

Enjoy Dacorum

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

BERKHAMSTED

TRING



Dacorum Tourism Strategy

2015-2017

April 2015

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1.0 Introduction

In January 2015, Dacorum Borough Council commissioned Black Spiral Design and Tourism Engineers to develop a short-medium term Tourism strategy for the destination covering the next 2 years up to April 2017.

The Importance of Tourism

Tourism is a hugely important sector. The visitor economy is now worth £106bn¹ a year to England, employs in excess of two million people and accounts for nearly 10% of the entire UK workforce. It supports many thousands of businesses nationally, both directly and indirectly and is increasingly integral for economic growth, social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

In Dacorum, the visitor economy is worth £218m² annually and supports almost 4,000 jobs. The sector is characterised by several key hallmark attractions and experiences, alongside a diverse breadth and depth of offer, characterised by distinctive retail, a rich tapestry of landscape, heritage food and culture, opportunities for adrenaline sports and a solid accommodation base. At present the contribution from VFR³ and Business segments dwarf the more traditional leisure market but combined have shown a stable base since 2011 and ensure Dacorum accounts for between 10% to 20% of tourism as a whole across Hertfordshire.

Aspirations of this strategy

This strategy plans to build on the excellent work and progress achieved in the last two years and set out a clear direction, targets and actions for the forthcoming two year period. The approach focuses on the destination of Dacorum as a whole and addresses the range of elements that make-up Destination Management, looking equally at in-situ experience, industry support and product development alongside the marketing and promotional component.

The strategy does also recognise that no single body can manage a destination effectively and certainly cannot do so unaided, therefore the plan also addresses the need for a sustainable model to resource the activity and specifically links smaller destination plans for Tring and Berkhamsted (2 of the key places within the destination).

Further the strategy seeks to align its aims and activities with other key ventures and initiatives locally, namely the Business Improvement District in Hemel Hempstead and the development of the Ambassadors programme, again for Hemel.

Finally the key driver for this strategy is to visibly and tangibly move tourism and the performance of the destination forward over the two year period, making the most of the current resources and assets, addressing key gaps and positioning Dacorum strongly to take its next steps in 2017.

¹ Figures from VisitEngland 2013

² Figure for 2013 derived from Volume and Value data generated by Tourism South East

³ "visiting friends & relatives"

About this strategy

The contents of this strategy and its associated actions were developed from a thorough review, incorporating original research and analysis. This was further compounded by a programme of consultation and dedicated engagement with key stakeholders throughout February and March 2015, including three dedicated workshops and online engagement. In total around 40 businesses and organisations have been consulted and their needs and priorities have been key in shaping the plan.⁴

The following document outlines the resulting strategy and presents an action plan for its implementation.

⁴ See Appendix 2 for notes

2.0 Situational Analysis

A thorough review and audit of the destination was conducted as part of the strategy development which comprised; analysis of current research and context, a product audit, assessment of current and potential markets, in-situ experience audits, external marketing assessments, a business survey and series of consultation events with key stakeholders.

The full results are shown in appendix 1 but are summarised in the SWOT analysis below.

2.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged and supportive tourism sector Council dedicating specific support Energetic and well respected tourism team Location and access Several major "destination" attractions Range and diversity of attractions (all weather) Rural setting and context (Chilterns) Diverse retail and catering offer Quality of welcome and service is high Healthy accommodation base Good programme of business support Strong performance with business and VFR Generally positive online reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of current data at destination level Overarching brand means little to non-residents Little buy-in to the brand beyond DBC channels Poorly joined up marketing and experience between the destination components Confused B2B and B2C approach to communications Information delivery is patchy at best Signage and directional information poor Poor events calendar and information availability Lack of visibility as a destination from external and referral sources
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging the tourism sector more strongly in the new strategy development Build on the base of tourism development that has occurred over the last 2 years Thinking Place Ambassador and place work Continuing Evolve regeneration of Hemel Hempstead (includes Jellicoe Water Gardens). Planet Ice reopening adding to activities portfolio Growth of VFR and Business leisure Growing popularity and visibility of Warner Bros Studio Tour Outdoors/nature/wildlife/landscape Continued focus and awareness from the group tour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in council funding to lead tourism development Failure to translate business engagement into financial investment A competing marketing entity developing for Dacorum as a destination Competition for membership income from the new Hertfordshire DMO Business apathy

