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HOME
CULTURE
ECOLOGY
MOVEMENT
LIFETIMES

LIFETIMES

Winchester Vision 2020–2030
handbook **part 2: Target recommendations,**
following the four week working group
period, September and October 2020.

“There is an awareness that the process ahead needs to include the space to catch emerging ideas. It cannot be fixed or rigid. It needs to flex with changing times, changing attitudes, and changing technologies. But at its heart it needs a strong set of principles”

Exploring opportunities, engagement and retention.

Beginning in March 2020, the Winchester Vision project ran a series of listening initiatives, such as interviews, street audio recordings, social media interactions, digital walks. From this research, a series of five key targets emerged. These targets were described in Handbook Pt. 1 as starting points for working group activities.

This is Handbook Pt. 2 and is a record of the process of each working group. It explains how each group arrived at its key recommendations. These five working group reports will directly inform the final Winchester Vision 2020 - 2030

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Photo from University of Winchester

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What is Lifetimes?

The theme of the Lifetimes Group is 'Living' in Winchester. At its heart, the group's concern is about people and how people live in and inhabit the city. The many small narratives generated by the city that add up to a collective culture, a sense of place, feeling and community.

This is a very broad concept; it can address the fine detail – for example how easy is it for an elderly person to cross the street? To the big picture – questions around demographics, class, gender and diversity, age, ability, identity.



Photo from hatfair.co.uk

Group facilitator's summary.

The lifetimes discussions and project ideas focus on connecting people to places and connecting people to each other. Creating opportunities for co-created projects which give people greater agency to work collectively and have a much more active role in how to shape and make the city. There is also a focus on re-making the city by using it differently and recognising the active role public space plays in connecting community, shaping our perception of who we are and the potential positive effects public space could have on building inter-generational links.

Primarily the Lifetimes Group has focused on the need to create a cultural shift towards empowering people to have greater agency over where they live and the ways in which public space is organised. **People felt strongly that WCC could engender change by adopting generative approaches to localised culture.** This sense of shifting agency towards local community is suggested with the caveats that some communities have less resources at their disposal and that they would need more support. However the key message from the Lifetimes group is that the mechanisms around how communities access and use public space could shift and that this change could engender and empower if done right.

An example was given by a participant whose daughter had recently been given a council house. Outside the house was an area of green space that children had been using during Lockdown as outside 'play' area. She wanted to create a meeting place here and establish a small garden and some seating but did not know who she should contact or how to go about improving this space.

This example is a really good case in point as it raises a number of issues that could be initially concerning – who would maintain this?

Would it become messy and look bad or potentially hazardous? These concerns would all be reasons to simply say no to this person and stop her progressing with her idea. However given some agency the optimistic alternative is that this individual makes a great job of this area, it becomes a lovely green space for the community to use and take shared ownership of.

The question posed by the Lifetimes group was around risk and risk averse culture that imposes one rule of 'no' unilaterally because, quite frankly it is much easier – not a criticism but a fact. Working with people collectively is hard and it raises the potential for conflict and indeed failure. However, given the tools to work collectively taking ownership over this small space and using it to plant trees for example and making it a 'public area' could be seen as a huge 'win' for the community. People would be proud of their achievement and this area becomes symbolic of the fact that people can work collectively and can be responsible for public areas that they use.

One of the 'Hows' we therefore identified was how the WCC currently manage these small pockets of public space and how the potential benefit for greater community agency can be balanced against risk and potential failure. This shift is a cultural one, it is a shift that requires a change in centralised thinking but also a greater sense of shared responsibility and agency from the community itself. A positive example of this is the 'Barlow Road Orchard' in Levenshulme, Manchester, where a small area of land used for fly tipping has been turned into a community orchard with a picnic bench. The project was initiated by an individual resident and supported by a local shop and a local charity. This 'good news' story bought a positive angle to an otherwise troubled spot, which has resulted in broad support from the local community.



