

Princes Risborough Marketing Report

Written by:

Sally Williams

Managing Director

Retail Revival Ltd

sally@retailrevival.org.uk

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This marketing report has been written by Retail Revival (RR) and commissioned by Princes Risborough Town Council (PRTC). It forms part of a wider community planning project designed to overcome issues affecting the profitability and economic growth of Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire.
- 1.2. The report is not comprehensive nor the result of extensive research; instead it uses some secondary and primary evidence **to begin a discussion** about the future placement of Princes Risborough in an overcrowded visitor market.
- 1.3. The report begins to answer the following questions:
 - What market segments are most likely to use Princes Risborough?
 - What do people want and need from Princes Risborough?
 - How can Princes Risborough meet these needs and wants?
 - How will Princes Risborough let people know that it can meet their needs?

2. Shopping Segmentation

- 2.1. A market segment is an identifiable group of people sharing one or more characteristic in an otherwise homogenous market. It is possible to segment a market in a number of ways – age, gender, income etc.
- 2.2. Risborough cannot be ‘all things to all people’; the first step to successful marketing is determining which market segments are more likely to use Risborough than others.
- 2.3. An Experian ‘Mosaic UK’ Shoppers’ Survey report¹ was commissioned for Princes Risborough to determine who currently uses the town for shopping.
- 2.4. Figure 1 illustrates the catchment area of Princes Risborough. The yellow area of the map shows the general location of residents that shop in Risborough. There are 69566 people living in Risborough’ catchment area.

¹ This survey provides detailed knowledge of consumers preferred shopping destinations in-town and in retail parks. Mosaic classifies these individuals using census, financial, housing and retail data. By combining this with the profile’s information on local employment, age and family structure and social status, we are able to understand the varied lifestyles and behaviours of individual customers within Risborough’ catchment.

- 2.5. Figure 2 lists the 'Catchment Population Leakage'. This explains where people in Risborough' catchment area largely shop. From the 69566 people in the catchment area, just 1273 use Risborough as their primary shopping centre, this is less than 2%.
- 2.6. Experian segments the national population by breaking it down into 155 person types, 67 household types and 15 groups. Figure 3 shows which groups make up the local shopper population of Risborough and Figure 4 compares this data with the rest of the country. From the 1273 people that use Risborough as their primary shopping centre three key market segments emerge:
- Symbols of Success
 - Happy Families
 - Suburban Comfort
- 2.7. A description of each of these market segments can be found in figures 7, 8 and 9.
- 2.8. Only 2% (1273 people) of Princes Risborough' catchment area uses the town as a primary shopping centre and, of these, over 70% comes from affluent market segments. Figure 5 shows where each market segment lives within the catchment area of Risborough.
- 2.9. Most of the expenditure leakage in Risborough' catchment area goes to Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Oxford. This is illustrated in figure 6.

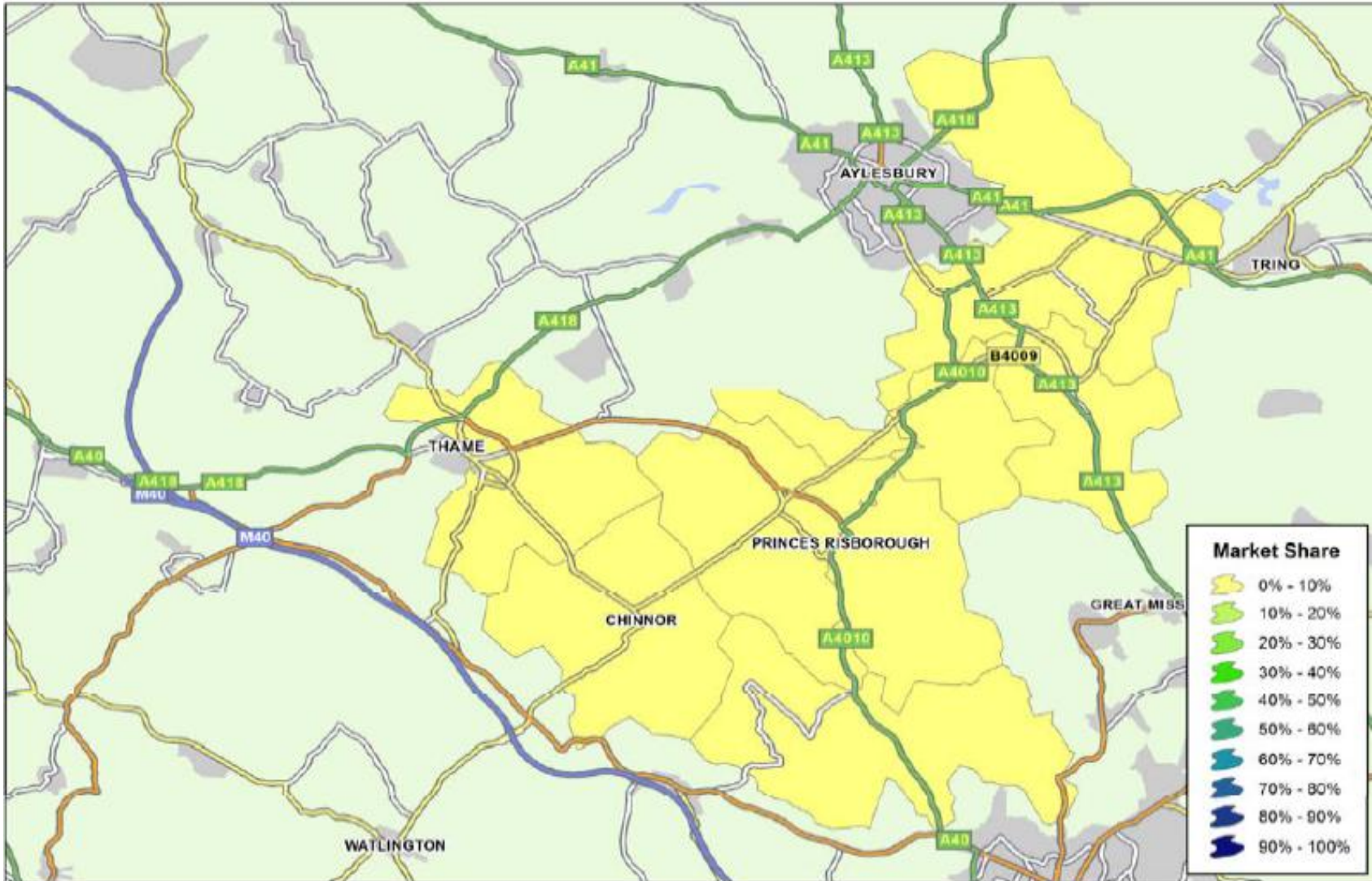


Figure 1 Risborough Catchment Area

Catchment Population Leakage



Retail Centre	Leakage from Princes Risborough Catchment	
	Shopper Population	%
Aylesbury	26,877	38.6%
High Wycombe	18,217	26.2%
Oxford	4,260	6.1%
Hemel Hempstead	3,927	5.6%
Thame	1,801	2.6%
Slough	1,417	2.0%
Cowley	1,311	1.9%
Princes Risborough	1,273	1.8%
Maidenhead	1,074	1.5%
London West End	962	1.4%
Other	8,445	12.1%
Total Catchment Population	69,566	100.0%

