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MODELS FOR MANAGEMENT OF HISTORICAL TOWNS REVITALIZATION
AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Possibilities for Revitalization and Conservation of the Old Town of Ivanić

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Valerie J. Carter

Encouraging Economic Success in Historic Small Towns

Valerie J. Carter, B.Sc (Hons), MRTPI, FRGS, Ecovast General Secretary, 59 Bodycoats Road, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 2HA, England, Tel.: +44 5810 752 379, E-mail: carter73@btinternet.com

Summary

A programme to support small towns (population up to 20,000) in SE England spread over 2000-2011. The criteria agreed to define a 'small town' was based on the function as centres for a rural hinterland. Most of the 179 towns identified were historic in terms of historic plan and buildings but several more towns from more modern times were included. The programme supported more than 70 towns in 2 phases. A 'health check' for each town appraised each town's assets (business / retail / tourism/ community) before any town was accepted onto the programme. It also ensured that all sectors and groups of people in the town were involved. The programme has encouraged towns to lead their own future based on community agreement. Community leaders have emerged to establish partnerships and galvanise activity. The programme money has had significant leverage - regional public money (UK Government) levered in local authority public money and private funding. The programme money has acted as a catalyst for future action. The town partnerships and projects still continued after the programme funding ended. They and their projects look now for new sources of funding or are self-financing. Community leaders are still active and success is being recognised with awards and support.



ECOVAŠT HRVATSKA SEKCIJA



Key words: Programme: function: health- check: partnerships: leverage: catalyst for future action

1 Introduction

1.1: What is a 'town'

The study in South East England looked at small towns where the population was less than 20,000. It was based on a hierarchy of settlements based on the services that the settlement provided for itself and for a wider hinterland. The definition of 'town' in this context is based on function not on size or historic origins of the settlement.

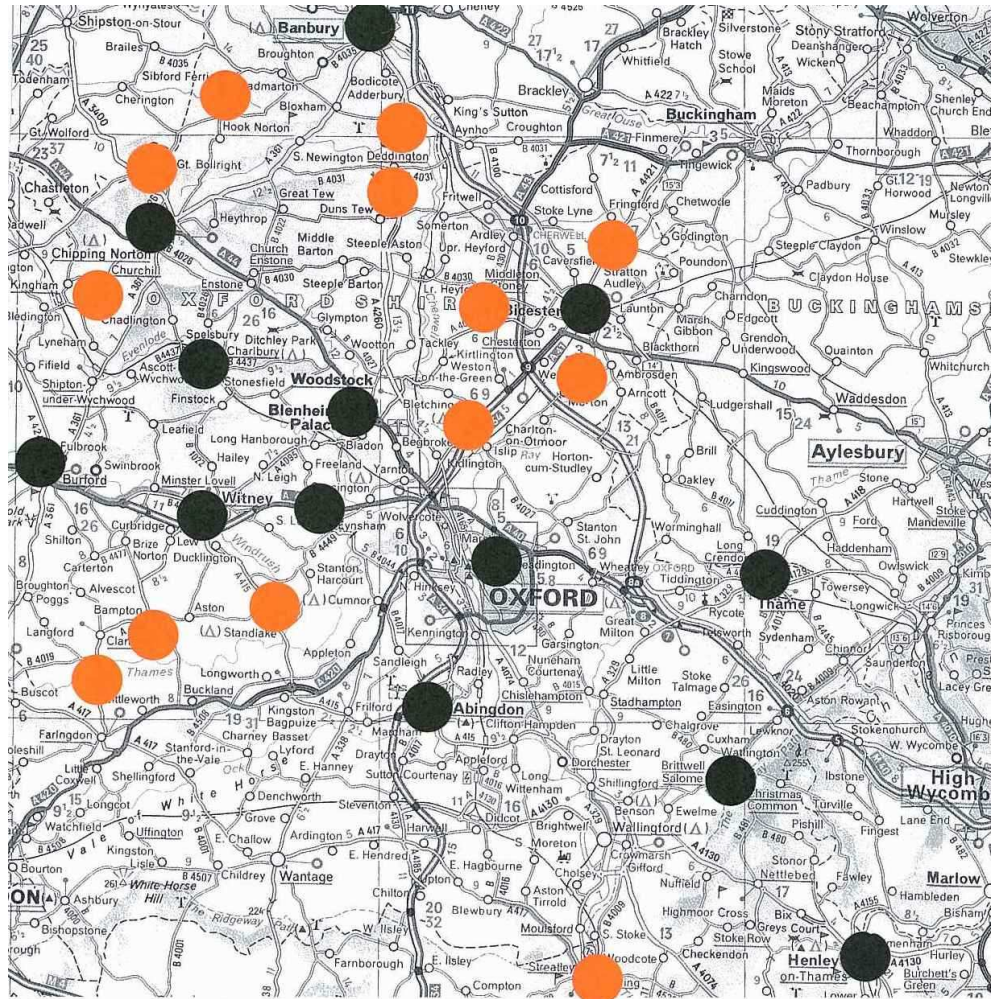
A 'town' provides services at a higher level than that of a village – with functions serving both itself and its rural hinterland of villages, hamlets and countryside. There were 179 small towns identified which formed the basis of the programme.