Lifetimes recommendations

The task set for the Lifetimes Group was to identify the blocks and barriers to participation and devise a set of solutions that might make the city more open to all. From our research we knew that shared spaces and how Winchester uses its shared space is a concern, we also learned that people felt strongly about community, participation and life chances in the city, both in terms of creating opportunities for people living within the city and allowing more mobility for younger people who want to remain in or move to Winchester.



Target projects

1 A City Made By Walking: A network of walks across Winchester connecting community public spaces.

One of the primary long term goals established by the lifetimes group is a series of walking routes that enable easy walking, away from busy roads, in local areas, that connect to form a network of routes across the city. This network would be interspersed with 'pause' or 'hub' spaces that provide communities with access to good quality public realm that would engender greater cross overs for people in the local community. These spaces would function as the 'village green' allowing for informal community meeting, pop up events and organised events like carnivals or celebrations - carol service/ easter egg hunt etc.

2 Pocket Public Spaces:

This Walking network is intersected by a series of nodal public spaces for the community to use. Spaces could range from small community gardens through to more formal squares and areas adjacent to shops. These town squares would enable a shift in culture and would be used daily by the community to play, meet, encounter and throughout the year to host street parties, local events and festivals.

“The focus of the Lifetimes group is the experience of the individual in relation to community and the way that public space shapes community and therefore the individual. This circle tells us why public or shared space is so important: it tells us so much about who we are, where we belong and what we should expect from the world. “

3 Social Entrepreneurs:

A new mechanism to manage and fund the co-created city. The idea of encouraging social entrepreneurs began with a conversation around identifying individuals in the community and supporting them to make small but significant changes to their local area. Activity could range from putting on events and street festivals to cultivating community gardens and pocket parks. This led to a discussion around funding and the suggestion that the award of funds could be devolved to a micro local level. £100k could be broken into 10 pots of £10,000 and shared across the city, then granted at a local level in awards of £500 or £1000 for small projects. This could result in 200 local projects happening across the city.

4 365 Days A Year Festival Culture & the 15 Minute City.

Taking the culture of the Hat fair and allowing it to run through all areas of the city and throughout the year. A focus of collecting in public space to participate in community activity as a way of ‘joining’ in the overlaps. The group really connected with the idea of the 15 minute city- the concept that wherever you are in the city you should be able to access good public space, shops and services within a 15 minute walk of your front door. The group talked about the idea that areas could be much more active collectively and socially within their local area and that this could also coalesce on the high street, which would become a shared meeting point. Perhaps events that happened locally in pockets of the city meet on the high street for collective performance/ sharing/ exhibition. Ideas that were suggested included closing the city centre to traffic for city wide- games, events of activities.

5 Mapping Resources:

Winchester is already rich in activity/ resources and opportunity but these are not always widely known or available. Creating a map of resources would allow for greater visibility and accessibility. An app could be created that shares information about play parks across the city, open education, free services, cultural activity.

6 Mentoring Projects:

One of the key areas of concern in Winchester related to retaining graduates. Whilst it is felt that this is important the group also stressed that all of the above relate to retaining graduates and creating opportunity. This mentoring project focuses specifically on connecting young people in the city and recent graduates with ‘adult’ locals who can support and advise. These sessions would be run online and mentors paired with young people. It was also suggested that this mentoring could be switched the other way and invite young people to mentor the elderly and support them in a digital context.

SECTION

1.

Integration.

Today began the journey of building the next vision of Winchester! Our group, the “lifetimes” group, was tasked with building a community in which there are a lifetime of opportunities. But to do so, we first had to start with what that means! We began our discussions with a map of our beautiful city. This prompted us to reflect on how the outer areas of Winchester interact with our centre, and how there are areas that may feel more distant from the city by hills, indirect routes to the centre or even just physical distance! How accessible was each area of Winchester to spaces of community? What barriers could we see to people connecting with Winchester as a place to spend their time? This brought up theories of a 15-minute community: a city where, no matter where you lived in it, you were always within 15 minutes from the community essentials (i.e. food, cafes, open spaces to play, activities).

