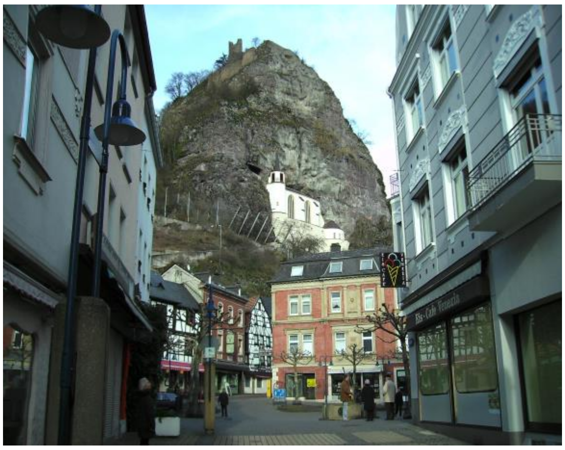
THE EVIDENCE BASE

Supporting Document to the publication 'The IMPORTANCE OF SMALL TOWNS' published in November 2014



The European Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST)

February 2015

The purpose of this document is to set out the research that was carried out on small towns by The Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST). It helped identify how many there were and how many people that lived in them. More detailed survey of individual towns in specific areas identified the significant assets that they possessed for a modern world as well as potential problems that they faced. These surveys were carried out between 2006 and 2012.

This document was compiled by Valerie Carter, together with the ASSET Team which consisted of Dr Arthur Spiegler (Austria), Tihana Stepinac Fabijanic (Croatia); Dr Ralf Bokermann, Angus Fowler and Andrea Weigert (Germany) and Valerie Carter, Pam Moore and Phil Turner (United Kingdom)

*The main cover photographs (identical to those on the cover of the publication 'The Importance of Small Towns' are **Leoben**, Austria (© website kunststofftechnik.at); beneath left is **Idar Oberstein**, Germany and right is **Lovran**, Croatia (taken from individual Wikipedia town websites – Wikipedia Commons: Freely Licensed Media File Repository).*

Contents:

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The European Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST) has been working for nearly 30 years to promote the well-being of the people and heritage of the rural regions of Europe. Millions of people across Europe live in small towns which have been a vital asset to Europe. Their role has evolved and changed over the years and their vitality has fluctuated in response to historical forces of all kinds. Changes will continue and there is a crucial need to understand the challenges they face in a modern world. Small towns cannot be ‘frozen’ or preserved in aspic. They are essential to the well-being of their surrounding villages and countryside. ECOVAST wishes to raise the profile of small towns across Europe – as opposed to large urban towns – and to try to influence future thinking and policy development across Europe.

1.2 ECOVAST produced a formal Position Paper in October 2013 which was sent to the European Commission (DG Agri and DG Regio) and the Council of Europe. It was also presented to the Rural Conference in October 2013 in Bologna, Italy, staged by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD was founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and World Trade). Our Position Paper then became the basis of an ECOVAST book ‘The Importance of Small Towns’ published in 2014, with many specific small town examples from 39 countries of Europe and was distributed to all these 39 countries in January 2015.

1.3 This document is the companion document to the book and sets out the evidence gathered by ECOVAST which supports and underpins the concepts and policy ideas promoted by ECOVAST.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE EVIDENCE BASE

2.1 This evidence base is compiled from several separate studies carried out by ECOVAST. Opinion surveys were carried out in 2006/7 and 2009 using networks and known rural contacts in various countries across Europe. Empirical surveys of data carried out between 2009 and 2012 include a European level study to determine the number of small towns across Europe and how many people live in them; followed by surveys of small towns in South East England and in Austria and Germany. They were carried out by ECOVAST UK; ECOVAST Austria & ECOVAST Germany. Reference is also made to other ECOVAST work.

3. THE ASSET PROJECT

The project was set up and managed by Phil TURNER (Past President ECOVAST)

3.1 In 2005 an international conference in Retz, Austria was sponsored by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and ECOVAST. Representatives attended from Austria, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia and the United Kingdom reflecting the commitment to the well-being of small towns. It concluded that current European policies for rural or urban areas did not fit the needs for small towns which act as rural centres for a surrounding hinterland of villages and countryside. As a result ECOVAST set up a specific project to focus on small towns, called Action to Strengthen Small European Towns (or ASSET). The project aims were:

- to promote co-operation, and the exchange of good practice between Governmental and other agencies throughout Europe who offer support to small towns
- to promote the exchange of good practice between individual small towns throughout Europe
- to speak on behalf of small towns to influence the European policy makers.
- to facilitate, support and encourage research to enable evidence which could influence policies to strengthen the well-being of small towns

3.2 The Retz event built on two earlier symposia in Austria (in 1998 and 2002) on small historic towns. They recognised that small towns faced threats posed by globalisation; centralisation of services into larger towns and losses due to modern development of out of town shopping centres. But they also recognised a positive side as small towns had significant historic assets with compactness, distinctiveness and a physical fabric which is human in scale; they had local economies which promote well-being; they had the potential to develop local resources of woodlands and farm produce; and new telecommunications opportunities which in turn could strengthen and diversify sub-regional economies and could be of benefit to rural people and businesses in small towns.

4. STUDY OF TOWNS IN EUROPE - SIZE AND POTENTIAL IMPORTANCE

This study was carried out by Valerie CARTER (President ECOVAST) in 2010.

4.1 Purpose of the Study

This study set out to find out how many people in Europe live in smaller towns by looking at the range of population level of larger and smaller towns/cities across Europe.

4.2 It hoped to establish how important these smaller towns are and what kind of effective voice they could have in Europe. It was research parallel to Opinion Surveys to establish whether they are suffering from a common set of problems (in the following Section 5) and more detailed studies of individual small towns(Section 7 to 14).

4.3. Research Area

The study covers all geographical Europe – both the states within the European Union and those outside it - apart from European Russia and European Turkey. The countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia - although Members of the Council of Europe - are considered to be geographically part of Asia rather than Europe and are also not included.

4.4 Methodology

The study identified all towns according to the size of their populations and split them into several categories or size-bands: Larger cities/towns were split into 3 size-bands: where the population is over 1 million; where the population is over 250,000 but below 1 million or where the population is over 50,000 but below 250,000. Smaller towns/cities were split into 4 size-bands; where the population is 40,000 but below 50,000; where the population is 30,000 but below 40,000; where the population is 20,000 but below 30,000 and finally where the population is 10,000 but below 20,000. These divisions into sub-categories allow for different amalgamations.

4.5 Can a 'small town' be defined ?

ECOVAST feels strongly that there are some towns which could be defined as 'small towns' which are found throughout Europe and which are essential to the well-being of rural areas. ECOVAST uses both size and function to define them as well as their particular assets of distinctiveness and contribution to rural landscapes.

4.6 Function

Small rural towns are places which provide for both themselves and their hinterlands. They provide local markets, shops – often having representatives of the major food chains, and some branches of 'magnet traders', as well as acting as a centre for business activity with a wide range of services which can include administration, leisure and secondary education – enough to make them rural service centres for their surrounding hinterland. ECOVAST through its debates and the South East England studies has identified several major characteristics for 'towns' – based on the functions they provide:

- towns are settlements which have **hinterlands** serving the needs of the town's own inhabitants and of surrounding smaller settlements. Villages and the countryside are often the hinterland of small rural towns, and small towns in turn are the hinterland of larger towns; and in turn larger towns are within the hinterland of major conurbations.
- the pattern of dependency between places is therefore complicated. There are 'city regions' across Europe, dominated by one huge metropolis; yet other regions remain multi centred.
- towns are **a market place for the goods from surrounding areas**.
- towns are normally **freestanding** although some have ribbon development joining them to other settlements but these may still have their own hinterland. Many former small towns have been completely swallowed up by large towns.
- towns are more **compact** - more densely developed and populated than villages – an 'urban' characteristic.
- they often have a pattern of narrow streets dating from historic times.
- towns have a **clear central place** – for meeting & trade – usually called the 'market place'.
- towns will have **religious buildings** attracting people from a wide area
- towns will have **cultural assets** such as museums or theatres

- historic towns will have many **significant remnants of their history** – walls, forts, castles, or palaces, and central places and streets with buildings in continuous historic facades.
- small towns provide **employment and services** not just for themselves but also for their hinterlands.

    - they provide **retail centres** – many with independent traders and some with representatives of the major food chains, some with branches of 'magnet traders', and many with markets;
    - they act as a **centre for business activity**
    - they provide a **wide range of other services** which can include administration, health, leisure and secondary education.

Not all small towns will have all these or to the same degree but all will provide at least some of these functions.

4.7 There are many small settlements which historically were 'towns' with historic 'Town Charters' which now no longer function as places which provide services for a hinterland. However, many of these historic places display a wealth of 'heritage' assets which attract tourists and have restaurants and hotels as well as important buildings to visit, providing local jobs and making contributions to the local, regional and even national economy and should be recognised for this.

4.8 Size

The study does not set out to define the limit between a 'larger' town and a 'smaller' town. The ECOVAST Opinion Surveys suggested that the **upper limit** on size of a 'small town' is not uniform across European opinion. The responses from 22 countries gave 12 different answers. However, ECOVAST does recognize that it is smaller towns that suffer most from centralization and loss of services. Some countries set the upper limit at 50,000 but the majority gave a figure much lower than this.

4.9 ECOVAST also felt that all settlements with a population of 10,000 or above would have the functions of a 'town' and this became the lower level for a town in this European survey. The study of small towns in South England (Sections 7, 8 and 9) makes it clear that the larger small towns (those between 10,000 population and 20,000) were the best in terms of the economy.

4.10 The opinion on 'the **lower level'** also varies considerably. It is difficult to define function without good survey work and uniform evidence gathering across Europe does not exist. It proved impossible to get comparable data for all the countries of Europe for towns below a population of 10,000 without a great deal of new survey work.

4.11 It is also clear from the collective knowledge of our ECOVAST members that there are many very small towns' with populations below the 10,000 population level. The South East Towns study identifies many small towns in South East England with 36% of them with populations between 5,000 and 10,000 and 34% of them with populations below 5,000 – that is 70% of the small towns surveyed. There are also many very small towns below 10,000 population level functioning as rural service centres – for instance in Austria, Croatia, Germany and France.

4.12 A further look at towns in France helps back up this opinion. One major function of a town is to act as a centre for administration of the town and its hinterland. Sub Prefectures are such towns. An analysis of the 228 Sous Prefectures in mainland France showed that 63% of them had populations of above 10,000 people but 37% had populations of less than 10,000.

4.13 ECOVAST is also aware that in the more remote, less densely populated countries the size of towns is generally much smaller – in Finland small towns often have populations below 2,000 people.

4.14 The Survey

The ASSET Study looked at all town settlements across geographical Europe (except for European Russia or European Turkey) and listed them in various size bands. The only database which covers the whole of Europe which is comparable between countries is Tageo.com - a database of more than 2.6 million towns/cities globally with 300 entries for each country. ECOVAST used this as the primary source of information. However, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Poland and Ukraine were so large that Tageo could not supply information down to towns of 10,000. Several secondary sources for population sizes were used. The data used was for town populations not for towns and their hinterlands.

4.15 The Tables below set out the survey results:

TABLE 1: EUROPEAN STUDY

Table 1a: Population and Size-bands for Larger Cities/Towns

Col 1	Col 2	Col 3					
		Larger Cities / Towns					
Country	Total Pop of state 100%	Urban pop over 1 mill	No of Towns	Urban pop 250-999.9K	No of Towns	Urban pop 50 - 249.9K	No of Towns
Germany	82,329,758	6,368,600	3	10,309,400	18	15,905,300	164
France	64,057,792	2,107,700	1	2,577,500	6	8,348,900	91
UK	61,113,205	9,692,800	3	5,189,800	15	15,754,900	173
Italy	58,145,320	3,831,800	2	4,756,000	9	10,688,500	121
Ukraine	45,700,395	6,039,500	4	7,888,400	18	6,993,300	70
Spain	40,353,352	4,716,400	2	5,543,500	13	11,407,000	109
Poland	38,500,696	1,676,600	1	5,215,400	11	5,927,500	76
Romania	22,215,421	1,897,100	1	2,131,300	7	3,999,500	38
Netherlands	16,715,999	0	0	2,075,700	4	5,716,500	58
Greece	10,737,428	0	0	1,134,200	2	2,893,400	36
Belgium	10,414,336	1,005,800	1	455,800	1	1,882,900	20
Portugal	10,227,924	0	0	825,500	2	1,090,600	13
Czech Rep.	10,211,904	1,157,800	1	692,900	2	1,500,400	19
Hungary	9,905,596	1,727,300	1	0	0	1,922,900	20
Belarus	9,648,533	1,646,600	1	1,805,900	5	1,885,000	19
Sweden	9,045,389	1,250,400	1	786,900	2	1,306,300	17
Austria	8,205,533	1,504,100	1	0	0	867,300	7
Switzerland	7,581,520	0	0	347,900	1	808,300	7
Bulgaria	7,204,687	1,044,200	1	628,800	2	1,541,900	17
Serbia	7,175,739	1,126,900	1	0	0	2,065,600	23
Denmark	5,484,723	1,089,700	1	0	0	725,200	7
Slovak Rep.	5,463,046	0	0	428,800	1	874,200	10
Finland	5,250,275	0	0	562,400	1	1,489,200	13
Norway	4,660,539	0	0	801,000	1	916,600	8
Bosnia	4,613,414	0	0	602,500	1	618,500	5
Croatia	4,489,409	0	0	694,100	1	598,100	6
Moldova	4,320,748	0	0	708,000	1	591,400	4
Ireland	4,203,200	1,027,900	1	0	0	349,700	3
Albania	3,639,453	0	0	352,900	1	495,100	6
Lithuania	3,555,179	0	0	542,700	1	897,400	5
Latvia	2,231,503	0	0	689,300	1	301,200	4
Macedonia	2,066,717	0	0	469,800	1	448,000	6
Slovenia	2,005,692	0	0	258,700	1	92,600	1
Estonia	1,299,371	0	0	396,000	1	168,500	2
Cyprus	1,084,748	0	0	0	0	352,100	2
Montenegro	672,180	0	0	0	0	203,600	2
Luxembourg	491,775	0	0	0	0	77,300	1
Malta	405,165	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iceland	306,694	0	0	0	0	113,400	1
Andorra	83,888	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lichtenstein	34,761	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monaco	32,965	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Marino	30,167	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gibraltar (GB)	29,286	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vatican	826	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	**585,946,251**	48,911,200	27	58,871,100	130	110,148,600	1,184

