Consolidated Summary of 1-Year Work With Consultant (Dan Smith)

A structured, filing-ready document capturing all discussions, strategies, insights & outcomes.

1. Market, Policy & Regulatory Landscape

Renters' Rights Bill / Market Implications

- Discussed within wider market intelligence planning. This is part of pricing/market trends monitoring.
  Outcome: Monitor the bill's impact on rent increases, rights, and long-term student demand.

Current Market Trends & Competitor Insights

Across multiple meetings:

- Marketplaces are paying more aggressively (e.g., Collegiate paying above standard rates).
- Re-booking rates in the market are down as students shop around more.
- Providers pushing higher RPI increases (e.g., AXO at 4% deemed too high).
- Uhomes shifting strategy heavily into Mumbai.

Outcome:

- A need for more aggressive revenue optimization, new channel segmentation, and controlling acquisition costs.
- Avoid overpaying stakeholders (e.g., Tribe) due to post-COVID recovery.

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2. Paddington Project: Strategy, Costs & Management Direction

Management & Operational Planning

- HFS budget needs critical analysis as it is usually inflated.
- Compare HFS and CBRE for efficiencies; CBRE quote requested.
- OPEX and final operational costs remain a key unknown.

Building Positioning & Sales Strategy

- Flat Fee Rate to marketplaces recommended (£350 flat for 44/51 weeks).
- First instalments for students could be tested earlier for cashflow.

Launch & Marketing

- In-house campaigns required; students need better communication about rebooking.
- Early Bird offers to continue, without cashbacks.

Outcome:
A clear need for:

- Transparent OPEX
- Revised HFS/CBRE comparison
- Simplified student-direct and partner-direct sales push
- January full launch target achieved

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3. Room Buying Strategy for 25/26 & Provider Relations

Tier System & Room Buying

Covered across meetings:

- Review of Glasgow room buying decisions and timelines.
- Tiered system recommended to structure deals across providers.

Provider Performance & Outreach

- Wait on Yugo (CRM-linked) for new opportunities; follow-up planned.
- Re-engage Mezzino for Novel (low rebooking success).
- Push for iQ & Yugo re partnerships.
- Tribe not to be paid additional support—market corrected post-COVID.

What Providers Will Do for 25/26

- Most providers are delaying bookings and students generally booking/payments in June.
- Providers expected to push more short-term and flexible cancellation products.

Outcome:

- Consolidated provider strategy needed with priority list: Yugo, iQ, Mezzino, AXO (price negotiation), Tribe (no additional commissions).

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4. Pricing Strategy, Revenue Optimization & Rent Launch

Pricing Strategy

- Unite RPI & rent increases to be monitored closely.
- AXO RPI of 4% too high; should be aligned at 3%.

Revenue Optimization Topics

Discussed repeatedly:

- Pricing against Vita for long-term bookings is difficult due to their low internal rates.
- Short-term bookings more competitive, especially via Chinese platforms.
- Opportunity to set standardised marketplace fee (£350).

Rent Launch Tracker

- Linked to the 25/26 Launch Timing (Jan) and pricing readiness.

Outcome:

- Revenue strategy shift needed toward:
    - China (short-term focus)
    - Earlier instalment collections
    - Adjusted rents aligned with RPI
    - Stronger marketplace fee controls

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5. Marketing, Campaigns & Demand Channels

Christmas / January Intake Campaigns

- Simple messaging to students: “Book through Londonist” already created.

Demand Channels – Key Markets

- China remains priority (Vita focus, platform expansions).
- India growing strongly; Agent targeting required (Edvoy, Edwise).
- Marketplace performance reviews requested (yearly bookings, revenue, tenancy length).

Should We Work with UCAS More Closely?

- Appears under wider marketing/lead partnerships exploration.
  No objections raised; fits Londonist's growth direction.

Affiliate Programmes

From Hospitality & DMC agendas:

- Potential affiliates: ASAP, BETA, UKInbound, StudentHalls platforms, Amazon marketplace for products.

Outcome:

- China & India remain top demand engines.
- More aggressive agent push needed.
- UCAS partnership exploration encouraged.

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6. Channels, Platforms & Marketplace Strategy

Platforms Performance / Strategy

- Student.com: Do not proceed with subscription model yet.
- Uhomes expanding in Mumbai; high potential.
- Housemates shifting into PMS integration.
- OTA introductions suggested: City Room Rentals, Destiny, My Property Host.

Re-Booker Strategy

- Re-booking rates are dropping globally.
- Vita short-term collaboration advised.

Outcome:

- Maintain flexibility: avoid subscription commitments.
- Prioritise high-growth platforms (UHomes, City Room Rentals).

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7. Canary Wharf PBSA Project

Discussions Summary

- Need exact utility cost breakdown (gas/electricity/EPC efficiency).
- £500k rent deemed too high; £400k more reasonable.
- CBRE draft email to be reviewed/sent.

Outcome:

- Awaiting complete OPEX model before decision.

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8. Technology, Automation & CRM Discussions

CRM & MP System

- Feedback on showing the system to Dan requested (DMC doc).
- CRM sync project mentioned for China calls.

VerbaFlow AI

- Consideration for collections calls in addition to lead work.
  (Your added item—no direct reference in uploaded docs.)

Outcome:

- Need review of CRM integration, AI-assisted workflows, and platform automation.

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9. Londonist DMC: Growth, Hospitality & Long-Term Vision

Growth & Expansion

- Long-term bed acquisition strategy.
- BTR opportunities.
- JV introductions.

OPEX & Pipeline Planning

- Must link new acquisitions with operational scaling.

Hospitality Arm

- Review of services (cleaning, laundry, linen).
- Product strategies (Arzum, Blisfull, Stubuddy).
- Marketplace selling (Amazon).

Outcome:

- Strong recommendation for Londonist to build clearer KPIs, pipeline strategy, and hospitality-commercial synergy.

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10. NSL Letter

(Provided by you – no reference in uploaded documents)
If you want this incorporated, share the content and I will append it.