

Loungers on track to open record number of bars as sales grow

Bar and restaurant chain Loungers has said it is on track to open 30 new sites this financial year, after reporting “industry-leading” sales growth.

The Bristol-founded group said it had already opened 11 new sites, comprising eight Lounge cafe-bars and three Cosy Club restaurant-bars, since April, taking its total portfolio to 206.

Bosses said the business continued to “significantly outperform” the market in the six months to October 2, delivering a 17% rise in like-for-like sales, when compared to pre-pandemic levels during the same period in 2019.

The AIM-listed firm praised the “relevance and resilience” of its brands in the face of a “challenging macroeconomic backdrop”, as hospitality businesses feel the pinch of rising energy prices and inflated operating costs.

Chief executive Nick Collins said: “As our strong sales performance demonstrates, neither uncertainty in respect of the wider UK economy nor consumer attitudes towards discretionary spending have to date impacted our sales.

“We are continuing to benefit from more people staying local, working from home, and supporting their community and high street, which are trends that we believe are here to stay.”

Loungers said it had a “strong” balance sheet, with non-property net debt of £9.5m, down from £11.9m a year earlier, which it said reflected the timing of September month end working capital cash outflows.

Last year the company opened a current record 27 new sites, as it raked in [highest-ever revenue of £237.3m](#), despite some impact from the Omicron variant of Covid-19 on December trading.

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