The results of the analysis showed that it is towns of around 10,000 population that provide the best range of functions for a rural hinterland, although those smaller than this provide some functions. The study put forward a typology for towns with upper, middle and lower categories based on the number of functions that they provide.

1.2: What is 'historic' in UK context

The majority, but not all, the small town settlements today in South East England are historic, mostly dating back to the Middle Ages. There are 18 small historic ports / settlements on the coast and 6 more modern small seaside towns. There are two small modern mining towns and two small modern army/airforce towns. Not all of the 'historic' small towns would have had historic Town Charters and not all those that originally had Charters now function as towns and are now regarded as villages.

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) produced a list of the best historic towns in the United Kingdom in 1964 based on well preserved historic town plans; the presence of waterfront, walls, castles and major ecclesiastical sites and many buildings worthy of preservation (Medieval, Georgian, Regency or Victorian buildings). There were 324 towns listed for England and 51 of these were identified as the best in the country. Unfortunately the CBA study was limited to looking at towns which had been administrative centres (Borough Councils or Urban District). They did not look at Rural Districts which had many towns that were not administrative capitals. Of the 179 small towns identified in the South East programme, only 39 were administrative centres with 18 of these listed in the top 324 CBA towns and 3 of these in the best 51. Very many more would meet the criteria of 'historic town' if towns in Rural District towns had been looked at by the CBA. The programme referred to in this paper is therefore not just limited to 'historic towns'.



