



Wetherspoon plans pub expansion Free 251224

## Description



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## **Leisure group JD Wetherspoon has announced plans to open 30 new pubs in 2007, creating 1,200 jobs.**

The expansion plans come as the pub group prepares for the introduction of a smoking ban in England and Wales.

Wetherspoon said it hoped the ban, which is due to come into force next year, would eventually encourage more people to visit its pubs.

The company already prohibits smoking in many of its pubs, and said it would invest £35m (\$69m) in the new sites.

“Our non-smoking pubs have proven very popular and this has given us the impetus to open more pubs in 2007,” said Wetherspoon chief executive John Hutson.

“Although the non-smoking ban might affect sales in all pubs when it is introduced, we are confident that in the long-term it will result in more people visiting pubs and that it will be a positive move.”

Wetherspoon added that it planned to spend £25m on its existing estate of 662 pubs, including creating smoking areas outside of pubs.

Smoking is already banned in Scottish pubs and is set to be prohibited in Wales and Northern Ireland from 2 April and in England from 1 July.

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1. Weatherspoons
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4. UK
5. All

### **Tags**

1. JD Wetherspoon
2. Sale
3. England
4. King
5. Ireland
6. Pubs

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