Table continued:

TABLE 1b: Population and Size-bands Medium Sized Towns

Col 1	Col 2	Col 4			
		Medium sized towns			
Country	Total Pop of state 100%	Pop 40K to 49.9K	No of Towns	Pop 30K to 39.9K	No of Towns
Germany	82,329,758	3,721,731	84	4,145,613	120
France	64,057,792	2,533,400	57	2,507,100	74
UK	61,113,205	2,888,300	66	2,926,500	81
Italy	58,145,320	2,187,300	48	3,816,600	109
Ukraine	45,700,395	730,300	16	1,082,500	33
Spain	40,353,352	1,210,700	27	1,759,100	50
Poland	38,500,696	1,157,200	26	1,167,700	59
Romania	22,215,421	298,000	7	592,100	17
Netherlands	16,715,999	1,327,500	30	1,595,100	46
Greece	10,737,428	632,700	14	369,300	11
Belgium	10,414,336	128,900	3	1,063,500	31
Portugal	10,227,924	312,000	7	380,100	11
Czech Rep.	10,211,904	186,100	4	355,700	10
Hungary	9,905,596	93,200	2	501,900	16
Belarus	9,648,533	83,400	2	194,400	6
Sweden	9,045,389	181,100	4	370,000	11
Austria	8,205,533	92,700	2	77,100	2
Switzerland	7,581,520	90,900	2	205,200	6
Bulgaria	7,204,687	310,700	7	176,400	5
Serbia	7,175,739	165,200	4	258,600	7
Denmark	5,484,723	175,600	4	338,400	10
Slovak Rep.	5,463,046	127,000	3	312,100	9
Finland	5,250,275	183,300	4	376,000	11
Norway	4,660,539	129,000	3	138,000	4
Bosnia	4,613,414	0	0	146,700	4
Croatia	4,489,409	136,000	3	201,700	6
Moldova	4,320,748	40,000	1	107,900	3
Ireland	4,203,200	48,300	1	66,700	2
Albania	3,639,453	45,500	1	38,200	1
Lithuania	3,555,179	90,000	2	131,900	4
Latvia	2,231,503	0	0	76,500	2
Macedonia	2,066,717	113,200	3	139,900	4
Slovenia	2,005,692	0	0	72,200	2
Estonia	1,299,371	90,900	2	0	0
Cyprus	1,084,748	95,500	2	69,700	2
Montenegro	672,180	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	491,775	0	0	0	0
Malta	405,165	0	0	0	0
Iceland	306,694	0	0	0	0
Andorra	83,888	0	0	0	0
Lichtenstein	34,761	0	0	0	0
Monaco	32,965	0	0	0	0
San Marino	30,167	0	0	0	0
Gibraltar (GB)	29,286	0	0	0	0
Vatican	826	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	**585,946,251**	19,605,631	441	25,760,413	769

Final part of Table 1

Table 1c: Population and Size-bands of Small Towns and Rural Areas

Col 1	Col 2	Col 6		Col 7		Col 8	Col 9
		Small Towns		Rural Towns		Rural	
Country	Total Pop of state 100%	Pop 20K to 29.9K	No of Towns	Pop 10K to 19.9K	No of Towns	Less than 10K Rural & some Very Small Towns	% Rural
Germany	82,329,758	6,406,993	264	7,387,145	512	28,084,976	34.4%
France	64,057,792	3,118,271	124	2,624,537	186	40,240,384	62.9%
UK	61,113,205	2,560,040	105	3,417,110	245	18,683,755	30.7%
Italy	58,145,320	2,854,761	119	4,323,800	309	25,686,559	44.2%
Ukraine	45,700,395	1,587,300	65	1,795,500	129	19,833,595	43.4%
Spain	40,353,352	3,461,900	138	2,173,200	149	10,081,552	25.0%
Poland	38,500,696	1,761,100	74	2,674,600	211	18,920,596	49.1%
Romania	22,215,421	818,200	33	1,489,200	118	10,990,021	49.5%
Netherlands	16,715,999	2,464,200	100	2,843,200	210	693,799	4.2%
Greece	10,737,428	743,100	31	733,200	52	4,231,528	39.4%
Belgium	10,414,336	1,579,500	66	2,568,500	178	1,729,436	16.6%
Portugal	10,227,924	940,400	39	1,341,200	102	5,338,124	52.2%
Czech Rep.	10,211,904	678,700	27	962,500	69	4,677,804	45.8%
Hungary	9,905,596	572,400	24	1,073,500	79	4,014,396	40.5%
Belarus	9,648,533	142,800	6	483,400	37	3,407,033	35.3%
Sweden	9,045,389	508,600	21	719,000	51	3,923,089	43.4%
Austria	8,205,533	292,300	12	605,300	48	4,766,733	58.1%
Switzerland	7,581,520	373,400	15	1,347,100	97	4,408,720	58.2%
Bulgaria	7,204,687	292,800	12	463,600	34	2,746,287	38.1%
Serbia	7,175,739	442,500	18	533,500	43	2,583,439	36.0%
Denmark	5,484,723	197,700	8	424,400	32	2,533,723	46.2%
Slovak Rep.	5,463,046	400,400	18	442,900	31	2,877,646	52.7%
Finland	5,250,275	478,800	20	568,100	40	1,592,475	30.3%
Norway	4,660,539	73,500	3	327,000	23	2,275,439	48.8%
Bosnia	4,613,414	83,400	3	326,900	25	2,835,414	61.5%
Croatia	4,489,409	94,800	4	243,400	18	2,521,309	56.2%
Moldova	4,320,748	75,200	3	336,100	24	2,462,148	57.0%
Ireland	4,203,200	114,500	5	273,700	18	2,322,400	55.3%
Albania	3,639,453	119,100	5	205,700	15	2,382,953	65.5%
Lithuania	3,555,179	152,300	6	270,100	21	1,470,779	41.4%
Latvia	2,231,503	78,200	3	156,600	12	929,703	41.7%
Macedonia	2,066,717	164,700	7	330,200	25	400,917	19.4%
Slovenia	2,005,692	72,200	3	118,600	9	1,391,392	69.4%
Estonia	1,299,371	20,400	1	117,300	8	506,271	39.0%
Cyprus	1,084,748	0	0	57,700	4	509,748	47.0%
Montenegro	672,180	23,800	1	101,600	8	343,180	51.1%
Luxembourg	491,775	28,000	1	17,800	1	368,675	75.0%
Malta	405,165	21,600	1	142,600	11	240,965	59.5%
Iceland	306,694	47,300	2	16,300	1	129,694	42.3%
Andorra	83,888	20,400	1	26,600	2	36,888	44.0%
Lichtenstein	34,761	0	0	5,200	1	29,561	85.0%
Monaco	32,965	0	0	28,800	2	4,165	12.6%
San Marino	30,167	0	0	4,300	1	25,867	86.0%
Gibraltar (GB)	29,286	29,286	1	0	0	0	0.0%
Vatican	826	0	0	0	0	826	0.0%
TOTALS	**585,946,251**	33,894,851	1,389	44,100,992	3,191	243,233,964	41.5%

4.16 Survey Results

Altogether the study identified 7,131 towns / cities across Europe.

(i) Larger towns

There are 1,341 towns with populations of 50,000 or more with **217,930,900** people living in them - which is **37.5% of the total population of the survey area.**

(ii) Smaller towns

The survey found 5,790 towns where the populations were less than 50,000 and they had 123,362,000 people living in them **- 21.0% of the population of the area surveyed -** made up of

- 441 towns with populations between 40 and 50,000 (population 19,605,631)
- 769 towns with populations between 30 and 40,000 (population 25,760,413)
- 1,389 towns with populations between 20 and 30,000 (population 33,894,851)
- 3,191 towns with populations 10 and 20,000 (population 44,100,992) .

Graph showing different sizes of towns

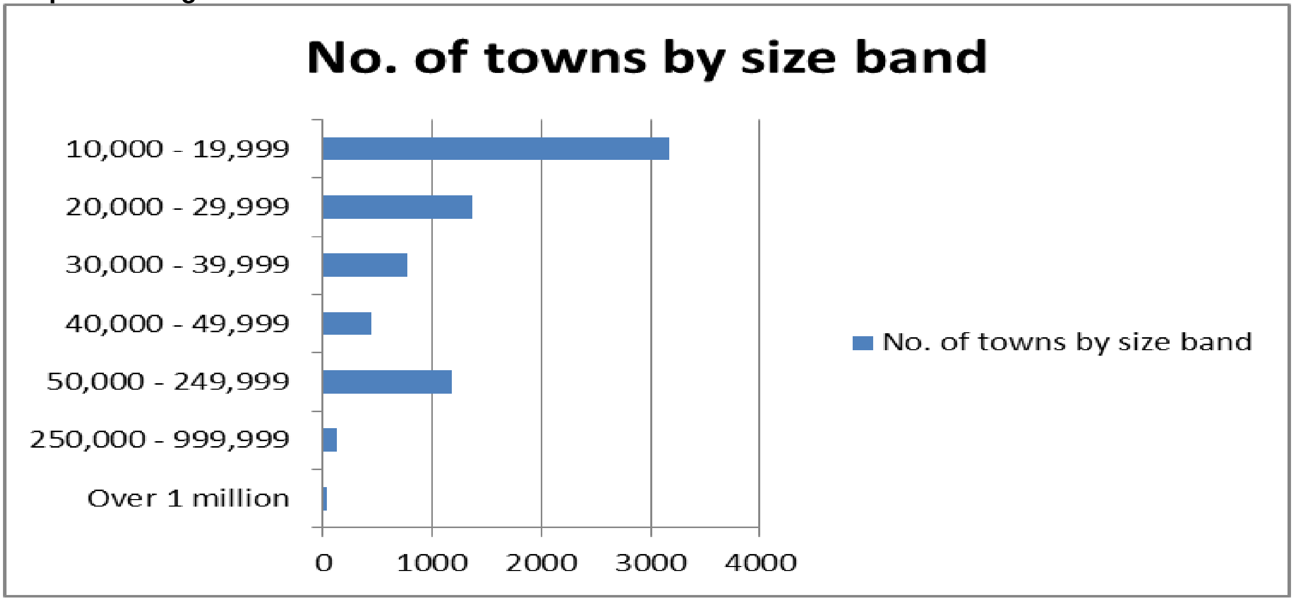
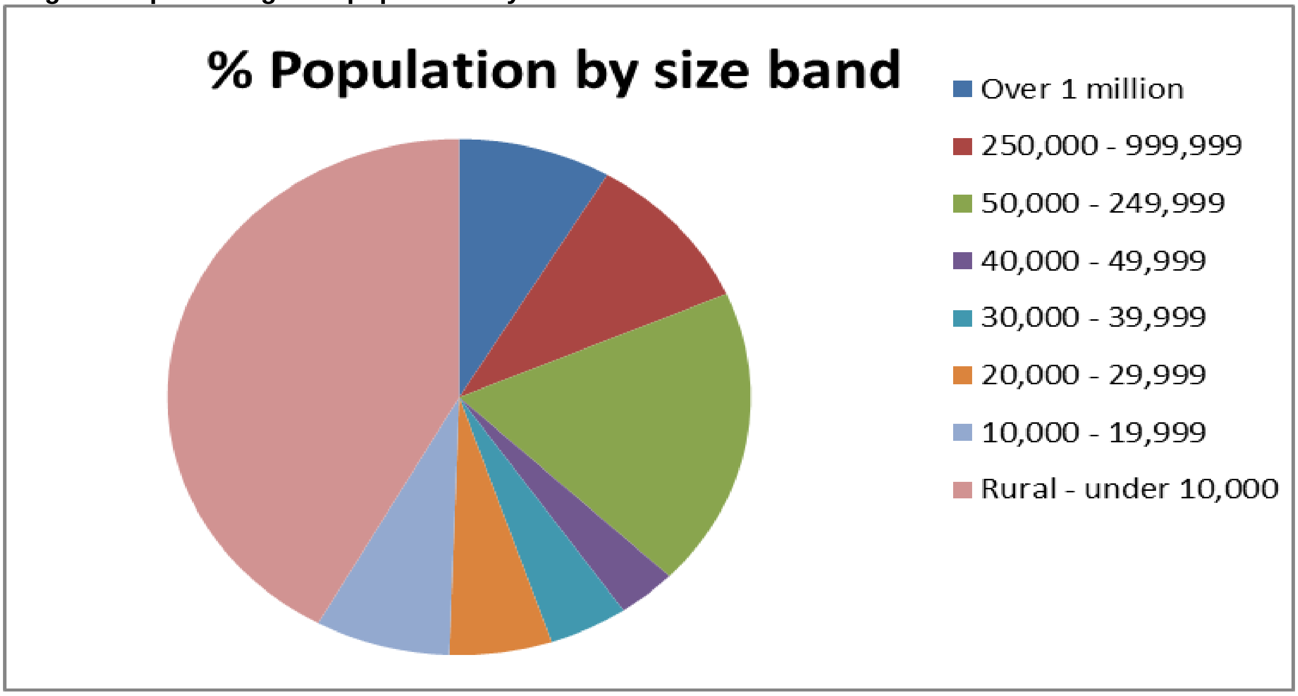


Diagram of percentages of population by size bands



(iii) Rural Areas
The remaining **41.5%** of the population of Europe (**242,984,000 million people**) live in settlements below 10,000

- this includes very small towns, villages, hamlets and the countryside.
- this is 41.5% of the population of the survey area.

4.17 Conclusions of European Study

(i) More than 80% of the towns in Europe are below 50,000 population size.

(ii) There are 1,120 towns with populations between 30,000 and under 50,000 people where 45,366,044 people live.

(iii) In the two smallest categories there are 1,389 towns 20,000 and 29,999; and 3,191 towns between 10,000 and 19,999 - 4,580 towns in total, together making up 65% of the total number of towns in Europe.

(iv) More than **78 million people live in these 4,580 small towns**/cities with populations of less than 30,000 making up 13% of the total population of Europe. This is larger than the population of any country in Europe except Germany. Many are run by strong municipalities which should enable them to have a much greater voice in Europe to help shape future policy and avoid a total dominance of an urban based approach.

(v) There are nearly 243 million people or 41.5% of the total population of Europe living in places where the population is less than 10,000. This will include many much smaller rural towns as well as villages and the countryside.

