

# Network Learning Programme

A six month programme enabling the co-ordinated development and delivery of effective local strategies

*“At a very early stage Warwickshire County Council recognised the importance of a public private partnership approach to ensuring successful town and district centres, investing in and supporting the Town Centre Management model. Key to this was forming networks that allow centres to share knowledge and approaches, ensuring they are working in a complementary fashion rather than a competitive one. We have found ATCM’s experience with and knowledge of the business sector very useful for moving this forward and would highly recommend this programme as an essential building block in the process.”*

**Sue Ashley, Town Centres Regeneration Manager  
Warwickshire County Council**



## **Introduction and overview**

Many County Councils/Sub-Regional Partnerships are taking a proactive role in supporting the urban renaissance of their town and district centres through a variety of activities including support for Town Centre Management partnerships. However, the ATCM recognises that it can be difficult to bring together key stakeholders including the businesses community, securing funding and delivering tangible projects that are seen as beneficial to all stakeholders. With 15 years experience doing just that we have devised a programme that will provide the opportunity to bring some of your local partnerships together to develop their knowledge base, share best practice and agree action plans. We will provide practical examples of robust partnerships and sustainable funding as well as advice on how to overcome challenges.

This is a two-tiered county/sub-region specific approach. The first workshop will establish a clear understanding of each locations' position and aspirations and through debating the challenges of engaging with stakeholders and securing sustainable funding we will agree an individual action plan with each location. This will be followed up with a review of progress at six months that will be incorporated into a second bespoke workshop which will respond directly to the issues identified by the locations as they work towards the delivery of their action plans. The ATCM advice line will also be available to locations during the programme.

Whilst each location will seek a competitive edge this joined up approach will enable all locations to share experiences and create synergy. By establishing a network of partnerships across the county/region delivering individually focused action plans the quality of the environment of the county/region, as a whole will be raised.

PPS6 seeks to promote and enhance a network of centres, with different roles and a range of facilities and the degree of specialisation in certain activities and uses. At regional level, planning authorities are urged to plan the distribution of growth using it to rebalance the network of centres so that the larger centres do not overly dominate. This will create a more even distribution of facilities, such that peoples' every day needs are met at the local level in a more sustainable manner. This programme offers the opportunity to develop an ongoing relationship between centres that will outlive the 6 months timescale of the project.

## **About the ATCM**

The ATCM is the leading agency providing best practice, support and research on local area partnerships. The Association has 15 years experience in supporting the development of partnerships which bring together public agencies and the local business community to work towards common goals, securing sustainable funding for enhancement of the public realm and trading environment.

Our membership incorporates over 500 centres and 10,000 businesses. We recently completed the National BIDs Pilot on behalf of ODPM and a leading alliance of public agencies, property and retail organisations and 15 BIDs securing a mandate within the first year of the introduction of the legislation.

We worked with the 10 leading business trade associations (BRC, BCSC, BEDA, BII, BPF, The British Beer and Pub Association, CPF, BCO, CBI, Chambers of Commerce) as well as over 25,000 businesses developing practical models for BIDs.

This work has provided the ATCM with a unique knowledge and experience of developing partnerships and engaging with the business community. Our aim is to encourage best practice and the development of partnerships that will deliver tangible results that have a positive economic impact and support the welling being of an area.

## **PROGRAMME**

### **Workshop 1**

The aim of the first workshop will be to gain an overview of the commercial centres represented, their existing partnerships and activities and the vision for the future of these areas. We will explore a variety of examples of sustainable funding including providing essential information on the key challenges in developing a BID. This will then be applied to the locations and we will consider the issues in terms of resource, relevance and timeframe. At the end of the workshops delegates will agree an initial six month outline programme of activity for their location.

This workshop will:

- Identify the key ingredients for a robust partnership
- Provide detailed examples of sustainable funding mechanisms for Town Centre Management
- Raise awareness and understanding of the concept and challenges of BIDs
- Provide lessons learnt from Town Centre Management partnerships and BID Pilots
- Provide a countywide perspective of strategic activities and initiatives
- Review the current situation, issues and achievements within each local partnership
- Identify challenges and opportunities
- Agree an action plan for each location, which takes into account other nearby locations

### **Feedback and Further Research**

Each location will be required to complete a short report outlining progress made with their initial action plan during the first six months as well as identifying barriers to be overcome. Areas to be reviewed will include information collated, stakeholder engagement and partnership structures.

The project team will use this information to identify common themes and concerns. From this we will establish relevant examples and case studies that will inform the scope and direction of the second workshop. This will lead into agreement of major milestones for a two year strategy for each location

## Workshop 2

The aim of this workshop will be to share the locations' experiences and lessons learnt as well as providing practical solutions to the barriers identified and encouraging locations' to provide a network of support for each other. Armed with these ideas delegates will be asked to apply these, to their locations' and agree a follow up action plan including major milestones.

This workshop will:

- Review each locations progress and share experiences
- Analyse information collated, its sources and its uses
- Debate partnership structures that will incorporate key stakeholders
- Consider resources identified and how they can be applied in each location
- Explore practical solutions to barriers identified
- Develop next steps in action plans
- Identify and agree milestones
- Encourage support mechanisms

Following the completion of each workshop a short report will be provided covering the topics discussed, key themes that emerged and actions agreed.

For more information please contact:

Jacquie Reilly  
Consultancy and Communications Director  
p. 07980 748 651  
e. [jacquie.reilly@atcm.org](mailto:jacquie.reilly@atcm.org)