

Enterprise & Investment Team

Action Plan

2017-20

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Foreword:

With the pressure for housing growth coming to Dacorum, we face many challenges over the next few years in maintaining a balanced local economy.

With increased residents comes the need to support growth in local employment, to ensure we can maintain Dacorum as a great place for people to live, work and enjoy.

There are many different areas of the council which have influence on local business and its success, the main ones are reflected in the diagram below, and all of these areas are focussed on working together to support our local business community and deliver the best services they can.

Dacorum is committed to developing a strong local economy supported by good transport links, good commercial spaces and access to a skilled work force.



This plan details the work to be carried out by the Dacorum Enterprise and investment team to deliver Economic Development through business care and retention and the promotion of inward investment.

Economic Profile/Strategic Context

Dacorum in Context

Location and Transport

The borough of Dacorum, home to main settlement Hemel Hempstead, is situated within Hertfordshire and is part of the wider Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) of South West Hertfordshire.

The area is well connected to London, the rest of the country and internationally. The west coast mainline means London Euston is only half an hour away, making it easy to commute and with junctions on the M1 and M25 location is one of our main economic strengths.

Getting to the Midlands and North of England is as simple as going South which is appealing in terms



of accessing customers and other suppliers. Dacorum also benefits from having London Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton and Stansted airports all within easy reach ensuring that it can act as a globally connected centre. The connectivity with the capital makes it effectively a part of the 'London experience' which is hugely attractive to investors and businesses as the borough expands.

Dacorum is within the Hertfordshire LEP M1/M25 Growth Area where Hemel Hempstead is identified as one of the largest towns with growth potential.

Population and Skills

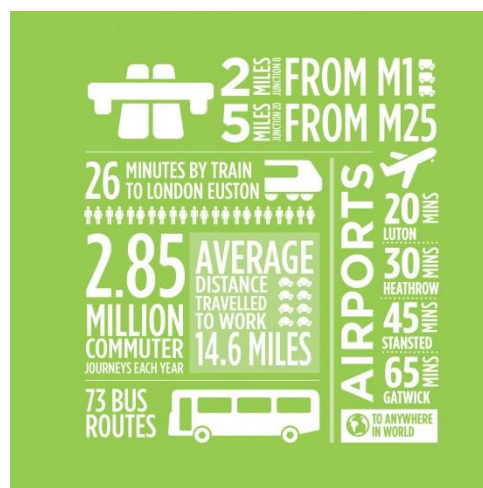
Home to 151,400 people, with over 120,000 of these living in one of the three main settlements in the borough, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring; Dacorum is the largest of the 10 boroughs by population which make up Hertfordshire.

In Dacorum, 41% of residents are qualified to NVQ 4 or above which whilst slightly lower than the Hertfordshire average at 42%, this is significantly higher than the East of England and National averages.

This means Dacorum can supply a highly skilled workforce to Employers, adding to our attraction as a location for business.

Economic Activity

The economic activity rate in Dacorum is, at 84.2%, higher than the Hertfordshire, East of England and national averages. Dacorum is characterised by a highly skilled resident population with very low levels of unemployment. Our economic strengths mean we provide employment opportunities beyond our boundaries, with the area being a large net importer of labour.



