



The 2010 National Market Town Awards

Introduction and Project Criteria



England's country towns, a focus for rural life, have a timeless and iconic appeal. But the rich heritage of our towns is a varied one, ranging from traditional market towns serving the surrounding agricultural area to former mill towns which prospered in the first wave of industrialisation.

Towns have always adapted to changing times – but the pace of change has accelerated and many towns now struggle to cope with similar problems: bank and post office closures; concentration of services in larger towns; the decline of traditional shopping centres in the face of out of town shopping parks; the ending of many manufacturing industries and lack of new jobs; the lure of large cities which leaves many towns as dormitories.

But initiatives to regenerate town centres are now widespread in every region, with local partnerships revitalising market towns. The government recognises the importance of market towns as sustainable rural communities and the focus for economic, social and environmental regeneration in rural areas. The National Market Town Awards are an important showcase for what can be achieved by such effective market town regeneration programmes.

Action for Market Towns is delighted to be able to promote the 2010 National Market Town Awards – this year with regional sponsorship provided by Savvy UK (www.savvy-loyalty.co.uk) and in association with the international news agency The Press Association as media partners.

This award scheme gives recognition to the dedication and hard work that is showing results across England and encourages others to follow these examples.

The Awards Scheme

The first round of the National Market Town Awards is regionally based. **Applications are invited from each of the following four awards categories:**

- **Environment and Culture**
- **Social and Community**
- **Business and Economy**
- **Partnership and Strategic Working**

The winner of each of the categories will be asked to give a 10 minute powerpoint presentation at a regional event in June and July. One of the four category winners will receive the additional accolade of the region's "**Best Market Town Project**". The winners of the four categories and the overall winner will be written up and published as Best Practice Case Studies. Each Regional **Best Market Town Project** will go forward to the national judging panel. The regional winners will also be invited to give a presentation about their project at the Action for Market Towns National Annual Convention in Chippenham in October 2010, where the overall national winner will be announced at a gala dinner.

Completed application forms must be received in an electronic format – preferably e-mail, but CDs are also acceptable - with at least one high resolution digital photograph by **no later than Friday, April 30th 2010** to awards@towns.org.uk

If the application is on a CD, it should be sent to:

Market Town Awards, Action for Market Towns, Baxter Court, Higher Baxter St, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1UU. Telephone: 08456 446 202.

Paper entries are not acceptable.

*Please note that photographs (**which must be high resolution – 300K file size or higher**) may be used by Action for Market Towns for presentations and publicity purposes. You must ensure that parental permission has been granted before submitting to us any pictures containing the faces of children. Please also note that Action for Market Towns seeks your permission to incorporate your application into our Best Practice on-line library where your contact details will be made available with your permission. Moreover, should you become a semi-finalist, you will be asked to do a presentation on your awards entry for a regional event, and during the Annual Convention in October 2010.

1. Eligibility Criteria

The traditional definition of a market town is one where agricultural occupations predominated, in a settlement that serves a rural hinterland. However, for the

purposes of this scheme, the presence of a 'market' as such is not the determining feature. Of greater importance is the relationship between the town and its hinterland.

The definition of a town eligible under this new scheme is as follows:

- Be within the region entered for.
- Have a population of between 2,000 - 35,000
- Provide at least convenience shopping with some weekly and specialist needs being accommodated
- Act as a service centre for its hinterland and local community for many things, typically having **some** of the following services:
 - a bank/building society/cash point machine
 - a small health centre or large daily doctors surgery
 - a secondary school
 - permanent library facilities

2. Project Criteria

Awards will be considered for projects that:

- Have had a significant proportion of project activity completed after the **1 April 2009 and before 31 March 2010**
- Can demonstrate innovation or creativity in delivery or execution
- Can demonstrate long-term financial viability or the contribution of the project to the social, environmental and economic quality of life for local people
- Have involved the local community and community partnerships in the development and delivery of the project from an early stage in the process
- Can demonstrate links to Market Town Healthchecks or similar research and consultation exercises or to strategic regional strategy or policy documents
- Illustrate innovation either in the design or the delivery of the project or in the processes and methods used to prepare or plan an initiative
- Has the potential to be easily transferred (both the conception and execution of the project) to other towns

You can download an application form and also 'Application Form Notes for Guidance' from the online Market Town Awards Promotional Pack at weblink: [Market Town Awards Information Pack](#)