Figure 2: Leakage from Princes Risborough Catchment Area

Mosaic Profile of Princes Risborough Catchment

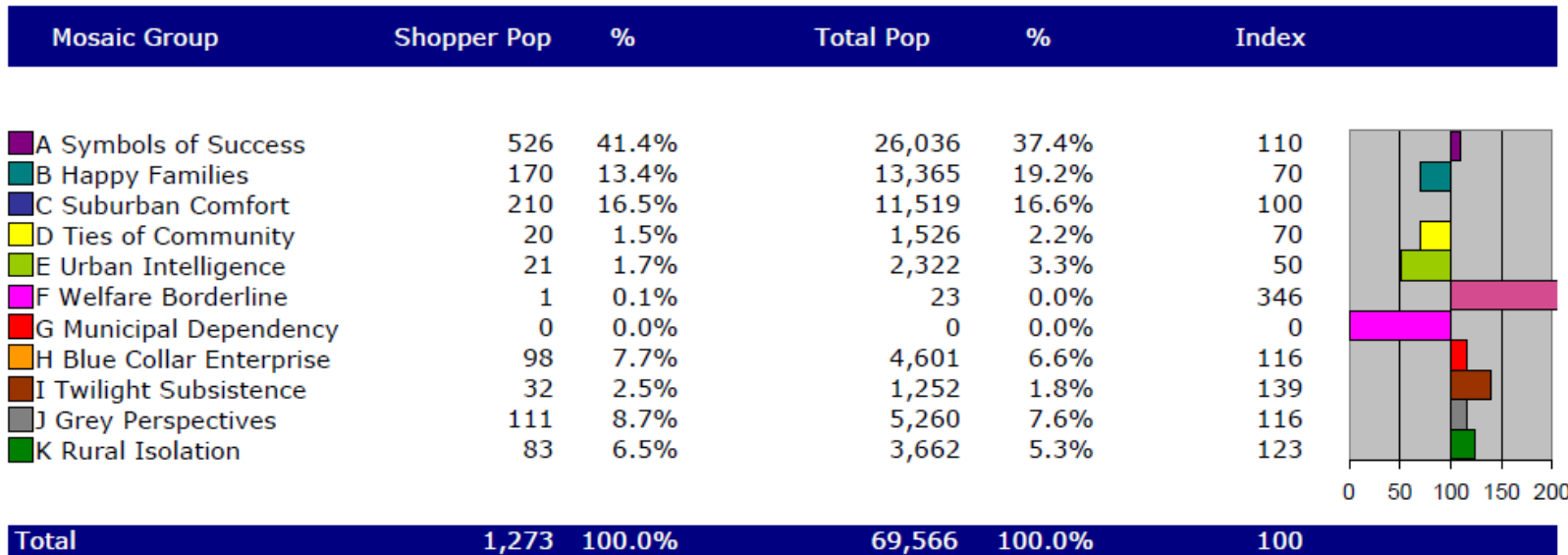


Figure 3: Profile of Princes Risborough Catchment

Mosaic Comparison of Princes Risborough Catchment

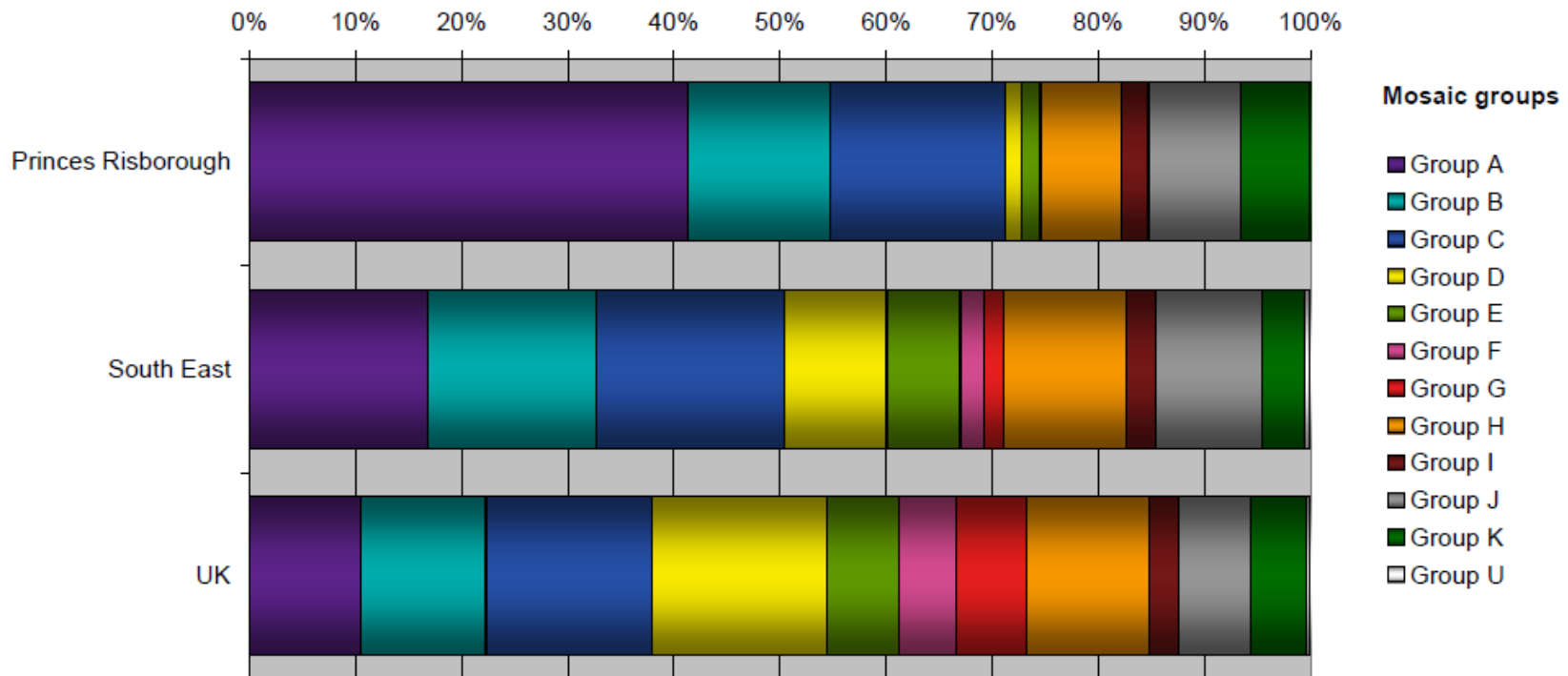


Figure 4 Comparison of Princes Risborough Catchment

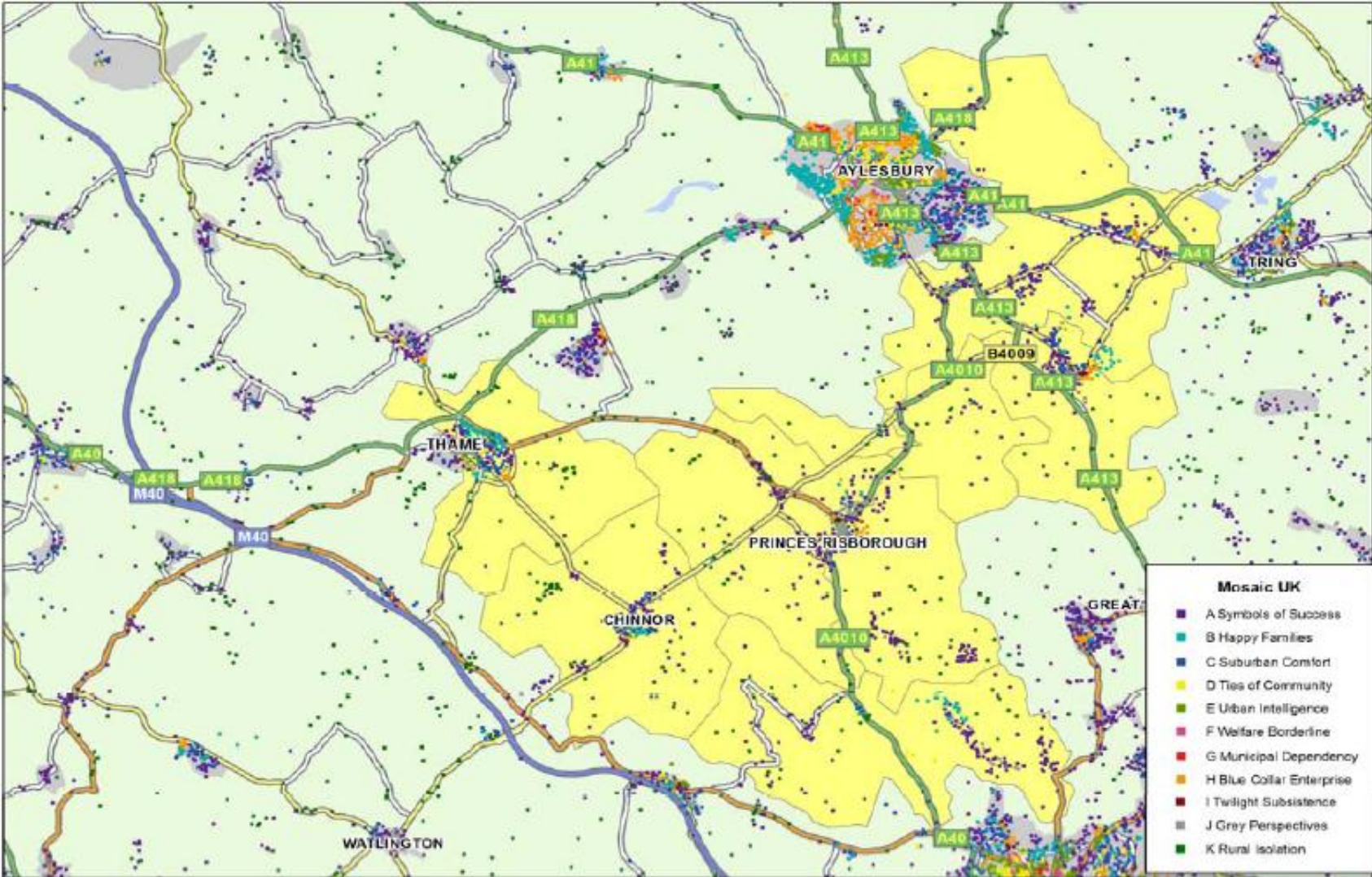


Figure 5: Map of Princes Risborough Catchment Area – Yellow Shaded

Catchment Expenditure Leakage



Retail Centre	Leakage from Princes Risborough Catchment	
	Shopper Expenditure	%
Aylesbury	137,962,558	37.9%
High Wycombe	97,366,703	26.8%
Oxford	21,962,949	6.0%
Hemel Hempstead	20,686,505	5.7%
Thame	9,221,140	2.5%
Slough	7,503,914	2.1%
Cowley	6,754,662	1.9%
Princes Risborough	6,735,520	1.9%
Maidenhead	5,730,387	1.6%
London West End	5,081,070	1.4%
Other	44,646,246	12.3%
Total Catchment Expenditure	363,651,656	100.0%

Total Worker Spend: £202513	Total Tourist Spend: £63012	Catchment area 245 Sq Km
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Figure 6: Catchment Expenditure Leak

Symbols of Success Rupert and Felicity

Symbols of Success people are well set in their careers and their incomes have risen far into upper income tax ranges. Some work for large corporations in senior management positions; some hold respected roles in professional practices; others have built successful enterprises with their own commercial acumen.

These are people with busy and complex family lives. Their children are now less time consuming, with more independent lifestyles, but with leisure interests that are likely to be more expensive.

This group is mostly white British but is likely to contain significant Jewish, European, Chinese and Indian minorities.

Symbols of Success neighbourhoods are concentrated in economically successful regions, notably London and the South East of England, where a high proportion of the workforce is engaged in 'knowledge' industries. These are typically neighbourhoods of choice housing, whether fashionable inner city areas such as Kensington or the New Town area of Edinburgh or prestige outer suburbs. These are well-established neighbourhoods; houses are well built and spacious, with four or more bedrooms, very often built to individual designs at low densities.