5. PAN-EUROPEAN OPINION SURVEYS

These opinion surveys were carried out by Pam Moore (Secretary General ECOVAST 2006 -2009)

5.1 As part of the ASSET project, two Opinion Surveys were carried out by ECOVAST which sought the opinions of rural networks across Europe about their views on small towns, the problems they were facing and how were they coping with the economic recession.

5.2 Introduction and Purpose of First Opinion Survey

The first survey was carried out in 2006-7

5.3 Methodology
A questionnaire was compiled and sent out to the contacts identified in 30 countries across Europe not just the Member States of the European Union. The questionnaires were then analysed.

5.4 The Survey
A simple database of appropriate rural specialists was compiled using existing ECOVAST contacts; other known networks; the internet of EU and other Country sites which was the basis for asking for opinions. Information was sought on the following topics: Governmental structure of country; the definition of a "small town" (population); whether this includes its hinterland; specific issues of concern to small towns; what support is received and from whom; whether larger towns get preferential treatment; degree of interaction between small town and hinterland and what forms this takes; what exemplifies "good practice"; and what research has been done.

5.5 The Responses
22 countries completed the questionnaire – 21 from EU Member States: Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and England, Scotland and Wales in the United Kingdom; and 1 from Croatia. giving valuable opinions from western, southern, northern, eastern and central Europe.

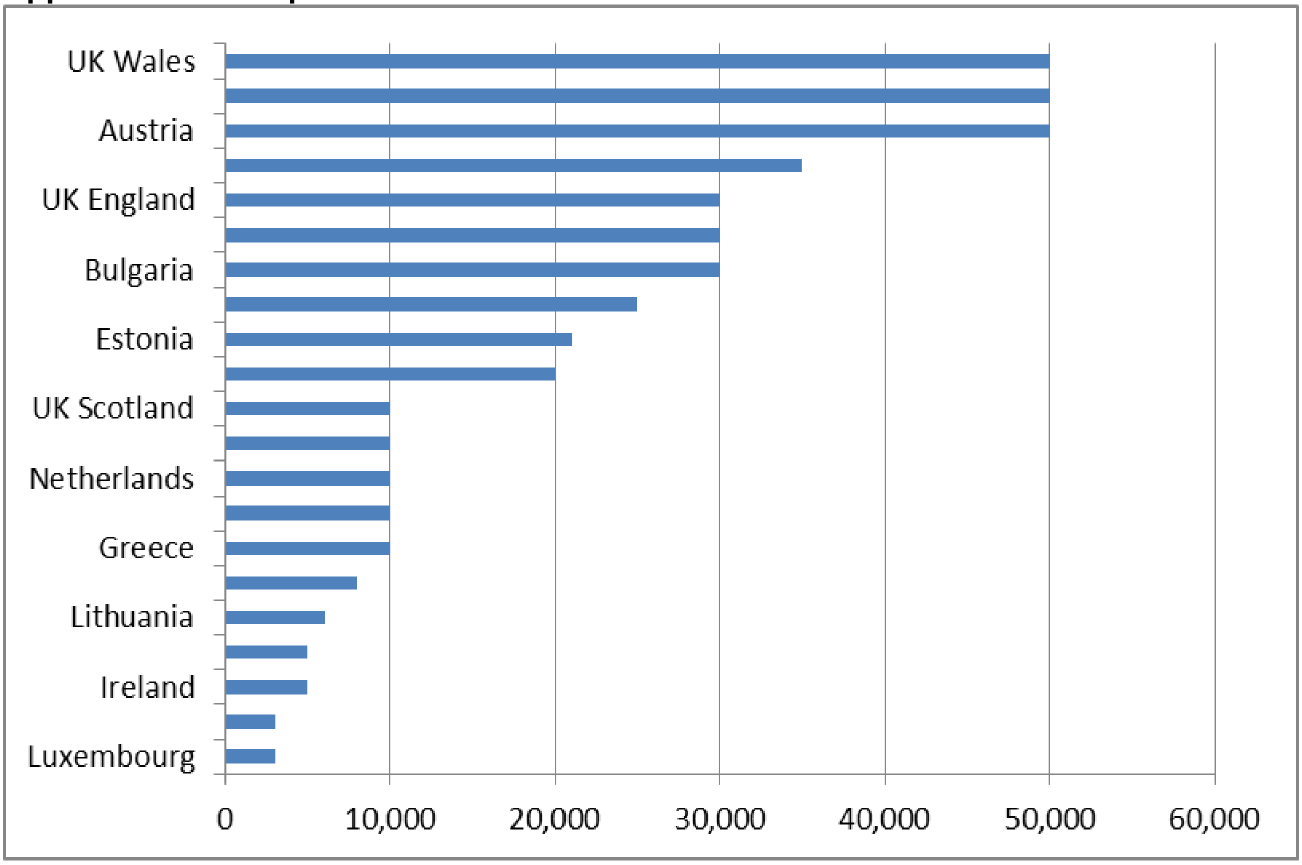
5.6 The Analysis of the Results
The analysis has indicated that the picture is very complex, with major differences in every aspect of the data collected. The following answers were given to the more detailed questions:

(i) What is the size of a small town?

A variety of answers were given to the question on population levels for 'small towns'. There is therefore no simple or specific European definition on what makes a 'small town".

- the lower level suggested of population for a small town varied between 200 and 5,000 with many citing 2,000 or 3,000
- the upper level of population suggested for a small towns ranged from 3,000 (Luxembourg and Malta) and 50,000 (Austria, Spain and Wales). Sweden gave two different responses and is not included on the graph below which illustrates these responses.

Upper Limits of Population for a 'Small Town'



(ii) Hinterlands

The respondents were almost equally divided between those who wanted figures for small towns to include their hinterland and those which do not. This can, of course, seriously distort the picture – for example in Austria the town of St Veit an der Glan in Carinthia and its hinterland has a population is given as 14,000 but the town itself only has 7,000. The European Study used town populations which excluded their hinterlands.

(iii) The Challenges Small Towns Face

The responses revealed the following concerns: loss of population – particularly of young people; the loss of facilities; loss of local employment opportunities; the growth of traffic and the consequent demand for car parking; concerns about new developments in their town centres; and the growth of out of town shopping developments. Other factors causing concern included: loss of traditional buildings; weak infrastructure; poor public transport; unemployment generally; land pressure; planning and housing policies.

(iv) Out Migration

All respondents reported real concerns about out migration from their small towns, especially of young people. Much of this is to urban areas or to pursue higher education, but few of them return, and this is threatening the demographic balance of many towns.

(v) What Support is there for Small Towns?

The question about national or regional networks for small towns elicited a fascinating range of replies. Some countries, such as Poland, have a Union of Small Towns, some have an Association of Towns (often embracing all sizes of town), whereas others have nothing in place. In some instances support does come from Government related sources, in others not. The support, where it exists, can take many forms - the most usual roles are information exchange and lobbying of some kind, but it can include financial help.

(vi) Interaction between small towns and their hinterland

Most countries reported some degree of interaction between their small towns and hinterland settlements, though Romania and Estonia did not agree, and interestingly, Poland felt this had decreased recently, whereas in Hungary it was a rising trend. The interactions identified included: shopping and markets; locally produced food; leisure provision; tourism; transport facilities and health related provision

(vii) Do larger towns get more support than small towns?

The general view was that they do, although Slovakia gave the response that for them the opposite applies and some were uncertain. Some countries, namely Croatia, England and Germany felt it was variable

(viii) Best Practice Examples

Most respondents could give examples of "good practice" in interaction, though the form and source of this varied. Portugal and Lithuania identified LEADER Programmes; Austria identified the specific example of Gussing with its pioneering self-sufficiency in renewable energy; and Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and the UK gave examples of case studies. The Croatian response was of particular interest as it gave instances of both good and bad practice.

(ix) What Research had they undertaken?

Research into the challenges faced by small towns and how these might be met had been undertaken in most of the countries sampled, much of it by Universities and similar institutions.

5.7 Conclusions of First Opinion Survey

Overall the information gathered is valuable in showing not only the great variety in responses in the circumstances in each country but also the impressions that there is a lot of activity going on in a piecemeal way.

5.8 The Second Opinion Survey 2009 Introduction and Purpose

Although the initial survey provided an outline of the challenges being faced by small European towns, early in 2009 it became apparent that it would be useful to seek further information specifically on the impact which the economic downturn is having on these vital hubs.

5.9 Methodology

A questionnaire was compiled and sent out in 2009 to the contacts identified in 18 countries across Europe not just the Member States of the European Union. England was not included, because the Commission for Rural Communities (England) had done similar research and could provide us with the information. ECOVAST have worked closely with them. The responses were then analysed.

5.10 The Survey

The topics of the new questionnaire were similar to those in the first phase, but presented in a more focused way to address recent problems of the recession. Questions were asked on specific impacts such as effects on population; facilities; employment; housing; heritage and the impact of "out of town" development. Additional questions were also asked about their concerns of the impact on landscapes around the towns, and their relationships with hinterland settlements. It also sought to establish what support was being provided during the downturn of the economy in Europe.

5.11 Results of the 2nd Opinion Survey

Responses were received from fourteen states - 13 of them being EU Member States: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia and Sweden; and 1 from Croatia. Some of these were from the same people who had completed the earlier questionnaire, but for some were from new states - Denmark; Lithuania, Scotland - where additional contacts had been made.

5.12 The data from responses was from a well-spread geographical range of countries – from north, south, east and west Europe, and a mix of "old" and "new" EU members.

5.13 Analysis of the Results of 2nd Opinion Surveys

The information provided by respondents has given a valuable insight into the impact which the economic downturn is having across Europe. No country has escaped the impact of the recession, but it is evident that its effects have been far more pronounced in some states - particularly Hungary, Croatia and Ireland. For example, Denmark and Poland appear, so far, to have escaped the worse effects of the recession.

(i) Loss of jobs

Most respondents commented on loss of jobs – both by the closure of businesses, or reductions in their workforces. The Polish response, however, highlighted a problem not so far encountered elsewhere – the impact of OTHER countries' problems – in this instance, the loss of jobs by factory closures, caused by the economic woes of Germany, where the parent companies are based.

(ii) Loss of retail

Almost all of the states face loss of facilities in small towns, with a particular area of loss being in the retail sector. For some, this is due to small businesses being unable to compete with larger stores in urban centres. There are many empty shop premises and several new developments left half completed. A major concern is related to "out of town" shopping, with two thirds of respondents citing this issue, which they feel is tearing the heart from smaller towns. It might be expected that the recession would have stalled the growth of "out of town" development, but the evidence so far suggests this slowdown has not been marked.

(iii) Tourism and heritage

It is noticeable that countries reliant on tourism are suffering severely. Malta and Croatia both give the decline in this industry as a major concern, with a consequent loss of employment and facilities resulting. Indeed three quarters of the respondents are concerned about the impact of the recession on heritage. Fewer tourists visiting historic buildings which run the risk of becoming disused; fewer being sold or let in a stagnant property market or being lost altogether. The lack of maintenance due to funding constraints by local authorities reducing financial input because of changed priorities.

(iv) Pressures on hinterlands

Half of the respondents expressed concern about increased pressures on the hinterland and landscapes around small towns. Most said that there was increased co-operation between small towns and hinterland settlements recently.

(v) Adverse effect on landscapes

However, it was new development which was causing concerns due to the adverse effects on the landscape – either from new industry; new housing, agricultural change (a notable concern for Italy and Portugal).

(vi) Housing

All states had faced some degree of difficulty, but the extent varies. Most cite a shortage of finance available, but only two have already seen a significant number of house repossessions. A particular problem in Ireland is "over supply" – a housing boom just before the downturn leaving many properties partly completed, or finished, but remain empty

(vii) Support during the downturn

Half of respondents said they had received some help from national or regional government, with others citing EU funds, such as LEADER.

5.14 Conclusions of Second Opinion Survey

(i) All countries reported that they had been affected adversely by the recession.

(ii) Many reported on the decline in employment which will have a wider implication not only on the town itself but also on the villages in the hinterland.

(iii) The impact which might affect the heritage is particularly worrying as it is heritage tourism that often offers the potential for sustainable visitor spend.

The following sections are based on studies carried out by different ECOVAST National Sections – 3 on small towns in South East England (set out in detail); a study of all historic towns in Austria, followed by references to research and other work in Germany and Croatia.

6 INTRODUCTION TO STUDIES OF 160 SMALL TOWNS IN SE ENGLAND

The following three separate studies were carried out by Valerie CARTER (President ECOVAST)

6.1 The following three in-depth studies of the assets of 160 small towns in South East England look at the economic, service and heritage assets. The economic study was carried out by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and ECOVAST in 2010 and the Services and Heritage survey solely by ECOVAST carried out 2010-20112.

6.2 It is believed that small towns in SE England are typical of all the small towns in England and those across Europe. It is accepted that this region is one of the more densely populated regions of Europe but it has significant rural areas with a variety of nationally designated landscapes and some 1,400 village settlements as well as 160 small towns.

6.3 They share a common history and heritage with small towns across England and are also similar to small towns across Europe serving the needs of themselves and their hinterlands across the ages, These towns are nearly all historic and having grown up since medieval times and remain compact reflecting architecture and history throughout the ages, not overwhelmed by modern development (because of strict English planning policies). Many have Town Charters issued in medieval times.

6.4 They are considered typical of all small towns whatever political regimes that have developed in west and east Europe since the 2nd World War.

7. THE ECONOMIC ASSETS OF SMALL TOWNS - & THEIR VALUE TO THE ECONOMY 2010

7.1 Purpose of this study

The purpose was to look at the value of small towns in South East England to the local economy. The survey examined 179 settlements in total but during the analysis stage it was decided that several did not really meet the ‘function’ of a town and only 160 small towns are listed in this document.

The study examined the economic functions of each town and ranks them giving a typology for these towns in terms of population size, ranking position, communications and remoteness from major urban and medium sized towns. It also provides evidence that could be used to influence future policy.

7.2 Methodology

A survey of these economic assets was carried out on all 160 towns and then they were ranked into the very best towns ranked as ‘Top Towns’; followed by Upper, Middle and Lower Towns.

7.3 The Survey

The towns had to have a hinterland and be freestanding - not totally surrounded by urban populations of larger towns. It was decided by partners in the South East that the upper level of population in this work would be 20,000. There was no lower limit.

This differs from the European Study which considered that small towns could include those up to 50,000 although it uses the 30,000 level in most of its conclusions. The towns in South East England with populations of 20,000 to 50,000 are included in the diagrams but were not surveyed in detail.