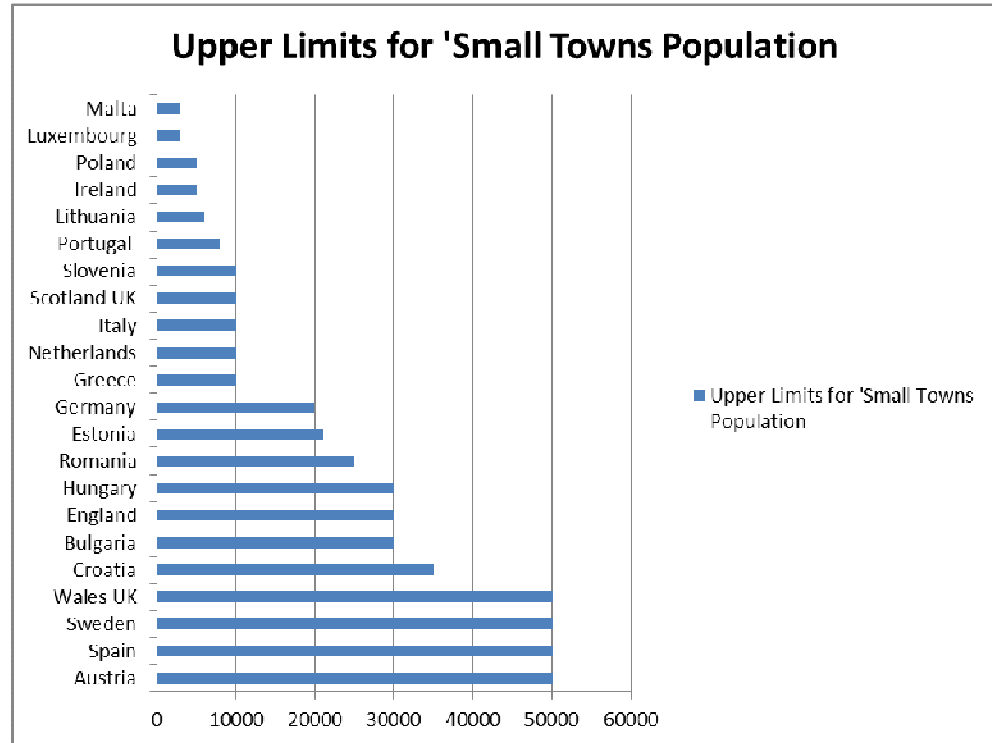
Map of Oxfordshire showing in 'orange' those historic Charter Towns which are now regarded as villages

1.3: Size of towns

Research has been carried out by Ecovast to look at just how many 'small towns' there are in Europe, not just the European union. All city/town settlements in Europe were looked at and grouped into different size bands.

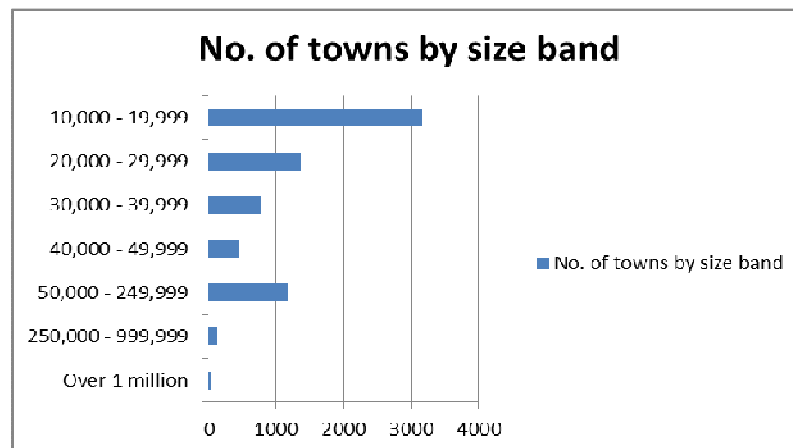
What defines a 'small town' evokes much debate across Europe and countries have different opinions of what constitutes a small town. An Ecovast questionnaire asked for both lower and upper size limits for a small town. The graph below lists the top level for a small town for several countries who responded. Finally Ecovast arrived at a consensus that defined a 'small town' as being those with less than a 30,000 population – higher than upper limit as the South East England study. Lower levels also varied as many countries used historic charters as the basis for a town – but a lower level of 10,000 population was chosen

reflecting the findings from the South East study which was based on functions. It is accepted that there are very many 'small towns' below this but more research is needed before the functions of such settlements can be determined.