2.2 Challenges

In summary the key challenges faced by the destination and which this plan will address include:

- **A confused message** - The way in which the destination is perceived has an impact on its ability to attract.. Currently the overall message lacks consistency, neglects some of the key elements and has little focus on any particular audience.
- **Less than the sum of its parts** - Dacorum has a strong offer, but it is fragmented, operates in silos. As such its constituent parts are each stronger than the destination as a whole and currently have little to bring them together for the audience..
- **In the know...** - Much of the experience and promotion of the destination relies on prior or existing knowledge to get the best from. Dacorum needs to help its potential visitors, providing reasons why they should choose, enjoy, recommend and return. Inspiration is key.
- **Right tools for the job?** – Current marketing channels across the destination are either confused, difficult to find or un-optimised for the task in hand. Better communication is a core component of getting the message to the right people.
- **Key gaps in the experience** - Generally the standard of the experience is high, however several key areas require attention, notably information provision and directional information. Vigilance needs to be maintained on presentation of the destination to encourage visitors to explore with confidence.
- **Limited resources to make a difference** - The strategy calls for change and real progress within a short time span and with limited resources. Quick wins with tangible impact are vital to really leverage the enthusiasm and willingness of stakeholders to buy into the plan.
- **Keeping Momentum** - Equally an enormous amount of goodwill and enthusiasm has already been generated, this needs to be retained and channelled rather than lost in a wholesale redevelopment of approach.

3.0 Strategic Direction

3.1 Vision

By 2017

Dacorum will be known as a distinct place and understood for its breadth of assets and depth of offer. It will inspire new and repeat business as a compelling destination of choice for both day and increasingly weekend visits, a convenient base for business and a fantastic resource for those proud to call it home. The destination will be positioned to grow its core markets and take effective steps forward, safe in the knowledge it operates from strong foundations.

This activity will be supported by an interactive network of businesses and stakeholders, working alongside each other, delivering a joined-up approach, sharing the benefits and ensuring the experience lives up to the promise.

3.2 How will this be achieved?

To achieve this vision, tourism across Dacorum will be guided by a clear and widely agreed plan that focuses on several specific principles:

Consolidate

Addressing key gaps and working with what we have. This recognises certain constraints and issues but seeks to maximise and optimise current resources over throwing weight behind entirely new efforts that may not show the required return over the lifespan of the strategy.

Position

Focusing efforts on actions that can make a difference now and position us to move forward after 2017. One eye is always on where the destination will be at the culmination of this process and putting in place the basic foundations to allow us to move forwards.

Invest

Investing time and energy now in structures and tools that have longer lasting use and impacts This means that certain of the activities may not be "instant quick wins", some will be longer lead or multi-stage.

Share

The plan will primarily be delivered by the tourism team at Dacorum Borough Council, supported by the Tourism Partnership - a representative body of tourism interests from the public and private sectors, and through newly established Destination Groups - locally based stakeholder groups with a focus and purview over their immediate geography.

Measure

All aspects and elements of the plan will be directly measurable. There will be overarching indicators to assess progress, but equally each specific activity will have its own in-built indicators and measurement mechanisms. This way we understand not just whether we have encouraged change, but which actions directly contributed and by extension provides justification and evidence for forward planning from 2017.

3.3 Target Audiences

Given resources and timescale the selection of audiences must be pragmatic and based on the biggest returns and the most sustainable ones, therefore priority is given to firming up the most accessible audiences before specifically targeting further groups.

→ Existing visitors

Those who have already chosen to visit and sample the destination.

This group are day visitors who may come from a wide catchment but who will be coming for a single purpose only. They generally visit one of the large attractions within Dacorum (mainly the Snow Centre or Warner Bros Studio Tour) which comprises the majority or entirety of their visit. They may also purchase food & drink or indulge in retail but are just as likely to do this en-situ at the attraction as outside of it.