We then reflected on who within the lifetime journey was less represented in Winchester and it became apparent that young people, specifically 20s-30s, were missing. This could be for a number of reasons, housing, employment opportunities for those graduating from school or university, or even areas such as nightlife. But we all decided one area of research we needed to delve into more was how to make Winchester a place for all ages to thrive. And this led us onto our final train of thought: Winchester being a space for all. Many studies demonstrate that the needs of young people can be very similar to the needs of the older generation – open spaces, places to socialise, support networks. And so similarly, we needed to grasp how to make Winchester an intergenerational city. A space for all generations to interact, play, communicate and thrive. Going forward we are going to be researching what each demographic needs within a community and how to ensure each group can thrive together. We are combining this research with making sure that all areas of Winchester are feeling this sense of community, and not just the centre.



Interaction between young and old

The creation of sustainable communities can be supported through spaces that facilitate intergenerational interaction, for example, by providing facilities for longer dwell time and a mix of active and contemplative public spaces. Activities that foster exchange, such as community gardening, can also help reduce isolation among the elderly and increase compassion and empathy in the young.”
Cities Alive, Designing For Urban Childhoods, Arrup





Week 1 Blog extract:



“A space for all generations to interact, play, communicate and thrive.”

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“Who on the lifetimes journey feels welcome and able to reach the fifteen minute city?”



“ A 15-minute city is an urban planning strategy that’s aimed at improving the quality of life for city-dwellers. In short, the strategy focuses on meeting the needs of citizens by giving residents access to everything they could need within a 15-minute radius of their home. **”**

“How is the city a space for all generations to interact?”

“How are areas outside the city centre experiencing community?”



SECTION

2

Co-creation.

The Lifetimes group this week focused on how we might achieve change in Winchester. Each group member presented their own research into a specific age group. Two group members (our youngest & oldest) worked together to think about how the elderly feel isolated by new technology.

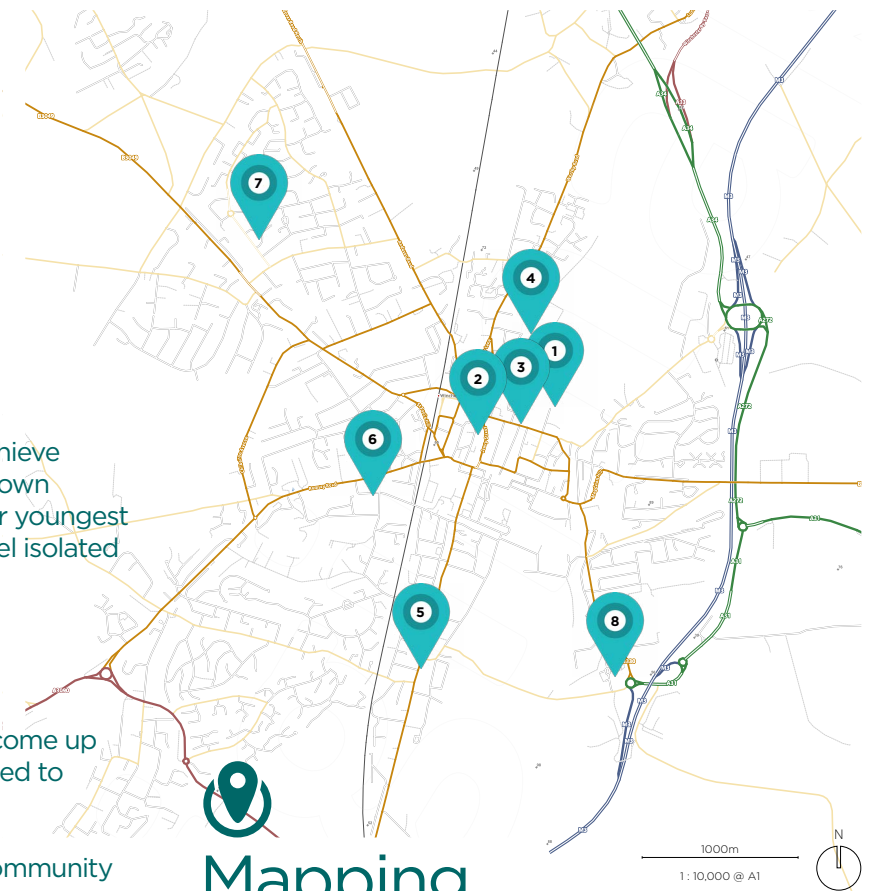
Mechanisms that can affect change: Culture shift toward a co created city.