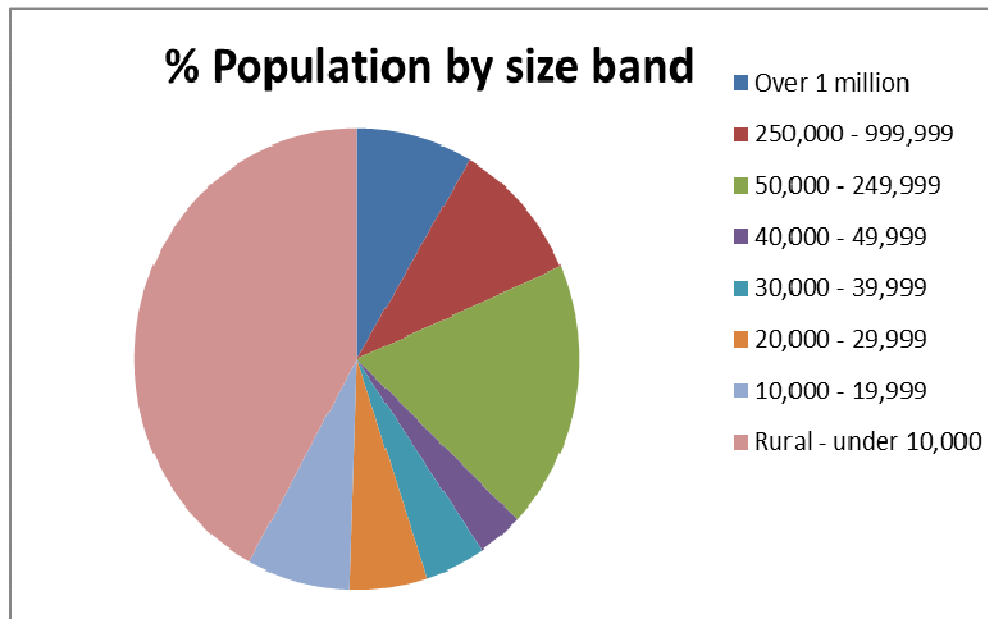


Graph of opinions of upper limits of population for a 'small town'

The results of the European Study revealed just how many small towns there are in Europe. It found 4,459 small towns – with populations between 10,000 and 30,000 - with a total population of 77 million people living in them – bigger than the population of all European countries apart from Germany. They are therefore very important to the economy of Europe as well as their own countries and should be able to make their views heard in the European arena, and influence European policy much more than they do now.



Graph showing number of towns by size band



Pie Chart of percentages of populations by size bands

1.4 Why are small towns important

The studies referred to above show that there are large numbers of people living in small towns. These small towns have rural hinterlands often with many villages and hamlets. The small towns alone make up large percentages of their local administrative areas - the population living in them in South East England was 1.3 million making up a substantial proportion of the 2 million population living in the rural areas, which in turn was a quarter of the 8 million population of the whole region. These small towns are therefore important to regional and local economies. Vibrant small towns are essential to vibrant rural areas.

There are no specific policies in Europe or the UK which relate to small towns. Urban policies are dominant and there are also significant rural policies – although much is devoted to agriculture and food production rather than rural settlements. The sheer volume of people living in small rural towns should enable a much stronger voice to develop policies to reinforce their contributions to local economies.

2. The South East Small Towns Programme

2.1 How did it start

Small towns were supported by a national government body known as the Rural Development Commission from the early 1990's. They helped set up a new national body 'Action for Market Towns' (AMT) to carry out research on aspects of town problems and promote best practice and attract membership from towns themselves. In 1999 the Rural

Development Commission was wound up (after 99 years) and replaced with eight newly created Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) and a new national body called the Countryside Agency. Both had a responsibility for small towns although most funding was provided through the RDAs who have provided many millions of £s between 1999 until 2011

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) developed a regeneration programme to revitalize their small rural towns. The programme, agreed in 2000 has been delivered in two phases – 2000 to 2004 and 2004 to 2012. It was limited to small towns that were under 20,000 population. The Regional Development Agencies have been disbanded by the new Coalition Government in the UK, together with all regional bodies but the programme is in its final phase with all projects underway and finishing by end March 2012.

