



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	11 October 2016
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Town Centre and Tourism Update
Contact:	<p>Cllr Graham Sutton - Portfolio Holder for Planning & Regeneration</p> <p>Author/Responsible Officers;</p> <p>Pennie Rayner – Economic Development Officer, Enterprise & Investment Team, Strategic Planning & Regeneration</p> <p>Susan Lea – Tourism & Marketing Officer, Enterprise & Investment Team, Strategic Planning & Regeneration</p> <p>Rebecca Oblein –Team Leader, Enterprise & Investment Team, Strategic Planning & Regeneration</p>
Purpose of report:	To update members on the work carried out to support and develop town centres and businesses therein and the tourism economy.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That this report is noted. 2. That the work undertaken to support Dacorum's town centres and tourism economy be acknowledged.
Corporate objectives:	The project supports the Corporate Vision and in particular the priority of Building Community Capacity and Regeneration by promoting business growth.
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>None arising for this report – work is carried out from established budgets</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>Working in Partnership with commercial businesses we are</p>

	able to leverage sponsorship and outsource assets to bring income into the Enterprise and Investment team to support the delivery of this service.
Risk Implications	There is a risk that budgeted income from Town Centre facilities is not realised. This is being addressed through regular budget monitoring. The Council's engagement in tourism, and costs thereof is being addressed through proposed subscription to the Visit Herts service for 2017/18 and beyond for a set subscription level.
Equalities Implications	None arising from this report.
Health And Safety Implications	None in this report
Consultees:	Rebecca Oblein - Team Leader, Enterprise & Investment Team, Strategic Planning & Regeneration James Doe – Assistant Director Planning & Regeneration Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director Housing & Regeneration
Background papers:	Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy 2014-17 DBC Tourism Strategy
Historical background (<i>please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context</i>).	This report updates members on work that happened for the Financial year 2014/5 to date and focusses on the Town Centre and Tourism initiative run through the Economic Wellbeing service.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<i>BID – Business Improvement District</i> <i>ATCM – Association of Town and City Managers</i> <i>MBC – Maylands Business Centre</i>

1. Town Centre Update

1.1 Purpose – To work in partnership with others to create a safe, clean, child and family friendly, vibrant and exciting destination that will;

- attract visitors, shoppers and inward investment;
- create a culture that encourages businesses to grow and take greater ownership for their trading environment/town centre;
- deliver activity that will increase footfall and decrease the vacancy rate thereby encouraging future inward investment.

The Enterprise and Investment Team work in partnership with our business community, landowners, commercial agents, developers, visitors and residents to make this happen. Our areas of focus, as set out in the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy 2014-2017, can be demonstrated in the diagram below.



1.2 In summer 2016, Capital and Regional (C&R) announced its purchase of the Marlowes Shopping Centre along with a number of other retail units in the town centre bringing in £53 million new investment. C&R credit the Council's regeneration works as a contributing factor to their decision to invest in Hemel Hempstead. This investment has acted as a catalyst to reinvigorate the process of developing a BID for the town centre.

1.3 Further to the C&R investment, the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Partnership has new focus. Recently it had dwindled in numbers and purpose. However it now needs to focus on reengaging with other town centre businesses assisting in the BID development. The Council's Enterprise and Investment service will be working with the partnership to assist in the BID process.

- 1.4 Strong links have been maintained with Tring Together; where the E&I team are working towards an action plan to support the 'I Love Tring Retail Group', and the team now represent DBC at the regular "Shop Talk" retail networking sessions. Links were strengthened with Berkhamsted businesses in preparation for the visit of HM Queen Elizabeth II and business support has been offered to over 60 of their town centre businesses.
- 1.5 The Hemel Hempstead Old Town Partnership is working proactively to encourage footfall in the Old Town and have developed an Action Plan in partnership with DBC. A programme of weekly Saturday Pop-Up Markets were organised in June 2016 to encourage footfall on a day when many businesses were open. These events proved a success and the Old Town Partnership are now looking at expanding this programme to run events throughout the year. The market operator, Saunders Markets, run a monthly Old Town Market on the first Sunday of each month. This has proved successful and is a popular event for visitors to the Old Town.
- 1.6 Hemel Hempstead Market has had to adapt and be flexible during the period of the regeneration works. This has had an impact on the market performance, which the Enterprise and Investment team have worked hard to mitigate. To improve the market appearance in line with the new public realm, add to the infrastructure and increase efficiencies in setting up and taking down, 25 new market stall gazebos were purchased in 2016. Work is now taking place to ensure that the market can thrive going forwards and compliments the new public realm. Regular meetings and communication takes place between Saunders Markets, the on-site Market Manager and the Enterprise and Investment team to assess how the market is performing. The market contract with Saunders Markets is due to run until February 2018.
- 1.7 Saunders Markets has reported a drop in the number of stalls and some regular traders have decided to cease trading in Hemel Hempstead since the move to the agreed layout post-regeneration works. Officers are working with Saunders Markets to ensure that the market is now in a position to improve with the new public realm. A new layout, focused on the area north of the New Town Square, is currently being trialled and will be reviewed during September.
- 1.8 In addition to the weekly markets, Saunders Markets have run a monthly Sunday market in the Old Town High Street for the past two years. See point 1.5
- 1.9 Business support, advice and guidance are now embedded in E&I service provision and offered to commercial and retail businesses alike. Services available include personal business support supported by COBRA, a suite of information providing business intelligence, fact sheets and regular updates on current business legislation. In addition to this, there is a focus within the team on supporting retail economic development across the borough through attendance at partnership and networking events, ATCM and Future High Street Conferences and face to face meetings.
- 1.10 The number of empty shops in Hemel Hempstead town centre has reduced by two thirds as investors take confidence from the ongoing £30 million regeneration. Just 6% of units were empty during July 2016, compared to the national average of 10.1% according to the business intelligence bench marker, Springboard. The rate stood at 16.5% in October 2014 as the Hemel Evolution