In this group, status is established by the values associated with the brand rather than by the product category, and by the manner in which the product is accessed and consumed. The air of discretion and understatement that is associated with traditional premium brands appeals more than the flamboyance and conspicuous consumption associated with the nouveau riche.

Symbols of Success people are likely to have accumulated substantial equity of some kind, and to have a high 'net worth'. Assets might be held as equity in high value properties, in stocks and shares, in pension schemes or in the form of illiquid assets such as business enterprises.

Figure 7

Happy Families

Darren and Joanne

Happy Families contains people whose focus is on career, home and family. They are mostly young couples, married or living with their partner, raising pre-school and school-age children. This group's educational attainment has enabled them to secure positions in large organisations in either the private or the public sector, with the prospect of future career advancement.

These neighbourhoods consist of modern, purpose-built family housing, either detached or semi-detached, on estates with other young families. These estates are often some considerable distance from major commercial centres but an easy driving distance from many potential workplaces, such as major new industrial or office 'parks'.

Happy Families neighbourhoods are typically found in areas of rapidly expanding employment, around towns such as Swindon, Northampton and Milton Keynes. Some of the new jobs are in locally grown businesses in new industrial sectors such as information technology, biotechnology or business services. Other jobs are in organisations that are relocating from inner city sites to new green-field office parks; these are close to the motorway network, and within easy reach of potential employees.

Happy Families place a high value on material possessions. To some extent, this reflects their life stage, when investing in new homes involves substantial expenditure on appliances. Modern design, the use of high technology, and reliability are important consumer values in these neighbourhoods.

Happy Families tend to need credit. Quite apart from a mortgage, there may be one or two cars that need to be financed, and many residents also use credit to buy consumer durables. With steady incomes and often with two parents working these debts are usually affordable and are typically spread across credit cards, personal loans and retail credit.

Figure 8

Suburban Comfort

Geoffrey and Valerie

Suburban Comfort people have established themselves and their families in comfortable homes in mature suburbs. Children are becoming independent, work is less of a challenge and interest payments on homes and other loans are becoming less burdensome.

These people live in inter-war suburbs and work mostly in intermediate level, white-collar occupations, where they are beginning to plan for approaching retirement. They are likely to be married and most have children, who may be at secondary school or university, or grown up and starting families of their own.

These neighbourhoods consist mostly of houses built between 1918 and 1970 to meet the needs of a new generation of white-collar office workers. Pleasant but homogenous semi-detached houses are set back from the road in generously sized plots with leafy gardens. Such areas were once on the edge of the city, but they now often form a no-man's land between the high density Victorian inner city and the more modern family estates further out.

People in this group value independence and self-reliance, and tend to rely on their own judgment, rather than social or community attitudes, when taking key decisions. Although they expect neighbours to be helpful, they do not necessarily take pride in or get involved with their local community.

'An Englishman's home is his castle' could describe this group's outlook.

Suburban Comfort people seldom earn enough money to accumulate significant wealth. Much of their personal equity is locked up in their property, which has often increased significantly in value in relation to the original mortgage. A number have small share investments; most own and use credit cards, but usually as a convenient method of payment rather than as a line of credit. As rational planners who want to minimise financial uncertainty, this group is a good market for insurance products.

Figure 9

3. Visitor Segmentation

3.1. **A visitor** is ‘somebody spending three hours or more away from home where the visit is not undertaken on a regular basis’². Visitors have many motivations for visiting a market town, they include:

- **Leisure:** Culture, Food and Drink, Festivals and Events, Attractions, Adventure, Wildlife
- **Business:** conferences, meetings, exhibitions, trade shows, training courses and any other business travel

3.2. The table below shows that the majority of visitors to the South East region come from within the South East, London and the South West region.

	Origin of Domestic Visitors to South East	
	Trips	Spend
	%	%
London	15	13
East Midlands	5	12
East of England	13	6
West Midlands	4	4
North West	6	7
North East	2	2
South East (excluding London)	32	25
South West	12	11
Yorks & Humberside	6	9
Scotland	3	7
Wales	3	4
Northern Ireland	0	0

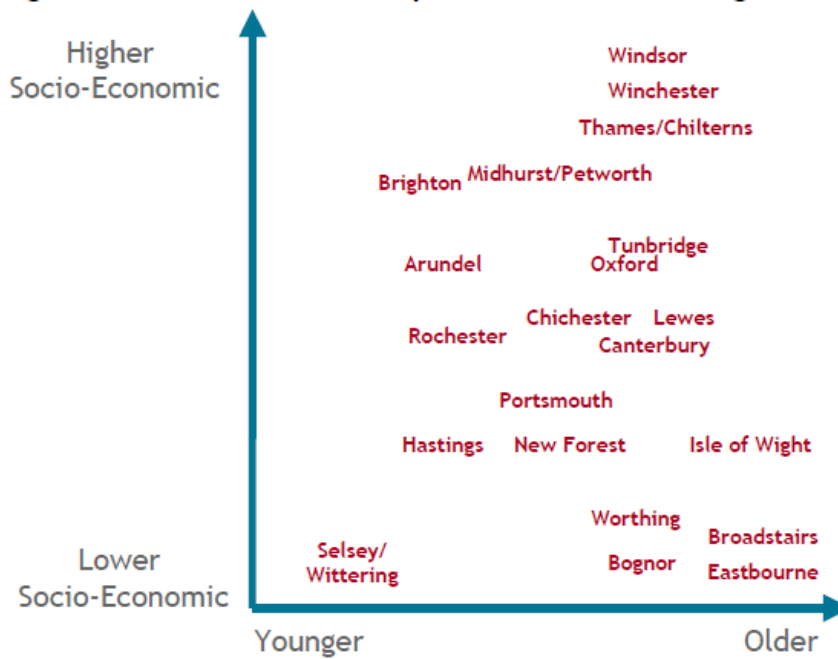
3.3. Any conclusions made about the visitor segments most likely to use Risborough will be made as a result of analysing regional and sub-regional research. There are no recent visitor segment statistics for Princes Risborough.

3.4. In 2005 Tourism South East commissioned a survey to identify visitor segments to the region. 5000 surveys were undertaken in 22 different towns in the South East. The results were then segmented using two separate models: Cameo and Ark Leisure.

² VisitBritain

3.5. The CAMEO Model uses postcodes to classify people according to their socio demographic status. Figure 10 shows that visitors to the Chilterns tend to be older and wealthier.