2.2 What funding was provided

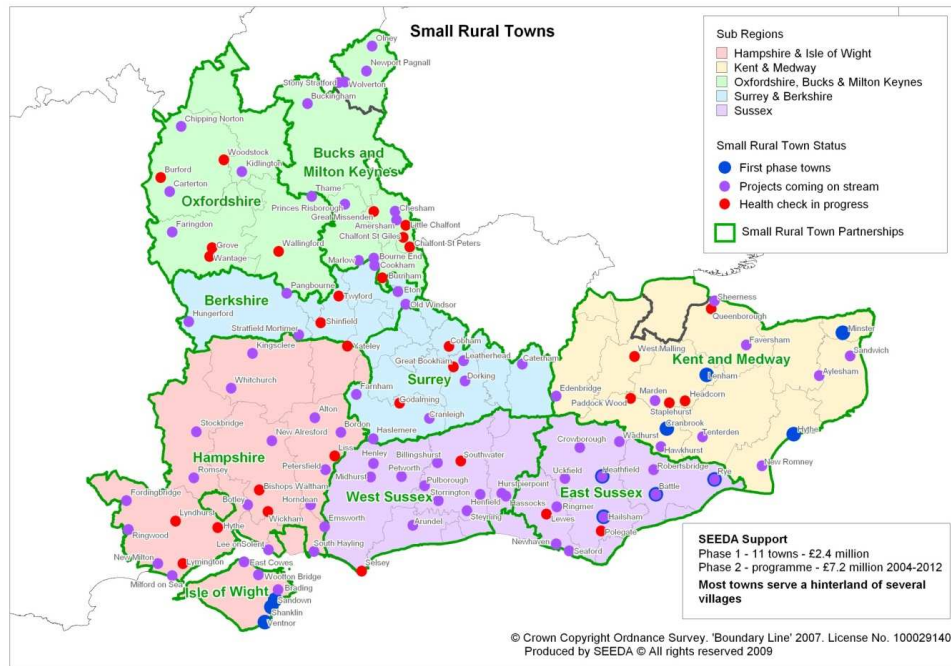
In total £10 million (Euros 11 million) of UK Government money has been spent on the South East programme. The first phase provided nearly £3 million and the second phase provided £7.2 million. The programme also had to be match-funded by others from other public or private sources. It was specifically for larger scale projects which were at least £80,000 (£88,000 Euros) per project with half of that funding provided by the programme and half from match funding.

2.3 Programme focus

the focus for any support was on 'economic regeneration, improving business, employment and skills in the town or other activities that in the long term would contribute to the local economy – such as town improvements which would make them more attractive for trading or tourism or community activity which would encourage residents to use their own town rather than go elsewhere.

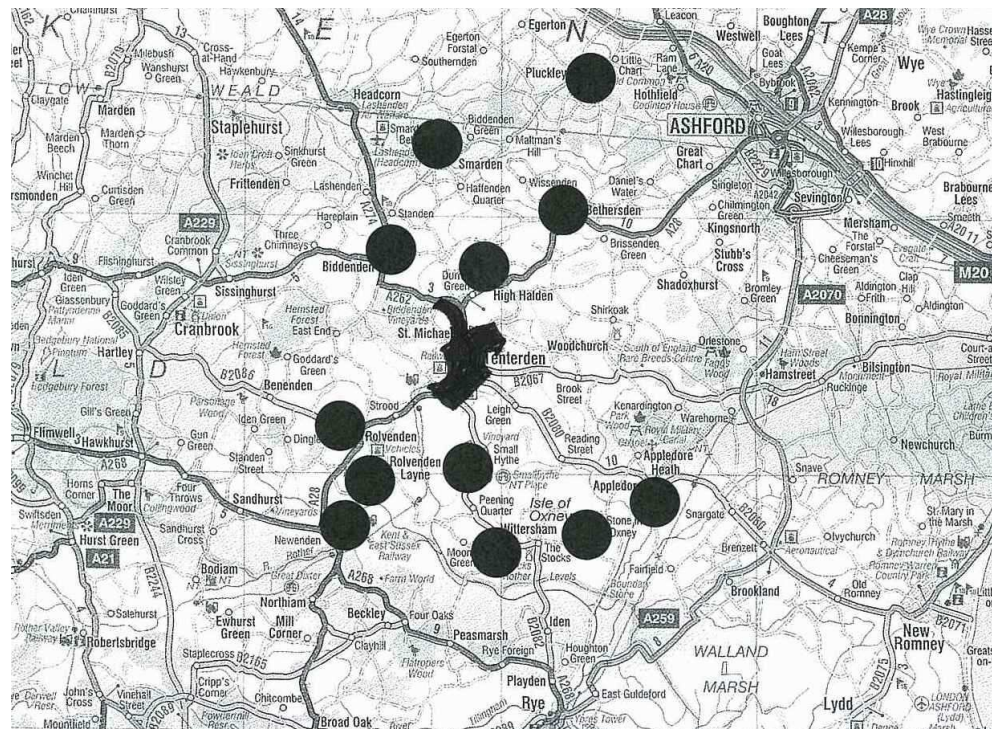
2.4 Towns had to be assessed for functional eligibility