transformation of the main shopping area began, showing a 64% overall reduction.

- 1.11 Alongside the large scale investment from C&R, a number of smaller independents have spotted Hemel Hempstead's potential, such as Cappuccios Italian Delicatessen, Little Beans Play Café, the Entertainer, PEP & Co, Toys R Us and Topshop to name but a few. Contributing to the decrease in the vacancy rate that Hemel Hempstead has seen.
- 1.12 The service maintains a comprehensive database of information relating to businesses in Hemel Hempstead, relating to both tenants and landlords. This has enabled swift communication with businesses and will assist the BID feasibility progress. Work is currently being undertaken to improve on the databases in both Berkhamsted and Tring.
- 1.13 A shared and targeted calendar of events has focused primarily on the annual Halloween and Christmas Lights Switch On events, along with events to celebrate the launch of the new public realm; a programme of outdoor cinema events and the launch of the new fountain. Sponsorship opportunities are being sought to reduce the Council's commitment and we are encouraging community events around the town centre and New Town Square.
- 1.14 Pinpointer Media (formerly BoConcepts) have been appointed to manage the town centre promotional bookings and maximise income generation during a one year trial, ending in April 2017. Officers are working with Pinpointer to maximise income opportunities.
- 1.15 Additionally a contract has been put in place with Powwow TV for the management of the big screen in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. This will generate a minimum of £15k per annum income for the council, whilst we still retain approx. 60% of the air time for council and community content.
- 1.16 The Enterprise and Investment team continue to work closely with the Communications Team to ensure that marketing and communications are shared in a timely and relevant manner through our websites and social media. This has culminated in an entry for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre into the Great British High Street Awards, in the "Rising Star" and "Town Centre" categories. Shortlisted applications will be announced in mid-October when, if selected, our high profile social media campaign will begin allowing an opportunity for nationwide publicity and recognition.
- 1.17 Officers are constantly evaluating events and initiatives in order to measure success, using car parking data, vacancy rates, shared information with Marlowes and Riverside Shopping Centres and will soon be able to use footfall data again. During the regeneration works the footfall counters were not online and some counters were upgraded. The footfall counters will be operational again imminently, with work in the final stages of ensuring that the data is accurate.
- 1.18 Through continual two-way communication with our business community the service will remain both a pro-active and flexible team who can adapt quickly to ensure we meet the needs of our customers and where ever possible exceed expectations.

- 1.19 HHTC Management Post 2017 - BID feasibility work has now commenced, led by Central Management Solutions (CMS) which will act for the BID company once established. This work is being funded by DBC and Capital & Regional, the new owners of the Marlowes Shopping Centre and other property in the town centre by way of a grant. If successful, this will have a significant impact on the management of the town centre with the formation of a BID company.