Several functional criteria were identified for survey which included retail businesses (magnet traders; members of the 5 major supermarket chains; members of other supermarket chains; range of shops; weekly market and farmers’ markets); the number of other businesses; the town being an administrative centre for the district in which it was situated and the presence of a secondary school.

7.4 Accessibility to and from towns is important to their attractiveness to a hinterland or visitors. The survey included being on a bus route, having a railway station and good access to motorway junctions (being within 5 miles or within 10 miles).

7.5 The table below sets out the economic study results for the 160 small towns

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns
Table 2a: Communications Score and Economic Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Communication					Economic Scores					
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	1. On a Bus Route	2. Railway Station	3. Town within 5 miles of motorway junction	4. Town within 10 miles of motorway junction	**COMMUNICATION SCORE**	5. Overall Retail Trade Score	6. Overall Business Score	7. Administrative Centre Fo = Former	8. Secondary School	**TOTAL FUNCTION SCORE**	**ECONOMIC RANKING**
HA	East.Hampshire.	Alton	16000	5	5			10	18	16	Fo	10	44	Upper
BU	Chiltern.	Amersham	20000	5	5			10	11	9	10	10	30	Upper
WS	Arun	Arundel	3200	5				5	7	5	Fo		12	Lower
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Ascot	9000	5	5	5		15	10	15			25	Middle
SU	Guildford	Ash	17000	5	5			10	2	9		10	19	Lower
KE	Dover	Aylesham	1500	5	5			10	9	1			10	Lower
SU	Surrey Heath	Bagshot	5200	5	5	5		15	6	5			11	Lower
ES	Rother.	Battle	5100	5	5			10	18	6		10	34	Middle
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Beaconsfield	12900	5	5	5		15	21	17	Fo	10	48	Upper
IW	Isle of Wight	Bembridge	3400	5				5	9	3			12	Lower
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Benson	3000	5			2	7	6	2			8	Lower
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Berinsfield	2700	5				5	6	1			7	Lower
WS	Horsham.	Billingshurst	5400	5	5			10	10	7		10	27	Middle
HA	Winchester.	Bishops Walt.	6000	5			2	7	9	5			14	Lower
HA	East.Hampshire.	Bordon/White.l	16000	5				5	14	10		10	34	Middle
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	Borough Green	4200	5	5	5		15	6	3		10	19	Lower
HA	Eastleigh.	Botley	5000	5		5		10	6	3			9	Lower
BU	Wycombe.	Bourne End	3000	5	5	5		15	6	8		10	24	Middle
IW	Isle of Wight	Brading	1700	5				5	6	1			7	Lower
HA	New.Forest.	Brockenhurst	2800	5				5	7	4		10	21	Middle
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Buckingham	12500	5	5			10	13	14	Fo	10	37	Upper
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Burford	1400	5				5	6	4	Fo	10	20	Middle
BE	Newbury.	Burghfield.	5600	5				5	6	1		10	17	Lower
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Burnham	5000	5	5	5		15	5	8			13	Lower
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Carterton	12900	5				5	6	8		10	24	Middle
SU	Tandridge	Caterham	15000	5	5	5		15	22	15		10	47	Upper
BU	Chiltern.	Chalfont SGiles	4700	5			2	7	6	6			12	Lower
BU	Chiltern.	Chalfont SPeter	10000	5		5		10	10	10		10	30	Middle
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Charlbury	2900	5	5			10	7	3			10	Lower
BU	Chiltern.	Chesham	20000	5	5			10	17	21	Fo	10	48	Upper
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Chipp. Norton	5600	5				5	10	11	Fo	10	31	Middle
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Cookham	4000	5		5		10	2	5			7	Lower
IW	Isle of Wight	Cowes	12000	5				5	6	16	Fo	10	32	Middle
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook	4200	5				5	6	4	Fo	10	20	Middle
SU	Waverley	Cranleigh	10000	5				5	15	12			37	Upper
ES	Wealden.	Crowborough	20000	5	5			10	10	15	10	10	45	Upper
BE	Bracknell.Forest.	Crowthorne	5000	5			2	7	14	11		10	35	Upper
WS	Mid.Sussex	Cuckfield	3200	5				5	7	3	Fo	10	20	Middle
BK	Windsor Maidenhead	Datchet	4000	5		5		10	2	4			6	Lower
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Denham	7000	5	5	5		15	2	5	10		17	Lower

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns
Table 2a: Communications Score and Economic Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Communication					Economic Scores					
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	1. On a Bus Route	2. Railway Station	3. Town within 5 miles of motorway junction	4. Town within 10 miles of motorway junction	COMMUNICATION SCORE	5. Overall Retail Trade Score	6. Overall Business Score	7. Administrative Centre Fo = Former	8. Secondary School	TOTAL FUNCTION SCORE	ECONOMIC RANKING
SU	Mole Valley	Dorking	16000	5	5		2	12	25	19	10	10	64	TOP
IW	Isle of Wight	East Cowes	7000	5				5	6	6			12	Lower
KE	Sevenoaks	Edenbridge	7100	5	5		2	12	9	7		10	26	Middle
HA	Havant.	Emsworth	8100	5	5			10	10	8		10	28	Middle
BK	Windsor Maidenhead	Eton	2000	5	5	5		15	3	4	Fo		7	Lower
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Eynsham	4600	5				5	10	6			16	Lower
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Faringdon	6100	5				5	9	7			16	Lower
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Farnham Com	5000	5		5		10	6	4			10	Lower
KE	Swale	Faversham	18200	5	5	5		15	15	12	Fo	10	37	Upper
BE	Wokingham.	Finchampstead	5000	5				5	2	9			11	Lower
HA	New.Forest.	Fordingbridge	5700	5				5	6	6		10	22	Middle
ES	Wealden.	Forest Row	3600	5				5	6	5		10	21	Middle
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Gerrards Cross	9600	5		5		10	12	10			22	Middle
SU	Waverley	Godalming	20000	5	5			10	23	22	10	10	65	TOP
SU	Mole Valley	Great Bookham	10000	5	5	5		15	9	7			16	Lower
BU	Chiltern.	Gt Missenden	4000	5	5			10	6	4			10	Lower
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Grove	5000	5				5	10	4		10	24	Middle
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Haddenham	4700	5	5			10	2	5			7	Lower
ES	Wealden.	Hailsham	19100	5				5	15	14		10	39	Upper
HA	Hart.	Hartley Witney	7400	5		5		10	11	5			16	Lower
SU	Waverley	Haslemere	11600	5	5			10	15	13	Fo	10	38	Upper
WS	Mid.Sussex	Hassocks	6000	5	5			10	9	5		10	24	Middle
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Hawkhurst	3100	5				5	6	2			8	Lower
KE	Maidstone	Headcorn	2400	5	5		2	12	6	2			8	Lower
ES	Wealden.	Heathfield	10000	5	5			10	15	8		10	33	Middle
WS	Horsham.	Henfield	4500	5				5	6	5			11	Lower
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Henley Thames	10500	5	5		2	12	20	22	Fo	10	52	TOP
KE	Medway	Hoo	5200	5			2	7	2	2		10	15	Lower
HA	Hart.	Hook	6800	5	5	5		15	14	9			23	Middle
SU	Reigate & Banstead	Horley	19000	5	5		2	12	15	18		10	43	Upper
HA	East.Hampshire.	Horndean	13000	5				5	6	4			10	Lower
BE	Newbury.	Hungerford	4900	5	5	5		15	14	7		10	31	Middle
WS	Mid.Sussex	Hurstpierpoint	6100	5				5	6	4			10	Lower
KE	Shepway	Hythe	10000	5		5		10	15	10	Fo	10	35	Upper
HA	New.Forest.	Hythe	5200	5			2	7	10	7			17	Lower
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Iver.Heath.	7300	5		5		10	6	11			17	Lower
OX	Cherwell	Kidlington	14900	5			2	7	12	12		10	34	Middle
HA	Basingstoke Deane	Kingsclere	3200	5				5	2	3			5	Lower
BE	Newbury.	Lambourne	2900	5			2	7	0	2			8	Lower
SU	Mole Valley	Leatherhead	10000	5	5	5		15	18	16		10	44	Upper

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns
Table 2a: Communications Score and Economic Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Communication					Economic Scores					
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	1. On a Bus Route	2. Railway Station	3. Town within 5 miles of motorway junction	4. Town within 10 miles of motorway junction	**COMMUNICATION SCORE**	5. Overall Retail Trade Score	6. Overall Business Score	7. Administrative Centre Fo = Former	8. Secondary School	**TOTAL FUNCTION SCORE**	**ECONOMIC RANKING**
HA	Gosport	Lee on Solent	6000	5		5		10	9	7			16	Lower
KE	Maidstone	Lenham	2000	5	5	5		15	2	2		10	14	Lower
ES	Lewes.	Lewes	15900	5	5			10	20	21	20	10	71	TOP
SU	Tandridge	Lingfield	3000	5	5		2	12	6	5			11	Lower
HA	East.Hampshire.	Liphook	6000	5	5			10	7	9			16	Lower
HA	East.Hampshire.	Liss	6400	5	5			10	10	6			16	Lower
KE	Dartford	Longfield	8400	5	5			10	11	3		10	24	Middle
HA	New.Forest.	Lymington	14200	5	5			10	23	17	Fo	10	50	TOP
HA	New.Forest.	Lyndhurst	2200	5			2	7	6	4	10		20	Middle
KE	Maidstone	Marden	2400	5	5		2	12	2	3			5	Lower
BU	Wycombe.	Marlowe	18400	5		5		10	20	22	Fo	10	52	TOP
ES	Wealden.	Mayfield	2100	5				5	2	2		10	14	Lower
KE	Gravesham	Meopham	4200	5	5			10	2	4			6	Lower
WS	Chichester	Midhurst	6100	5				5	13	7	Fo	10	30	Middle
HA	New Forest	Milford on Sea	6000	5			2	7	2	3			5	Lower
KE	Thanet	Minster	3500	5	5			10	7	1			8	Lower
HA	Winchester.	New Alresford	5000	5	5			10	8	7		10	25	Middle
HA	New.Forest.	New Milton	10000	5	5			10	15	14		10	39	Upper
KE	Shepway	New Romney	9400	5				5	7	5	Fo	10	22	Middle
ES	Lewes.	Newhaven	12200	5	5			10	15	12	Fo	10	37	Upper
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Newport Pag.	14000	5		5		10	18	14	Fo	10	42	Upper
HA	Hart.	Odiham	2900	5	5	5		15	7	3		10	20	Middle
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Old Windsor	7000	5		5		10	6	3			9	Lower
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Olney	6000	5				5	7	8	Fo		15	Lower
HA	Basingstoke Deane	Overton	3300	5	5		2	12	6	2			8	Lower
SU	Tandridge	Oxted	12500	5	5	5		15	10	10	10	10	40	Upper
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Paddock Wood	7800	5	5			10	7	5		10	22	Middle
BE	Newbury.	Pangbourne.	3000	5	5	5		15	13	4			17	Lower
ES	Lewes.	Peacehaven	17500	5				5	11	11			22	Middle
HA	East.Hampshire.	Petersfield	13000	5	5			10	24	17	10	10	61	TOP
WS	Chichester	Petworth	2200	5				5	6	4			10	Lower
ES	Wealden.	Polegate	7000	5	5			10	10	5			15	Lower
BU	Wycombe.	Princes Risb.	10400	5	5		2	12	7	9		10	26	Middle
WS	Horsham.	Pulborough	7100	5	5			10	12	4			16	Lower
KE	Swale	Queenborough	9000	5	5			10	6	4	Fo		10	Lower
ES	Lewes.	Ringmer	2900	5				5	2	3		10	15	Lower
HA	New.Forest.	Ringwood	13300	5				5	19	15		10	44	Upper
ES	Lewes.	Robertsbridge	1900	5	5			10	6	2		10	18	Lower
HA	Test.Valley.	Romsey	17300	5	5	5		15	24	18		10	52	TOP
ES	Rother.	Rye	4100	5	5			10	10	7	Fo	10	27	Middle

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns
Table 2a: Communications Score and Economic Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Communication					Economic Scores					
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	1. On a Bus Route	2. Railway Station	3. Town within 5 miles of motorway junction	4. Town within 10 miles of motorway junction	**COMMUNICATION SCORE**	5. Overall Retail Trade Score	6. Overall Business Score	7. Administrative Centre Fo= Former	8. Secondary School	**TOTAL FUNCTION SCORE**	**ECONOMIC RANKING**
IW	Isle of Wight	Sandown	9500	5				5	11	13	Fo	10	34	Middle
KE	Dover	Sandwich	4300	5	5			10	10	5	Fo	10	25	Middle
ES	Lewes.	Seaford	19000	5	5			10	9	14	Fo	10	23	Middle
WS	Chichester	Selsey	9700	5				5	10	5		10	25	Middle
IW	Isle of Wight	Shanklin	9000	5				5	9	11	Fo		20	Middle
KE	Swale	Sheerness	11600	5	5			10	9	8	Fo	10	27	Middle
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	Snodland	9300	5	5			10	6	9		10	25	Middle
HA	Havant.	South Hayling	7000	5				5	6	12	Fo		18	Lower
WS	Horsham.	Southwater	8200	5				5	6	4			10	Lower
KE	Maidstone	Staplehurst	5100	5	5		2	12	2	3			5	Lower
WS	Horsham.	Steyning	9000	5				5	10	4		10	24	Middle
HA	Test.Valley.	Stockbridge	3000	5				5	2	2		10	14	Lower
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Stony Stratford	14000	5	5			10	9	8			17	Lower
WS	Horsham.	Storrington	7700	5				5	14	6			20	Middle
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Sunningdale	5000	5	5	5		15	7	2		10	19	Lower
HA	Basingstoke.and.Deane.	Tadley	8200	5			2	7	16	6			22	Middle
KE	Ashford	Tenterden	7700	5				5	20	7	Fo	10	37	Upper
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Thame	10800	5				5	20	15	Fo	10	45	Upper
BE	Newbury.	Theale	2700	5	5	5		15	6	5		10	21	Middle
BE	Wokingham.	Twyford	7000	5	5			10	7	4			11	Lower
ES	Wealden.	Uckfield	15300	5	5			10	14	12		10	36	Upper
IW	Isle of Wight	Ventnor	5800	5				5	9	8	Fo		17	Lower
ES	Wealden.	Wadhurst	3600	5	5			10	2	3		10	15	Lower
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Wallingford	8000	5			2	7	19	12	10	10	51	TOP
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Wantage	12700	5				5	15	10	Fo		25	Middle
BE	Wokingham.	Wargrave	2800	5			2	7	2	3		10	15	Lower
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Watlington	4000	5		5		10	6	5		10	21	Middle
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Wendover	7300	5	5			10	12	5		10	27	Middle
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	West Malling	2100	5	5	5		15	10	8			18	Lower
KE	Sevenoaks	Westerham	2900	5		5		10	6	5			11	Lower
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Wheatley	5400	5				5	11	4			15	Lower
HA	Basingstoke.and.Deane.	Whitchurch	4300	5	5		2	12	10	4		10	24	Middle
HA	Winchester.	Wickham.	1900	5		5		10	2	3			5	Lower
BE	Wokingham.	Winnersh	7000	5	5	5		15	7	6		10	10	Lower
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Winslow	4500	5				5	7	4			11	Lower
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Woburn Sands	4900	5	5			10	6	3		10	19	Lower
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Wolverton	11000	5	5			10	11	9			20	Middle
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Woodstock	2300	5			2	7	7	4	Fo	10	21	Middle
KE	Ashford	Wye	2000	5	5			10	6	2			8	Lower
HA	Hart.	Yateley	16000	5				5	9	9		10	28	Middle

7.6 The Results of the Economic Study

There were 25 towns in the south east which had populations over 50,000; 5 towns with populations between 40,000 and 49,999; 9 towns with populations between 30,000 and 39,999 and 13 towns with populations between 20,001 and 29,999. However the survey only looked at towns with a population up to 20,000.