The towns that were eligible for funding had to meet specific functional criteria which identified them as a 'town'. Extensive consultation with local authorities identified 179 'eligible' towns and it was expected that around 60 would take part. South East England has always been a highly populated region with major trade links by road and ports to the rest of the continent of Europe.



Map of towns in South East England taking part in the programme

Several functional criteria were looked at. The first functional criteria was that the towns must serve a hinterland. Although the population of the small town had to be less than 20,000 the population of the hinterlands are often considerable. The map below demonstrates the small town of Tenterden in Kent which has a population of 7,000 with its hinterland of 10 villages which together have an additional population of 8,800.



Map of Tenterden, Kent and hinterland of villages

Secondly all towns must have a good range of shops. As well as these two functional criteria they must have had at least one of the following: a magnet trader (Woolworths, WH Smiths or Boots); a branch of one of the top 7 supermarkets; a secondary school (providing education up to 16 years old).

Encouraging business and supporting new business creation and employment was critical. All businesses need to be involved in the town's future not just retail businesses in the town centre. Small towns are ideal places to do business; offering the resident population in the town and its hinterland to create jobs and wealth within the community. Workers spend in the town they work in and businesses working together can create new opportunities for improved trade. Most small towns have small business estates or clusters.

2.5 The Health-check

The activity to be supported had to have involved all sectors in the community and be based on an in- depth 'health check'. The people in the town formed a local town partnership which was responsible for carrying out an assessment of the town's assets and problems and developing an Action Plan on what needed to be done. The local town partnership was then responsible for seeing that the agreed actions are carried out. Some towns already had Chambers of Trade for their town but many did not or it was fairly moribund. The essence of the programme was that local decisions were made by local people based on local assessments of need with the involvement of all sectors of the community.

2.6 Support structures

The programme supported county-based local co-ordinators who would help all the town partnerships emerging in their area. They met regularly with each other across the region and helped to iron out any problems along the way. They were based with the local county authority of their area and were a great help in securing public match funding. A regional Board known as the South East Rural Towns Partnership Board was set up to have overall management of the programme.

3. Achievements

3.1 The First Phase

The first phase of the South East programme established that all the outputs anticipated for the first 11 towns supported between 2000 and 2004 and the match funding had been well met. One of the most outstanding achievements was the fact that the programme had

found community leaders who were prepared to spend considerable time during and beyond the programme support.

These leaders had generated enthusiasm and commitment for other volunteers in their town partnerships who are continuing to work in their towns to develop solutions to the problems identified in their Town Action Plan.

3.2 The Second Phase

The second phase of the South East programme was appraised by the Rural Consultancy as follows:

3.2.1 Health-checks

106 towns have already completed the formal health-check with a further 14 in the process – far more than have submitted actual projects for funding but indicating that local town partnerships have been established and volunteers established to work on the future of their towns.

