

# WINCHESTER DISTRICT TOURISM STRATEGY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP







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# WINCHESTER TOURISM STRATEGY WORKSHOP

9 & 10 July 2025



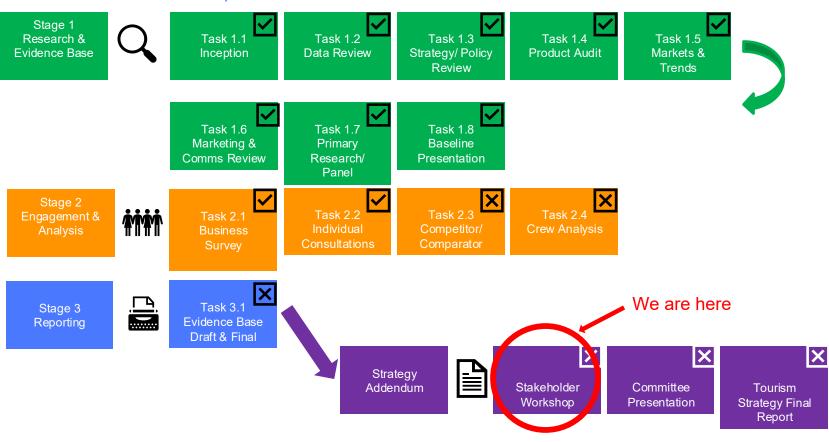
Adam Bates & Elizabeth Parbutt

## Today we want to think about tourism in Winchester ...

- What makes it special & different
- Consider potential markets
- Explore what success looks like
- And what will be needed to achieve it



## Where we are in the process...



WINCHESTER NOW



#### What the data tells us...

- Tourism matters:
  - 8m visits
  - > 5760 jobs (7% all employment)
  - ► £292m spend
- Staying really matters: Staying = 2.7% visits and 19% spend
- Staying visitors stay longer:
  - ▶ 3.5 nights compared to Stratford (2.9) Warwick (3.2)
  - but all other metrics are lower
- Within Hampshire, Winchester is mid-table.
  - Day visits 3<sup>rd</sup>, spend 6<sup>th</sup>
  - Staying 4<sup>th</sup> in visits and spend
- ...so staying and spend have headroom for growth





## There are four key themes for leisure experiences...

### History & Heritage

- ▶ England's ancient capital
- Cathedral, Great Hall with Westgate Museum, City Museum, 878AD, City Mill, Wolvesey Castle, Bishops Waltham Palace, Hospital of St Cross etc

Literary heritage: Austen & Keats

#### **Foodie Offer**

- Vineyard tours, tastings & food
- ▶ Bombay Sapphire Distillery
- Farmers' Markets & Events e.g. Watercress Festival, FizzFest
- ▶ Independent eateries, some fine dining
- ▶ High quality local producers

Attractive historic city & towns

And

atmospheric

traditional

pubs

#### Nature & Outdoors

- Water meadows & rivers
- ▶ South Downs NP
- Nature reserves e.g. St Catherine's
- Walking & cycling trails
- X 2 dark skies discovery sites

#### Visitor attractions

- Marwell Zoo
- Science Centre & Planetarium
- Watercress Line
- NT Hinton Ampney
- ▶ Independent shopping

Unique chalk grassland & streams

Expanding outdoor offer





#### Supported by an events programme

- Outdoor Arts, Literature & Music: The Hat Fair, The Grange, Bishop's Waltham Festival, Poetry Festival, Boomtown, Mucky Weekender
- Food & drink: Alresford Watercress Festival, Beer & Cider, Foodies Festival, Taste of Wickham
- Vintage: Retro Wheels & Rails Festival, Southwick Revival, The Overlord Show