(i) There were 160 such towns which had populations of under 20,000. Altogether they had a combined approximate population of 1,230,100 with:

- 12% of the towns (19 towns) had populations above 15,000 people
- 18% of the towns (28 towns) had populations between 10,000 and 14,999 people;
- 36% of the towns (58 towns) had populations between 5,000 and 9,999 population and
- 34% of the towns (55 towns) have populations below 5,000.

(ii) The economic ranking resulted in 9 Top Towns (6%); 23 Upper Towns (14%); 52 Middle Towns (33%) and 76 (47%) Lower Towns.

(iii) The retail assets were significant with 93 magnet traders (though 30 of these have subsequently been lost in the recession with the closure of Woolworths); 99 major supermarkets; 114 other supermarkets; 34 had weekly markets and 59 had farmers' markets; and 47 towns had a very good range of shops.

(iv) In terms of employment there were 11,960 businesses in these small towns. Whilst this does not give the size of these businesses they are significant assets to the local and regional economy.

(v) There were only 11 towns (7%) which were now centres of administration. There used to be 34 (21%) other small towns which were administrative centres with local council offices but local Government re-organisation in 1974 devolved many powers from the County Councils down to new District Councils but at the same time it meant that many former small Urban Districts and small Boroughs and Rural District Councils lost their former functions as administrative centres.

(vi) There were 87 towns (54%) with a secondary school - a highly valuable asset to their hinterlands as well as providing a significant number of jobs. All the Top Towns and all but one of the Upper Towns had one.

(vii) In terms of communications all towns are on a bus route; 50% have a railway station; 24% lie within 5 miles of a motorway junction and another 16% lie over 5 miles but less than 10 miles from a motorway junction. There are 31% of towns altogether that are more isolated as they have neither a railway station nor are near a motorway junction. All top towns are not isolated and only % of Upper Towns are more isolated.

7.7 Conclusions of the economic study

(i) There were significant economic assets in these small towns. The 11,960 businesses are major contributors to the local, regional and even national economies and 400 retail businesses serving the towns and 86 secondary schools which serve the towns and many hundreds of villages that surround them.

(ii) It is the larger towns that have the best economic functions

- 56% of the Top Towns are over 15,000 population
- 23% of the Upper Towns are over 15,000 population
- 33% of the Top Towns have a population between 10,000 population and 14,999
- 52% of the Upper Towns are a population between 10,000 population and 14,999

(iii) It is the larger towns that have the highest scoring for retail

- 100% of the Top Town have the highest retail scores
- 74% of the Upper Towns have high retail scores

(iv) It is the larger towns that have the highest scores for businesses

- 89% of the Top Towns have the highest business scores
- 57% of the Upper Towns have high business scores

(v) The towns in the top two rankings demonstrate more sustainability criteria by providing a good range of convenience shopping and local employment for both themselves and their immediate hinterland of villages and hamlets where travel journeys are quite short.

(vi) There were only 4 towns (5%) of the towns with populations more than 10,000 people, and although they met the criteria for a town, were ranked as Lower Towns in economic terms.

8 STUDY OF SERVICE ASSETS 2012

8.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose was to provide additional evidence on these same 160 small towns on service assets and to discuss the potential opportunities and threats to community services.

8.2 People need a range of essential services to provide for their daily needs. One definition for a 'sustainable settlement' is one which is able to provide for most of its basic daily requirements without the need to travel long distances.

8.3 Methodology

This study refers to some of the data collected for the Economic Study but most information came from several new data sets, both national and local. The number of services present in a town has been used to rank the towns into Top; Upper; Middle and Lower Ranked Towns.

8.4 Administrative centres and secondary schools were discussed as part of the Economic Study. Only a few small towns are now administrative centres whereas prior to 1974 there had been many more. Administrative centres not only provide access to local authority services such as housing and planning, but also refuse collection and car parking. Secondary schools are only found in towns, not villages. As recorded above 51% of the towns had a secondary school.

8.5 The Survey

This services study looks at 10 other different community services for each of the 160 towns. They included acting as an education centre providing primary schools; a Post Office; Chemists; Medical Care (Doctors Surgery and/or Hospital); Banks; Libraries; Leisure centres; Ambulance Stations and Fire Stations. Eight of these services selected are needed for daily living and 2 others – libraries and leisure are ones which provide knowledge and healthy enjoyment.

8.6 The Results

For the ten different Services that have been looked at:

- Every small town has a primary school.
- Every small town has a Post Office, providing essential services which are highly valued, although their future is not secure. Some towns have shared services with the post office in a local supermarket.
- Every town has access to a chemists' shop. Some feel threatened by local doctors' practices which also provide prescription services.
- Every small town does have a doctors' surgery. Some of the towns also have a local hospital which can provide a variety of services which can include convalescent and respite care and out-patients services such as physiotherapy. None are Accident and Emergency or trauma centres which are concentrated in major hospitals in the larger towns.
- 82% of towns have access to money through one of the major banks or building societies
- 92% still have a library, although their future is not secure because of pressure on local authority budgets.
- Only 46% of towns have leisure or sports centres.
- Ambulance Stations offer a variety of services but are only found in 19% of towns.
- Retained Fire Stations – that is a station which are not permanently manned but employing part time fire-crews who have to live nearby – have been found in 67% of towns.

8.7 In terms of rankings there were 9% (14 towns) which were ranked as Top Towns for services; 34% (54 towns) ranked as Upper Towns; 47% (75 towns) ranked as Middle Towns and only 10% (17 towns) ranked as Lower Towns. All the towns which were ranked Top Towns had a perfect score. None of the towns had a very poor level of community services.

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2b: Service Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Service Scores & Ranking											
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	9. Primary School	10. Post Offices	11. Chemist Score	12. Doctors Surgery	13. Local Hospital	14. Access to Money Score (Bank, Building Society Bank)	15. Library	16. Leisure / Sport Centre	17. Ambulance Stations	18. Fire Station	**TOTAL SERVICE SCORE**	**SERVICES RANKING**
HA	East.Hampshire.	Alton	16000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
BU	Chiltern.	Amersham	20000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
WS	Arun	Arundel	3200	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10	90	Upper
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Ascot	9000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10			10	80	Upper
SU	Guildford	Ash	17000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
KE	Dover	Aylesham	1500	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
SU	Surrey Heath	Bagshot	5200	10	10	10	10			10	10			60	Middle
ES	Rother.	Battle	5100	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Beaconsfield	12900	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
IW	Isle of Wight	Bembridge	3400	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Benson	3000	10	10	10	10			10				50	Lower
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Berinsfield	2700	10	10		10			10				40	Lower
WS	Horsham.	Billingshurst	5400	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
HA	Winchester.	Bishops Walth.	6000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
HA	East.Hampshire.	Bordon/Whitehill	16000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	Borough Green	4200	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
HA	Eastleigh.	Botley	5000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
BU	Wycombe.	Bourne End	3000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
IW	Isle of Wight	Brading	1700	10	10	10	10							40	Lower
HA	New.Forest.	Brockenhurst	2800	10	10	10	10		10				10	60	Middle
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Buckingham	12500	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Burford	1400	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
BE	Newbury.	Burghfield.	5600	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Burnham	5000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Carterton	12900	10	10	10	10		10	10	10			70	Upper
SU	Tandridge	Caterham	15000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
BU	Chiltern.	Chalfont S Giles	4700	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
BU	Chiltern.	Chalfont SPeter	10000	10	10	10	10		10	10		10		70	Upper
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Charlbury	2900	10	10	10	10			10			10	60	Middle
BU	Chiltern.	Chesham	20000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Chipping Norton	5600	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Cookham	4000	10	10	10	10			10				50	Lower
IW	Isle of Wight	Cowes	12000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook	4200	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
SU	Waverley	Cranleigh	10000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
ES	Wealden.	Crowborough	20000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	TOP
BE	Bracknell.Forest.	Crowthorne	5000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
WS	Mid.Sussex	Cuckfield	3200	10	10	10	10			10				50	Middle
BK	Windsor Maidenhead	Datchet	4000	10	10	10	10		10					50	Middle
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Denham	7000	10	10		10							30	Lower

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2b: Service Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Service Scores & Ranking											
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	9. Primary School	10. Post Offices	11. Chemist Score	12. Doctors Surgery	13. Local Hospital	14. Access to Money Score (Bank, Building Society Bank)	15. Library	16. Leisure / Sport Centre	17. Ambulance Stations	18. Fire Station	**TOTAL SERVICE SCORE**	**SERVICES RANKING**
SU	Mole Valley	Dorking	16000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
IW	Isle of Wight	East Cowes	7000	10	10	10	10			10			10	60	Middle
KE	Sevenoaks	Edenbridge	7100	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
HA	Havant.	Emsworth	8100	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
BK	Windsor Maidenhead	Eton	2000	10	10		10		10	10				50	Middle
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Eynsham	4600	10	10	10	10			10			10	60	Middle
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Faringdon	6100	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Farnham Com	5000	10	10	10	10			10				50	Lower
KE	Swale	Faversham	18200	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
BE	Wokingham.	Finchampstead.	5000	10	10		10			10				40	Lower
HA	New.Forest.	Fordingbridge	5700	10	10	10	10	10	10	10			10	80	Upper
ES	Wealden.	Forest Row	3600	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Gerrards Cross	9600	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
SU	Waverley	Godalming	20000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
SU	Mole Valley	Great Bookham	10000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
BU	Chiltern.	Gt Missenden	4000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Grove	5000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Haddenham	4700	10	10	10	10			10			10	60	Middle
ES	Wealden.	Hailsham	19100	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
HA	Hart.	Hartley Witney	7400	10	10	10	10		10				10	60	Middle
SU	Waverley	Haslemere	11600	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
WS	Mid.Sussex	Hassocks	6000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Hawkhurst	3100	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
KE	Maidstone	Headcorn	2400	10	10	10	10		10				10	60	Middle
ES	Wealden.	Heathfield	10000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
WS	Horsham.	Henfield	4500	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Henley Thames	10500	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
KE	Medway	Hoo	5200	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
HA	Hart.	Hook	6800	10	10	10	10	10	10		10			70	Middle
SU	Reigate & Banstead	Horley	19000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		90	Upper
HA	East.Hampshire.	Horndean	13000	10	10	10	10			10			10	60	Middle
BE	Newbury.	Hungerford	4900	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
WS	Mid.Sussex	Hurstpierpoint	6100	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
KE	Shepway	Hythe	10000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
HA	New.Forest.	Hythe	5200	10	10	10	10		10	10		10	10	80	Upper
BU	South.Buckinghamshire.	Iver.Heath.	7300	10	10	10	10				10			50	Lower
OX	Cherwell	Kidlington	14900	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
HA	Basingstoke Deane	Kingsclere	3200	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
BE	Newbury.	Lambourne	2900	10	10	10	10			10	10		10	70	Middle
SU	Mole Valley	Leatherhead	10000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2b: Service Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Service Scores & Ranking											
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	9. Primary School	10. Post Offices	11. Chemist Score	12. Doctors Surgery	13. Local Hospital	14. Access to Money Score (Bank, Building Society Bank)	15. Library	16. Leisure / Sport Centre	17. Ambulance Stations	18. Fire Station	**TOTAL SERVICE SCORE**	**SERVICES RANKING**
HA	Gosport	Lee on Solent	6000	10	10	10	10			10				50	Lower
KE	Maidstone	Lenham	2000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
ES	Lewes.	Lewes	15900	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
SU	Tandridge	Lingfield	3000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
HA	East.Hampshire.	Liphook	6000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
HA	East.Hampshire.	Liss	6400	10	10	10	10							40	Lower
KE	Dartford	Longfield	8400	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
HA	New.Forest.	Lymington	14200	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
HA	New.Forest.	Lyndhurst	2200	10	10	10	10	10	10	10			10	80	Upper
KE	Maidstone	Marden	2400	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
BU	Wycombe.	Marlowe	18400	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
ES	Wealden.	Mayfield	2100	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
KE	Gravesham	Meopham	4200	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
WS	Chichester	Midhurst	6100	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
HA	New Forest	Milford on Sea	6000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Mide
KE	Thanet	Minster	3500	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
HA	Winchester.	New Alresford	5000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
HA	New.Forest.	New Milton	10000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
KE	Shepway	New Romney	9400	10	10	10	10		10	10	10			70	Upper
ES	Lewes.	Newhaven	12200	10	10	10	10		10	10		10	10	80	Upper
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Newport Pag	14000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
HA	Hart.	Odiham	2900	10	10	10	10	10	10	10			10	80	Upper
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Old Windsor	7000	10	10	10	10			10				50	Lower
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Olney	6000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
HA	Basingstoke.and.Deane.	Overton	3300	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
SU	Tandridge	Oxted	12500	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	TOP
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Paddock Wood	7800	10	10	10	10		10	10		10	10	80	Upper
BE	Newbury.	Pangbourne.	3000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
ES	Lewes.	Peacehaven	17500	10	10	10	10		10	10	10			70	Middle
HA	East.Hampshire.	Petersfield	13000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
WS	Chichester	Petworth	2200	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
ES	Wealden.	Polegate	7000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
BU	Wycombe.	Princes Risbo.	10400	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
WS	Horsham.	Pulborough	7100	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
KE	Swale	Queenborough	9000	10	10	10	10		10	10		10	10	80	Upper
ES	Lewes.	Ringmer	2900	10	10		10		10	10				50	Middle
HA	New.Forest.	Ringwood	13300	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
ES	Lewes.	Robertsbridge	1900	10	10	10	10		10					50	Middle
HA	Test.Valley.	Romsey	17300	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
ES	Rother.	Rye	4100	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		90	Upper