2. Tourism Update

- 2.1. Dacorum Borough Council has employed a Tourism and Marketing Officer since January 2013 to help boost the tourism industry in the borough by maximising the impact of tourism in the area and raising the profile of Dacorum locally, regionally and nationally.
- 2.2. The Tourism Partnership was established in March 2013, with the group including representatives from hotels, attractions, pubs and restaurants in the borough and surrounding area. To date 47 businesses have joined the Tourism Partnership, generating a total of £8255 income.
- 2.3. In July 2015, the Tourism and Marketing Officer held a launch event for tourism businesses to attend to showcase the new branding and the Membership Scheme. 60 businesses attended this event.
- 2.4. The new Enjoy branding gives a clearer message and identifies Dacorum as a place to visit. It breaks down the area into the three main towns, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring.
- 2.5. The layout of the "Enjoy" section of the Dacorum Look no Further (DLNF) website has been changed to be more inviting, clear and user friendly in order to help attract more visitors to the website. Each page on the Enjoy section has been populated and upgraded. Each of the pages shows a variety of businesses which include attractions, hotels and restaurants.
- 2.6. The DLNF website is averaging 1500 hits per month as opposed to the 2013 figures where the website was averaging 390 unique hits per month. The website has now seen a 284% increase of traffic due largely to increase awareness and continued PR advertising by the Tourism officer.
- 2.7. Pay per Click (PPC) marketing has been used on the Enjoy section of the website to help increase traffic to it and to facilitate increased search engine optimisation. Specifically the campaign is aimed at the families market during school holidays. PPC has seen an increase of click through rates from when the campaign first started in November 2013, 6.37% to an average now of 8.65%
- 2.8. Partnership working has been organised between the tourism partners (hotels and attractions) facilitated by the Tourism and Marketing Officer. Partnership working helps to build the tourism economy by increasing bookings and keeping visitors in the area for longer periods. These links are being measured to quantify their impact.
- 2.9. Most recently the Canal & River Trust and the Red Lion, Nash Mills have partnered up. This has resulted in the pub adopting part of the tow path along

the canal. In time they will be able to use this space for their business. This will create more seating along the canal which will in turn attract more visitors.

- 2.10. The Tourism and Marketing Officer has maximised advertising and PR opportunities, featuring in different publications, radio, bus shelter campaigns and competitions to showcase Dacorum and the surrounding areas.
- 2.11. In November 2015 a second tourism map was produced in partnership with our leisure businesses, showing all of the local hotels and attractions. A total of 35,000 copies of the map were printed, 30,000 of which were distributed using a distribution company called "Get Smart". The maps were distributed across five regions; Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, North London and Northamptonshire through Tourist Information Centres, hospitals, Service Stations, Hotels and Attractions. The remaining 5000 copies of the map are being distributed locally and via networking events.
- 2.12. Businesses were given the opportunity to purchase one of the promotional spaces on the back of the map. In total 26 spaces were sold, generating an income of £6900
- 2.13. Another target area for tourism is the Group Travel Market. The Tourism and Marketing Officer has attended travel trade shows to raise the profile of Dacorum specifically for this market. In May 2016, Frogmore Paper Mill welcomed two coach visits from the midlands (total of 80 visitors) as a direct result of the Enjoy Dacorum stand.
- 2.14. According to the 2014 figures, Hertfordshire Tourism is valued at 1.9billion Dacorum tourism is valued at 230 million. Dacorum makes up 12% of the total amount spent on tourism within Herts. Since 2012 Dacorum's share has increased by 4%.
- 2.15. A Hotel Survey was developed and sent out in order to help measure and monitor the occupancy in the hotels across the borough. The results to the survey showed that in 2014 the average occupancy was 73% this increased to 77% in 2015. Since 2012 the average occupancy has increased by 13%.
- 2.16. The Enjoy Dacorum campaign has reached a wide range of people, not just residents, but also nationally showcasing Dacorum as a place to visit. The Tourism Partnership has been vital part of this work since January 2013. Without their commitment the campaign would not have been so successful. The Enjoy Dacorum campaign has been a key part of increasing footfall in to the area and has promoted partnership working with businesses resulting in hotel, occupancy rates rising and generally more spend to the area which ultimately has had a positive impact on the local economy.
- 2.17. From April 2017 the Enjoy Dacorum campaign will be contracted out to the Visit Herts tourism team. This will allow the campaign to be taken to the next level, giving our Dacorum businesses access and exposure to new markets and allowing them to benefit from the years of tourism experience the Visit Herts team have.

Attached is a schedule of activity proposed for the future Enjoy Dacorum Service.

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT Dacorum District Council Benefits Packages 2017/18

GROW *Improving and developing the product; people power: unlocking talent and improving skills*

KNOW *Marketing the county for the 21st century*

CONNECT *Working together: developing partnerships, improving quality and creating a community of mutually supportive tourism businesses*

VH would provide a representative working the equivalent of three days per week focusing exclusively on Dacorum tourism activity, with the aim of undertaking the items listed in options 2 & 3 and against agreed targets (where this is possible) as part of an SLA.

In this option the existing Dacorum tourism partnership would be maintained and managed by the VH team member.

- No subscription charge for SMEs to participate in Dacorum tourism partnership.
- Opportunities for tourism partnership members to “pay and play” to enhance presence.