Festive: Christmas Market

#### Accommodation

▶ Hotels: Outdated but expensive

**B&Bs:** Dense city cluster, plus rural scattering

▶ **Self-catering:** Even spread across city/rural

**Camping:** Serve rural district & towns

▶ **Glamping/Alternative**: Limited mostly yurts/huts

▶ **Private rentals:** Limited but high occupancy

Hat Fair audience c. 95k





Well aligned with road network

- Heritage offer
- ▶ Food and drink provenance/ vineyards
- Traditional/'quintessential England'
- Value from staying visitors
- Easy to get to/from by road and rail
- Independent retail and food/drink
- ▶ Events with impact e.g. Xmas market
- Gateway to the South Downs
- VisitWinchester networking
- ▶ Headroom for growth overnights for value
- Join up experiences/ itineraries
- Sustainable/ accessible tourism
- ▶ Dynamic, contemporary and fun as well as 'traditional'
- ▶ Rural public transport/ active travel
- ▶ Accommodation supply and events strategy and focus
- ▶ Food/drink experiences and positioning
- ▶ Make more of landscape
- ▶ Brand development
- ▶ Film/ TV production & screen tourism



- Not enough staying visitors/ lower value
- Not enough distinctive accommodation
- Notable awards e.g. 'Michelin'
- ▶ Independent sector overshadowed by chains
- Lack of clear events strategy
- Rural transport connectivity
- Heritage experiences not joined up
- Destination seen as 'nice' but indistinct and not progressive

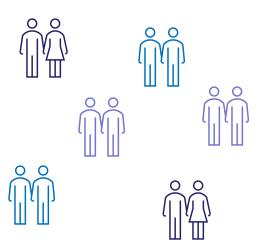


- Positioning within the LVEP
- ▶ Competitor destination e.g. Sussex Wine
- ▶ Neighbours picking up overnights
- Lack of clarity about what Winchester stands for among visitors









- ▶ Find a partner someone you don't know
- Introduce yourself and share what's on your card 1 minute each
- ▶ Then we'll ask you to find a new partner and repeat
- ▶ We will collect the cards



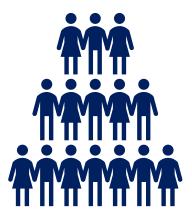
Everyone working Position as English Thursday 10 July... together sparkling wine capital Food & drink Better Fresher highlighted International packaging of communication more profile drawing the offer 'tone' 'A-listers' Over arching Clear identity event Guests to & stories strategy stay longer The one thing I would like to Sustainable see in the tourism strategy... **Robust &** & accessible resourced destination campaigns Winchester Help presented as Public transport to promoting 'fun' Research rural experiences our offer Share data so we A clear statement That children can make informed of why a visitor are included decisions should come here

TARGET MARKETS



# 3 potential segments which could deliver growth for Winchester

- Cultural Explorers
- Curious Families
- Global Experience Seekers





### **Cultural Explorers**

- Couples aged 50+ travelling without children
- Take lots of short breaks enjoy planning

### What's important?

- Small cities/towns & rural places
- Enjoy local culture, heritage, contemporary art, events
- Authentic local food & drink, inc experiences
- Quality, independent accommodation
- Landscapes and gentle outdoor activities

#### Rationale...

- Will engage in a variety of activities if the offer is right
- Affluent professionals, will spend for quality
- Will visit outside of peak times



#### **Curious Families**

- Families with children under 12
- Multi-generational groups

### What's important?

- Trips & breaks spending time together, creating memories
- Things to do for all the family attractions, outdoor activities, culture, events
- Looking to have fun together
- Motivated by value for money, will pay for quality
- Family friendly accommodation

#### Rationale...

- Will spend on activities to keep children happy
- Active on social media so easy to reach – and spread the word
- Want to make sustainable choices
- Locals as ambassadors encouraging friends and relatives
- Opportunity to convert from day visit to overnight if enough to do



### **Global Experience Seekers**

- <40s travelling without children as pre-family couples or in friendship groups
- UK and international e.g. USA, Canada, Australia, France

### What's important?

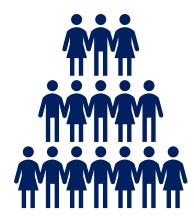
- City plus countryside
- Trips packed with activities daytime & evening
- Want 'only here' experiences arts & culture, events & festivals, hands-on learning, active, wellbeing
- Enjoy heritage, landscapes, quality food & drink
- Boutique accommodation & socialising
- Public transport & good digital connectivity

#### Rationale...

- Frequent travellers who will spend on 'unique' experiences
- Advocates for destinations they love – social media
- Consciously support independent businesses
- Champions for sustainability
  & inclusivity

