ninth in a recent ranking of local areas by businesses per 100,000 residents. According to research compiled by media agency One Day Agency and reported locally, the Cotswolds recorded 6,787 businesses per 100,000 people — making it one of only two non‑London districts to feature in the top ten. The ranking has drawn attention because it contrasts the capital’s extraordinary business concentration with pockets of strong entrepreneurial activity elsewhere in the country.

The One Day Agency listing places Westminster at the top of the table, with a total of 52,115 registered businesses and a business density that dwarfs other areas; Camden, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea and Hackney also occupy the highest positions. Bromsgrove in Worcestershire is identified as the first non‑London location inside the top ten, with about 7,288 businesses per 100,000 people, while Merseyside’s Knowsley sits at the bottom of the scale with roughly 2,200 businesses per 100,000 residents.

Those headline numbers rest on an explicit methodology. One Day Agency’s analysis mapped official business counts against local population figures, using Office for National Statistics data as the underlying source for enterprise counts. That approach is useful for highlighting where businesses concentrate relative to resident populations, but it is sensitive to definitional and timing issues: ONS tables distinguish enterprises from local units and are snapshots taken on specific dates, so densities can shift with new registrations, closures or boundary changes.

The agency behind the research underlined that business density is only part of the story. “Entrepreneurial areas focus on more than just the quantity of businesses,” Ricardo Seixas of One Day Agency said to the Oxford Mail, adding that the most successful places attract skilled workers, take advantage of government support and foster innovation that meets market demand. Those factors help explain why some smaller districts punch above their weight in business counts.

Local policy and targeted support appear to be playing a role in the Cotswolds’ performance. Cotswold District Council has promoted a Green Economic Growth Strategy and highlighted recent infrastructure projects, inward‑investment activity and partnership work intended to help town centres and specialist firms recover and expand after the pandemic. The council frames those measures as part of a deliberate effort to sustain jobs and encourage growth in sectors such as digital, agritech and green technology.

Another recurring explanation for the region’s buoyant profile is its appeal to affluent and high‑profile residents, which can in turn stimulate demand for professional services, hospitality and high‑end property development. National and lifestyle press coverage of celebrity purchases and renovations — from reports about Ellen DeGeneres’s and Portia de Rossi’s Cotswold farmhouse to pieces on David and Victoria Beckham’s country estate and high‑value projects near the area involving media figures — feed the narrative that celebrity investment contributes to the area’s economic character and local spending patterns.

Yet a high business density does not automatically equate to broad‑based prosperity. The same ONS counts that illuminate entrepreneurial hotspots also show stark geographic variation, and analysts caution that business numbers must be read alongside employment, wage, and access‑to‑services data to understand living standards. Policymakers seeking to replicate pockets of success will need to combine support for start‑ups with skills provision, infrastructure and targeted investment — precisely the mix One Day Agency highlights as critical to turning high business density into lasting economic resilience.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25375810.cotswolds-named-uks-top-business-hub-outside-london/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.digitaljournal.com/business/westminster-named-the-uks-most-entrepreneurial-area/article)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.digitaljournal.com/business/westminster-named-the-uks-most-entrepreneurial-area/article), [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25375810.cotswolds-named-uks-top-business-hub-outside-london/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.digitaljournal.com/business/westminster-named-the-uks-most-entrepreneurial-area/article), [[3]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25375810.cotswolds-named-uks-top-business-hub-outside-london/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/business-in-the-cotswolds-is-booming)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.tatler.com/article/ellen-degeneres-selling-cotswolds-farmhouse), [[6]](https://www.hellomagazine.com/homes/20220804147299/victoria-david-beckham-cotswolds-home-doubled-value/), [[7]](https://www.oxfordshirelive.co.uk/news/property/james-cordens-8m-house-near-8051345), [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25375810.cotswolds-named-uks-top-business-hub-outside-london/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation), [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25375810.cotswolds-named-uks-top-business-hub-outside-london/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/business-in-the-cotswolds-is-booming)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25375810.cotswolds-named-uks-top-business-hub-outside-london/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.digitaljournal.com/business/westminster-named-the-uks-most-entrepreneurial-area/article> - This Digital Journal article reports on an assessment carried out by One Day Agency that ranked UK local areas by businesses per 100,000 residents. It lists Westminster as the most entrepreneurial area, followed by Camden and Islington, and notes Bromsgrove as the first non‑London place in the top ten. The story gives the specific per‑100,000 figures used in the ranking (for example Cotswold ninth with 6,787 businesses per 100,000 and Knowsley bottom with c.2,204). The piece states One Day Agency based its analysis on Office for National Statistics business counts mapped against local population data.
3. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation> - The Office for National Statistics dataset provides official counts of enterprises and local units by geography and industry for the UK. It explains the Inter‑Departmental Business Register snapshot methodology and supplies downloadable tables (editions by year) showing numbers of businesses at local authority level. The dataset is the authoritative source for counts of enterprises used in regional analyses; it includes metadata on definitions (enterprise versus local unit), dates of snapshots, and links to the 2024 and previous editions. Researchers and commentators use these ONS tables to calculate business densities per population for local comparisons.
4. <https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/business-in-the-cotswolds-is-booming> - A Cotswold District Council update describing renewed business investment and growth across the Cotswolds. The council describes its Green Economic Growth Strategy and highlights infrastructure projects and local initiatives intended to support firms, attract inward investment and encourage sectoral growth such as digital, agritech and green technologies. The page emphasises that targeted local support and strategic planning are helping town centres and enterprises to recover and expand after the pandemic, and cites new projects and partnership work intended to sustain a thriving local economy and create jobs in the district.
5. <https://www.tatler.com/article/ellen-degeneres-selling-cotswolds-farmhouse> - This property feature in Tatler covers Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi’s purchase, renovation and subsequent sale of a large farmhouse estate in the Cotswolds. It describes the 43‑acre property, the extensive restoration and the high‑end fittings and amenities that align the residence with celebrity country living. The article situates the property within the Cotswolds lifestyle and notes how high‑profile buyers and wealthy individuals have contributed to the area’s reputation as desirable and cosmopolitan countryside, illustrating the point that notable residents and celebrity investment are part of the region’s economic character.
6. <https://www.hellomagazine.com/homes/20220804147299/victoria-david-beckham-cotswolds-home-doubled-value/> - This Hello! Homes article outlines David and Victoria Beckham’s Cotswolds country property, describing renovations and additions that have increased the estate’s value. It details features such as leisure facilities, gardens and landscaping and notes the family’s use of the house as a countryside retreat. The piece is representative of wider coverage showing that several high‑profile figures own or use homes in the Cotswolds, supporting the observation that celebrity residency and investment form part of the area’s profile and economy, reinforcing local demand for premium services and property.
7. <https://www.oxfordshirelive.co.uk/news/property/james-cordens-8m-house-near-8051345> - This OxfordshireLive article reports on James Corden’s ownership of a property near Henley‑on‑Thames on the Oxfordshire/Berkshire border, including planning and renovation activity. It details his purchase of a distinctive 1960s house and subsequent approval to demolish and replace it with a new family home, noting local planning decisions and community responses. The reporting demonstrates that well‑known media figures have taken up residence in and around the Cotswolds/Oxfordshire border area, lending context to claims that prominent residents contribute to the region’s profile and, indirectly, its business and service demand.