



## **Place Marketing**

### Economic Development Officers Annual Meeting

#### **Discussion Summary**

The following points were raised during the meeting:

##### **Thinking rural**

- About the Rural Services Network (RSN) e.g. seminar programme, conference, economic development service.
- Ensuring rural has a voice in Government programmes designed to boost local economies (e.g. Growth Deals, City Regions, devolution, broadband investment) and in the Industrial Strategy.
- New ideas for working with MPs and central Government (e.g. holding a 'day in parliament').
- How Local Authorities think about rural e.g. area, population size and density.
- The importance of championing the needs and aspirations of our rural communities.

##### **Business in rural places**

- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs): the amount of levy collected and how it is calculated, including capping the maximum payment.
- How the natural environment provides local economies with goods and services – and how these can be invested in at a landscape scale.
- If you consult with businesses and provide what they want they won't then necessarily use it – finding out what they really need.
- It's about knowing what the businesses want, keeping them updated, measuring changes in the local economy and celebrating success.
- How to be an attractive place that businesses want to invest in and locate to.
- The lack of careers guidance in schools – schools are expected to develop their own approach to careers advice and find the money to provide it; the fragmented system we have doesn't address the trend affecting rural communities who lose young people who tend not to return until they are older (if at all).

##### **Rural communities**

- How do you identify rural priorities with communities (e.g. using data, consultation, setting up a working group)?
- How can you prevent one or two individuals/local groups with a few pet projects driving engagement with Local Authorities?
- How can you build the capacity of local groups to be able to bid to deliver services?
- The importance of volunteers – and how in rural places they address multiple issues that manifest themselves in that place.
- You need to place people at the heart of your vision and place marketing. You also want to use place marketing to (re)connect local people to place.

##### **The changing role of Local Authorities**

- A need for Local Authorities to measure impact, manage community and business expectations, achieve value for money and think about what can be replicated/scaled up in programmes and services.

- Moving away from the idea that the Council will 'do things for' communities, to 'doing with' residents – in response to austerity (budget pressures in the short term) and a cultural shift in thinking about how you deliver services differently in the longer term.
- A desire amongst Members, Officers and residents for services to be commissioned that meet local needs and are delivered by local providers who invest in people and place.
- The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 – not just measuring Local Authority contracts by targets and outputs, but also by their impact and the outcomes being delivered.
- Letting tenders based on higher quality and social value not price and cheapness.
- How to spend discretionary funding i.e., on prevention, early action community initiatives?
- The importance of leadership in local government.
- The need to leverage in external funding to finance economic development programmes.
- How can Local Authorities use their assets and advocates/champions to encourage new investment?