Figure 10: CAMEO Market Segmentation



3.6. The Ark Leisure Model divides visitors into eight categories according to their values and behaviour specifically relating to holidays and leisure time. The 8 segments are: Style Hounds, High Streets, Followers, Habituals, Cosmopolitans, Discoverers, Traditionals and Functionals. Figure 11 plots these types in a diagram using two fundamental dimensions as axes – adventure/exploration against safety/conservatism and self interest and image against conscience and spirituality.³

³ Understanding target markets; Blue Sail

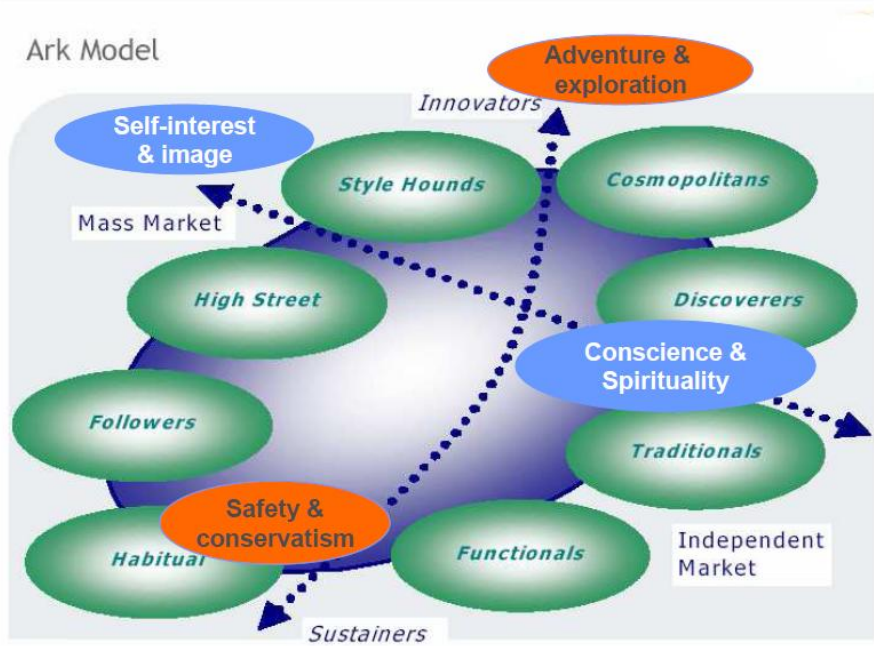


Figure 11: Ark Leisure Model of Segmentation

3.7. Using the Ark Leisure Model, research⁴ shows that the four market segments most often found visiting the Thames and Chilterns area are the ‘Cosmopolitans’, ‘High Streets’, ‘Traditionals’ and ‘Functionals’ - Table 1.

3.8. Table 2 outlines the key characteristics of the people in these categories.

Table 1: Chilterns and Thames Ark Segments

Group	Thames and Chiltern	Whole population	Mean age	Income	Family
Cosmopolitans	19%	15%	42	£26k	34%
High Streets	16%	21%	42	£22k	32%
Traditionals	16%	12%	56	£20k	20%
Functionals	15%	9%	53	£16k	25%

⁴ Locum Consulting: A more refined approach to destination development and marketing

Table 2: Characteristics of Four Key Chilterns Market Segments

Category	Characteristics
Cosmopolitans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, active, confident • Style and brand important, but as an expression of their self-made identity • most active attraction visitors both in variety visited and repeat visits • High spenders especially on innovation and technology • Looking for new challenges, new experiences • Globetrotters • The largest proportion of visitors for Culture and Heritage and Gardens and Manor Houses
Traditionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reliant, internally referenced • Slow to adopt new options • Strong orientation towards traditional values • Value individual attention and service • More likely to visit Culture and Heritage attractions than the other attraction types • Enjoy market towns
High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream early adopters • Followers of high street fashion • Care what others think • Happy to buy packaged options • The largest segment for family attractions
Functionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reliant • Price-driven • Value function over style • Traditional values, but interested in new experiences, not risk averse • Least likely of all segments to have been on a shopping trip • Value bargains at markets

3.9. Although the research used above is regional, it provides useful data at sub regional level. Though not specific to Princes Risborough the data goes some way to identifying the market segments for the Chiltern area. It is likely that the High Street segment, described in table 2, will be more attracted to larger settlements in the Thames and Chilterns sub region for a greater range of high street shops than

Risborough. Princes Risborough might look towards the functional, traditional and cosmopolitan market segments to influence an early marketing strategy.

4. Market Segment Needs

- 4.1. In order to target a market segment it helps a town to have a Unique Selling Point (USP) or niche offer. Leisure tourists in particular will be attracted by something that is distinctive about Risborough and sets it apart from the competition. Grand aspirations are all well and good but the potential for a town centre's economy will be largely determined by its current function, size and location.
- 4.2. Risborough is sometimes compared unfavourably to Thame, a town 7 miles away in Oxfordshire. This is an unfair comparison because Thame is a much larger and vibrant town: it has wide streets, diverse architectural styles and a large market place. Risborough needs to identify and focus on its own distinctive characteristics and use them to attract pertinent market segments.
- 4.3. The Market Town Benchmarking Survey⁵ identified that Risborough's primary function was as a 'town for locals'. The majority of people using the town did so often and for short trips. 51% of shoppers surveyed lived in the town. Over 80% of the people surveyed were using the town for work, to access services like the doctors or bank and to do convenience shopping.
- 4.4. Research showed that 80% of the people using Risborough did so at least once a week, with 52% using the town every day. Over half of those surveyed were staying in the town for just one hour or less. The length of time people spend in the town clearly needs to be increased to encourage users to spend more money locally in shops and restaurants.
- 4.5. The average footfall count in Risborough High Street on a non-market day was 81 persons per 10 minutes, whilst on a market day this increased to 144. Car Parking occupancy was also noticeably higher on a market day (82% over 60%), both points emphasizing the importance of the market to the vibrancy of Princes Risborough.
- 4.6. Over 80% of people surveyed believed that the variety of shops in Risborough was 'poor' or 'very poor'. Regarding leisure and cultural facilities in Princes Risborough town centre, opinion was divided, with 46.2% stating that these were poor and 43.6% stating they were good.

⁵ Market Towns Benchmarking Report – Action for Market Towns 2010

- 4.7. Current users of Risborough Town Centre see the town as a convenient way to access services. On the whole they were 'popping in' to use a service or convenience shop because the town centre is close to their home or place of work. Very few people surveyed saw Risborough as a place to shop for comparison goods or to spend time browsing.
- 4.8. To attract more people to the town and to increase their length of stay Risborough needs to increase its offer. Ideally empty shops would be filled with a greater range of shops, selling comparison goods in particular. However as this is unlikely to occur overnight, a more immediate solution might be to increase the volume of stalls on the market and offer an annual programme of events and activities to meet the needs of the target markets described in the Experian Shoppers Survey Report above.
- 4.9. Experian shows that Risborough has a high proportion of families with children of school age and yet town centre businesses offer very little in the way of children's toys, books, games and clothing. The town centre also fails to offer children's events and activities at weekends to attract families.