Employment and earnings

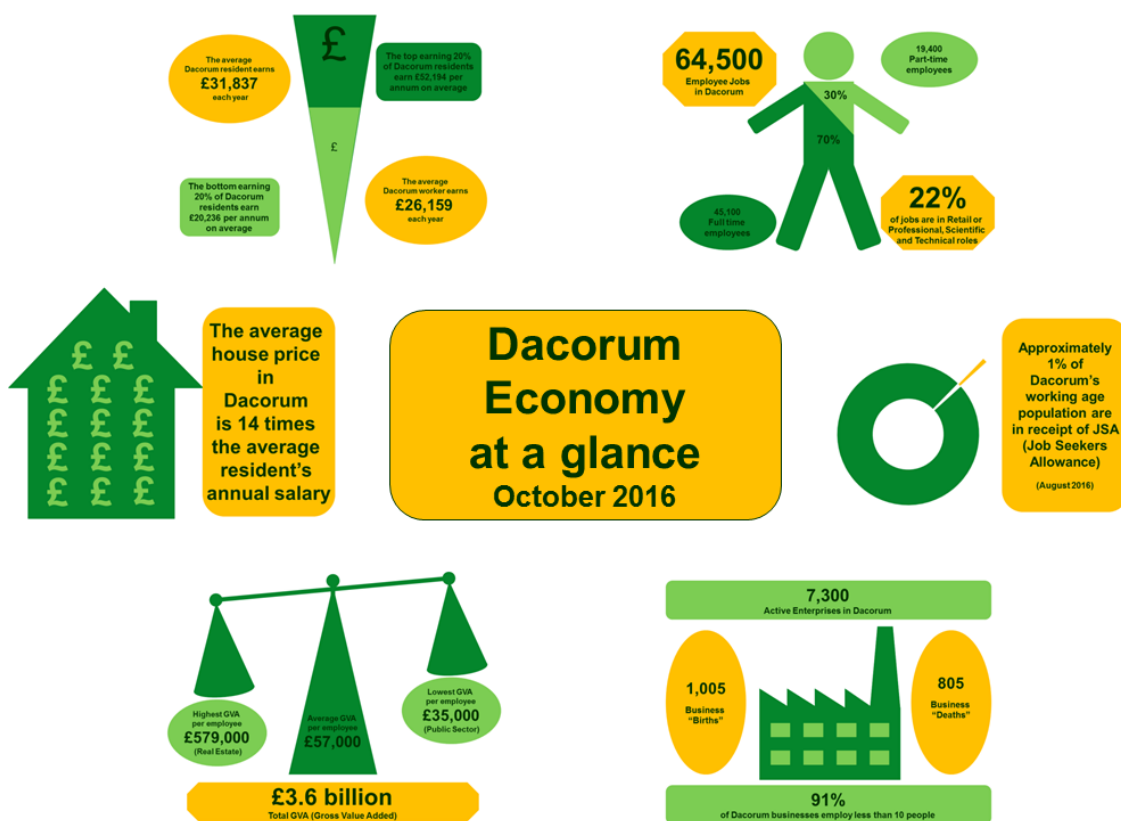
Dacorum records 64500 employee jobs (2015) which have increased by 13% in the last 5 years. This growth rate is slightly higher than the Hertfordshire average which stands at 12%.

The recent Economy study for SW Hertfordshire FEMA indicates strong levels of jobs growth is predicated for Dacorum up to 2031, however the area's ability to accommodate this may be constrained by a shortage of available and developable land and limited labour supply.

Conversely Dacorum has a very low JSA claimant count (May 2016) of 1.1% in line with Hertfordshire as a whole indicating that local labour supply will be difficult to maintain with high jobs growth unless there is a significant growth in population.

Whilst resident's earnings in the borough are high at an average of £602 per week, earning per workplace are 17% lower. This figure jumps to 25% lower for female full time workers.

This difference between resident and workplace earnings indicate that Dacorum residents are commuting out of the borough for higher paid employment.



Business demography

Dacorum has a healthy business base. With 7600 enterprises based here (2016 data). Dacorum is home to the Maylands Business Park in Hemel Hempstead, one of the largest business parks in the East of England.

The make up of our business base is predominantly micro and small businesses (98%) however we do have a slightly higher proportion of larger businesses (100 employees +) than to the Hertfordshire and Eastern regional averages.

Businesses such as Britvic, Northgate, Henkel, Sopra Steria and UTC Aerospace have all chosen to base their HQ's here. The area supports a broad range of industry types with particular strengths in Information and Communication, Professional Scientific and Technical sectors and Business administration and support services compared to neighbouring authorities, the East of England and nationally. The area does have a strong mix of businesses with no sector overly dominant leading to a strong diverse business base.

Dacorum excels in supporting business start ups with impressive business survival rates, higher than of Hertfordshire's average. This is the case for all situations when looking at 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 year survival rates.

