

Convention Workshop Report

Supporting local business, economic and skills development

Introduction

This workshop introduced the findings of a recent amt-i research project funded by the Commission for Rural Communities entitled 'Understanding and Supporting the Resilience of Market Towns.' The findings provided delegates with a detailed quantitative analysis of how the economic downturn has affected market towns in terms of Unemployment, House Prices, Footfall Counts and Vacant Unites before highlighting the local actions which have taken place to combat the recession. The report illustrated that initiatives traditionally concentrate on the town centres retail offering, including the development 'loyalty' schemes which was the focus of the second stage of the Workshop. Steve Wyllie from Savvy, outlined when loyalty schemes should be implemented, what makes an effective scheme and the types of options available. Case Studies of loyalty schemes being run by AMT members were offered throughout the presentation.

Content

Need

Mike King from Action for Market Towns commercial division amt-i, gave an overview of the workshop before highlighting the need for a more long term approach in our market towns to planning to combat downturns in the economy. SAVVY's tried and tested loyalty card schemes offer a practical innovative example.

Findings

The workshop indicated a strong interest from key stakeholders in reviewing the amt-i research report and monitoring a more in depth second stage. Delegates from towns without a loyalty card scheme expressed an interest in developing an initiative, whilst those with schemes used a Question and Answers session with Steve Wyllie to focus on ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Strategic Influence

amt-i are about to embark upon a second stage of the research, conducting an in-depth qualitative study with market towns identified as coping well with the recession. The outcome will be the production of an overall framework which can be used as a guide for

market town in developing initiatives and operating in an economic downturn. Examples from different typologies of market towns will offer a holistic package.

Conclusion

The presentation finished with a brief Questions and Answers session, concentrating heavily on the development of loyalty cards.

Actions

- Mike King to make a copy of the presentation available to workshop attendees
- Mike King to make a copy of the report available to all workshop attendees
- Mike King to keep attendees updated with Stage 2 of the Research
- Steve Wyllie to make the SAVVY presentation available through AMT