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2b: Service Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Service Scores & Ranking											
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	9. Primary School	10. Post Offices	11. Chemist Score	12. Doctors Surgery	13. Local Hospital	14. Access to Money Score (Bank, Building Society Bank)	15. Library	16. Leisure / Sport Centre	17. Ambulance Stations	18. Fire Station	**TOTAL SERVICE SCORE**	**SERVICES RANKING**
IW	Isle of Wight	Sandown	9500	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
KE	Dover	Sandwich	4300	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
ES	Lewes.	Seaford	19000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	90	Upper
WS	Chichester	Selsey	9700	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
IW	Isle of Wight	Shanklin	9000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
KE	Swale	Sheerness	11600	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	Snodland	9300	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
HA	Havant.	South Hayling	7000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
WS	Horsham.	Southwater	8200	10	10	X	10		10	10	10			60	Middle
KE	Maidstone	Staplehurst	5100	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
WS	Horsham.	Steyning	9000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
HA	Test.Valley.	Stockbridge	3000	10	10	10	10		10				10	60	Middle
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Stony Stratford	14000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
WS	Horsham.	Storrington	7700	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
BE	Windsor & Maidenhead	Sunningdale	5000	10	10		10			10				40	Lower
HA	Basingstoke.and.Deane.	Tadley	8200	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
KE	Ashford	Tenterden	7700	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Thame	10800	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
BE	Newbury.	Theale	2700	10	10	10	10		10	10	10			70	Upper
BE	Wokingham.	Twyford	7000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
ES	Wealden.	Uckfield	15300	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100	TOP
IW	Isle of Wight	Ventnor	5800	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
ES	Wealden.	Wadhurst	3600	10	10	10	10	10	10	10			10	80	Upper
OX	S Oxfordshire	Wallingford	8000	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Wantage	12700	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	90	Upper
BE	Wokingham.	Wargrave	2800	10	10	10	10			10			10	60	Middle
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Watlington	4000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Wendover	7300	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	West Malling	2100	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
KE	Sevenoaks	Westerham	2900	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Wheatley	5400	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
HA	Basingstoke.and.Deane.	Whitchurch	4300	10	10	10	10			10			10	60	Middle
HA	Winchester.	Wickham.	1900	10	10	10	10		10				10	60	Middle
BE	Wokingham.	Winnersh	7000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Winslow	4500	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Woburn Sands	4900	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Wolverton	11000	10	10	10	10		10	10				60	Middle
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Woodstock	2300	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Upper
KE	Ashford	Wye	2000	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	70	Middle
HA	Hart.	Yateley	16000	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	80	Upper

8.8 Conclusions of the Services Study

(i) It is clear from this research that the small towns in the Study have a good range of community services. The top and upper towns have an excellent level of community services. The middle ranked had reasonable community services. Even the lower ranked towns had a number of community services.

(ii) There is a correlation between size of the town and the level of service provision:

- All but one (13 out of 14 towns) of the Top Service Towns had populations above 10,000 people
- 44% (24 out of 54 towns) of the Upper Service Towns had populations above 10,000 people
  These 37 towns have a really good level of service provision.
- Only 13% (10 out of 75 towns) of the Middle Ranking Service Towns had populations above 10,000 people

(iii) However, although this picture looks rosy, there remains the threat of losing some of these services through declining local authority budgets where difficult decisions are needed to balance budgets when faced with major financial cuts. Six of the 10 services looked at are dependent upon public sector funding.

(iv) There also remains the threat of further centralisation of services with trends towards bigger and better centres.

(v) If small towns are to remain or become more sustainable then the level of community services provided at local level is a critical factor.

9: STUDY OF HERITAGE ASSETS & THEIR VALUE TO RURAL TOURISM

9.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to look at the value of these same 165 small towns to tourism, concentrating on heritage tourism rather than any other specialised interests such as golf, wildlife / bird watching or fishing: and to examine their individual heritage assets and discuss how heritage tourism could be of value to the local economy and also provide evidence that could be used to influence future policies on tourism. This study has not looked at car parking (good or bad), quality of street surfaces and signage or the presence or quality of public toilets. It is accepted that all these are essential for tourism and may need new investment to be effective. This study is concentrating on the inherent assets that might attract a tourist interested in history and architecture.

9.2 Potential of Small Towns for Rural Heritage Tourism

Small rural towns serve not only themselves but a hinterland of villages, hamlets and countryside. As shown above they have economic assets creating wealth for the local, regional and even national economies. They are centres for services and often the hub of public transport. These towns include many assets which attract visitors – castles, keeps, country mansions, attractive streets and squares and places to eat and places to stay. The landscape setting is important in small towns as it is clearly visible – much more so than in larger urban populations – and adds to the attractiveness of the town.

9.3 This study focuses on ‘heritage tourism’ and the historic appeal and quality buildings which directly reflect the local building materials of stone, wood and bricks and tiles made from local clays and architectural styles of buildings denoting different periods of history.

9.4 Methodology

This study looked a number of data sets, both national and local, for all 160 small towns and then assessed their heritage assets, and ranked them according to these assets into Top; Upper; Middle; Lower Ranked Towns and finally those that had no or negligible heritage assets.

9.5 The Survey

The research survey looked at 5 specific criteria of built heritage and also their landscape setting. These historic building and landscape assets are set out in the Table below. There is a ranking for heritage but not for landscape.

(i) The Historic Built Assets

- The rights of self-administration by a Mayor and town council with the status of borough date back in some places in Anglo Saxon times to the 10th century. Also in the Middle-Ages (from around 1100 onwards) Town Charters were awarded allowing markets and fairs to be held in the town where they were centres of a hinterland in historic times. In Germany and elsewhere in the 13th and 14th centuries the right to hold a market was extended to include the right of self-government, administration and justice with their own courts, Sheriffs, Mayors and councils and officials. This study used the presence of a 'Town Charter'.

- Since 1967 Conservation Areas have been designated by Local Planning Authorities which identify significant groups of historic and architectural buildings, natural features and assets of cultural heritage.

- Many thousands of old buildings of architectural or historic interest (BAHI or 'Listed Buildings') exist across the United Kingdom. They are on Statutory Lists to denote their importance to heritage which must be taken into account when affected by development proposals.

- The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) also in 1967 produced a list of the best 324 historic towns in the United Kingdom and a very best list of the top 51 of the 324. Whilst the list is rather old it and did not cover all 160 towns (just those that were either Boroughs or Urban Districts) it was the first comprehensive analysis of the historic assets of towns and cities.

- Single buildings of national interest owned by either the National Trust or English Heritage – the two bodies responsible for the upkeep of the very best buildings in England, Scotland and Wales. The National Trust is private sector and English Heritage public sector.

9.6 The Results

It is clear that there is a great deal of 'heritage' existing in these small towns – set out in the table below:

- there were 15 towns (9%) that were ranked as Top Towns – with exceptionally good heritage assets. There is no particular correlation between size of town and heritage nor top ranking economic towns and heritage
- there were 36 towns (23%) that were ranked as Upper Towns in terms of heritage.
- there were 49 towns (31%) that were ranked as Middle Towns in terms of heritage
- together that gives 63% of South East towns have significant heritage assets
- the remaining 60 towns (37%) had only a few heritage assets – not really enough to attract visitors. The word 'Lower' does not poor quality heritage, just less of it compared to others. There were some towns with negligible assets and some with no heritage assets at all.

(ii) Landscape Setting Asset

Whilst this heritage study is primarily concerned with buildings, in small towns the landscape is very much part of the ambience.

In the area surveyed there are 2 National Parks and 9 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Water is also a feature in many small towns. A river frontage considered a quality townscape feature, some have a canal and some towns are on the coast and have a seafront or port.

9.7 Accommodation

Other studies have looked at how much visitors spend when they become tourists. Those who stay overnight spend at least twice as much as those who are just on a day trip.

Although not a mainstay of this research a brief look has been taken of hotel provision in the 160 small rural towns, listing all hotels that are 3 star or above – considered to be quality hotels. They are a significant asset for historic towns and those that have them already have an advantage over those who have none. All the Top ranked and 95% of the Upper ranked heritage towns had a quality hotel.

9.8 Accessibility

Ease of access to 'heritage towns' by both rail and motorway is important. There are a significant number that do not have good communications - 26% of Top or Upper Ranked heritage towns; 42% of Middle ranked heritage towns; and 21% of Lower ranked heritage towns have poorer communications. These towns may find it harder to attract visitors compared to the towns with good communications.

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2c: Heritage Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Heritage Scores & Ranking										
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	19. Historic Town Charter	20. Conservation Area	21. Number of Listed buildings	22. British Council of Archaeology best towns: top 51 = 10 or top 324 = 5	*Not surveyed by BCA*	23. National Trust / English Heritage building	TOTAL HERITAGE ASSETS SCORE	**HERITAGE RANKINGS**	24. Seaside / Coast / River / Canal: All = 5	25. Edge of AONB =5; Inside AONB = 10	**TOTAL LANDSCAPE ASSETS SCORE**
HA	East.Hampshire.	Alton	16000	10	5	16	0			31	Upper			
BU	Chiltern.	Amersham	20000	10	5	20	5			40	TOP		5	5
WS	Arun	Arundel	3200	10	5	21	5			41	TOP	5	5	10
BE	Windsor Maidenhead	Ascot	9000			3		*ns*		3	Neg			
SU	Guildford	Ash	17000			1		*ns*		1	Neg			
KE	Dover	Aylesham	1500			1		*ns*		1	Neg		5	5
SU	Surrey Heath	Bagshot	5200		5	1		*ns*		6	Neg			
ES	Rother.	Battle	5100	10	5	17		*ns*	5	37	Upper		5	5
BU	S.Buckinghamshire.	Beaconsfield	12900	10	5	17	0			32	Upper			
IW	Isle of Wight	Bembridge	3400			3		*ns*	5	8	Lower	5		5
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Benson	3000		5	7		*ns*		12	Lower			0
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Berinsfield	2700			0		*ns*		0	Neg			0
WS	Horsham.	Billingshurst	5400		5	10		*ns*		15	Middle			
HA	Winchester.	Bishops Waltham	6000	10	5	13		*ns*	5	33	Upper		5	5
HA	East.Hampshire.	Bordon/Whitehill	16000			1		*ns*		1	Neg			
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	Borough Green	4200		5	1		*ns*		6	Neg			
HA	Eastleigh.	Botley	5000	10	5	5		*ns*		20	Middle			
BU	Wycombe.	Bourne End	3000			2		*ns*		2	Neg			
IW	Isle of Wight	Brading	1700	10	5	9		*ns*		24	Middle			
HA	New.Forest.	Brockenhurst	2800	10		6		*ns*		16	Middle		5	5
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Buckingham	12500	10	5	20	5		5	45	TOP			
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Burford	1400	10	5	26	10			51	TOP		10	10
BE	Newbury.	Burghfield.	5600			1		*ns*		1	Neg			
BU	S.Buckinghamshire.	Burnham	5000	10	5	13		*ns*		28	Upper			
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Carterton	12900			0		*ns*		0	Neg			0
SU	Tandridge	Caterham	15000			1		*ns*		1	Neg			
BU	Chiltern.	Chalfont St Giles	4700		5	8		*ns*		13	Lower		5	5
BU	Chiltern.	Chalfont St Peter	10000	10	5	3		*ns*		18	Middle		5	5
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Charlbury	2900	10	5	11		*ns*		26	Upper		10	10
BU	Chiltern.	Chesham	20000	10	5	16	0			31	Upper		5	5
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Chipping Norton	5600	10	5	12	5			32	Upper		10	10
BE	Windsor Maidenhead	Cookham	4000	10	5	6		*ns*		21	Middle	5		5
IW	Isle of Wight	Cowes	12000		5	12	0			17	Middle	5		5
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook	4200	10	5	22		*ns*		37	Upper		10	10
SU	Waverley	Cranleigh	10000	10	5	8		*ns*		23	Middle			
ES	Wealden.	Crowborough	20000		5	2		*ns*		7	Lower		5	5
BE	Bracknell.Forest.	Crowthorne	5000		5	1		*ns*		6	Neg			
WS	Mid.Sussex	Cuckfield	3200	10	5	10	0			25	Upper			
BK	Windsor Maidenhead	Datchet	4000	10	5	3		*ns*		18	Middle	5		
BU	S.Buckinghamshire.	Denham	7000	10	5	9		*ns*		24	Middle		5	5

