

## RURAL ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

26 MAY 2010

### REPORT OF HEAD OF SOCIAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### ACTION FOR MARKET TOWNS CONVENTION- EVALUATION REPORT

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For members to note the Evaluation report received in relation to the national Action for Market Town Convention held in Melton Mowbray on the 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That members note the Evaluation report received in relation to the Action for Market Towns Convention, held in Melton Mowbray.**

#### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Action for Market Towns is an annual national convention. Each year towns apply to host the convention, which in 2008 was held in Skipton. Melton Mowbray secured hosting town, over Ludlow for the **Action for Market Towns National Convention 2009**, which was held at Pera on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Following the event an initial evaluation report was prepared (**App A**). 195 delegates attended the two day convention at Pera, on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October, with delegates, which included Local Authorities, Councillors, Town Centre Partnerships and Town Centre Managers. (**See App B, for list of attendees**).
- 3.2 The theme of the convention was ***Beyond the Recession***. AMT joined with the **Rural Services Network** to plan a convention which looked both at practical steps which towns could take to get through the recession and prepare for the upturn and also help the process of drafting a Rural Services Manifesto, which was launched in November.
- 3.3 Based over two days, the Convention programme included a diverse choice of Study Tours on the afternoon of Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> which led all 195 delegates into the town centre. Attended by a number of Councils, Partnerships and Town Centre Managers the tours sought to give a real insight into the town centre and how the town and Borough have striven to survive the recession.
- Melton Mowbray – Rural Capital of Food & Drink
  - Cattle Market as Potential regeneration
  - Neighbouring Towns working together in the Welland
  - Tackling Financial Exclusion in a Credit Crunch
  - Masterplanning in Melton Town Centre
  - Think Melton Shop Melton
  - Melton Learning Hub

3.4 The response and feedback to all the study tours was excellent, as illustrated within the AMT Evaluation report (**App C**). Key topics raised during the study tours included:

- Amount of shops/businesses in small market town – 446, compared to many towns attending of 220/280
- Low number of vacant units (7.6% of total town centre units – 446)
- Empty shop scheme – launch of Melton Arts & Crafts trail within vacant units
- Degree of Marketing and Promotion of town –
- Thriving and busy markets, with particular interest in the Cattle market and farmers markets, which many towns had now lost, eg Evesham.
- Shop Front Grants and Business Improvement Grants.

Excellent feedback was also received with regards not only to the study tours, but to the venue itself. The service and facilities offered by Pera were first class, including the excellent food and service during the Gala dinner on the evening of Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October. Attended by 165 delegates, this included a light-hearted commentary, a quiz on local food/drink and a musical performance by “Encore”.

3.5 The convention also boosted the Borough’s tourism, with 37 bedrooms booked at Scalford Hall on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> October and 108 bedrooms on the 13<sup>th</sup> at three of the key town centre hotels. Additional accommodation was also reserved in Rutland. (**See App D**)

3.6 Day 2, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October, saw key speeches by Professor Ray Pahl, AMT Board Member, Graham Biggs, Chief Exec of the Rural Services Network, with a number of workshops throughout the morning and afternoon. Workshops included a variety of practical and policy themes. (**See App E, Convention programme**)

3.7 Hosting of the Action for Market Towns Convention in 2009, also provided opportune media coverage of the town centre. This included East Midlands Today, The Times newspaper and local media. Live interviews were also aired by Chris Wade, Chief Executive of the Action for Market Towns, on BBC Radio 4, Radio 2 and BBC Radio Leicester. BBC Radio Wales and Oxford also contacted the organiser during the event for live feedback.

#### 4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The AMT convention links into the following Corporate Priorities:

- Helping people and businesses through the economic downturn
- Supporting economic recovery
- Enhancing the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray Town centre

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Although there are no direct financial implications from the recommendation in this report members are asked to note that hosting of the Action for Market Towns

convention required that the host town provide in-kind support and financial funding of £20,000.

5.2 Melton Borough Council and Melton Town Centre Partnership worked with key partners to provide the necessary financial commitment. Sponsorship towards the Convention was given by Emda, Leicestershire County Council, Melton Town Centre Partnership and Melton Borough Council. Significant in-kind support was also provided by the Town Centre Managers, co-ordinating the Convention and conferring with the Local Organising Group.

## 6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no direct implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

## 8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no equalities issues arising out of this report.

## 9.0 RISKS

9.1 The one risk applicable to the report is shown below:

**Probability**  
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Very High A				
High B				
Significa nt C				
Low D				
Very Low E		1		
Almost Impossi ble F				
	IV Neg- ligibl e	III Marg -inal	II Criti- cal	I Cata strop hic

→  
**Impact**

Risk No.	Description
1	AMT convention in Melton Mowbray was perceived to be of poor quality and content
2	
3	

## 10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no direct climate change implications arising out of this report.

## 11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 There was no direct consultation in regards to this report, however

## 12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All Wards are affected by this report.

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Date: 15 February 2010

Appendices :  
A – AMT initial briefing note  
B – AMT formal evaluation report  
C - AMT convention Accommodation document  
D – AMT delegate list  
E – AMT Programme

Background Papers: Shaping the priorities document

Reference : X : REEA\2009-10\111109