5. Visitor Needs

- 5.1. In 2009 there were 18.3 million domestic overnight trips to South East England, generating a total spend of £2.6bn. 50% of those trips were holiday and leisure trips, 27% were people visiting friends and relatives, 21% were business trips and 2% were other.
- 5.2. Data doesn't exist to identify what percentage of these visitors come to Princes Risborough, however the following list of most popular regional attractions, shows that 355,770 people visited Wendover Woods in 2009. Wendover Woods is less than nine miles from Princes Risborough. If link trips were made between the two it can be seen that the potential for tourist footfall in Risborough is high.

Top 10 Free Attractions 2009		Top 10 Paid Attractions 2009	
Name of Attraction	Visitors 2009	Name of Attraction	Visitors 2009
Willen Lake and Park	1,000,000	Canterbury Cathedral	1,013,118
Oxford University Museum of Natural History	506,895	RHS Garden Wisley	964,212
Lower Leas Coastal Park & Amphitheatre	500,000	The Look Out Discovery Centre	695,290
Queen Elizabeth Country Park	344,442	Leeds Castle	646,801
The Packhouse	300,000	Blenheim Palace	537,120
Pitt Rivers Museum	255,622	Portsmouth Historic Dockyard	532,158
City Museum	236,420	Wakehurst Place	454,932
Itchen Valley Country Park	235,638	Wendover Woods	355,770
Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest	230,890	National Motor Museum Beaulieu	351,975
Runnymede	230,000	Waddesdon Manor	348,620

5.3. Visitors look for and need different things from their destinations. Research⁶ shows that visitors to market towns are attracted by the following:

- A distinctive product offer
- A unique attraction, event or festival
- A positive and welcoming environment
- Essential services
- Information about the town and surrounding area
- Easy parking, traffic manoeuvre and signage
- An attractive built fabric
- A distinctive retail offer
- Heritage
- A quality environment

The Princes Risborough Market Towns Benchmarking report identified that 93% of those surveyed felt that Risborough was clean and attractive. However many respondents were disparaging about other aspects of the town. Sections 6-8 explore visitor needs further and determines whether the town can provide for them.

6. Attractions

6.1. Research⁷ shows that visiting an attraction accounts for 12% of all tourism trips in the UK. Approximately 58% of people take a trip to a visitor attraction at least three of four times a year.

⁶ Countryside Agency MTI Evaluation 2007

⁷ VB National Day Visitor Research

6.2. Table 2 illustrates that Cosmopolitans and Traditionals – two potential market segments for Risborough - seek cultural and heritage activities and enjoy visiting manor houses, stately homes and art galleries.

6.3. Visit Britain defines an attraction as:

"... an attraction - to charge admission for the sole purpose of sightseeing. The attraction must be a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for entertainment, interest or education; rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical or film performances. It must be open to the public, without prior booking, for published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists as well as local residents."

6.4. Table 3 lists the number of attractions in the South East categorised by type. 84 of these attractions are in Buckinghamshire and a further 148 in bordering Oxfordshire.

Table 3: Visitor Attractions in the South East Region⁸

Attraction Type	Number of Attractions
Country Parks	65
Farms	57
Gardens	106
Historic Houses/Castles	179
Other Historic Properties	109
Leisure/Theme Parks	67
Museums/Art Galleries	350
Railways	26
Visitor/Heritage Centres	42
Wildlife Attractions	110
Workplaces	122
Places of Worship	87
Other	185
Total	1,502

⁸ Source: Tourism South East Visitor Attractions Audit

- 6.5. The Enjoy England Website lists 8 attractions within a five mile radius of Princes Risborough; they are, Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway, The Horse Trust, Tiggwinkles Wildlife Hospital, Lacey Green Maize Maze, Chiltern Brewery, Bucks Goat Centre, Obsidian Art and Lacey Green Windmill. There is great potential to encourage link trips between Risborough and these attractions.
- 6.6. A further 42 attractions are listed within a ten mile radius including Waddesden Manor, Roald Dahl Museum, Wendover Woods and Hughenden Manor.
- 6.7. Princes Risborough itself has a very limited offer of tourist attractions so in order to attract visitors the town could be incorporated into a trail of towns or locations. There are many ways of doing this which need to be explored further. Heritage trails are popular and mainstream and link locations through often historic sites. The Midsomer Murders Trail links locations used in the filming of a television series.
- 6.8. Geocaching is a relatively new phenomenon. It is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, outdoors and then share experiences online. Geocaching is enjoyed by people from all age groups, with a strong sense of community and support for the environment. Geocaching would perhaps appeal to the Cosmopolitan market segment; they enjoy new experiences and are interested in modern technologies. Princes Risborough could hide geocaches in sites around the town and nearby areas of interest to attract new market segments and keep people in the town long enough to use local businesses.

7. Retail and Eating Out

- 7.1. Research⁹ shows that shopping is a very important activity for visitors; going on a special shopping trip accounts for 15% of all tourism trips in the UK, 50% of trips include a shopping element and 30% of people would prefer to go shopping on a day trip. Furthermore 40% of trips to visitor attractions include purchasing gifts and souvenirs.
- 7.2. For the Cosmopolitan segment – a potential market segment for Risborough – a variety of food and drink outlets are very important. Furthermore 64% of all shopping trips include food purchases and over a third (35%) of all trips includes spending on alcohol.

⁹ VB National Day Visitor Research

- 7.3. A balance of both comparison and convenience retail units is need to encourage visitors and other potential customers. Within Princes Risborough town centre there is an imbalance of the Comparison¹⁰ and Convenience¹¹ shops. Only 38% of the A1 commercial units sell Comparison goods, which is a vast difference from the national average of 66%.
- 7.4. Risborough doesn't have a great volume and diversity of shops and it suffers from prominent empty shop units. The town doesn't have an auction and the Charter market is very small. Risborough has at least four clusters of businesses of a similar type, they are:
- Giftware and fancy goods
 - Quality Food
 - Daytime Eating and Drinking
 - Charity Shops
- 7.5. People in the 'Functionals' market segment are driven by price and have a keen eye for a bargain. The cluster of good quality, nicely presented charity shops in Risborough provides a potential niche market for this segment.
- 7.6. People in the 'Traditionals' market segment value good service. As the majority of businesses in Risborough are independent it is expected that they will be well placed to provide excellent customer service and use this as a means to differentiate in an overcrowded market.
- 7.7. In Princes Risborough, Ercol, a furniture manufacturer, has a factory, showroom and factory outlet selling ex-display, seconds and returned items to the public. Ercol is a national brand and is the UK's biggest manufacturer of solid wood furniture. The outlet has the potential to attract the 'Cosmopolitan' market segment who are style and brand conscious.
- 7.8. Risborough needs to find ways to improve its shopping offer. As described earlier the potential for specialist markets should be exploited and a further range of shops needs to be attracted to sell products that are currently missing in the town centre.