	Births	1-year per cent	2-year per cent	3-year per cent	4-year per cent	5-year per cent
Hertfordshire County	5745	92.5	76.1	61.8	50.7	44
Dacorum	745	94	81.2	65.8	53.7	47
Broxbourne	385	90.9	72.7	59.7	46.8	40.3
East Hertfordshire	820	92.1	77.4	61.6	50.6	43.3
Hertsmere	675	91.9	74.8	58.5	47.4	41.5
North Hertfordshire	610	92.6	74.6	62.3	50.8	45.1
St Albans	805	92.5	77.6	65.8	55.9	48.4
Stevenage	285	91.2	70.2	52.6	40.4	35.1
Three Rivers	445	92.1	73	59.6	50.6	43.8
Watford	470	93.6	75.5	61.7	51.1	45.7
Welwyn Hatfield	505	93.1	76.2	62.4	51.5	41.6

Retail in Dacorum

Retail is a major employment sector for all districts in Hertfordshire and Dacorum is no different with an estimate of 14, 000* job relating to retail in the borough. Town centres have seen many challenges over the last few years with the increase of online shopping and out of town retail parks and we are all aware of the changing face of the High Street. It is important that we support our retail sector to ensure that it has a sustainable future.

In the Grimsey report into High Streets 2013, they state

“What is required is a business approach to set out the vision, the objectives and plans to develop each area as a unique vibrant community hub with an economic blueprint.”

In Hemel Hempstead, Dacorum have recently invested £30 million regenerating the Town Centre. During 2017 Dacorum Borough Council will work alongside Capital and Regional (a major town centre property owner) together with the retailers and town centre businesses to develop a Business Improvement District for Hemel Hempstead which will allow for a sustainable town centre action plan post 2017.

*NOMIS Employee Jobs figure for Dacorum in classification G : Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

Tourism in Dacorum

The visitor economy is now worth £106bn a year to England, employing in excess of two million people and accounting for nearly 10% of the entire UK workforce.

Dacorum's visitor economy is worth £230m+ annually and supports almost 4,000 jobs. Since January 2013 Dacorum has had a dedicated tourism officer focusing on offering support to our visitor economy businesses. This has led to an active local tourism partnership who have benefited from support, advice and networking, resulting in an increase in the value of tourism in Dacorum of £30 million between 2012 and 2015.

To build on this work and widen the exposure of local partners to a more county, regional and national stage from April 2017, Dacorum Borough Council have sub contracted the delivery of the tourism service to Visit Herts, the county wide destination management service chosen by Hertfordshire County Council and LEP.

Employment space

With low levels of brownfield land and much of the borough being within the Greenbelt, there are severe limitations for future opportunities for employment growth in Dacorum. Coupled with large losses of office stock through permitted development, particularly in Hemel Hempstead town centre, the borough is currently constrained in terms of growth. Making the best use of what brownfield land we currently have as well as looking at increasing the density and quality of developments within the borough will be essential. During 2017 an employment Land Availability study is being carried out to assess current land supply and recommend courses of action in order to be able to meet the expected jobs growth from the SW Herts Economy study.

Dacorum Business Survey 2016

A business survey was carried out in the spring of 2016 to inform the development of this plan and ensure that the views of local businesses were fully accounted for.

The survey had over 200 local businesses respond, split across Dacorum, broadly representing the spread of businesses across the borough. The highest percentage of respondents was from businesses with less than 10 employees with 56.3% of respondents falling into this category. The remaining respondents were split across the different size bands.

The findings from the survey along with the information provided from our economic profile have been incorporated into this plan's focus areas.

Focus and Action areas.

A. Strategic Economic Development

Dacorum Borough Council has an essential part to play in planning and facilitating the ongoing development of Dacorum borough. Pressures for both housing and employment growth need to be understood and managed carefully in order to maintain a high quality environment for people to live and work.

Through the recent South West Herts Strategic Housing Assessment and the South West Herts Economy study, high growth figures are emerging for both homes and jobs.