# Choose which segment you want to work on – and go to that station

- Cultural Explorers
- Curious Families
- Global Experience Seekers



### *In your group:*

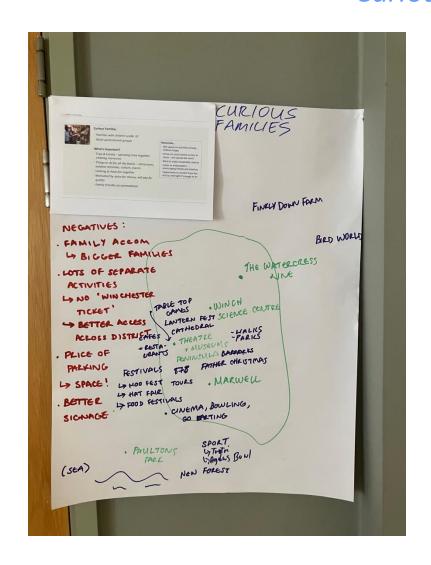
- Draw a map of Winchester and mark on it all the things that would DELIGHT your segment
- Think cross-boundary too

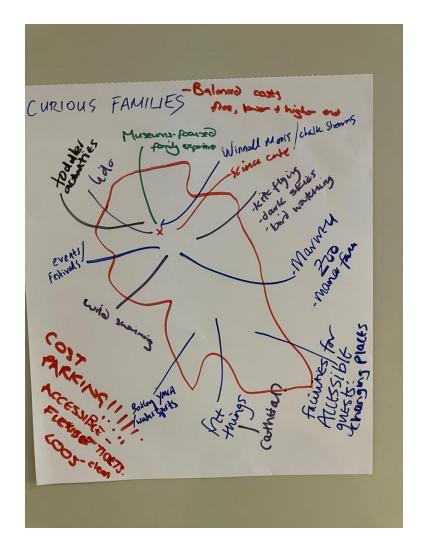
#### Now ...

- Think about what would DISAPPOINT them
- Or what's MISSING
- Mark or list on your map