This audience will likely have little perception or knowledge of Dacorum as they view the attraction as king and the surrounds as simply surrounds. They will visit throughout the week and year but with specific spikes at weekends and holiday periods.

The focus needs to be on extending stays, inspiring additional action, encouraging returns and eliciting recommendations.

→ Local Residents (& by extension VFR - visiting friends and relatives)

Those who live within the borough, but who may be limited by awareness of the geographical scope or of the depth or breadth of the product, or who currently choose to spend their leisure time elsewhere.

This audience is aware of "Dacorum" as an entity and have some knowledge of the destination. They generally focus on specific trips to an attraction in leisure time, retail offers, short period outdoor activities and food & drink especially. Are willing to travel within the destination but are more likely to frequent known and trusted establishments than always try something new. Dwell times are short but repeat visit potential is high as is spend on the experience as they are not committing to overnight or travel expenses. This group has the highest potential for evening activities.

This audience is likely to have mixed perceptions of Dacorum and will likely be more negative than any other (local perceptions are always more critical than a visitor). However they also hold the key to the potentially lucrative VFR market which has seen significant growth in recent years, with a trend more towards leisure activity rather than in-home entertainment. Persuading residents of the value of the offer and converting them as ambassadors is therefore key, so they choose to entertain locally or are able to recommend and suggest local experiences for their guests.

The focus needs to be on encouraging and inspiring them to explore (and keep on exploring) their own doorstep.

→ **Local businesses**

Corporate business accounts for a large proportion of the overall tourism volume and value for Dacorum and is driven by local businesses based within the borough.

Local business breaks down into three specific groups; contractors or individuals in Dacorum on business with local companies, those using Dacorum as a convenient base or stopping point en route to business elsewhere and small-medium scale conference and meeting business at the venues around the borough. Each of these groups are looking for convenience in location and facilities and value for money (not necessarily cheap) in accommodation. They will equally spend on food & drink and some occasional retail. Business will be skewed towards a Sun-Thursday stay pattern with dwell times ranging from a single meeting to multi-night stays.

This audience will likely view Dacorum in the context of their professional lives and may not make the connection to it as a place for leisure.

The focus needs to be on awareness of the product, easing the experience and showing that corporate tourism is valued alongside leisure.

→ **Special interest groups**

Likely heritage or countryside interest based who are active in their interest and travel as arranged groups (both large and small). They will originate outside of the destination but remain relatively easy to target through their shared interest.

A group comprising individual with a shared or specific interest that brings them together to travel. They will generally arrive escorted and visit to a fixed itinerary for which they have paid in advance. Groups will generally be UK based and will have interests around heritage, specific activities and the outdoors. They will likely have little knowledge of Dacorum as an entity, with their focus being on the constituent parts of their experience (much like "Destination" visitors but with a broader list). If given the opportunity this group is keen to explore on foot and will spend on quality but are not on the whole big purchasers. This group is generally reached through its organisers.

Focus needs to be on enticing them to "try", giving confidence in the offer and ensuring the quality of the experience.

→ "Local" day visitors

Finally there are large markets within day visit distance, notably the capital but also larger conurbations throughout the periphery of South East and the Midlands.

This group are drawn from areas in close proximity to Dacorum and comprise a diverse demographic. Their defining feature is an awareness of the offer and experience available and the ease of travel to reach, thereby making Dacorum a viable (and easy) day trip from home. They will generally travel on weekends and during holiday periods but a significant proportion may travel throughout the year. Spend will be capped at the costs of an attraction or two plus food & drink and they will be largely daytime visitors, with some evening potential.

This audience may have knowledge of Dacorum as an entity but are more likely to know places by geographical names and to orient and plan a visit as such.

Focus needs to be on targeted messages, delivering inspiration and confidence and showcasing at least two coordinated experiences in any suggested message.

3.4 Targets

The following represent the overarching targets for the strategy, in effect the bottom-line change and improvement it will aim to deliver by April 2017.

- Grow annual visitor spending by 3% annually
- Grow annual visitor numbers by 3% annually
- Grow number of "overnights" spent annually in Dacorum by 3% annually
- Generate 50K in matched funding by April 2017

These targets will be measured through the annual volume and value statistics, as well as additional data collected through this strategy and external sources such as the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) sponsored by Visit England.