The council needs to do what it can to facilitate this growth in a planned manner, using both the services and assets we hold to leverage new private investment. This needs to be planned and managed to ensure investment comes in the best way possible to deliver high quality homes and jobs to meet the local population's needs.

Recent changes in government legislation around Permitted Development (PD) rights have given land owners greater flexibility over the types of changes of use that are seen as permitted which adds to the increasing pressures on employment land supply. With employment B class planning uses no longer needing planning permissions to be converted to residential uses PD will continue to add increased pressure to the employment land supply in housing areas such as Dacorum where there is a large incentive for developers to pursue residential options.

Dacorum is not alone in facing this problem. Considered in the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) of South West Hertfordshire (consisting of Dacorum, Watford, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and St Albans), we will work closely with the other authorities within the FEMA and wider Hertfordshire area to jointly address our challenges and to seek a comprehensive and joined up solution.

Actions

Action	Target date	Impact	Lead officer
To deliver the Employment Land Availability Assessment for Dacorum	June 2017	Dacorum has sufficient land available to 2036 for planned employment growth. Part 1 completed	Lesley Crisp Chris Taylor
Build relationships with other district councils in our FEMA so seek commonality	Ongoing	Dacorum identifies and addresses cross FEMA barriers to growth for our businesses	Chris Taylor Lesley Crisp
Attend regular meetings with Hertfordshire LEP, HEDOG, the European officers group and Herts Vibrant Towns meetings	Ongoing	Shared best practice allows Dacorum's business community to benefit from local and regional knowledge.	Lesley Crisp (HEDOG - Pennie Rayner) (Vibrant Towns – Sue Pilgrim)
Work alongside CMS and Capital and Regional to develop HH BID	Vote in November 2018	Business Improvement District implemented focussing on increasing footfall and the economy in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre.	Chris Taylor Pennie Rayner (Complete)

B. Challenges of Growth in Dacorum

The two greatest challenges for growth in Dacorum are suitable land availability and supporting infrastructure. These are not things we can address alone or immediately. Being part of the LEP's priority M25/M1 growth area gives further weight to our needs and has already resulted in the proposed Enterprise Zone (to be incorporated April 2017) covering parts of Dacorum and St Albans.

As a council we will continue to work with our strategic partners in Hertfordshire County Council, other Hertfordshire local authorities, Hertfordshire Highways and the Hertfordshire

LEP to facilitate infrastructure improvements which will allow development to follow, unlocking Dacorum's potential.

Actions

Action	Target date	Impact	Lead Officer
To establish an Enterprise Zone status for the Gateway land in Maylands in partnership with Herts LEP and SADC	Completed	Business rates retention scheme established via the EZ to contribute to funding for Maylands road improvements	Chris Taylor/ Lesley Crisp
To work with SADC and Herts LEP to attract inward investment to the EZ	2017-2020	1000 New jobs created for local residents	Chris Taylor/ Lesley Crisp
Deliver 5 new light industrial incubation units at the Maylands Business Centre	Completed	Increased stock of incubation space. Supporting 5 new businesses every 3 years.	Chris Taylor/Lesley Crisp
Deliver move-on office space at the Heart of Maylands In partnership with Dacorum's Strategic Housing team	2019	Provide 3000 sqft of move on office space to support 40 jobs	Chris Taylor/ Lesley Crisp

C. Enterprise and Innovation

Councils can play a vital role in growing their local economies by promoting enterprise and developing business skills. Dacorum has a strong track record of support for its business community and this base will be built upon working alongside county wide support agencies as well as delivering local services.

Dacorum's Enterprise & Investment team are focussed on ensuring a fit for purpose care and retention package which is tailored to foster growth and assist in the removal of barriers for businesses to flourish.

In March 2016 we carried out a survey to assess what our business community felt about the area, the support available, the potential for growth and any barriers they foresee in order to help us form this Enterprise and Investment plan. We received over 200 responses from a representative mix of business from micro businesses right through to our largest employers.

