

AGENDA ITEM 7

RURAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

4 JUNE 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

DIGITAL HIGH STREET SKILLS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on the Digital High Street Skills Initiative (DHSS), the Train the Trainer programme and future DHSS Workshops for Melton's high street businesses.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That members of the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee approve the Digital High Street Skills workshop programme and the subsidy recommended for the delivery of the first wave of workshop modules.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES / BACKGROUND

- 3.1 E-commerce and out-of-town retail parks are a threat to UK high street businesses and today's high street customer is embracing multiple channels in which to shop and use services. Town centre's must learn to use all available channels in order to meet customer needs and expectations.
- 3.2 The Digital High Street Skills (DHSS) training courses have been developed and funded by the National Skills Academy for Retail (NSAR) and the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) to assist SMEs within this area and to ensure there is a cohesive strategy and consistent offering for local business on our high streets. Further details are contained as Appendices 1 and 2.
- 3.3 The DHSS programme aims to equip small businesses with the skills they need to fully exploit their high street business onto the internet and through digital marketing channels.
- 3.4 Small businesses make an enormous contribution to the UK economy, but with consumer spending on the high street falling, SMEs need to take full advantage of digital technology to ensure they have both an on-street and on-line presence to maximise their sales potential and ensure a positive future for the high street.
- 3.5 The DHSS foundation training courses are compiled into three full day modules:
- Understanding your Customer and Digital Marketing
 - Develop your Business Online
 - Grow your Business through Social Media
- 3.6 There will be 6 advanced and specialist modules to follow later in 2014 covering all aspects of digital skills which can be applied in a town centre retail setting.

- 3.7 The NSAR and ATCM have developed and funded a 'Train-the-Trainer' programme which offers the opportunity for experienced individuals to become certified skills trainers as part of a major new digital skills education programme and to consequently deliver the DHSS courses to their local businesses.
- 3.8 MBC's Town Centre Managers, Lisa Brown and Shelagh Core, successfully applied and completed the 'Train the Trainer' programme and are now accredited trainers to deliver the DHSS suite of training courses.
- 3.9 The recommended retail price (RRP) for each module is £85.00 plus VAT (£255.00 plus VAT for the full course).
- 3.10 Until July 2014, all SMEs who are independent retail businesses (including cafes, bars, hair and beauty salons) based on the high street are entitled to a reduced rate of £60.00 per module through the Employer Ownership Fund. (£180.00 plus VAT)
- 3.11 The income potential for trainers, (Melton Borough Council) is significant and the more delegates recruited onto the programme will result in greater revenues for trainers. The fee payable to trainers per delegate per module is £35.00 (£105.00 for the full course per delegate)
- 3.12 ATCM will provide delegate recruitment support to trainers through a web portal available to both trainers and prospective delegates. Delegates will be able to download course information and make payment for their modules. Trainers will also be able to access all trainer module notes and other support material.

Next Steps

- 3.13 It is recommended that businesses sign up to all three modules which will provide them with a Digital High Street Foundation Certificate.
- 3.14 The NSAR would like to pilot Melton Mowbray to deliver the DHSS training course, raising the profile of the town and MBC as a local authority committed to helping SMEs.
- 3.15 In order to attract the full amount of delegates (10 per module) to maximise publicity for the initiative, it is recommended that MBC offers a further subsidy for businesses of £30.00 bringing the cost per module down to £30.00 (£90.00 for the full course)
- 3.16 This subsidy would be funded through the £35.00 per delegate income supplied to MBC by the NSAR.
- 3.17 It is recommended that MBC reduces the subsidy in £10.00 increments to maximise delegate attendance and potential income.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are clear links to priorities within the corporate plan:
- Support people and businesses through the economic downturn
 - Meet the Economic needs of Borough
 - Maximise the potential of Melton Mowbray Town centre

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Melton Borough Council will support the initiative through the income paid by the NSAR for any future financial implications.
- 5.2 Melton Borough Council will host the training workshops at Parkside during working hours and will provide the relevant refreshments required.
- 5.3 Melton Borough Council will support the Town Centre Manager’s time in delivering a maximum of four full courses per year (12 days).

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 No direct legal implications have been identified.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 No equality impact assessment implications at this stage, should the next steps result in further actions then where applicable they will

9.0 RISKS

Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		1,		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg-ligible	III Marg-inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

Impact →

Risk No.	Description
1.	Poor take up of training

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The ATCM and NSAR has consulted with various Government Departments (BIS & DCLG) and the campaign was launched at the Future High Street Summit on 26th & 27th March at the National Space Centre, Leicester.

11.2 The ATCM and NSAR have worked in conjunction with leading strategic commercial stakeholders in the digital sector to ensure integrity of this initiative.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 Melton Egerton, Melton Dorian, Melton Warwick and Melton Craven are the wards directly affected.

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Appendices App 1 – Link to website: <http://www.digitalhighstreetskills.co.uk/>
App2 – Link to website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/experts-to-look-at-future-of-digital-high-streets>

Date: 14 May 2014

X Drive/committees/REEA/2014.15/040614/HR- digital high street skills.