We looked at common ground and cross overs in order to come up with a list of 'Hows'. These are mechanisms that might be used to effect change:

An important 'HOW' for the group centred on looking for community overlaps and meeting points for communities. Primarily this meant activities or spaces in which all members of the community could feel involved and included. The potential for this ranges from shared access to good quality public space where people can sit out, encounter and engage with each other informally through to temporal meeting points- for example road closures around school pick up and drop off.

The next 'How' related to creating overlaps by mapping resources in order to join the dots and make visible and accessible the wealth of resources, culture, infrastructure that already exists in the city.

We considered how to gather and map this data (e.g open source software such as Google Maps or Wikipedia that is open to all and allows the users to update and manage).



Mapping Lifetime Projects & Interventions

1. New pedestrian bridge to Leisure Centre and to connect river route.
2. Staple Gardens - gate in wall to provide pedestrian route through car park adjacent to library.
3. Pedestrian route through car park to North Walls .
4. Improvements to path adjacent to Recreation Ground.
5. St Cross Road, pavement and junction improvements.
6. Creation of pedestrian route from Romsey Road to St James' Lane.
7. Fromond Road - creation of path through central green area with seating, incidental play and connecting crossings.
8. Removal of barrier on pedestrian route from Bar End P&R to City Centre and signage.

“ Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody ”
Jane Jacobs

How can we make this data visible and usable by all? A Winchester inventory was discussed that anyone can access. We also looked at what to include in this map, such as resources for people to use or organisations to share. We looked for common ground highlighting the consensus and any overlaps. We thought how this might look spatially such as the inter-generational use of space. What is good for a 3 year old might also be good for an 83 year old?

We considered how different generations engage with technology and what strategies can be put in place to include all. This could include ideas around opening up city institutions and running courses for elderly people, encouraging ‘grey city tech’ events and local business acknowledging the elderly market.

We discussed how people make place. The people are the city or rather ‘We Are Winchester’. Therefore, the design should be led by use – the city is a dance. How can we all dance more? You can read more about this concept by Jane Jacobs and Henri Lefebvre in ‘Rhythmanalysis’ where a city is not a thing but a process.

We talked about extending the culture of the ‘Hat Fair’ and other festivals across the city 365 days a year, allowing people to take more ownership of public space.

Lastly, we discussed co-creativity; the re-making of public space through shared practices. This is ‘open-ended’ design that allows people input into a process. It encourages evolution and is flexible enough to shift and change. For example, the High Street can be reinvented as a social space with increased ‘dwell’ time creating opportunity for business.



Week 2 Blog extract:



“The message from the Lifetimes group to the next ten years is: **We want to create a city that inspires its young people through creativity, access to ideas and experiences.**”

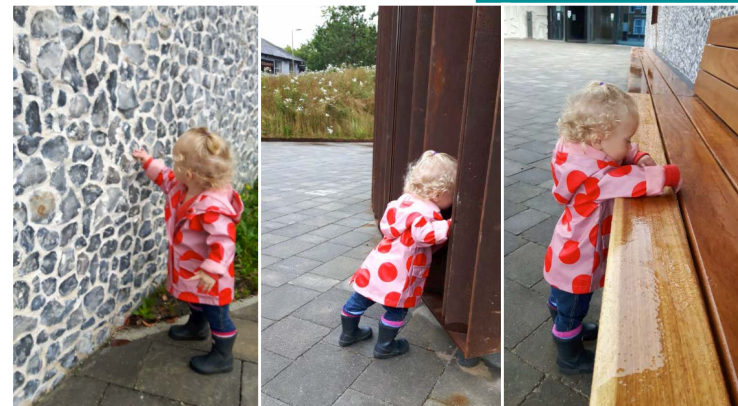
We want to make a connected city where young people can easily access ideas and experience and we want to have a city where all generations feel included and enabled.