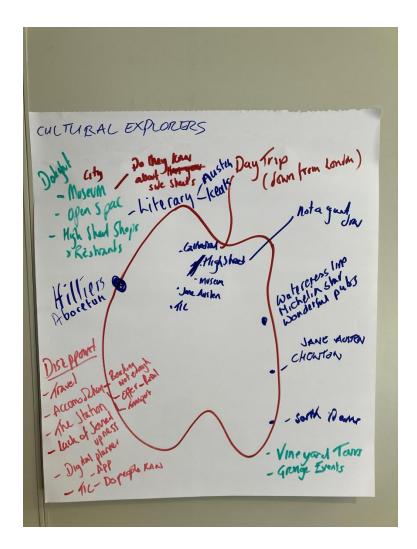


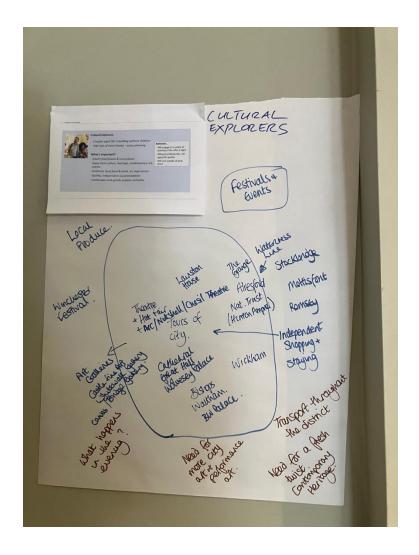
## Wednesday 9 July Curious Families



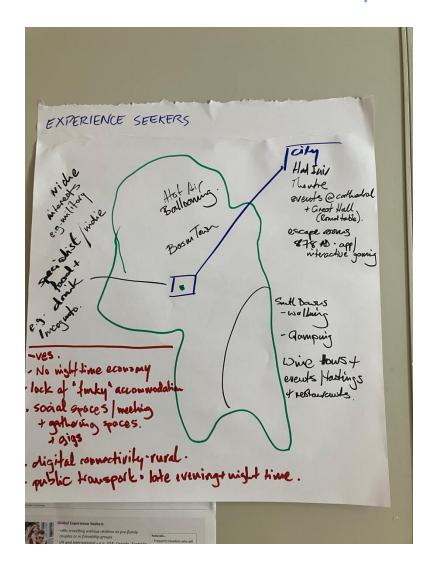


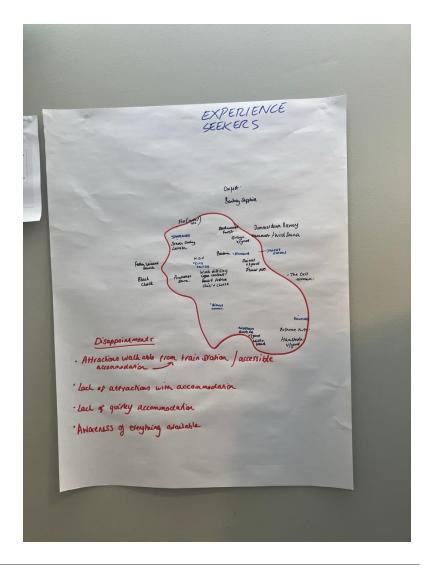
# Wednesday 9 July Cultural Explorers



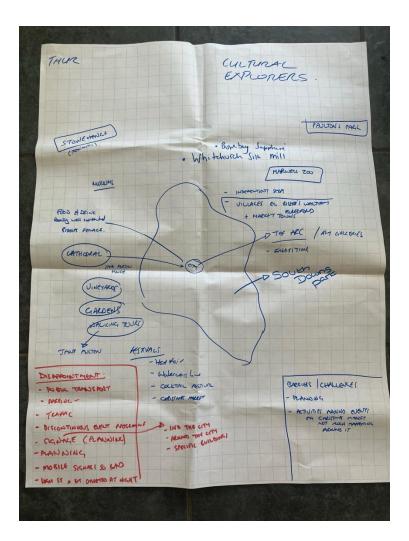


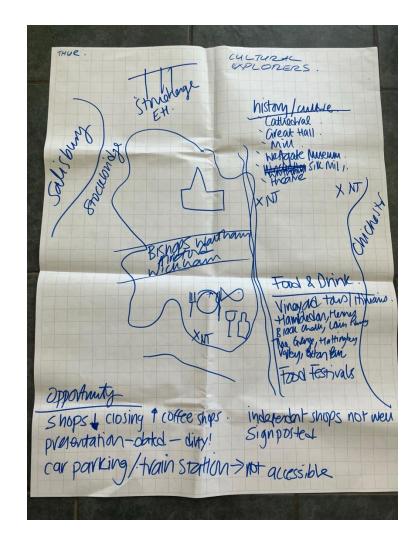
# Wednesday 9 July Experience Seekers



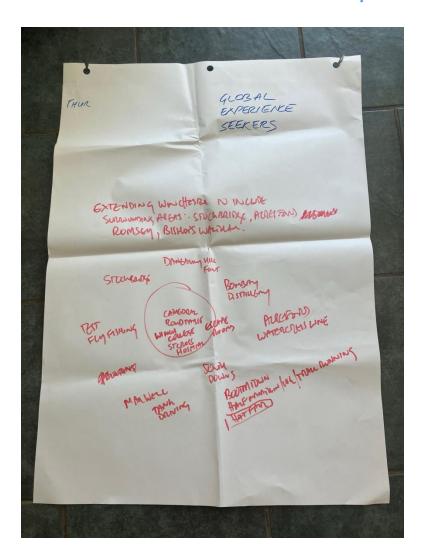


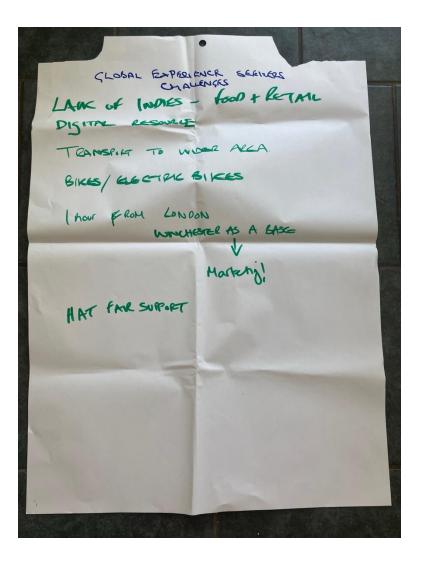
# Thursday 9 July Cultural Explorers



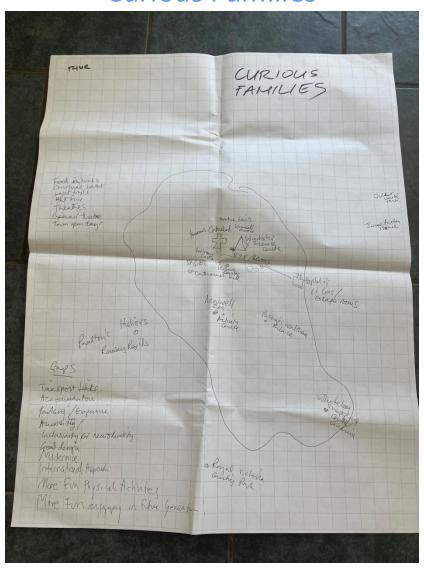


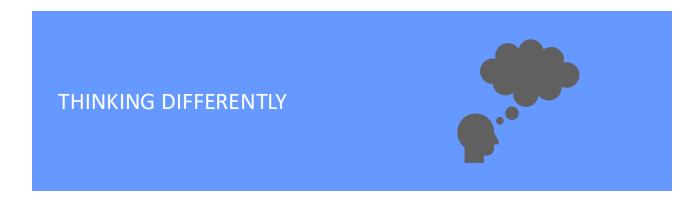
# Thursday 9 July Experience Seekers





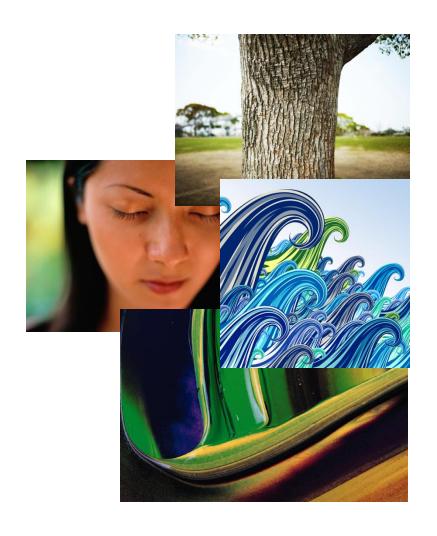
# Thursday 9 July Curious Families





## Thinking differently ...

- Each group has been allocated a 'sense'
- Imagine how you would describe Winchester using only this sense.
- Capture your thinking on a flip chart
- ▶ Be prepared to feed back!



## Colour - Workshop 1

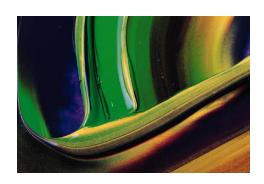
- Green watercress, grapes, landscape, fields, military museums, Christmas market
- ▶ Blue sky, water in rivers & streams, tradition
- ▶ Grey stone, heritage, flint
- ▶ Sparkle trout, water
- White- chalk, cheese, bunting
- ▶ Pink blossom, blooms, Hampshire pork