3.2.2 Projects

Projects have been supported in all nine counties of South East England. Sixty two projects have been approved and nearly all of them are now nearing completion – and will be finished by March 2012. The total cost of all these projects is £16,798,938 with an average project cost of £270,950 and average programme grant of £92,276 - meeting the intention of only supporting major projects in towns.

3.2.3 Outputs

A very impressive number of recorded outputs achieved so far have been: 214 jobs created or safeguarded; 1,055 individual businesses supported; 76 training opportunities; 237 people helped into employment; 23 new community facilities built; 59 community facilities improved; 3 new community services provided and 9 community services improved.

3.2.4 Leverage

The rates of leverage of both public and private sector funding have also been impressive with £2,230,468 from the private sector and £9,401,587 from the public sector – mostly from local authorities demonstrating their strong support for the programme and the small rural towns in their area.

3.2.5 Volunteers

All the town partnerships rely very heavily on unpaid volunteers, many of whom freely gave many hours of their time. More than 1,200 volunteers have been identified through the

survey carried out by the Rural Consultancy, who also estimated that each volunteer carried out 80 hours of work. If a value of £15 per hour was used the impressive voluntary contribution to the programme would be £1,442,400 – additional to actual money.

3.2.6 Project examples

Set out below are examples of projects that have been carried out to improve the economic performance of towns in the South East.

Loyalty scheme in Faversham, Kent: that has improved trade in local shops in the town, and encourages local people to shop in the town rather than going elsewhere

Physical regeneration in Cranleigh, Surrey: that has improved the appearance of the town centre leading to the improvement of trade in the town



Left: Picture of town centre improvements, Cranleigh



Right: Picture of Princes Risborough

Event, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire: a revival of a former hill-climb formerly held in the town. It attracted thousands of visitors and is now self-financing

Eco Festival in Faringdon, Oxfordshire: a week-long festival in the town attracting many visitors. This project won the Action for Market Town's national competition for a small town

Centre for children in Billingshurst, West Sussex: this provided a day centre for children between 0-5 and a breakfast and afterschool club and enabled women in the town to work longer hours



Picture of Faringdon

4. What have been the successes

4.1 Local Leaders

The programme has acted as the catalyst to establish leaders to emerge from local towns who have demonstrated real and long lasting commitment to the future of their towns and encouraged thousands of volunteer hours.

4.2 Active Town Partnerships

Active town partnerships have been established which continue long after any programme has finished

4.3 Local Needs Analysis

The health-check was the backbone of the programme funding and led to a locally agreed Action Plan that has encouraged the development of many other projects which have been carried out without funding from the programme but which have had an increased impact on the economy and well-being of the town.

4.4 A Place to do Business

The programme encouraged all businesses in a town to become involved in its future not just retail businesses in the town centre. It has proved that small towns are a good place to

do business and that maintaining employment land is important as workers will spend money in the town as well as working there

4.5 Attractive to Visitors

Many tourism projects have built on the attractive assets of the town, bringing in visitors to spend money in the towns. Festivals and events have proved so successful that they not only bring in good money to the town but are now self-financing.

4.6 A Place for Education

The presence of secondary schools means that many parents visit and get used to the town and should be encouraged and welcomed to use it as their centre, rather than go elsewhere.

4.7 Improving Community assets

The improvement of community buildings can encourage new services to come into the town, promoting a mixture of uses which will bring in more people from the local community, spending more time in their town than going elsewhere.

4.8 Leverage

The programme has managed to lever out much more than match funding.

4.9 Support Structures

The support structures proved invaluable. The overall smooth running of the programme needed a South East Rural Towns Board and the County Co-ordinators proved essential to nurture and help emerging local partnerships in their areas.

4.9 Ongoing success

Towns in the programme are being recognised for the good work that they have done. Billingshurst in West Sussex and Little Chalfont in Buckinghamshire have both been awarded the prestigious Queens Award for Community. The town partnership in Caterham, Surrey has been fully recognised as a competent body with a secure future and has just been given an old building in the town centre for them to manage as a community centre with the prospect of attracting a £3 million project.

