

Strengthening the wellbeing of market towns in the Rural North and Borderlands of England and Scotland:

New initiatives to create social and economic growth

A seminar organised by the *Institute for Local Governance, (ILG)*.

It will take place at the Beaumont Hotel, Hexham, Wednesday 10th July 2019, from 1.00 – 4.00 p.m.

Town centres have been under the spotlight recently as the economic viability of high streets have been put under intense pressure due to the changing patterns of consumer demand and behaviour, the consequences of online shopping for retail outlets and the pressures of business rates. However, town centres invariably offer a wider range of opportunities in public service provision, leisure activities, events, socialising opportunities etc. But they are more than just hubs for such activity, they also represent a focal point for economic development and civic pride – they tell us something about local culture, our sense of place and about who we are.

In the rural borderlands of England and Scotland, economic and social pressures may have been compounded by their relative isolation from major urban centres. Often it is felt that market towns face a kind of double jeopardy because they are relatively small and isolated from key decision making centres.

At one time many market towns were dependent for their economic wellbeing on agriculture and related rural businesses and services. But now, new sectors and enterprises are emerging, some of which can compete at a national or even international level utilising information and communications technology and able to recruit skilled workers and professionals attracted by the quality of life and local environment. From a policy perspective, central and local government, their agencies and financial programmes are increasingly recognising the need to support rural and coastal towns and their centres.

This seminar is about more than economic vibrancy, it is also about quality of life, community development, business engagement and place making.

The seminar will be chaired by **Councillor Richard Wearmouth**, Cabinet Member for Economy, Northumberland County Council and introduced by **Professor Mark Shucksmith**, Professor of Planning, Newcastle University.

Speakers will include:

Simon Hanson, Federation of Small Business: on the contribution of small business to social wellbeing and civil society.

Chris Kolek, Director, Kolek Consulting, on the process of supporting business development strategies in rural areas.

Bryan McGrath, Chief Officer, Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council, on town centre regeneration in the Scottish Borders.

Jonathan Wallace, Senior Director, Lichfields, on the revitalisation of town centres in North East England.

This seminar is free to attend, but places are limited and they tend to book up quickly, so please register your attendance via: Janet Atkinson, Institute for Local Governance, Durham University janet.atkinson@durham.ac.uk.

The Institute for Local Governance is a North East Research and Knowledge Exchange Partnership established in 2009 comprising the North East region's Universities, Local Authorities, Police and Fire and Rescue Services. Further information about the content of the event can be obtained by contacting: - tony.chapman@durham.ac.uk or john.mawson@durham.ac.uk

Strengthening the wellbeing of market towns in the Rural North and Borderlands of England and Scotland:

New initiatives to create social and economic growth

A seminar organised by the *Institute for Local Governance, (ILG)*.

It will take place at the Beaumont Hotel, Hexham, Wednesday 10th July 2019, from 1.00 – 4.00 p.m.

AGENDA

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 12.30 – 1.00 | Registration and Coffee |
| 1.00 – 1.05 | Chairs welcome: Councillor Richard Wearmouth , Cabinet Member for Economy, Northumberland County Council |
| 1.05 – 1.20 | Introductory comments: Professor Mark Shucksmith , Professor of Planning, Newcastle University |
| 1.20 – 1.45 | Jonathan Wallace , Senior Director, Lichfields, on the revitalisation of town centres in North East England. |
| 1.45 – 2.10 | Bryan McGrath , Chief Officer, Economic Development, Scottish Borders, on town centre regeneration in the Scottish Borders. |
| 2.10 – 2.20 | Questions from the floor. |
| 2.20 – 2.45 | Coffee and networking. |
| 2.45 – 3.10 | Chris Kolek , Director, Kolek Consulting, on the process of supporting business development strategies in rural areas. |
| 3.10 – 3.35 | Simon Hanson , Federation of Small Business: on the contribution of small business to social wellbeing and civil society. |
| 3.35 – 4.00 | Discussion and questions to the panel. |
| 4.00 | Close of seminar. |