- Red Christmas market
- ▶ Yellow straw bales
- Orange autumn
- Multi-coloured hanging baskets, Hat Fair, bollards/art, butterflies, bunting (red, white & blue)





## Colour - Workshop 2

- ▶ Green trees in the city, open spaces of South Downs
- Blue open skies of National Park
- ▶ White chalk
- Autumn colours
- Lavender fields
- Grasslands spring flowers
- Colourful Bunting, Christmas decorations & festivities, Hat Fair, Buskers, characters
- ▶ Gardens Abbey Gardens, ornamental planting elsewhere
- Hanging baskets
- Muted colours in branding
- ▶ Buildings sandstone, brown of stone & brick, grey concrete
- Streetscapes shop windows, flags, people & their outfits, signage/road signs, colour on Google Maps, buses, cars, posters



Colourful buildings in Alresford

## Sound - Workshop 1

- Community bustling high street, people buskers, market, children, dogs, performances & festivals, dogs
- Nature tranquil, peaceful, bird song, swifts
- ▶ Heritage bells, steam trains, military bands
- Water stream bubbling

## Less appealing

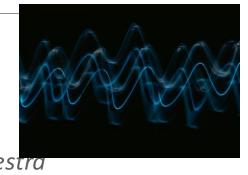
- ▶ Infrastructure— motorway, cars, traffic, trains, planes
- Urban life Big Issue seller, homeless people, charity collectors