5. The Influence of Outside Factors

5.1 Recession

Like most of Europe and the United Kingdom, South England is undergoing a recession and small towns are suffering as are larger towns. There are empty shops but the biggest blow has been the loss of one of the major 'magnet traders – Woolworths. Thirty-three small rural towns in South East England have lost a Woolworths. Some have been filled by newcomers but not with the same kind of draw to shoppers as Woolworths had been.

5.2 Planning policies

Planning policies affect all parts of the economy. Development policies favour urban area and towns over villages and rural areas. Small towns have benefited from policies which have seen a growth in population which can help maintain the level of services. Centralization of services generally worked the other way and many small towns have suffered the impact of major retail development of 'out-of-town' shopping centres, loss of administrative sub offices etc. Tenterden has benefited from planning policies which designated it as a sub-regional shopping centre - unusual for its size but it has enabled it to maintain a good level of independent shops and attract major supermarkets too.

5.3 Change in Government

A change in Government will bring about major changes in support. New governments like to stamp their authority on any public sector spending and are likely to change government supported bodies.

6. Conclusions

The sheer number of people living in small rural towns should enable a much stronger voice to be developed for the role of small towns and what needs to be done to help them continue and strengthen their contributions to local economies.

Small towns provide the backbone to surrounding rural areas and healthy vibrant towns will create healthy rural areas – all contributing to their local economy.

The South East England programme has had a much more significant impact than just providing public money. It has been a significant catalyst for action in towns and not just a delivery of projects using programme funding. That catalyst role is continuing long after the funding has been completed giving both short term and long term impacts.

Maintaining businesses and encouraging small towns to be 'a place to do business' will support a healthy local economy.

Maintaining secondary schools ensure that people from the local hinterland get to know and use the town as their base for shopping etc.

7. What support for small towns in England exists today

7.1 Loss of RDA's and Local Economic Partnerships

The new Government in the UK has now abolished all regional bodies and the loss of Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) has meant that the support they gave to small towns is no longer available. They have been replaced by more local bodies called Local Economic Partnerships (LEP's) but they do not cover all areas of England. This type of RDA programme support is not being picked up by the LEPs as they will not be provided with the same type of funding, although efforts are being made to make the new LEP's aware of the important role that small towns play in local economies – though they are not likely to be grant giving bodies.

7.2 National Forum

The new Government is providing some support through a new National Forum on the Future of Smaller towns. It is basically a think tank to establish and promote the role of smaller towns and their value to the national economy.

7.3 Action for Market Towns (AMT)

Action for Market Towns (AMT) remains and is a membership organisation and is still partly supported through the public sector. They worked closely with the Regional Development Agencies and staged a national annual competition for the best town project from regional winning entries.

7.4 Localism

The idea of local people making local decisions about their own area has been amply demonstrated by the South East programme but as yet no decisions have been made on how 'localism' in England is to be supported.

7.5 Neighbourhood Planning

Some neighbourhood plans are to be supported and the Health-check is very similar to the requirements needed and could be adapted fairly easily.

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Valerie Carter is a qualified chartered Town Planner and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. She worked as a planner for 12 years for Kent County Council and then took a career break to bring up her children. She subsequently worked as a planning/business adviser for the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (CoSIRA), later becoming an Economic Development Officer with the Rural Development Commission (RDC); then Area Manager, followed by Regional Manager for the nine counties in the South East. She transferred in 1999 to the new Regional Development Agency – the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and led their rural work as Rural Director until September 2010, when she retired from full time employment. She is a member of the South East Rural Towns Board, and of the national Forum for the Future of Small Towns. She has worked with different rural European partnerships for many years. She is currently the President of the European Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST) and a member of the Council of Administration of the European Rural University (ERU).