Enterprise Support

Maylands Business Centre is owned and operated by DBC and provides a unique offer for start-up and growing businesses to take on their first commercial premises, with affordable rents and on-site support for a maximum of 3 years. The centre comprises a mixture of small offices and light industrial units. The model has been very successful in terms of business growth and job creation since it opened in 2011, and it has been running at full capacity since

June 2012. An extension is now underway to add a further 5 light industrial units to the centre in summer 2017. DBC are also looking at providing further move-on office space in the Heart of Maylands by the end of 2018.

All businesses and potential start-ups within the area have access to a Business Advisor for one to one support and advice free of charge. A small grants scheme, Dacorum's Den, is also operated annually, supported by the private sector, to give small businesses an opportunity to obtain grant funding to progress new products or services which will enable their businesses to grow.

DBC also pursue opportunities for external funding for enhanced business support services and have been successful recently with an ERDF programme for start-up support which will run from 2016 – 2019.

General Business Support / Care and Retention

Business Support incorporates numerous services aimed at growing and developing businesses to create a strong sustainable economy and more local jobs.

The Enterprise and Investment team facilitate a number of business partnerships (including the Town Centre Partnership and the Tourism Partnership) allowing business direct 2-way communication with the council as well as a one stop shop for direction to other relevant local business support services.

Networking , which is key to many businesses in terms of generating new relationships and leads, is also facilitated with opportunities organised by DBC such as the Linked in Group, Business Partnership meetings, Connect Dacorum and the Small Business Forum.

Better Business for All

'Better Business for All' is Hertfordshire regulators' response to reducing the burdens on business and aims to support growth by building stronger relationships between businesses, local regulators and other interested parties. The partnership, which has been endorsed by all of the county's local authority leaders, was formed in 2013 and includes representatives from both public and private sector.

DBC will work in accordance with the Herts LEP to ensure the collaboration is maintained and that Dacorum will be perfectly placed for business. Working this way will support a positive business environment helping businesses thorough the myriad of regulations, thus stimulating business growth.

Town Centre Events and promotion

The Team will continue to support and assist with events to be held in HHTC, as well as organising 2 annual DBC run events. These events will increase footfall into the shopping area and increase the profile and reputation for Hemel Hempstead as a great family place to visit.

Filming:

With 95 days of filming over during 2015/2016 bringing an estimated £5.8 million into the local economy, we will continue publicise our filming areas in order to raise awareness for the Borough and bring revenue into the area.

Actions

Action	Target date	Impact	Lead Officer
Maintain business contact through attending local networking, business meetings, online conversations and other business events	Ongoing	Increased contacts list for communications and increased take up of services. Target 300+ business interactions per annum. 100 new contacts per annum	Lesley Crisp Pennie Rayner Mary Jeffery
Look at new services to add to current business support offer	March 2019	To reach more businesses and enable further growth	All
Hold an annual business event showcasing our support services (Dacorum Business Heroes)	Annual	Increased awareness of the support available to business. Target 200 businesses involved in the event.	Lesley Crisp Pennie Rayner Mary Jeffery
Deliver the ERDF start-up programme	2017-2018	To provide a county wide standard support programme for new and start-up businesses to increase survival rates. 40 jobs created	Lesley Crisp Mary Jeffery Liz Dand
Produce a social media and marketing strategy to publicise the ED offer to reach a wider audience inc home workers.	Sept 2018	Informed business community, increased service take up.	Mary Jeffery
Deliver an annual Dacorum's Den grant programme	Annually (2017 completed)	Funding supports business growth and creates jobs - supporting up to 10 businesses per year with funding and supporting all applicants.	Pennie Rayner
Create, deliver and analyse a business survey	December 2017	To shape work of ED team moving forward and ensure it remains relevant to the business needs	Pennie Rayner
Manage the MBC to maintain 95% occupancy	Ongoing	To maintain services at MBC	Lesley Crisp
Implement a logistics forum for Maylands Business Park	Launched April 2017	Local logistics companies working together to solve local road traffic issues. 10 large businesses supported.	Chris Taylor/Lesley Crisp
Develop and grow the logistics forum for Maylands Business Park	March 2018	Members grown to 15. Short and medium term solutions found	Chris Taylor/Lesley Crisp
Manage the Tourism contract with Visit Herts	2017-2020	Increase in the value and volume of tourism in Dacorum by £25 million	(Lesley Crisp) Pennie Rayner

