

Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan

Evidence Base Review

Appendix 3: Tourism sub group report July 2012

TOURISM REPORT – ALSO CONSIDERED SUSTAINABILITY (13.7.12)

1. Crucially important is to create a vision for Faringdon that we can all be collectively responsible for. We should build on what we've already got and protect it. What will the Faringdon of 2029 look and feel like? (to work, live, visit and shop) What will be the magnets? This is the number one focus for Faringdon to draw in more tourists: we need to have an identity that is woven through and manifest in all we offer. The recent Hidden Britain on Faringdon starkly highlights this as our most pressing concern which gave us a score of 41.6% compared to Market Town Average of 65.8% (for how the destination would be perceived prior to arrival) and scoring a paltry 12/120 regarding our identity and message for external visitors. Interestingly when they conducted the Mystery visitor survey Faringdon came out much more strongly in terms of the actual experience (71.85% compared to average of 72.9%). There needs to be a much more coherent and integrated approach.
2. We should utilise existing assets: historic market town – the centre, eccentricity, Folly Tower, organic farming, attractive to cyclists (farcycles) and walkers, culture of arts, Civil War history. Promote and protect the Town Centre & Folly, the town's biggest assets.
3. Consider the different types of Tourism: retail, business, pleasure
4. Consider food offering being developed and a draw. Organic and/or local farming. Look at how production of food could also co-exist with retailing e.g. let shops to producers – making things locally. Consider having high quality staples/artisan e.g. bakery. Businesses should co-promote. Could we replicate some elements of the Melton Mowbray success (the Faringdon Tower pudding? {look at report of CPRE – from field to fork food webs. How can we make use of the NPPF to enable Faringdon to have the desired type of shopping mix? Branding for Faringdon?
5. Shopping is now leisure activity so as a tourist attraction we need to enable people to have an experience (locals and more distant visitors). The arts and food could be powerfully combined. Look to stage food festivals and ensure there is a stream of activity.
6. To develop the Arts theme: look at creative use of space in the centre to provide a Performing and Arts venue. 3 possible locations:- 1. The Lees (close to town centre and could car parking on top); 2. Opposite 4&20 Business Park and built into hill so that businesses could use conference facilities; 3. (New offering) Between Rogers Concrete and school playing fields so that schools could make use of facilities within the teaching offering.
7. Look at practice across the country, including those Portas pathfinders e.g. Croydon Town Council, Todmorden with their incredible edible green route: walks that take them on a local food story.
8. Simple steps to make the town centre more enticing e.g. paint signposts black, blackboards for retailers, use of pendants (rather than more costly bunting).
9. To attract more tourists need the infrastructure – coach park? What about a campsite on the outskirts. Need to provide additional accommodation.
10. Link with employers. Consider how big companies as well as local may be interested in supporting the Neighbourhood Plan pilot e.g. with expertise or funding. RWE Swindon has previously worked with the National Trust to look at carbon-neutral development. Develop greater use of BiTC (Business in the Community)

11. Regarding sustainability – encourage more cyclists particularly children/young people. By 2029, all our young people should be able to walk or cycle to school.
12. We looked at the Hidden Britain Report on Faringdon which provides an excellent basis for taking forward the development of a tourism strategy.
13. To use some of the development gain (£106 funds) to put towards regular festivals to ensure their viability in the initial years and keep them as a feature within the town.