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A child's eye view

16 month-old EM and her mother shared with local filmmaker, Penny Lawrence, a child's experience of public space. Their walk from Romsey Road to Nursery Gardens is an important



permeable pedestrian part of the city linking the hospital, university station, schools and nurseries. EM's parents noted her confident tactile relations with the built environment, “She is her own boss when she is outside” when she had enough space to be free yet with her parents close by.

SECTION

3.

Cultures.

During this third session we agreed that the Lifetimes Working Group was about defining principles rather than mapping ideas spatially. The idea of focusing on principles has emerged from the group's collective interest in the 15 minute city which we discussed last week, and the idea that we should focus on how to create lifelong opportunity in a 15 minute city in Winchester and prioritise the cross-overs and the common ground between different age groups.

There seemed to be a bit of disagreement within the group between utility and function versus attractiveness and 'beauty'. The latter arguably contributes to well-being, whereas the former focuses much more on what people need and a basic desire to establish equality and equal access to basic community needs such as a place to socialise or a decent shop etc.

This led to a discussion about connectivity and the routes and pathways that could currently be walked in each area but which don't quite connect. i.e a circular route that might circumnavigate busy roads, allowing people to walk a connected route between home and school or into town or to the park.

We also discussed travel and options for people moving about the city and the fact that the city is full of cultural, historic artefacts and natural spaces; often people don't use these free resources. We talked about the barriers that are preventing them from accessing them, which touched on a far more complex set of questions relating to culture, individual cultures, personal motivations and psychologies. This relates back to ideas in Week 1, where we talked about how young people can be encouraged and motivated to have greater agency if they have access to groups or mentors in the community.



Case Study: Winter Wanderland

'Window Wanderland' is an event run in February in Bristol. Residents decorate their front window and a map is created so that people can tour this neighbourhood exhibition and come together at the coldest, most drab time of the year.

Week 3 Blog extract:



“Although we found as many problems to solutions I think this meeting has opened up the discussion of what is possible and how far reaching those possibilities could be

both in terms of the more localised residential areas and the way that could interleave into the city centre, creating a high street that is more playful, that people come to spend time, to socialise. This dwell time is then picked back up as an economic impact as shops and business spring up to accommodate the new town centre.”

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A suggested solution to this is creating an index of all resources in Winchester that can be shared. However, we noted that if a person is not motivated to do so it becomes hard to encourage them to take part and furthermore this shared resource started to feel a bit like the err... internet!!

Last week, we discussed adopting the culture of the Hat Fair 365 days a year; the city should be a porous experience co-created by the people who lived here.

It was suggested that a year round calendar of activities could activate the '15 Minute cities' that surround the town centre and that the High Street itself becomes a meeting place, a space of convergence where perhaps all of the neighbourhoods come together.

The focus of all these ideas was how to co-create public space that enabled all age groups to participate. That 'public realm' or the places between A & B are opened up and activated so that every pavement, park, alleyway is a place for people to connect with each other and with the culture of the city. These spaces can leap into action and become the culture of the city where individuals express themselves through brilliant front gardens and generous planting creates colourful walks throughout the year.

Communities taking ownership over their 15 minute neighbourhood could also include devolving power for the central WCC to groups. Small project grants for example, that would be disseminated across the city could have a really big impact and, although some may fail, it would break the impasse feeling like nothing is moving or changing. Paris was highlighted as a city that gives 10% of its budget to community participation.



“Utopian thinking was rightly challenged with the question of equality. The neighbourhoods that are already doing well would simply go on to exceed at producing brilliantly orchestrated public space and those more challenged areas would need greater support.”

“There’s an appetite for live (pop) music but few gigs put on”

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26 June



SECTION

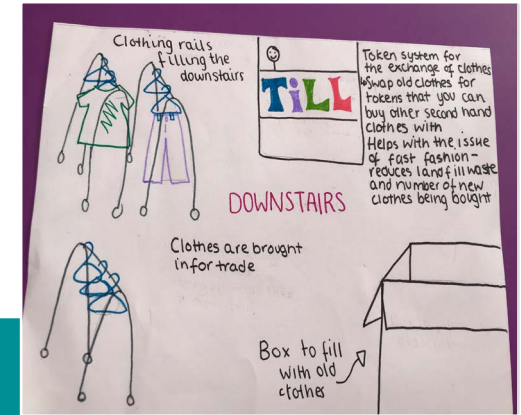
4.

