ITEM 9

RURAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

6TH MARCH 2013

HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

TOWN CENTRE PERFORMANCE 2012

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 For members to note and comment on the Town Centre Performance Report 2012..

1.2 Members to note that the AMT Town Centre Report 2012 will be published in March 2013, which will include comparison with other comparable market towns, both across Leicestershire and the East Midlands and will compare performance against national statistics.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 **Members note and comment on the Town Centre Performance Report 2012.**

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 <u>Town centre performance and benchmarking.</u>

Benchmarking data is collected on a quarterly and annual basis within the town centre, with the aim of providing consistent data to monitor the town centre's performance. Data collection comprises 12 key performance indicators, which include Business Confidence surveys, Visitor surveys, Footfall counts, Car park usage, Vacant unit rates etc. This report seeks to provide a full evaluation of the town centre's performance, and to compare performance on a year on year basis

3.2 The data is collected predominantly by visual surveys and counts (footfall and car park usage), individual surveys and consultation (business confidence, visitor surveys, postcode origins, retail yields, vacant units etc). Car park usage and footfall counts are recorded in April and May each year, at the same times and at the same town centre sites. Other surveys and data are collected in September. Town Centre User/Visitor Surveys were distributed in May/June 2012 to all 22,000 Borough residents. This seeks to provide a more comprehensive and accurate year on year comparison, and is also so for the other Leicestershire and East Midlands comparator towns.

3.3 The information contained within the town centre performance report is captured as a year on year comparison and this is attached as Appendix A. Some of the key issues this shows are:

- Independent businesses continue to represent a high proportion of the total town centre businesses, 68% in 2012 and are reflective of the town's continued start up businesses and USP. This is also reflective of the high longevity of businesses within the town centre, with 67% of businesses being within the town centre for more than 10 years. Springboard figures in June 2012 show an average of 49% independents within the East Midlands, nationally 48.9%

- Vacancy rates have seen a fall over the last 2 years, but with a slight increase in 2012 to 7.7% with the increase in national business closures on the High Street, such as Birthdays and Game Station. This is still below the national vacant unit average however of 11.2% and East Midlands average of 10.2%, with the town centre supporting 15 new business start ups in 2012.
- Business turnover and profit figures have shown a decrease in 2012, with an expected decrease in turnover over the next 12 months.
- 72% of businesses however still expect their turnover to remain the same or increase, with 4% expecting a significant turnover increase over the next 12 months.
- Footfall figures remain static, with increasing footfall on quiet days, such as Thursdays and Fridays.
- Car parking occupancy has significantly increased, both in the long stay and short stay car parks (29% and 66% respectively). This is reflective of the visitor survey results, with 80% of town centre users visiting the town centre by car.
- 57% rate the variety of shops as poor and very poor, reflecting need for greater retail mix in the town centre.
- Surveys show a decrease in full day parking, with the majority of visitors visiting the town between 2-4 hours, and a fall to 2% visiting for the full day.
- The town centre market has grown however year on year.
- Visitor surveys show a significant increase of visits to the town for shopping (73%) and leisure (58%) compared to 13% and 10% respectively in 2011.
- Ratings of the Leisure and Cultural activities in the town have also increased, 64% rated as very good/good.
- Visitor/Tourist figures continue to support the promotion of Melton as a destination town.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Councils Corporate Plan identifies as priorities:

- Support people and businesses through the economic downturn
- Maximise the potential of Melton Mowbray Town centre

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial or other resource implications directly arising from this report.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no community safety issues directly arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 No direct links have been identified from recommendations within this report, any projects and initiatives developed, will be subject to their own Equalities Impacts assessment.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 As section 4 highlights, corporate priorities are subject to a service and corporate risk register contained in the Communities & Neighbourhoods Service Plan 2011/12.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change issues directly arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The benchmarking data collection has included consultation with 443 town centre businesses. Town Centre User Surveys / Visitor surveys were distributed to 22,000 Borough residents in May/June 2012.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officer	Shelagh Core – Town Centre Manager
Date:	18 February 2013
Appendices :	A- Town Centre Year on Year Comparison Report 2012
Background Papers:	None
Reference :	