Targets will be assessed annually when data is available and revised/updated if required.

3.5 Pillars & Objectives

The strategy itself rests on 4 key pillars of activity, each with their own specific objectives:

1. Developing a clear identity for the destination as a whole

Bringing together and defining the nature and offer of Dacorum for its core audiences and creating practical tools and support to roll out the identity destination wide as a key component of developing Dacorum's market position

- 60 businesses actively using the Dacorum brand in their own activities by November 2016
- 40% recognition of the Dacorum brand amongst a sample audience by September 2016

2. Co-ordination of activity

Joining up the constituent elements of the destination (places, experiences and businesses) through promotion, development of shared products, increasing knowledge and development of a robust network.

- Growing membership of the tourism partnership to 150 by April 2017
- 50 joint promotional initiatives comprising at least 2 Dacorum businesses undertaken by April 2017
- 85% approval rating from partnership members for activities and initiatives undertaken by April 2017
- Establishment of functioning destination groups in Hemel, Tring and Berkhamsted by October 2015

3. Awareness raising & building inspiration

Addressing the methods the destination uses to promote itself, focussing these to convey the identity and offer more consistently. To target and deliver specific campaigns with core audiences and above all to inspire, enthuse and educate.

- 60 inbound links from Dacorum businesses to the Dacorum website
- 3000 followers on Dacorum B2C social media channels
- Dacorum presence & inbound links from 32 established referring websites
- 20% of visitors choosing to visit as a result of destination marketing activity

4. Optimising the experience

Ensuring quality is inherent in all aspects of the destination, at both macro and local scale. Understanding its performance, addressing information and interpretation provision and supporting sympathetic product development

- 30 info points across the destination showcasing minimum 5 other Dacorum businesses
- 50 businesses contributing data to destination performance
- Develop a follow-on Destination Management Plan for Dacorum beyond April 2017

Specific actions relating to these pillars are discussed in the following section. In addition there is a separate pillar of the strategy the deals with the resourcing and development of the business model behind the strategy allowing it to be sustainable and to continue to grow and develop tourism in Dacorum beyond the lifespan of this plan. This is dealt with in section 5.

4.0 Actions

Following are the actions prescribed to deliver the strategy. These are not designed to be "set in stone" and should be flexible as time and needs move on.

All actions listed here are important and should be attempted within the timeframe of the plan, however there is always a competition for resources and time. Therefore each action is given a priority rating to help assess which are vital if resources become stretched. *** denotes the highest priority.

4.1 Action Plan

Pillar 1 - Developing a clear identity for the destination as a whole

Project	Description	Priority	Deadline	Cost	KPI
1.1	Agree and develop a clear brand identity for the destination as a whole. Include core ethos, values and features, visual identity and sample copy/introduction	***	30/06/2015	Low	Clear identity created, agreed and shared with engaged businesses
1.2	Create brand toolkit for others to use. Include sample copy (various uses), image library, visual style guide, tone of voice and experience examples, notes on audiences etc.	***	31/07/2015	Med	Toolkit available online. E-newsletter sent to raise awareness + follow-up support given
1.3	Apply the new brand identity to all Dacorum collateral and channels (web, social media and print as reprints due).	***	31/07/2015	Low	Clear & consistent identity on all B2C & B2B channels
1.4	Public launch and PR to raise awareness (coincide with web revamp)	***	31/07/2015	Med	4 media reports, support from 2 wider orgs
1.5	Review business take-up of the brand identity -if low then ask if further support etc. required	***	30/11/2015	Low	40 stakeholders using consistently
1.6	Visitor focus groups to assess recognition and response to brand identity	***	31/08/2016	Med	2 focus groups completed
1.7	Review business take-up of the brand identity - assess need to refresh, revise or expand elements	***	30/11/2016	Low	60 stakeholders using consistently