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2c: Heritage Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Heritage Scores & Ranking										
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	19. Historic Town Charter	20. Conservation Area	21. Number of Listed buildings	22. British Council of Archaeology best towns: top 51 = 10 or top 324 = 5	*Not surveyed by BCA*	23. National Trust / English Heritage building	TOTAL HERITAGE ASSETS SCORE	**HERITAGE RANKINGS**	24. Seaside / Coast / River / Canal: All = 5	25. Edge of AONB =5; Inside AONB = 10	**TOTAL LANDSCAPE ASSETS SCORE**
SU	Mole Valley	Dorking	16000	10	5	4		*ns*		19	Middle		5	5
IW	Isle of Wight	East Cowes	7000			0		*ns*		0	Neg	5		5
KE	Sevenoaks	Edenbridge	7100	10	5	8		*ns*		23	Middle			
HA	Havant.	Emsworth	8100	10		8		*ns*		18	Middle	5		5
BK	Windsor Maidenhead	Eton	2000	10	5	9	5			29	Upper	5		
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Eynsham	4600	10	5	9		*ns*		24	Middle			0
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Faringdon	6100	10	5	13		*ns*		28	Upper			0
BU	S.Buckinghamshire.	Farnham Common	5000			1		*ns*		1	Neg			
KE	Swale	Faversham	18200	10	5	34	5		5	59	TOP	5		5
BE	Wokingham.	Finchampstead.	5000	10		2		*ns*		12	Lower			
HA	New.Forest.	Fordingbridge	5700	10	5	7		*ns*		22	Upper	5	5	10
ES	Wealden.	Forest Row	3600		5	6		*ns*		11	Lower		5	5
BU	S.Buckinghamshire.	Gerrards Cross	9600		5	3		*ns*		8	Neg			
SU	Waverley	Godalming	20000	10	5	22	0			37	Upper			
SU	Mole Valley	Great Bookham	10000	10		2		*ns*		12	Lower			
BU	Chiltern.	Great Missenden	4000	10	5	11		*ns*		26	Upper		5	5
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Grove	5000			2		*ns*		2	Neg			0
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Haddenham	4700	10	5	12		*ns*		27	Upper			
ES	Wealden.	Hailsham	19100	10	5	5		*ns*		20	Middle			
HA	Hart.	Hartley Witney	7400	10		9		*ns*		19	Middle			
SU	Waverley	Haslemere	11600	10	5	16	0			31	Upper		5	5
WS	Mid.Sussex	Hassocks	6000		5	2		*ns*		7	Neg			
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Hawkhurst	3100	10	5	10		*ns*		25	Upper			
KE	Maidstone	Headcorn	2400	10	5	9		*ns*		24	Middle			
ES	Wealden.	Heathfield	10000	10		5		*ns*		15	Middle		5	5
WS	Horsham.	Henfield	4500		5	11		*ns*		16	Middle			
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Henley on Thames	10500	10	5	37	5			57	TOP	5		5
KE	Medway	Hoo	5200	10		1		*ns*		11	Lower			
HA	Hart.	Hook	6800		5	2		*ns*		7	Neg			
SU	Reigate & Banstead	Horley	19000		5	4		*ns*		9	Neg			
HA	East.Hampshire.	Horndean	13000		5	2		*ns*		7	Neg			
BE	Newbury.	Hungerford	4900	10	5	14		*ns*		29	Upper	5		5
WS	Mid.Sussex	Hurstpierpoint	6100	10	5	9		*ns*		24	Middle			
KE	Shepway	Hythe	5200	10	5	13	0			28	Upper	10		10
HA	New.Forest.	Hythe	10000		5	2		*ns*		7	Lower	5	5	10
BU	S.Buckinghamshire.	Iver.Heath.	7300	10	5	4		*ns*		19	Middle			
OX	Cherwell	Kidlington	14900		5	6		*ns*		11	Lower			0
HA	Basingstoke Deane	Kingsclere	3200	10	5	9		*ns*		24	Middle			
BE	Newbury.	Lambourne	2900	10	5	6		*ns*		21	Middle		5	5
SU	Mole Valley	Leatherhead	10000	10	5	0		*ns*		15	Middle			

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2c: Heritage Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Heritage Scores & Ranking											
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	19. Historic Town Charter	20. Conservation Area	21. Number of Listed buildings	22. British Council of Archaeology best towns: top 51 = 10 or top 324 = 5	*Not surveyed by BCA*	23. National Trust / English Heritage building	TOTAL HERITAGE ASSETS SCORE	**HERITAGE RANKINGS**	24. Seaside / Coast / River / Canal: All = 5	25. Edge of AONB =5; Inside AONB = 10	**TOTAL LANDSCAPE ASSETS SCORE**
HA	Gosport	Lee on Solent	6000		5	0		*ns*		5	Lower	5		5
KE	Maidstone	Lenham	2000	10	5	10		*ns*		25	Upper			
ES	Lewes.	Lewes	15900	10	5	57	10		5	87	TOP	5	5	10
SU	Tandridge	Lingfield	3000		5	5		*ns*		10	Lower			
HA	East.Hampshire.	Liphook	6000		5	5		*ns*		10	Lower			
HA	East.Hampshire.	Liss	6400		5	2		*ns*		7	Lower		5	5
KE	Dartford	Longfield	8400			0		*ns*		0	Neg			
HA	New.Forest.	Lymington	14200	10	5	26	5			46	TOP	5	5	10
HA	New.Forest.	Lyndhurst	2200			4		*ns*		4	Neg		5	5
KE	Maidstone	Marden	2400		5	10		*ns*		15	Middle			
BU	Wycombe.	Marlowe	18400	10	5	24	5			44	TOP	5		5
ES	Wealden.	Mayfield	2100	10	5	10		*ns*		25	Upper		5	5
KE	Gravesham	Meopham	4200	10		4		*ns*		14	Lower			
WS	Chichester	Midhurst	6100	10	5	10	5			30	Upper	5	5	10
HA	New Forest	Milford on Sea	6000		5	5		ns		10	Lower	5		
KE	Thanet	Minster	3500	10	5	5		*ns*		20	Middle			
HA	Winchester.	New Alresford	5000	10	5	13		*ns*		28	Upper			
HA	New.Forest.	New Milton	10000			3		*ns*		3	Neg		5	5
KE	Shepway	New Romney	9400	10	5	6	0			21	Middle	5		5
ES	Lewes.	Newhaven	12200			2	0			2	Lower	5	5	10
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Newport Pagnell	14000	10	5	10	0			25	Upper			
HA	Hart.	Odiham	2900			20		*ns*		20	Middle			
BE	Windsor Maidenhead	Old Windsor	7000	10	5	4		*ns*		19	Middle	5		5
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Olney	6000	10	5	11	0			26	Upper			
HA	Basingstoke.Deane	Overton	3300	10	5	6		*ns*		21	Middle			
SU	Tandridge	Oxted	12500		5	6	0			11	Lower			
KE	Tunbridge Wells	Paddock Wood	7800		5	3		*ns*		8	Neg			
BE	Newbury.	Pangbourne.	3000		5	4		*ns*		9	Lower	5	5	10
ES	Lewes.	Peacehaven	17500			0		*ns*		0	Neg		5	5
HA	East.Hampshire.	Petersfield	13000	10		15	0			25	Upper		5	5
WS	Chichester	Petworth	2200	10	5	24		*ns*	5	44	TOP		5	5
ES	Wealden.	Polegate	7000			0		*ns*		0	Neg			
BU	Wycombe.	Princes Risborough	10400	10	5	9		*ns*		24	Middle		5	5
WS	Horsham.	Pulborough	7100		5	12		*ns*		17	Middle			
KE	Swale	Queenborough	9000	10	5	2	0			17	Middle	5		5
ES	Lewes.	Ringmer	2900	10	5	5		*ns*		20	Middle			
HA	New.Forest.	Ringwood	13300	10		11		*ns*		21	Middle		5	5
ES	Lewes.	Robertsbridge	1900	10	5	8		*ns*		23	Middle	5	5	10
HA	Test.Valley.	Romsey	17300	10	5	25	5			45	TOP	5		5
ES	Rother.	Rye	4100	10	5	13	10		5	43	TOP	5		5

TABLE 2: 160 South East Small Towns – continued
Table 2c: Heritage Scores and Rankings

The Town, Location & Population				Heritage Scores & Ranking										
County geographic area	Unitary, Borough or District	Town	Population	19. Historic Town Charter	20. Conservation Area	21. Number of Listed buildings	22. British Council of Archaeology best towns: top 51 = 10 or top 324 = 5	*Not surveyed by BCA*	23. National Trust / English Heritage building	TOTAL HERITAGE ASSETS SCORE	**HERITAGE RANKINGS**	24. Seaside / Coast / River / Canal: All = 5	25. Edge of AONB =5; Inside AONB = 10	**TOTAL LANDSCAPE ASSETS SCORE**
IW	Isle of Wight	Sandown	9500			1	0			1	Neg	5		5
KE	Dover	Sandwich	4300	10	5	43	10			68	TOP	5		5
ES	Lewes.	Seaford	19000			7	0			7	Lower	5		5
WS	Chichester	Selsey	9700	10	5	7		*ns*		22	Middle	5		5
IW	Isle of Wight	Shanklin	9000		5	4	0			9	Lower	5	5	10
KE	Swale	Sheerness	11600		5	2	0			7	Lower	5		5
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	Snodland	9300			2		*ns*		2	Neg			
HA	Havant.	South Hayling	7000			0	0			0	Neg	5		5
WS	Horsham.	Southwater	8200			4		*ns*		4	Neg			
KE	Maidstone	Staplehurst	5100		5	11		*ns*		16	Middle			
WS	Horsham.	Steyning	9000	10	5	13		*ns*		28	Upper		5	5
HA	Test.Valley.	Stockbridge	3000	10	5	4		*ns*		19	Middle	5		5
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Stony Stratford	14000	10	5	14		*ns*		29	Middle			
WS	Horsham.	Storrington	7700	10	5	7		*ns*		22	Middle		5	5
BE	Windsor Maidenhead	Sunningdale	5000		5	1		*ns*		6	Neg			
HA	Basingstoke.Deane	Tadley	8200		5	1		*ns*		6	Neg			
KE	Ashford	Tenterden	7700	10	5	20	5			40	TOP			
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Thame	10800	10	5	18	5			38	TOP		10	10
BE	Newbury.	Theale	2700		5	3		*ns*		8	Lower		5	5
BE	Wokingham.	Twyford	7000	10	5	2		*ns*		17	Middle	5		5
ES	Wealden.	Uckfield	15300	10	5	6		*ns*		21	Middle			
IW	Isle of Wight	Ventnor	5800		5	12	0			17	Middle	5	5	10
ES	Wealden.	Wadhurst	3600	10	5	15		*ns*		30	Upper		5	5
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Wallingford	8000	10	5	14	5			34	Upper	5	10	15
OX	Vale.of.White.Horse.	Wantage	12700	10	5	13	0			28	Upper			0
BE	Wokingham.	Wargrave	2800	10	5	7		*ns*		22	Middle	5		5
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Watlington	4000	10	5	11		*ns*		26	Upper		10	10
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Wendover	7300	10		11		*ns*		21	Middle			
KE	Tonbridge & Malling	West Malling	2100	10	5	17		*ns*		32	Upper			
KE	Sevenoaks	Westerham	2900	10	5	15		*ns*	5	35	Upper		5	5
OX	South.Oxfordshire.	Wheatley	5400		5	5		*ns*		10	Lower			0
HA	Basingstoke.Deane	Whitchurch	4300	10		6		*ns*		16	Middle			
HA	Winchester.	Wickham.	1900	10	5	8		*ns*		23	Middle			
BE	Wokingham.	Winnersh	7000			1		*ns*		1	Neg			
BU	Aylesbury.Vale.	Winslow	4500	10	5	8		*ns*		23	Middle			
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Woburn Sands	4900		5	0		*ns*		5	Neg			
BU	Milton.Keynes.	Wolverton	11000		5	4		*ns*		9	Neg			
OX	West.Oxfordshire	Woodstock	2300	10	5	17	0		5	32	Upper		10	10
KE	Ashford	Wye	2000	10	5	14		*ns*		29	Upper		5	5
HA	Hart.	Yateley	16000		5	2		*ns*		7	Neg			

9.9 Conclusions of Heritage Study

(i) It is clear from this research that 63% of the small towns in South East England can lay claim to an historic heritage with 32% having exceptional or very good quality of heritage. They still maintain a distinctiveness which reflects local building materials and architectural styles from different periods of history.

- The research results could be used as the basis for campaigns to attract visitors who are interested in looking at towns which have good historic and architectural buildings, and set in quality landscapes. Some also have famous buildings which have a world wide appeal.
- It is also considered that small towns have managed to retain their distinctiveness reflecting their history and architectural styles from across the ages and escape from the worst of the ravages caused by modern retail development, avoiding large plate glass shop frontages and large fascia boards (which has happened in so many of the larger towns, particularly in the United Kingdom).
- Heritage tourism assets including those in rural areas will attract people from across the region they are situated in but from major cities nearby and some iconic tourism attractions will have world-wide appeal.

(ii) These small rural towns are the backbone of rural areas, serving a hinterland of villages, hamlets and countryside. Heritage tourism in these small towns can also advertise other local attractions in the surrounding rural areas.

(iii) Tourism businesses can thrive in small towns and can make a significant contribution to local economies. All these small towns have a lot to offer the tourist who is interested in history and heritage buildings. Surveys of what visitors spend indicate that a staying visitor spends twice that of a day tripper.

(iv) Concentration of heritage tourism in rural areas – advertising their unique and distinctive buildings, history and architecture might encourage new hotel and other businesses. Most of the hotels in small towns will be small and not necessarily part of any hotel chain and able to develop their own individual styles and welcome. Quality hotels are critical for staying visitors. Quality eating places of different types are also critical – restaurants, pubs, bistros, tea shops.

(v) As they are hubs of public transport they could also promote sustainable ways of accessing them – 50% of them still have a railway station.

(vi) Visitors also require good car parks, easy signposting, good quality pavements but these difficult times of public spending means that it will be difficult to improve existing facilities.

(vii) It must be recognised that tourists need to be welcomed to the places they visit. The introduction has already identified that some town residents do not want tourist at all and a proper strategy for how the town will cope with them will be needed.

(viii) However it is recognised that not everyone living in small towns like tourists or want to encourage them. They resent the problems caused by visitor traffic clogging their streets, not knowing where they want to go; or competing for local car parking spaces. Some people also worry that visitors will be encouraged to buy houses in the area for second homes and so push the prices up and prevent local people from buying in their own town.

(ix) Whatever future strategies and actions are envisaged, it will always be important to engage all sections of civil society in the vision and implementation of measures to conserve and enhance the assets of small towns.

10: OTHER ECOVAST WORK

10.1 Several ECOVAST National Sections have also undertaken specific work with small towns.

Dr Arthur SPIEGLER (Vice President ECOVAST) and Dr Gerhard L FASCHING and Silvia MAYER of ECOVAST Austria have undertaken specific research on small towns.

10.2 ECOVAST Austria recognised that small towns in Central Europe were being affected by many threats caused by globalisation; losses due to modern development of out of town shopping centres; and centralisation of services into larger towns. In 1998 they staged a symposium in Murau, followed by a second one in Waidhofen an der Ybbs in 2002, a third in Retz (Lower Austria) in 2005 in joint co-operation with ECOVAST International and a fourth in Grieskirchen (Upper Austria) in 2009. ECOVAST Austria understood the threats, but on the positive side recognised that they had significant historic assets with compactness, distinctiveness and a physical fabric which is human in scale. The symposia supported the development of local economies which would promote well-being and that others could develop local resources of woodlands and farm produce which in turn could strengthen and diversify sub-regional economies. There was also a recognition that new telecommunications opportunities could be of benefit to rural people and businesses in small towns, and they can play a significant role for the further development of rural Europe.