Different languages being spoken

## Sound - Workshop 2

- ▶ Buskers 'unique to Winch', Morris dancers/ MayFest
- Cathedral bells, choral music, organ, Hampshire youth orchestra
- Crunch of gravel
- Christmas community choirs & bands
- ▶ Play parks children playing, laughter
- Nature sounds in parks & reserves
- ▶ River sounds canoeing, paddleboarding, wild swimming, splashing, fun
- ▶ Zoo gibbons & flamingos
- Market sounds, sizzle of outdoor food stalls
- Echoes of the past, history tours
- ▶ Music Boomtown, chamber music
- Range of languages
- ▶ Silk Mill working machinery, looms, industrial heritage
- Students
- Plus: Traffic, sirens, building construction



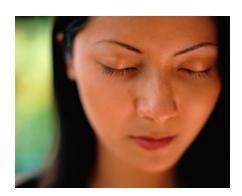
Buzz of activity, life, leisure & sport

## Smell - Workshop 1

- Fresh air
- Wild flowers
- Lavender
- Chalk streams
- ► Foodie BBQ grill, churros, coffee
- ▶ Markets fruit & veg etc
- Christmas market mulled wine, all spice, chestnuts
- Watercress line steam
- Vineyards, gin distilleries, brewers

### Plus:

- Car & train fumes
- **Drains**
- Gas leaks (construction)



Steam from the Watercress Line

## Smell - Workshop 2

- Grass, especially with heat on it
- Water meadows
- **▶** Flowers
- Lavender
- Food & drink eateries, different cuisines, street food, fish & meat stalls
- Cleaner air quality
- ▶ Inside Cathedral & Great Hall old stone, incense, wood, books
- ▶ Botanicals Bombay Sapphire Distillery
- Roses in Deanery Garden
- Smoke from Watercress Line & steam trains

#### Plus:

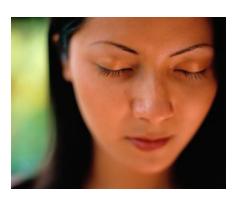
- Exhaust fumes
- ▶ Country smells muck spreading in September, horse manure
- ▶ Bin smells





## Taste - Workshop 1

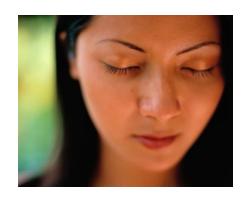
- Diverse/ global cuisine
- Festivals drinks & food
- ▶ Fresh from markets, meat, selling from farm
- ▶ Local produce Jude's ice cream
- Watercress spicy/distinct
- ▶ Wine fizz, upmarket
- ▶ Gin, beer, cocktails
- **Cheese**
- Rural/agricultural
- Farm shops
- Coffee/roasters
- Authentic
- Lavender
- Trout/ chalk streams





## Taste - Workshop 2

- Local focus Hampshire Fare
- ▶ Good range of options cafes, pubs, farm shops, restaurants (e.g. Bar Lento), festivals (watercress), markets (Farmers', Christmas with mulled wine), coffee shops, distilleries
- Vineyards e.g. Black Chalk, Hattingley
- Many independents
- Wide range of cuisines
- ▶ Local produce chalk stream trout, Isle of Wight tomatoes, cheese, fizz, chocolate, micro herbs, watercress, Jude's ice cream, Shoal gelato, venison, coffee, gin, olives
- Cocktail Week
- BBQ/outdoor cooking
- Pop-up catering vans
- N.B. Tend to close early, although trade responding to customers' changing patterns of behaviour



English sparkling wine

## Texture - Workshop 1

- **Stone**
- **Grass**
- Water
- Nature
- Bark/forest
- **Cobbles**
- ▶ Hilly
- ▶ Chalk
- Crumbly
- Spongy
- ▶ Soft
- ▶ Clean
- Makes you feel calm, safe, happy, relaxed rejuvenated, inspired
- Not dusty, gritty, grimy, stark, sterile, industrial





## Texture - Workshop 2

- Water- chalk streams
- Stone/cobbles/ flint
- Flagstones
- Embroidery & stained glass in Cathedral
- Bronze sculptures
- ▶ Buildings brickwork, limestone mortar, timber
- ▶ Paper bookshops, maps
- ▶ Grassland
- ▶ Chalk
- Silk mill
- Nature moss, bark , foliage, hedging & grass
- Streets signs, bunting, food & drink, asphalt
- Ornamental planting formal & informal gardens
- Conversation





HOW DO WE GET THERE?