Work in partnership with BID and other stakeholders to promote a vibrant Town Centre.	Ongoing	Enhanced image of HHTC with increased footfall and reduce vacancy rates. Specific outcomes as per strategy.	Sue Pilgrim
HH Market post February 2019	February 2019	To agree requirements for a market in HH town centre going forwards and tender as appropriate.	Chris Taylor Pennie Rayner
Manage current HH market contract	August 2017	Agree a one year extension to current market contract	Pennie Rayner (complete)
Work alongside Creative England to promote Dacorum as a film friendly location	Ongoing	Year on year increase in filming days (latest data to the end of March 2016 – 95)	Sue Pilgrim
HH Performance Monitoring & Evaluation. Look at funding	Ongoing	Review the performance of HHTC through car parking, footfall information and vacancy rates.	Sue Pilgrim (on hold pending Marlowes work)
Ensure ongoing operation of White Screen and look for long term solution	Ongoing	To maintain service through the big screen	Sue Pilgrim (complete)
Produce bi-monthly e-newsletters for Dacorum's businesses	Ongoing	Informed business community (reaching C2500 email addresses)	Sue Pilgrim
Deliver Halloween and Christmas events and other ad hoc events as required	Annually	10,000+ residents attend, increased footfall to old town and HH town centre	Sue Pilgrim

D. Skills for the Future

The Hertfordshire LEP skills strategy looks at skills shortages across the county and seeks to ensure this does not become a limiting factor to business growth. Dacorum Borough Council work with the LEP to deliver this in the local area.

Skills are an essential and key driver in local economic growth. Therefore ensuring that our residents have the correct skills to meet local business needs, and that through our schools and colleges we can create a pipeline of future talent, is paramount to the areas future success.

Current goals are:

- Develop our Future Workforce to meet the skills need for the local area.
- Maintain low employment rates in Dacorum
- Skills support for SMEs through subsidised workshops that meet the local need (data from skills survey 2017)

Actions

Action	Target date	Impact	Lead Officer
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Work with West Herts College to ensure Dacorum's businesses are informed on national skills incentives	Ongoing	50+ businesses per annum educated about apprenticeships.	Sue Pilgrim Lesley Crisp
Analyse workshops evaluation sheets from past 12 mths to determine next year's schedules.	October 2018	To ensure ongoing workshops remain relevant to the business community	Mary Jeffery
Ensure West Herts College and Skillmakers work effectively in our area	Ongoing	To provide relevant courses and information for the local business community	Mary Jeffery
Deliver local relevant and affordable training	Monthly	24 workshops per annum delivered to up skill Dacorum's workforce	Pennie Rayner Lesley Crisp
Meet termly with Dacorum Secondary School careers advisors and Youth Connexions.	3 times per annum	Linking schools with the local business community to raise awareness of business requirements from future workforce	Cindy Withey

E. Inward investment

Dacorum's ability to attract good employers and ensure they remain within the borough, providing long-term appropriately skilled employment for local people, will affect sustainability in the local economy.

In order to do this, the right business support and accommodation needs to be available. Dacorum has historically been successful in securing a number of major employers from across a range of business sectors, and in nurturing and growing a strong SME base. However recent evidence has suggested there has been a decline in the quantity of commercial and industrial space in Dacorum, a trend which is replicated throughout Hertfordshire. This could affect the town's ability to compete to attract good employers in the future, despite its locational strengths.

Once businesses are located in the borough, the right environment needs to be created to promote and support growth, in order that they remain in Dacorum and provide long-term employment.

