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# Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022

## Executive Summary Report

September 2022



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# Introduction

Winchester City Council commissioned The Retail Group to undertake a research consultancy study to provide it with a better understanding of the benefits and economic value of street markets in the Winchester district including the potential to develop the current offer. The scope covered markets and opportunities in Winchester city centre and the market towns of Alresford, Bishop's Waltham and Wickham. The objective was for the findings to provide valuable insight and information to the council and operators of street markets to:

- Support street markets' growth and development.
- Enhance the visitor experience after the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- Ensure the district's High Streets remain vibrant.

The study needed to include several aspects of research; these were:

- Audit of current markets' offer including overall experience.
- Feedback from businesses, traders, consumers.
- Assessment of opportunities to increase the choice and range of markets.
- Establish the additive nature of markets.
- Assess the economic impact.
- Review of locations, frequency and types of markets.
- Benchmarking against similar destinations / exemplar markets, and
- Gap analysis and recommendations for improvement.

This is an executive summary of the detailed research and surveys undertaken and the finding arising from that work.

## **Summary of recommendations for future development of the street markets**

The study made drew a number of conclusions and in particular identified improvement opportunities for the street markets across the district including:

- Better signage.
- More visible impact, improved first impressions from revised pitch layouts, site lines, improved trading equipment including stalls, gazebos and tables.
- Stronger branding, marketing and promotion.
- Extending the offer to complement the wider retail offer in terms of quality and mix including more local and regional producers.
- Introduce early evening markets, themed and touring markets including youth/student, entrepreneur/start up business and independent/local producer themes, and
- Consider street events and offerings to attract a younger adult demographic.

# Overview of the market offer

## Alresford - current

Alresford Town Centre offers a very appealing and attractive location, a quintessential Hampshire 'market' town with many historic buildings and interesting small scale architecture. The over riding impression is of a good quality, friendly and pleasant experience.

The location review was completed on a market trading day, Thursday. Circa 12 stalls were trading with space for up to 20 stalls, possibly more with smaller pitches. The market offered a diverse mix of categories, including florist and plants, pies, breads and baked goods, eco packaging groceries and household, olives / deli, fruit and veg, wool and knitted items, gifts, mobile sharpening. Many of these categories are adding to the offer of the town, in some instances expanding the offer, in many simply adding variety. Clearly the majority of stalls are regulars. The market was visibly popular, evident regular customers and several longstanding traders, it felt friendly, welcoming and service oriented.

The research findings would indicate the Thursday street market in Alresford is in the right location, a one day a week market is sufficient and the type and format of the market is broadly appropriate.

## Alresford - future

There is an opportunity to develop periodic visiting themed markets or events, although these would need to be in keeping with mix and quality of the town's offer, e.g. themed food markets, international markets, 'makers' markets, vintage and home markets. Formation of an events or visiting markets working group to identify the optimum mix, frequency and location is recommended.

The regular street market will be an attraction and an additional reason to visit, but is unlikely to achieve a destination status market for visitors outside the regular users of the town centre.

### Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	42
Neither / Nor	39
Dissatisfied	15



### Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	12	68
More visiting themed markets	39	39
More occasional event markets	54	34

# Overview of the market offer

## Bishop's Waltham - current

Bishop's Waltham is a pleasant town, sitting beside the South Downs and at the southern end of Winchester district. The town benefits from attractive buildings, small scale architecture and a busy High Street that is well occupied providing a diverse mix of businesses and attractions.

The town centre has few vacant properties and looks to be withstanding the wider impacts on retail centres quite well. Many businesses were busy with evident footfall and busy car parks.

## Bishop's Waltham – future

Visually and aesthetically the town looks as though it could support a regular weekly or fortnightly street market as part of its offer. There are a number of locations that might be suitable, and a street market would need to be highly visible and connected to existing High Street.

A regular market will need to include frequently purchased product categories, food items, clothing, household, catering. It would also benefit from including more home and accessories or gift items. Given the profile of the shops, the product quality would need to be good and the offer should complement the existing retail and extend the choice. Themes could include farmers markets, producers markets, artisan markets, visiting international markets, street food and craft markets.

A feasibility study to outline how, where, what and when to deliver a regular street market within the heart of the town centre would be needed. As with Alresford it will be part of the town's offer and an additional facility, it is not recommended to create a large destination market.

### Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	32
Neither / Nor	29
Dissatisfied	6



### Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	68	19
More visiting themed markets	71	10
More occasional event markets	77	6

# Overview of the market offer

## Wickham - current

Wickham was the smallest centre in the review, with an offer much smaller than that of Alresford or Bishop's Waltham. The centre felt more practical, probably as a result of the dominance of parking in front of premises. The 2020 LSH Retail Uses Study describes Wickham as having limited footfall and appealing to a limited catchment. Given the size of the offer, the existing mix, the layout and the reliance on parking to attract visitors it is difficult to consider that Wickham could sustain a regular street market. It is understood that street markets have been resisted historically. There are a number of seasonal events and there may be the opportunity to build on these providing they have wide appeal to all consumers.

## Wickham - future

In Wickham the opportunity is for irregular visiting markets and events.

### Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	13
Neither / Nor	27
No Answer	60



### Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	27	27
More visiting themed markets	47	27
More occasional event markets	60	20



# Overview of the market offer

## Winchester - current

Winchester High Street continues to be active, occupied and providing a varied retail, catering and service experience for the city's residents and many visitors. This established mix of chain and independent operators has enabled the city centre to remain well occupied. The city continues to attract new businesses and the recent sign posting for offers on side streets is a good example of delivery that many other locations might look to emulate.

As a result of Covid operating constraints, the market is operating from the wider lower part of the High Street, which has helped to increase visibility of shops along the narrowest areas. Given the time of the year and the emerging from Covid timescale, trading on both days was particularly buoyant and busy. Three days of markets attract circa 95 traders, 25 Thursday, 30 Friday and 40 on Saturday. Thursday stall numbers were almost at capacity, for the restricted space. Saturday trading covers a wider area and again all pitches were occupied. The market is anchored by a good fruit and veg, excellent fishmonger and a butcher. In addition there is an award winning cheese trader, excellent bread, pies and cakes traders and a sprinkling of other food operators. The catering offer is good, with an excellent coffee provider and several hot food specialists. The non-food traders cover a wide variety of categories, from silver plate cutlery to bedlinen, leather goods and artisan producers.

The 2020 LSH Retail Study Report makes a number of references to the existing street market offer. It is recognised as adding to the provision of independent retailers in the core city centre area, something that might not be otherwise be affordable given pressures on space and rents. Through expanding the independent offer, the street market will be increasing the choice and variety of goods available in the city centre.

The existing street market offer is a recognised strength and it is identified as a growth opportunity, both to improve the existing market offer and to add additional themed offers, evening markets, street food markets etc.

The LSH study included research with consumers about the facilities of the city centre, unsurprisingly many aspects were rated as quite good or very good. The street markets were rated mainly as quite good or average; there were some very good ratings (and a few quite poor).

Satisfaction with current street market?

Satisfaction Level	%
Satisfied	75
Neither / Nor	19
Dissatisfied	2



# Overview of the market offer

## Winchester - future

The street market is in the optimum location with no negative impact to its performance and appeal. It is considered that the current location has helped to create more impact and improve the linkage to The Brooks. On a Saturday / Sunday the trading area extends further toward The Broadway and the wide area outside the Guildhall. This area does accommodate the market well, although the street furniture and planters are limiting the trading area.

The findings of the review research would indicate that the current number of trading days are sufficient. In terms of expanding the market offer on those days, this is something that could be considered. The Thursday, Friday and Saturday markets could all grow and use the space used by the Sunday market, further along the Broadway. This would increase the appeal of the market and all the associated economic benefits, more direct income for the council and many indirect economic benefits.

In terms of its potential to create a 'special or destination market experience', this is limited by the space available and the delivery. The market is already part of the overall attraction of Winchester and it whilst it may be a primary attraction for some visitors, for most it will be a secondary attraction. For it to become a destination it would need to be larger and more dominant within its environment which is likely to meet local resistance. If moved to a dedicated remote space (to allow a significant uplift in stall numbers) it would lose footfall.



### Would you Like to See More Markets in This Centre?

Satisfaction	Yes %	No %
More regular markets	46	41
More visiting themed markets	65	26
More occasional event markets	72	18



# Stakeholder Feedback

In addition to the views of local businesses and existing market traders, a stakeholder engagement survey was completed via a questionnaire sent to a selection of stakeholders in each of the four centres. This included parish councillors, town clerks, local chambers of trade, town trusts representatives, and market operators.

We issued 43 questionnaires and contacted stakeholders twice.