¹⁰ Books, clothing and footwear, furniture, floor coverings and household textiles, radio, electrical and other durable goods, hardware, and DIY supplies, jewellery, silverware, watches and clocks, recreational and other miscellaneous goods.

¹¹ Food, confectionary, newspapers, magazines and other frequently purchased accessible and easily portable goods

8. Countryside and Adventure

8.1. Princes Risborough is set on the edge of the Chilterns an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Map 1 illustrates the town's location.



Map 1: Map of Risborough in relation to the Chilterns AONB

8.2. The scenic countryside of the Chilterns is enjoyed by millions of visitors every year. Most come on daytrips and their favourite activity is to go on walks and appreciate the stunning views from the Chilterns ridge. Others use the quiet lanes and bridleways to cycle and ride horses.¹²

8.3. Walkers, ramblers and cyclists require places to stop to eat and rest, places to stay and information which gives guidance on where to go, what to see, how to get there and what walking/cycling conditions to expect.¹³

¹² The Chilterns Website

¹³ The National Trust

- 8.4. Research¹⁴ shows that apart from pubs the Chilterns offers a significant lack of opportunities for visitors to spend. There is considerable scope to increase the level of expenditure by individual visitors, rather than by attracting more visitors. An increase in overnight stays would significantly increase the value of tourism, but there is a long standing shortage of suitable accommodation.
- 8.5. Princes Risborough has excellent rail connections to the Chilterns which would attract walkers and cyclists looking to use public transport. It doesn't have walking or running shops and although it has an excellent cycle shop this has reduced opening hours at the weekend and during the winter. Restaurants could do more to directly target walkers or cyclists by offering bike racks, space for rucksacks, muddy boots and other outdoor paraphernalia.

9. Business Tourism

- 9.1. The United Kingdom Tourism Survey (UKTS) is a national consumer survey measuring the volume and value of tourism trips taken by residents of the United Kingdom. The survey covers trips away from home lasting one night or more taken by UK residents and shows that in South East region in 2009, 12% of trips were for business purposes.
- 9.2. Regional data doesn't measure the extent of business tourism in Princes Risborough, however the Chilterns has a tradition for furniture making and the town has two large furniture factories, Hypnos and Ercol, attracting businesses visitors from across the world.
- 9.3. Buckinghamshire has a film industry niche and is home to Pinewood studios. Princes Risborough is close to London and offers an attractive and accessible location for filming. 'Midsomer Murders' has been filmed in the town and The Kings Speech was filmed close by in Wendover Woods. The potential to expand this film location market is an opportunity to boost the local business tourism market. Not only would the town benefit from additional business brought by the film crews but popular television locations also attract leisure visitors.
- 9.4. Business visitors to Risborough require accommodation, food and drink. Currently Hypnos uses hotels in other towns for their business travellers as Risborough hasn't a sufficiently large hotel to meet their needs. Local restaurants are used for business entertaining to some extent.

¹⁴ Chilterns Leader LAG Local Development Strategy

10. Communications

10.1. In order for Princes Risborough to sell itself and the services and products within it as successfully as possible, it is important to assess the offer it is making to its target market. It needs to be providing the right product or service at the right price or quality in the right place and at the right time and promoting this in the right way. In other words it is essential to get the correct marketing mix with the following four main elements: Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

10.2. To attract users and reach target markets Princes Risborough needs to raise awareness of both the town and the activities and services within it by communicating with the target market. A communications plan will help those promoting Risborough to:

- Prioritise market segments
- Determine the communication objectives and the key messages that need to be delivered to these segments
- List effective communication techniques for each segment and complete an audit of those already used
- Allocate budget and responsibilities for communication
- Design a communications calendar to prevent duplication or gaps in communication activity

10.3. Currently the town features on many websites, in printed brochures and promotional leaflets and receives publicity through mainly local media channels. A communications strategy will help define the budget available to promote Princes Risborough and the methods of communication that will be used in a twelve month period. This needs to be a co-ordinated approach to make the most of local resources. The channels of communication that are available to promote Risborough are listed below:

- **Advertising** involves mass media, from TV and radio to the Internet, magazines, newspapers and billboards. It is an expensive method of promotion and there is little real evidence to show how effective it is in generating actual visits to town centres. People are swamped by adverts daily and many go unnoticed.
- **Public relations** can increase the profile of a town through favourable, nonpaid media coverage. By thinking creatively and generating a constant stream of news stories a town can noticeably raise its profile without spending a penny.
- **Sales promotions** can be used to target individual market segments by engaging and motivating people to visit the town. Examples include

incentive vouchers for local attractions, shops and services or maybe discounted travel vouchers. Events and activities can also be used as sales promotions e.g. 'come to our food festival and receive a free goody bag' etc.

- **Direct marketing** is a personalised method to communicate with individuals. Using a database of existing or potential users it is possible to greet them by name with a letter or e-mail or telephone them directly. E-marketing and direct mail are cost effective methods used to stay in touch with a market and provide gentle reminders of a town's strengths.
- **Personal selling and word of mouth** sales are very effective and cost nothing. Everybody that lives, visits and works in the town should extol its virtues and represent it in a positive manner to encourage others to visit.

10.4. Those promoting Princes Risborough need to decide on a consistent theme and selling message that will be used in all marketing communications. This will be determined by the town's positioning statement which sets out what is being sold and to whom. Some examples of how towns describe themselves are listed below:

"Brighton is one of the most vibrant, colourful and creative cities in Europe. Cosmopolitan, compact, energetic, unique, fun, lively, historic, young, exotic and free-spirited, it's a city like no other. A fantastic mix of iconic attractions, famed nightlife, award winning restaurants, funky arts, culture & year round festivals & events Brighton really does have it all."