Pillar 2 - Co-ordinating Activity

Project	Description	Priority	Deadline	Cost	KPI
2.1	Research and build full tourism database with contact details and bios. Encourage opt in to sharing data amongst partners	***	31/08/2015	Low	Database established with 60 partners opted in
2.2	Make database available to partners who agree and sign up to data disclosure agreement	***	31/08/2015	Low	60 partners signed up to data disclosure
2.3	Support and arrange 2 x annual tourism partnership meetings, to include updates on progress, pitching of marketing opps, networking time and leaflet/literature exchanges	***	Feb/Mar & Oct/Nov yearly	Med	4 tourism partnership meetings held
2.4	Dedicated B2B e-news to drive membership. Showcase B2C activity, industry news and explain member benefits	**	Quarterly from Q2 2015	Low	7 x B2C newsletters sent
2.5	Create guidelines for joint marketing activity. Include usage of the brand, tips for working together, selection of Dacorum images, suggestions for partners/locations to include	***	30/09/2015	Low	50 joint promotional activities undertaken
2.6	Annual partner survey to assess approval of activity and needs moving forward	***	Jan/Feb yearly	Low	85% approval rating from partnership members
2.7	Establish Destination groups in Tring, Berkhamsted and Hemel to coordinate tourism focus locally.	***	31/10/2015	Low	3 groups established with initial actions agreed
2.8	Provide mentoring and support to destination groups (email, phone advice etc)	**	ongoing	Low	15 actions achieved across destination groups
2.9	Lead on coordinating and developing a "Dacorum event" encouraging businesses to showcase something special with tasters over a prescribed period (weekend/week). Coincide with B2C campaigns to raise awareness	**	Q3 2015 & 2016	Med	Involve: 20 businesses in 2015 30 businesses in 2016
2.10	Design and roll-out a Dacorum training package, helping businesses and other front of house teams to understand the destination better and what's on offer.	**	31/03/2016	Med	40 individuals trained

Pillar 3 - Raising Awareness & Building Inspiration

Project	Description	Priority	Deadline	Cost	KPI
3.1	Plan visitor journey through the new tourism section - entry points, vital information, useful information, calls to action etc.	***	31/05/2015	Low	Visitor journey & wireframe completed
3.2	Review DLNF web presence and highlight key areas for improvement / amendment & key info to retain + identify areas with advertising potential.	***	31/05/2015	Low	Core list of improvements and retentions mapped out
3.3	Move "Enjoy" section of DLNF to a dedicated micro-site with dedicated URL (e.g. www.enjoydacorum.co.uk) landing page and user friendly template.	***	31/07/2015	Med	New micro site created
3.4	Re-work and expand content on new site to match visitor journey and to appeal to key audiences. Include SEO at this stage	***	31/07/2015	Med	New site populated and beta tested
3.5	Public launch and PR to raise awareness (coincide with web revamp)	***	31/07/2015	Med	4 media reports, support from 2 wider orgs
3.6	PPC (pay-per-click) campaigns aligned with other campaign activity and delivered periodically throughout the year	**	Ongoing	Low	2000 direct click-thrus
3.7	Work with destination groups to develop further microsites for Hemel, Tring and Berkhamsted as offshoots of main Dacorum website	**	31/03/2016	Med	3 dedicated microsites established
3.8	Launch B2C Twitter / Flickr / Youtube presence and link up clearly with website. Encourage partners to add images, video and contribute content for tweets.	**	31/08/2015	Low	3000 followers by Apr17 50% of content being sourced from partners
3.9	Seasonal B2C e-newsletters to contacts database (N.B. make efforts to increase signup wherever possible).	**	Quarterly from Q2 2015	Low	7 x B2C newsletters sent
3.10	Research and review Dacorum content on key 3rd party marketing channels (e.g. Visit Chilterns, VisitEngland, Days out with the kids, VirtualTourist, Enjoy Hertfordshire etc.). Offer new content and images etc. to improve with focus on experiences.	**	31/03/2016	Low	Dacorum presence & inbound links from 12 established referring websites
3.11	Continue to monitor 3rd party details, updating as needed and continuing to seek out new avenues to promote the destination	**	31/03/2017	Low	Further 20 websites with Dacorum presence & inbound links
3.12	Ongoing proactive PR activity (minimum 4 x releases per year) and contribution to blogs and articles	**	Quarterly from Q3 2015	Low	6 x seasonal PR releases 10 blog articles
3.13	Organising familiarisation trips for press and key influencers to Dacorum	**	Ongoing	Low	5 trips by end year 2