We are very grateful for the contributions from stakeholders and received 11 responses. The responses are reported as a collective.

Stakeholders were divided as to whether more street markets were needed in a centre, half said yes and half said no. Those with markets clearly felt they had sufficient, those without were keen to have them.

In terms of location it was clear that street markets should remain in existing locations or be in 'the heart of the centre'.

Priority Future Street Market Requirements	
Destination markets to draw people into the centre	9
Good quality stalls	9
Complement the shops	8
Additional themed or specialist street markets	8
Stalls that look good	8
Clear signage and information	7
Good value prices	7
Good customer service	7
Convenient location	6
Good food and beverage offer	6
Good value 'everyday' products	5
Regular weekly market	5
Easy access	5
Customer seating and facilities	4
Occasional fortnightly or monthly street markets	3

Strengths	
Provide variety of goods	Regularity
Attract visitors	Reputation
Quality stalls / traders	
Community feel	
Good management	

Weaknesses	
Impact on parking availability	Cars in market area
Reduced space post Covid	Move to accommodate events
No central location	
Litter	
Negative impact on businesses	

# Economic Impact

The commissioned research consultancy reported that there is no recognised industry standard method for assessing economic impact of markets. However from the intelligence sought throughout the review certain assumptions can be made and some of the responses from the businesses, traders and stakeholders to survey questions that indicate economic impact are summarised below:

Impact Benefit Variable	Alresford		Winchester	
	yes (agree) %	no (disagree) %	yes (agree) %	no (disagree) %
The regular street markets in this centre successfully generate additional footfall to the centre	39	39	78	6
This centre's retail appeal is increased by the street market offer	32	32	79	8
Users of the regular street markets also use shops, cafes and services across this centre when they visit the markets	51	22	88	4
The markets generate a positive benefit for my business	37	39	66	9
The street markets provide unfair competition for centre businesses	25	39	9	57
An improved market provision would be an attraction for this location	44	19	41	15
An improved market provision would be beneficial to local businesses	34	22	43	18
An improved market provision in this centre would generate additional footfall	44	22	48	24

## Alresford

The existing market is providing a direct economic benefit as a result of the rental income it provides the town council, with an improved offer and increased variety of traders this would increase.

In terms of the impact of an improved future street market offer, this is clearly viewed as a positive impact and benefit generator. The qualitative benefits that had higher response rates include improving attraction, generating additional footfall and benefitting existing businesses.

Beyond the economic benefit to businesses and the location there are additional economic and social benefits in terms of employment of traders and support businesses, retaining local expenditure, entrepreneurship, new business start ups and sustainability through repurposing and upcycling of products.

# Economic Impact

## Winchester

Responses overwhelmingly indicate a view that the street market brings economic benefit. The findings in the LSH 2020 Retail Study, further support this.

If the street market continues to grow and attracts a thousand additional visitors a week (or contributes to their reason to visit the city centre), the additional economic benefit would be calculated as follows:

- 1,000 visitors, 50% conversion to 500 shoppers.
- Each of the 500 shoppers visit three shops, 1,500 shop visits.
- Spending £10 per shop (very low ATV, average transaction value) equates to £15,000 of additional 'retail income' per week.

Annualised this becomes £780,000 of additional city centre revenue. If this is attributed to a spend per square foot (@£400 / sqft.) it could sustain 1,950 square feet of retail floorspace, a typical small shop unit.

Additional indirect benefits include local employment, job creation, support of independent businesses, support for local artisan producers and start up businesses, entrepreneurship and product sustainability. Given the location in the city centre, the markets provide plenty of opportunities for young people starting on there road to employment and even business creation.

We are aware of at least two businesses now trading from premises in the city that started off as market stalls, providing clear benefit of business start up and business growth.

# Conclusions

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The existing street market offers are already enhancing the visitor experience. The provision of markets, and improved street markets will enable the district's high streets and town centres to remain vibrant, popular and sustainable places.

The over-riding tone of the feedback is positive about existing street markets and the support for improved street market offers, with the exception of Wickham. Wickham businesses do not require or desire a regular street market offer.

The report has identified that there is clear demand for regular street markets in the three centres.

- In Alresford and Winchester the existing markets should be retained and improved.
- In Bishop's Waltham there is the need for further work to determine how, where, what and when to deliver a regular street market within the heart of the town centre.
- In Wickham the opportunity is for irregular visiting markets and events.