The council needs to focus more on attracting high tech businesses to the area, to balance out the recent influx of logistics jobs. This process will be helped by the creation of the "Envirotech" Enterprise Zone encompassing the Maylands Gateway, and the work being undertaken by the Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors and the Enterprise & Investment team to attract inward investment into the area.

Ambassadors:

Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors is an innovative new scheme that will see direct investment in the local economy from local businesses and stake holders in order to build and strengthen the reputation of the area as the prime choice for business.

The HHBA scheme recognises that our businesses lead the way in shaping the future of Hemel Hempstead's on-going success.

By creating a group of economic champions for Hemel Hempstead, the scheme brings together the knowledge, networks and influence of businesses, organisations and individuals

as a powerful force to influence the place shaping of Hemel Hempstead, in order to compete, attract investment, business and visitors to create a more successful economy for the benefit of everyone.

By getting Hemel Hempstead thought about and talked about, we will ensure we are 'on the map' for all the right reasons.

Actions:

Action	Target date	Impact	Lead Officer
Attend regular Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors meetings and events	Ongoing	Ensure the HHBAs work dovetails to that of the E&I team, to maximise output.	Chris Taylor
Continue to develop the Ambassador scheme to fully viable financially	Viable by 2018	Board engaged and driving the organisation Organisation is financially viable and sustainable	Chris Taylor Gary Stringer
Increase membership by 2 new members per month with an emphasis on larger businesses	24 per year	Ensure the viability of the Ambassadors business plan	Gary Stringer
Work with HHBA scheme to measure value of investment into Dacorum	Total figure produced annually with evidence	£150million + per annum	Gary Stringer
Deliver at least six bi monthly events and maintain attendance	6 events 50 attendees	Ensure the Ambassadors are providing relevant and engaging meetings that business wants to attend	Gary Stringer
Maintain database of business contacts to continue to sell membership to high profile business in Dacorum	Contact Database prepared and maintained	Keep records of target members and contacts or approaches made and to signpost areas of business that would be an asset to the organisation	Gary Stringer
Maintain membership of the scheme to 90% (reducing drop out as much as possible) and carry out customer analysis to ensure organisation delivers what members require	Customer survey December 2017 – Jan 18	Ensure high retention to the scheme and keep the business plan relevant to members and current issues	Gary Stringer

F. Communications

In order to help the maximum number of companies and to support local supply chains it is vital that we reach as many businesses as possible. One of the key objectives of the E&I team is to improve our engagement with our businesses. Good quality engagement will increase people's understanding of the services the team provides, so that those who need our services can access them. It will also improve customer satisfaction with the council, by ensuring that services meet the needs of businesses to help shape the decisions that affect them.

Recent years have seen big changes in the way that DBC communicates. Social Media, our website and blogging have all come into common use and it is important that the team and the council maintain a communications service that is relevant to audiences across the borough.

We must continue to investigate new potential opportunities that these developments provide and where appropriate make use of them.

Actions

Action	Target date	Impact	Lead Officer
Social media campaign to communicate with home workers	March 2019	30 new micro business contacts	Mary Jeffery Pennie Rayner
Business visits	Ongoing	300 businesses interactions per annum across sectors 60 in depth business support meetings	Lesley Crisp Pennie Rayner Mary Jeffery
Produce bi-monthly e-newsletters for Dacorum's businesses	Ongoing	Minimum of 6 newsletters per annum to C2500 email addresses	Sue Pilgrim (Content from Mary Jeffery and Pennie Rayner)
Maintain informative web pages regarding our services	Ongoing	Correct information reaches our audience. 100 +enquiries through the business@ email address	Sue Pilgrim (DBC) All (MBC)

Glossary of Terms;

BID	Business Improvement District
CMS	Central management Solutions – Consultancy company supporting the establishment of a BID in Hemel Hempstead
DBC	Dacorum Borough Council
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EZ	Enterprise Zone
FEMA	Functional Economic Market Area
HEDOG	Hertfordshire Economic Development Officers Group
HH	Hemel Hempstead
HHBA	Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
MIPIM	Property trade Show
SADC	St Albans District Council