3.14	Re-print Dacorum map with new branding and distribute to all venues and key touch points within the destination (include redeemable code)	**	31/01/2016	Med	20% conversion rate (visits using code)
3.15	Print a simple, focussed publication for the destination to drive traffic to website and distribute to key target areas to generate awareness	*	31/01/2017	Med	2000 direct click-thrus
3.16	Research annual calendar of consumer travel shows and draw up priority list based on interest and audience types. Target very tightly and attend only those with best ROI potential	*	30/06/2015	Med	Attend 3 consumer shows per year
3.17	Develop a series of new (days out) itineraries for the destination, themed and directed to key audience groups. Engage destination groups to do the same locally. Showcase as pdfs online	***	31/01/2016	Low	10 Dacorum itineraries created
3.18	Investigate costs and potential to translate itinerary content to a dedicated mobile app (iOS & Android)	*	30/07/2016	High	Mobile app launched
3.19	Create dedicated marketing campaigns devoted to key markets (local & VFR, business, day visitors and specific groups). Each campaign to have own identity under Dacorum brand and tie in with other activity (e.g. local campaign & Dacorum event).	***	Ongoing	Med	7 campaigns delivered by end of year 2
3.20	Repeat assessment of external marketing	**	28/02/2016 28/02/2017	Low	Clear and consistent message across DBC channels

Pillar 4 - Optimising the Experience

Project	Description	Priority	Deadline	Cost	KPI
4.1	Audit current points of information provision - cover places, publications & organisations to assess current performance and highlight areas for improvement	***	31/08/2015	Low	Audit completed and priority areas identified
4.2	Create guidance and overall content resources (e.g. maps, images, brand elements and Calls to action) that can be common to all.	***	30/09/2015	Low	Guidance rolled out to destination groups & businesses
4.3	Work with destination groups and businesses to address issues and upgrade/plug gaps.	***	Ongoing	Low	20 info points upgraded across destination
4.4	Co-ordinate collation and exchange of publication and materials to ensure all info points showcase as wide a Dacorum offer as possible.	**	Ongoing	Low	30 info points showcasing minimum 5 other Dacorum businesses
4.5	Repeat mystery visit assessments in key destinations to assess information provision and offer support where needed to improve.	**	28/02/2016 28/02/2017	Low	Clear improvements in localised information provision
4.6	Commission yearly Volume & Value research	***	Ongoing	Med	3% increase in vol & val
4.7	Encourage all partners and stakeholders to contribute to occupancy and visitor number research	***	Ongoing	Low	50 businesses providing data
4.8	Undertake face-to-face visitor survey across the destination.	*	30/09/2016	Med	200+ sample visitor survey completed
4.9	Encourage all partners and stakeholder to collect and share visitor/customer origin and feedback data. Include providing standardised forms and short surveys	**	Ongoing	Low	Visitor feedback data collected from 30 partners