Connect.

Primarily, the Lifetimes Group has focused on the need to create a cultural shift towards empowering people to have greater agency over where they live and the ways in which public space is organised. People felt strongly that we could advocate for this change and shift agency towards the local community. The key message from the Lifetimes group is that the mechanisms around how communities access and use public space could shift and that this change could engender and empower if done right.

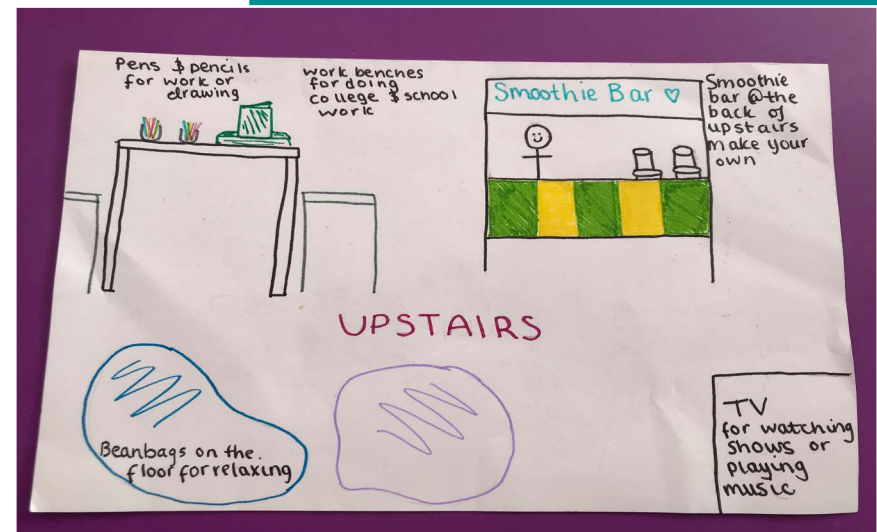
A key focus of the group was access to public space and the idea that public space needed to be viewed as community space. From the town centre to the suburbs public space could be actively designed to intergrate the community and create opportunities for people to learn, play, develop and connect. That public space is also a place for culture, to travel actively and participate as a citizen.

It was noted by the group, who came from across Winchester, that there are currently 'almost' local walking routes and networks that link up neighbourhoods, but that these intuitive walking grids could be better connected in order to be able to actively navigate the city. People felt that infrastructure projects could focus on opening up these routes in order to create greater sense of well being and community for residents.



Case study: The Young Women's Design Forum

As part of our research we reached out to young people in the city to take part in a design forum to re-think the High Street.



Just some of the forum's thoughts shown here, from Carmen Waters and Alice Dawson.

Week 4 Blog extract:



“Some of the questions raised by the Lifetimes group are about cultural shifts in how public space is organised, how local communities can be supported and what a tool kit for this support could look like? “

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26 June



It was noted that a walking audit of Winchester has already been carried out and that in fact this survey could form the basis for an implemented network. Hub or pause spaces could be carved out around nodes or meeting points in order to make community gardens and public squares. A good example of this is Lockleaze community square in Bristol which took an open area of common ground and transformed it into a public meeting space and community garden with adjacent community centre.

This network would facilitate a number of new directions the focus of these being HOW the community use public space. From using these local communal areas as places for meetings, parties and festivals through to growing spaces and community gardens.

Other cross overs and ways to connect that were discussed were around mapping and sharing information- looking for resources that are underused and making them more available through an ap. An example was given of a park and basketball court that few residents knew about. It was suggested that an ap that could share this information would mean that currently underused resources could be made more available. This could also be extended to human resources- sharing and making available peoples experience via a mentoring project that allowed in particular young people access to potential mentors or indeed the elderly to access to greater tech resources.



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