Below are the services to be delivered by Visit Herts on behalf of Enjoy Dacorum;

GROW		
<p>Destination Management Planning (or strategy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH rep on planning group. - Discounted cost for VH to undertake new work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to relevant working groups and steering groups. - Access to business advisory service (businesses pay consultant’s subsistence and travel expenses). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of follow-up Destination Management Plan as proposed in Dacorum Tourism Strategy 2015
<p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to VE/VB national research and trends intelligence. - Access to VH research team. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate county-wide research.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Barometer (additional questions available to Dacorum as Investors). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would deliver the business barometer for Dacorum and ensure local stakeholders are engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would present findings to members and officers if required at a meeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-commission Cambridge Economic Model research to reduce cost to Districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would serve, check and validate draft findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would present findings to members and officers if required at a meeting.
<p>Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B2B website with reservations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise on development opportunities. 	
<p>Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to advice on Brown signs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring information points as required.

Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to training and masterclasses. - World Host training at discounted rate. 		
Meetings and Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to on-line B2B site to promote District to event planners. 		
Annual review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One meeting p.a. to review developments and aspirations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two meetings p.a. to review developments and aspirations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly review meetings
KNOW		
Brand management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Act as Dacorum brand guardian.
VH website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One standard page with a link to an existing Dacorum tourism website. - Key marketing messages up to (number tbc) amplified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would manage Dacorum content. Dacorum can have a microsite on the VH website (at additional cost). - The Dacorum jump page would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 250 words of copy ▪ large header image and up to 4 additional images and/or video to appear as thumbnails in the media gallery ▪ Ability to profile your nominated businesses (Things to do, Places to stay, What's on) - Enhanced listing for Dacorum run events (events to be supplied by Dacorum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any tourism micro-site linked to the VH website would be managed by the team member. - Review/monitor Dacorum content on 3rd party sites and marketing channels.
e-marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Editorial coverage across the e-newsletter programme. (This activity will grow as our consumer database grows). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to pre-book headline coverage in specific e-newsletters (to be agreed in advance). - Opportunity for Dacorum to identify tourism businesses for inclusion in VH marketing activity, irrespective of whether or not they are a VH Investor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seasonal B2B newsletter tailored to Dacorum businesses. - Option to supply competition prizes in return for 3rd party data capture (to be agreed in advance).
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dacorum re-tweets will appear throughout the VH website – including the homepage. - If Dacorum is active on Facebook share your posts with our followers – we will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay per click campaigns managed by the team (at additional cost). - Set up and manage Dacorum Facebook page.

	do our best to “share” posts where appropriate for our audience.	
Travel trade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH organised travel trade familiarisation trip. - Priority in trade marketing activities both on and off-line and in the developing digital platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination of travel trade activity to avoid duplication and cost (e.g.” Excursions”). - District’s businesses to be offered opportunities in familiarisation visits by trade operators and early involvement in planning and hosting local visits to ensure valuable local product knowledge is included and translates into bookable trade products. - An in-house resource will need to support coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team member will attend trade events to represent Dacorum businesses. - Team member will coordinate the visit(s) on territory.
Public Relations Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “No clip, no trip” journalists’ visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dacorum businesses to be offered opportunities in familiarisation visits by journalists and early involvement in planning and hosting local visits to ensure valuable local product knowledge is included and translates into bookings. - Dacorum businesses featured in targeted press releases. - Interview opportunities with media (where relevant). - Introductions to journalists (where relevant). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An agreed number of media releases to be issued p.a. - Team member will coordinate the visit(s).
Itineraries and information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion in new county-wide thematic itineraries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority in relevant itineraries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce Dacorum map/tourism leaflet as required (at additional cost).
Big Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in this established VFR campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would deliver this for Dacorum and ensure all local stakeholders are engaged and liaise with local media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would present findings to members and officers if required at a meeting.
Targeted campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Districts feature in a London campaign/promotion involving rail operators, posters, e-marketing, social media, competitions and offers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources at VH would manage this for Dacorum and ensure local stakeholders are engaged and fully featured. 	

CONNECT		
Updates and opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular communications from VH. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tailored (monthly) newsletter of trends, news, plans and opportunities 	
Networking and events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly Investor's event. - Twice yearly Officers' meeting. - Leader's lunch (alternate years). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would represent Dacorum at one event per annum. - Jointly organise MPs' event to coincide with Big Weekend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VH would represent Dacorum at two events per annum. - Organise two networking events for Dacorum Tourism Partnership businesses.
Planning and reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual planning meeting to create SLA and mid-year review. - Annual report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to wider support of Go To Places. - Annual presentation to Cabinet (if required). 	
Access a national network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cascade developments and achievements of district via VH's national B2B network of DCMS, other Government agencies and national bodies. - Expertise, support, additional exposure, national contacts and networking events. 		
Stakeholder engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Championing tourism in Herts with county districts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct annual Dacorum Tourism Partnership satisfaction survey.