### What does Winchester need to do?

Firstly, stand up and find another 2 people to make a group of 3

- On post-it notes, write your ideas of what needs to happen
- One idea per post-it
- As many as you like!
- 2 minutes





## Group A

- Joined up transport (city to rural) e.g. shuttle bus, open top tours, heritage bus
- Boutique accommodation in the city
- Café culture, more pedestrianisation, links to night-time economy

### Group B

- More collaboration between city & rural, around events, attractions, food & drink, shops
- Encouraging younger visitors 30+ by promoting contemporary offer, not always heritage focused
- Broader advertising for non-Winchester residents



### Group C

- New twist on old, don't take visitors for granted i.e. Heritage PLUS...
- Sustainable transport e.g. linking rural attractions & vineyards
- Visitor advertising at key gateways

## Group D

- Investment in the sector, or at least no decline e.g. Hat Fair funding
- Clearer wayfinding physical & digital
- Growing the night time economy e.g. spaces for gigs, outdoor offer, restaurants opening later



## Group A

- More collaboration between all groups involved in tourism
- Work with qualified social influencers to showcase wider offer i.e. so not focusing on just one venue
- Food network map and drive

## Group B

- Better transport connections between city & rural plus Park & Ride for North
- Younger nightlife/evening entertainment
- Celebrating independent businesses more



## Group C

- Branding whole district strategy
- Investment in rural buses & clarity around timetables/ destinations
- ▶ Focus on fun for 15 30 year olds, inc locals and students different/modern activities

## Group D

- Rural transport links & better traffic management to create seamless experience
- Modern approach to marketing with confident tone of voice
- Inclusive options Winchester welcomes all (including prayer, food, neurodiversity, LGBTQIA, accessibility/purple pound)



### **Brand & Marketing**

- Collaborative, joined up marketing for whole district
- Clear brand, including strong theme e.g. Manchester & bees
- Becoming a trade-ready destination (promoting to groups)
- Promote better internationally, inc links to cruise passengers
- Itineraries, including car & bus
- Championing & supporting independents
- Foster the local visitor market
- More promotion of wellness walking, cycling etc
- Greater profile for military museums

### **Product**

- Support for Hat Fair
- Investment in a flagship attraction
- Better evening offer & supporting infrastructure(parking, lighting, seating)
- More hotel beds inc family, different price points, quirky
- More active & wellbeing experiences e.g. Lido

### **Destination Collaboration**

- Sharing of visitor statistics to inform decisions
- Collaboration with meaning & benefit e.g. PR partnership
- Multi-attraction ticket/ city pass, or package deals
- Visitor attractions network
- Access to tourism training

## Tourism strategy

- A future-proof plan
- Aspirational visitor markets which aren't too niche
- Link to the cultural strategy

## Physical experience – transport/signage/access

- Bus station improvements
- Warmer welcome at train station
- Strategy for good design across city & district
- More access to the water in city centre
- More meaningful start/end to South Downs Way
- Defined cycle routes/paths
- More visibility for park & ride



### Other

- Places for teenagers to go that aren't sporty
- Lower business rates
- Working closely with landscape designers and architects, planning etc

## What does Winchester need to do?

In your original 3 join with another group to make a 6 ...

- Find a flip chart
- Sort and de-duplicate ideas
- Put the duplicates at the bottom of the flip chart
- If appropriate group similar ideas together
- 2 minutes



## What are the priorities?

## Now in your group ...

- Sort the priorities with most dots to top
- Put the others to the bottom of the flip chart
- 2 minutes



# What are the top priorities?

## In your group ...

- Agree your group's top 3 priorities
- Mark each with a star
- 2 minutes





**SUPPORTING YOUR BUSINESS** 



# What help or support does your business/organisation need?

- Recruitment
- Staff training
- Business Planning
- Marketing
- Digital skills
- Accessibility
- Going green
- Investment
- Something else?









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