

Pub is The Hub

Evaluating the Impact of Initiatives

2011



Executive Summary



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Introduction

Pub is The Hub was first established nearly ten years ago and during this time has encouraged local communities, licensees and pub owners to work together to support, retain and locate local services, where possible within the pub. Pub is The Hub also assists licensees with guidance on the availability of local and regional project funding, and by having a thorough independent understanding of the pub business, is able to advise on and facilitate the best way to progress individual schemes.

Since its inception through the inspiration of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Pub is The Hub has gathered information on individual case studies but this is the first external assessment to examine some of the benefits which have been brought about by its work with communities and licensees. Pub is The Hub felt that in order to help identify future priorities and ensure supporters and funding partners understand the wider merits and impact of its work, an independent assessment would be beneficial.

Pub is The Hub commissioned Ecorys to evaluate:

- The general impact of the Pub is The Hub philosophy.
- The impact of schemes upon rural society, the environment and the economy.
- The value of pub diversification schemes to the local community, the wider economy, pub licensees and pub companies, and government (at a local, regional and national level).

The principal research components comprised:

- Consultations with wider stakeholders and steering group representatives
- A survey of 71 pubs that have delivered, or were in the process of delivering, a Pub is The Hub scheme.
- A survey of 100 local residents that live near six Pub is The Hub schemes.

Summary of Key Findings

- A large majority (70%) of licensees would recommend a Pub is The Hub scheme to other pubs and virtually all of these pubs stated that the main reason is because it can benefit the wider community, whilst also diversifying and providing supportive benefits to the business.
- Without exception, all (100) of the respondents to the community survey agreed that their local Pub is The Hub scheme is either 'very important' or else 'important' to the community.
- The main advantages of involving Pub is The Hub are the practical advice and professional business experience of the advisors and their access to and understanding of local funding opportunities. To date, Pub is The Hub schemes have focussed on delivering key services for communities but alongside this, there is evidence of considerable diversity into other rural services provision.
- Based on the survey findings of 49 pubs that had completed a scheme. Without Pub is The Hub support over one half would either not have been able to go ahead or there would have been considerable uncertainty and a further quarter of schemes may have proceeded but at a later date.



- It is important to note that the beneficiaries of Pub is The Hub schemes may also include local residents who do not typically use the scheme, for example, people may value having the scheme there for use in an emergency.

Community benefits

- Nearly three quarters of respondents to the community survey agreed that the Pub is The Hub scheme allowed them to meet more local people than they would have done otherwise.
- Over four fifths of respondents to the community survey agreed that the Pub is The Hub scheme improved their access to a key service.
- Almost all respondents to the community survey agreed that Pub is The Hub schemes saved them time.

Environmental benefits

- Pub is The Hub schemes encourage less car use and as a result, it can be estimated that each visit to a scheme equates to an environmental saving.
- Over four fifths of respondents to the community survey agreed that Pub is The Hub schemes contribute to making the area they live in more attractive.
- Very few people responding to the community survey agreed that the Pub is The Hub schemes had contributed to congestion, parking problems, or loss of peace and quiet.

Economic benefits to the local community

- On average individual schemes have recruited additional employees (Full time equivalents), as well as securing the retention of some employees. What is more, these jobs primarily benefit people living in the local area.
- Customers saved time by travelling to a Pub is The Hub scheme, rather than the nearest alternative. This equates to an average time cost saving of approximately 81p per visit.
- Nearly three quarters of people responding to the community survey agreed that the Pub is The Hub scheme saves them money. As an example, the average travel/energy cost saved per visit is over £1.50.
- Virtually all of the respondents to the community survey believed that the Pub is The Hub scheme supported local suppliers and businesses. This was also emphasised through the pub survey, where licensees frequently cited that they use a wide range of local suppliers to stock their scheme.

Economic benefits to the pub

- The majority of schemes either break even or generate a small profit. This is despite underwriting one-off investment costs. There can also be cost savings associated with locating additional services in an existing pub.
- Over one half of licensees stated that their scheme had increased the number of customers to the pub.
- Overall, the majority of the licensees stated that the benefits of undertaking a scheme outweigh the costs. The principal reason for this was often that the Pub is The Hub scheme brings direct benefits to the local community and helps to generate a positive perception of the pub.

Strategic added value

- Pub is The Hub has raised awareness of the opportunities and benefits that can be derived from licensees implementing schemes effectively and has communicated and promoted rural services needs.
- Pub is The Hub has focused on bringing a variety of partners together in order to address shared objectives and deliver more co-ordinated solutions.
- Pub is The Hub engages communities and empowers them to work together as well as take ownership of local issues.
- Pub is The Hub has used its expertise and knowledge to highlight how pubs can support wider strategic objectives at a local and national level, namely building sustainable communities, supporting health and well-being, contributing to environmental priorities and encouraging a prosperous economy.
- Pub is The Hub has successfully levered in-kind and financial support from a range of organisations and individuals and its intervention and promotional activities have led to new project investment being made available to pubs by some local and rural authorities.

Overall Conclusion

The research has highlighted strong evidence of additionality in terms of community, economic and environmental benefits as a result of Pub is The Hub schemes. What is more, schemes have also demonstrated significant strategic added value. Importantly, the projects encourage private and public organisations, along with local communities, to work together as a partnership to address shared objectives in respect of rural service provision. It is reasonable to suggest that Pub is The Hub has changed the perception of a rural pub in a positive way.

The research team believe it is important to acknowledge that, in recognising the success of Pub is The Hub in its tenth year, a key element of this success may be credited to its informal, flexible approach that has allowed the organisation to offer creative and innovative support to rural communities.

In many ways, Pub is The Hub is less an organisation, more a collective, vocational, shared vision of how rural services, communities and local pubs can be improved and enhanced. It is to the credit of its partnership approach of staff and stakeholders that Pub is The Hub has delivered at a local level to communities, and at the same time providing persuasive advice, guidance and evidence to government, trade associations and the pub industry at a national level through its local and national networks.

Pub is The Hub

Regional Agricultural Centre
Great Yorkshire Showground
Railway Road
Harrogate
HG2 8NZ

Tel: 01423 546165



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Ecorys

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