10.3 Purpose of survey

Their interest in small towns strengthened after the first two events and after the third symposium held in Retz in 2005 (which led to the ASSET project referred in the earlier part of this document) they wanted to find out more about small towns in Austria so started an in-depth study on all Austrian towns to identify and catalogue their individual assets. Their particular interest in Austria is in ‘historic towns’ as more than 90% of the 165 small towns in Austria could be described as historic.

10.4 Methodology

Their research led to the establishment of a ‘Register of Small Towns’ with data about individual towns. The 'Register' is able to standardise and compare these settlements with a wide range of criteria recorded; including buildings and density; historic and cultural assets such as castles and walls, theatres and museums; administrative assets such as town halls; education assets; medical assets and all were given a geo-reference. This survey has established a matrix for the character of small towns that nominate the most important historic and functional criteria for such towns, which give the town its unique identity. Each criteria is graded as ‘dominating’ or ‘good or strong’ or ‘medium' or of 'low' impact. Below is the example for the historic town of Retz, hosting the third symposium which resulted in ECOVAST’s project called ASSET.

Matrix for characterisation of Small Historic European Towns (SHETs)

Example: Small Town of Retz; Lower Austria

	RETZ Population 4,284 Sea Level 264 metres	Dominating feature excellent	Strong good	Medium	Low
1	**Inhabitants**				
1.1	Inhabitants in whole community				
1.2	Inhabitants in historic town				
2	**Historic Criteria**				
2.1	Historic, specific town centre		X		
2.2	Dense town centre: buildings of varied sizes of storeys	X			
2.3	The big, historic, central and public court	X			
2.4	Line of historic facades on multi-storied houses	X			
2.5	Big, central building of worship or public	X			
2.6	Castle, ruin (remnants) of fortification		X		
3	**Functional Criteria**				
3.1	Centre of education (higher schools)		X		
3.2	Centre of medical care (hospital and special doctors)			X	
3.3	Residence of regional authorities				X
3.4	Centre of commerce			X	
3.5	Significant amount of higher academic professions			X	
3.6	Site of culture and>/or tourism			X	
4	**Additional values and specifics**				
4.1	Authenticity	X			
4.2	Place of identification for the region and beyond (unique sense of place)	X			

10.5 The Results and Conclusions

As part of the survey each town gets a series of statements – remarks and impressions. The example for the town of Retz recorded:

- Retz has a typical rural small town characteristic for the wine region and related to the pannonic climate, offering the authentic experience of a “unique sense of place and landscape”.

- For characteristics of the landscape or hinterland the Matrix for landscape identification in the ECOVAST Landscape Identification Study (another study produced by ECOVAST in)
- Very characteristic and dominating small historic town hall in the centre of the central, gently sloping square also hosting a historic well (fountain). Famous, huge, underground system of wine cellars carved in the "Loess" sand, situated under the central court and beyond.
- The small town lies at the border line of two landscapes: the "Wine Quarter" to the East and – over a "landscape-threshold" the higher "Wood Quarter" to the West.

10.6 The 'Register' is designed to be used by others who wish to do further comparisons and those who are developing proposals for new investments in small historic towns. This 'Register' formed part of the Austrian contribution to the ASSET project.

10.7 This Austrian Survey has many similar characteristics to the United Kingdom studies and there was significant discussion on this amongst the members of Austrian and United Kingdom National sections of ECOVAST. The Austrian survey lists more individual cultural assets than the South East small town studies but does not list the number of individual businesses in the town nor the number of shops. The Austrian study graded the criteria too.

Professor Dr Ralf BOKERMANN of ECOVAST Germany has also undertaken research on small towns.

10.8 ECOVAST Germany has been campaigning for several years for a strengthening of small rural towns in Europe. Small towns in several different types of rural areas in Germany have been studied.

10.9 Purpose of Survey
In Germany most small rural towns are integrated into the central–place-system through official regional planning. Small towns are mainly central places of the lower level (sub-centres). Through this function small towns are, as a rule, the hub for a sub-region of approx. 8 to 15 villages. Since 1972 (in eastern Germany since 1992) there has been a focus on local government, public and private infrastructure in small towns and surrounding villages. This strengthened the role of small towns to form rural micro-regions with the towns as the centre for the surrounding rural hinterland delivering rural services.

10.10 Two particular prevalent problems have been investigated
- Since approx. 1990 due to the internationalisation of economic competition, many towns have lost job opportunities and there has been an increasing tendency in Germany's rural areas of out migration and massive job losses. The loss of employment due to migration is one of the reasons for stagnant or declining numbers of the population in these towns. A further consequence is a mostly tight financial situation due to stagnating local income from taxes. Some small towns have had little in-migration.
- A second problem is the development of the town centres. A number of the former residents have left their place of residence in the town centre in favour of a house with garden on the edge of the town. Furthermore many smaller specialist shops have had to give up due to competition from shopping malls. Vacant offices and flats in the town centres are the result. The whole town loses some of its appeal due to decreasing viability.

10.11 The Survey
The project investigated the significance of small towns for rural areas. Five small towns are examined in detail with their surrounding regions. The towns are situated in different types of rural regions, spread about Germany. The upper level of the towns in this study was 7,000 inhabitants. The towns have been surveyed for their features and their problems analysed and the implementation of local action areas examined.

10.12 The Results
The towns surveyed demonstrated a series of accentuated functions.
- small towns are places of residence for the majority of the regional population; only in densely populated areas with large villages do these have more inhabitants than the central location.
- small towns are centres of work-related occupation for the surrounding areas; a large share of their residents however works as out-commuters in urban zones further afield.
- the education in all types of schools is concentrated in the small towns; this includes vocational schools and further education colleges for adults. Important: Schools, apart from their function for education, are an important cultural factor for every small town.
- the communal institutions play a large role in the supervision of children, juveniles and elderly persons, as many smaller villages do not have this kind of facility any more.

- the health services of small rural townships are also of great significance. Doctors' surgeries, pharmacists and other health care practices care for the surrounding rural area.
- the local administration of the smaller regions is always in the towns and thereby an important segment.
- small towns have an indispensable function as central location for purchasing, especially those items for daily consumption. All towns have two or three supermarkets at their disposal. Special items are only occasionally bought locally, as regional market centres are becoming more and more competition for local shops.
- a focal point in local life, which is often overseen, are events in the areas of culture, entertainment, sport and recreation. This part is often carried out by voluntary engagement of clubs and other groups of citizens. The large number of voluntary groups demonstrates a lot social capital in small towns.

10.13 Conclusion

The study came to a series of conclusions:

- The cost pressure due to stagnant local finance can be reduced by communal co-operation among other things. Communal co-operation is practised on all levels in the surveyed towns, from town planning to joint infrastructure for public utility use and joint industrial areas.
- Many tasks, especially the promotion of cultural life, entertainment, sport and recreation, can be taken over by voluntary work groups.
- There is obviously no hard and fast rule for revitalising town centres; however there are good examples for their recovery.
- Town marketing provides a modern method of management. Town marketing as a management method means that the town actively incorporates its residents into communal tasks. The objective is, to optimize the main communal affairs by this management method. This means among others, that all local decisions are made public in time and that decisions are not taken in small "closed shops".

Angus FOWLER (Past President ECOVAST) has done considerable work on small towns in Germany.

10.14 ECOVAST Germany has worked with central government in Germany which has initiated various programmes for such towns. Much has taken place in the Federal State of Brandenburg, where in 1998 the Chamber of Architects issued its first major statement on the problems and development of towns in Brandenburg – called the 'Wittstock Declaration'. It was supported by Brandenburg State, which was also a partner at a conference in 2008 in the small town of Wittstock, together with the Chamber of Architects and ECOVAST. This resulted in a 2nd enlarged 'Wittstock Declaration'. Important work has also been done for many years by the Working Association of Towns with Historic Town Centres of the State of Brandenburg. This was followed in 2010 by an ECOVAST international workshop on small towns held in Potsdam, Germany which brought together several pieces of research on small towns.

Andrea WEIGERT also of ECOVAST Germany has been involved in working in Germany on small towns.

10.15 As part of her work in the Academy for the Rural Areas of Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, she has carried out research on the small municipalities in the state during 2000. She studied the level of services that they provided and was able to rank them in order of 'upper', 'middle' and 'lower grade centres' depending on the services they offered. Many of the towns had lost their former administrative status of them but one good aspect was that many had started to co-operate with each other.

Tihana Stepinac FABIJANIC (Past President ECOVAST) has been involved in work with small towns together with Biserka Dumbovic BILUSIC and Valerija Kelemen PEPEONIK from ECOVAST Croatia.

10.16 She has been involved in research projects in Croatia and has championed the importance of small towns including organising international conferences in Samobar 2007 And Mosenice in 2009 to debate the issues facing small towns. She has been closely involved with the National Association of Municipalities in Croatia which was founded in 2002 (before Croatia joined the European Union) and which was separated from the 'Association of Towns' which now represent big and middle-sized towns. The association of municipalities promote and protect their common interests which are mainly directed to smaller settlements in rural areas of Croatia. By 2014 there were already 281 members from 20 counties.

10.17 Calin HOINARESCU and Magdalena BANU and ECOVAST Romania has been looking at specific Byzantine heritage assets which also included small towns.

10.18 Dr Olga SEVAN and ECOVAST Russia has undertaken a lot of work on specialist 'monastery towns'.

11: FINAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

11.1 The European Study proved that there were thousands of small towns there are across Europe with many millions of people living them – bigger than any European Country except Germany. If they co-operated more with each other they could develop a really strong voice and they could use this to influence policy and programme makers of the future.

11.2 It is clear that the larger towns – those over 10,000 population had a higher ranking of economic functions than small town.

11.3 It is considered that the heritage in the small towns in South East England is typical of what could be found in the small historic towns in the rest of Europe. They share a similar history - have undergone growth, had periods of stagnation, suffered wars and conflicts, been affected by the industrial revolution and modern development pressures, and the centralisation of services and loss of earlier historic importance. If similar percentages were applied to the whole of Europe it would equate to 1,787 (56%) of them having a good or very good quality of heritage, even though the data sets available would be different to those in the United Kingdom. This gives clear support to the argument that small towns could be centres of rural heritage tourism. Many of them already will be performing this role but many others could follow their example. They provide good places to visit and become local or regional centres of rural tourism based on their attractiveness.

11.4 The Opinion surveys identified that small towns across Europe have had many similar concerns and all have suffered from the economic recession.

11.5 The South East England studies demonstrated what economic assets they had, what kind of service assets and the heritage assets which could provide a new future for many of them to be centres for tourism. These types of survey could be replicated across most countries even though the data sets will vary.

SOURCES:

*The pan European **Opinion Surveys** were carried out by ECOVAST in 2006/7 and 2009 using emails*

*The **Empirical Surveys** were also carried out by ECOVAST in 2010 using a variety of databases at international, national and local level and used mostly Internet sources.*

- *The **pan European Study** of town populations used primarily the website and database on a website called Tageo.com. This database records the population details of 300 towns for every country in the world listing them in number of population order going from large to small. The database has more than two and a half million settlements on it and the population data is for the city/town or village dating from 2009.*
- *However in the larger European Countries of Germany, the United Kingdom; France, Italy, Spain, Ukraine and the Netherlands this did not go down to the small towns and the information was supported from a series of secondary sources: tables of all German towns supplied by ECOVAST Germany; the former UK Countryside Agency; Michelin Red Guides and various maps which give population of towns.*
- *Several hundred individual towns across all of Europe were looked at (using mostly Wikipedia and individual town websites) in order to get the examples used in the ECOVAST publication 'The Importance of Small Towns'*

*The **studies of towns in South East England** 2009 and 2012 was the result of actual site surveys carried out by SEEDA and ECOVAST.*

- *179 settlements were looked at originally but several of them did not meet the rigorous criteria used to define a 'small town' and only 160 remain in the analyses in this publication.*
- *They were supported by a database of businesses from the former South East England Development Agency,*
- *They were also supported by Yellow Pages Business Pages and*
- *Various internet sites of local authorities and individual towns.*

*The **Austrian Register of Towns** used site surveys and databases.*

The European Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST)

ECOVAST was founded in March 1984 in Bellnhausen, near Marburg, in Germany, to foster the economic, social and cultural vitality and the administrative identity of rural communities throughout Europe and to safeguard the sensitive and imaginative renewal of the built and natural environments of such communities.

ECOVAST has members from many countries across Europe, both individuals and networks. We have two formal aims:

- to foster the economic, social and cultural vitality and administrative identity of rural communities throughout Europe: and
- to safeguard and to promote the sensitive and imaginative renewal of the built and natural environments of such communities.

We are a volunteer-based organisation that seeks to influence policy and action by citizen involvement. Our network supports its members, and encourages cooperation between them, as they pursue their activities in rural areas. ECOVAST is an International Non-Government Organisation and has been a member of the European Commission's DG Agri Rural Development Advisory Group (1998-2014); a member of DG Regio's RURBAN group (2011-2014) and is a current member of the Council of Europe. ECOVAST was also a founder member of other pan-European networks of PREPARE and CIVILSCAPE; and a member of EUROPA NOSTRA and EUROGITES.

Our members come from a variety of backgrounds (including academics, anthropologists, archaeologists, architects, economists, ethnologists, geographers, historians, industrial archaeologists, researchers, sociologists, town planners, and rural practitioners) who work in the public, private and voluntary sectors. On our study tours and surveys we visit many varied rural projects and meet people from rural communities in many European countries and in rural areas where political situations vary considerably. These have given us a wealth of experience which we use in our work.

ECOVAST is managed by an International Committee that meets at least once a year and stages an Annual Assembly. It has 10 National Sections – in Austria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom which focus on local rural issues in those countries. Its international work focuses on landscapes, rural buildings, rural tourism and small towns. ECOVAST has advanced its support of small towns since 2005 through the development of a project called 'Action to Strengthen Small European Towns' (ASSET).

***ECOVAST**: Information on the organisation can be found on the ECOVAST website: www.ecovast.org*

The ASSET research has been on the ECOVAST website since 2011 but this is the first time it has been all gathered into one document. Full details of the individual studies on Economic, Service and Heritage Assets with diagrams and Tables of small towns in South East England, and the Austrian and German surveys can be found on the ECOVAST website through the ASSET pages and the link to DorfWiki website.

Enquiries about this evidence base report can be addressed to valeriecarter@ecovast.org or individual National Section contacts listed on the ECOVAST website

*Printed in **Cranbrook** – a small town in Kent, England: by **Stationery Express UK Ltd***