"Woodbridge - Interesting Buildings, Friendly Welcome, Museums, History, Riverside Walks, and Real Shopping"

"Breacon - This is a town where you'll enjoy losing yourself...not only in the narrow streets and passageways lined with Georgian and Jacobean shop fronts, but in the sense of timelessness about the place"

10.5. Risborough is currently described as 'An historic market town with an unhurried main street' 'An interesting mix of shops' 'An excellent base from which to explore the surrounding countryside'¹⁵ 'an ideal jumping-off place from which to explore the Chiltern Hills, which form a glorious backdrop to the town'¹⁶ 'A small country town'¹⁷ The community needs to decide which, if any of these statements, adequately sums up the town and packs enough punch to attract people to visit. It then has to be endorsed and applied by all to begin building a brand.

¹⁵ Visit South East England website

¹⁶ About Britain Website

¹⁷ Princes Risborough Town Council Website

10.6. A town's brand is important and it begins with a consistent logo and strap line. By inserting Princes Risborough into a search engine a variety of logos emerge from a selection of web pages promoting the town. There is little evidence of a consistent colour, size or logo uniformity and each sample demonstrates a different interpretation of the town.

10.7. Images used to promote the town need to be carefully selected to emphasise the town's brand. Currently the Market House is used frequently on websites describing Risborough. The town needs to build a professionally constructed image bank with pictures of activities and people as well as landmarks and buildings.

11. Recommendations

It has already been stated that this report is not a comprehensive marketing strategy for Princes Risborough, merely a paper written to begin discussions between local stakeholders. The paper goes some way to identifying who might use Princes Risborough, how they might use it and if the town is able to provide adequate services and activities to keep existing customers and attract new target markets.

This final section provides three broad recommendations for future activity.

Recommendation 1

Further research should be carried out to determine the volume, type and needs of existing and potential users of Princes Risborough

It is difficult to understand where to place Princes Risborough in the market without robust local data to evidence existing and potential market segments and their needs and wants. A lot of information is collected at regional and national level, and large visitor attractions gather comprehensive data to inform their personal marketing strategies. There is however a shortage of visitor statistics for Princes Risborough.

It is recommended that more research is carried out to understand the volume, type and needs of visitors and users of Risborough.

Recommendation 2

Explore the potential to promote realistic niches

If the term niche is accepted as 'making a specialist offer' and 'concentrating on selling to a smaller but targeted market' then all towns can expect to build a strong image and position in their respective markets and should experience less competition along the way. This report has identified the following potential niches for Princes Risborough:

Model One: An attractive base for countryside activities

Princes Risborough is able to meet many of the needs of visitors walking, cycling and enjoying the Chilterns AONB. It could further strengthen its offer by providing more accommodation, shops that sell outdoor clothing and walking equipment, cycle hire and accessories, big breakfasts and hearty, local foods, bike racks, provision for muddy boots and large rucksacks and improved signage to the Tourist Information Centre.

Model One Marketing Mix

Off the beaten track and tucked into the Chiltern Hills this market town offers walkers and cyclists everything they need to enjoy their break in the countryside. Princes Risborough has excellent road and rail links, comfortable accommodation, a plethora of quality restaurants and pubs offering roaring fires, big breakfasts and seasonal foods.

Product – Country sporting activities

Place – Tucked away, exclusive

Price – Varied price points

Promotion – Sunday papers, Country Living Magazine editorial, Walking and Cycling magazines and websites, local and regional Websites, Chilterns AONB websites and literature, printed materials at key Chilterns attractions e.g. Wendover Woods.

Model Two: An accessible and convenient service centre for local people

Princes Risborough is predominantly a town for local people and provides them with convenient and accessible shops and services. Visits to the town centre are often short but are made regularly. The town is seen as attractive and is well located.

Model Two Marketing Mix

Princes Risborough is your local service centre. With easy parking, this attractive little town has a wide range of independent shops offering cards and gifts, hardware, jewellery, local food and drink and electrical items. Select from the wide range of cafes and restaurants to enjoy a snack, specialist coffee or hot chocolate.

Product – Essential, local service centre

Place – Convenient and accessible market town

Price – Mid range pricing

Promotion – Word of mouth, local newspaper advertising, promotional leaflets, business directory, local website

Model Three: A town for bargain hunters

Princes Risborough has a high proportion of charity shops and this could be presented as strength; the majority of the local charity shops are very well presented and products are very realistically priced. The town has a wealthy population and therefore the quality of goods found in local charity shops is high. The town also has a Car Boot Sale and it has the potential to hold Sunday antiques and collectables markets. It might be possible for an auction house in another town to include Risborough in its calendar of events. Already a niche is developing to attract people who enjoy buying and selling second hand products. Recycling could be used in the niche promotional material as it is topical and ethical.

To promote the outdoor niche with the bargain hunting niche the following strap line might be considered – ‘**Princes Risborough – a town for cycling and recycling**’

Model Three Marketing Mix

Risborough is a Mecca for bargain hunters. With seven top quality charity shops, a large Car Boot Sale and a range of Sunday antiques markets it is *the* place to find hidden treasure and branded goods at rock bottom prices. The town has a range of pubs and restaurants for you to use to enjoy before heading off on the bargain trail once again.

Product – Quality Recycled Goods at Bargain Prices

Place – Wealthy Buckinghamshire Market Town

Price – Cheap prices for practically new goods with often high street and designer names

Promotion – Leaflets, Word of Mouth, Website

Model Four: A Town for Families

Shopping is not a great attractor for families with young children nor is travelling long distances. Instead they are looking for weekend and after school activities which are popular, low cost and child friendly. Princes Risborough has many local facilities including a leisure centre, swimming pool and play park. To attract families to the town centre there is an opportunity to present a regular programme of weekend events. The events could include story-telling, face painting, bouncy castles, singing and dancing. Restaurants could design creative children’s menus and improve accessibility for prams and buggies.

Model Four Marketing Mix

Why not spend a day with the family in Princes Risborough? The well equipped play park is

safe and ideal for children of all ages and the town has a wide range of cafes with fun and healthy menus. Spend some time at the swimming pool and then browse the kids section at the library.

Product – Family entertainment and linked children’s themed events

Place – Leisure and parks, children’s activities

Price – Value for Money

Promotion – Word of mouth, customers returning, school promotions

Recommendation 3

In order to implement a marketing strategy consistently it is important to audit the activities of all potential stakeholders. These include residents, small business owners, Town, District and County Authorities, any tourism and town sub partnerships and other sub regional partnerships.

It is recommended that in order to prevent duplication of activity and to maximize any budgets available the following information should be collated:

- Who is involved with marketing the town?
- What activities are they carrying out?
- What is their budget?
- What special skills do they have?
- What gaps and overlaps exist in the marketing plan?