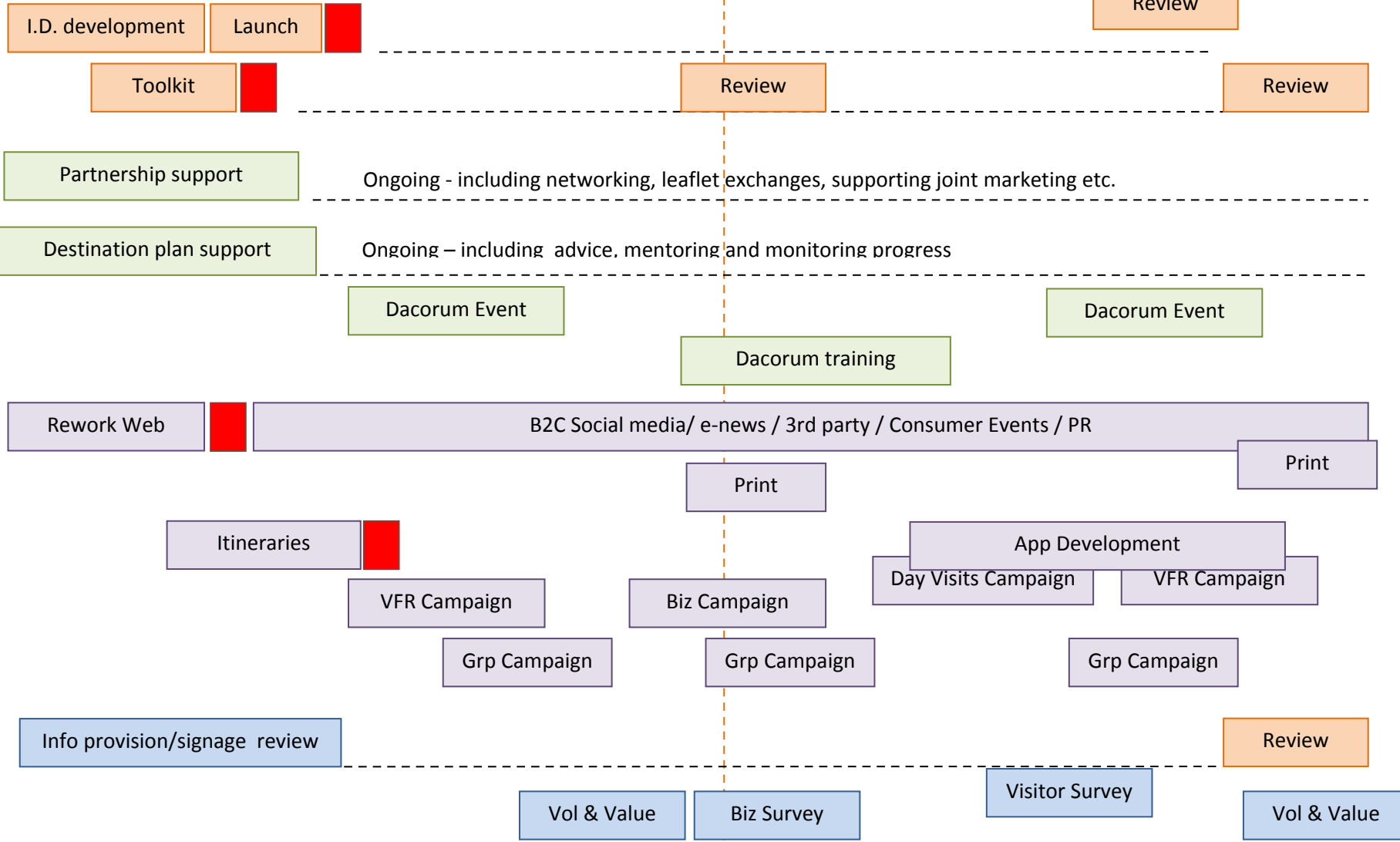
4.2 Timing Plan

Overleaf the key elements of the action plan are mapped out visually in order of delivery and colour coded by pillar.

A red box denotes a critical milestone that all other actions depend on.

Year 1

Year 2



5.0 Delivering the plan

This strategy represents a more focussed approach to tourism but does represent a challenging way forward given the limited resources and budget available initially for its delivery. Where possible the strategy aligns itself to current activity, ensuring it is simpler and easier to make happen however there is a need for; a solid management plan, drawing in resource and support from the wider industry and specifically generating a broad financial base to ensure the sustainability of the work the strategy embarks on.

5.1 Roles

Dacorum Borough Council

The lead management and delivery role for the strategy falls to Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) and specifically the tourism team. Tourism Officer Sue Lea will manage day-to-day delivery and be the key point of contact. Additional resources within Dacorum Borough Council will assist on specific tasks (e.g. Hemel Town Centre activities etc) where relevant.

The Tourism Partnership

The tourism partnership will work alongside DBC in delivering the strategy and provide support and input where required to enable delivery. More specifically the onus will be on the tourism partnership members to:

1. Deliver coordinated marketing opportunities with other members
2. Collect and report data
3. Provide content (images, copy etc.) for Dacorum marketing purposes
4. Use and promote the Dacorum brand and activities within their own marketing
5. Provide a clear backlink to the Dacorum website from their own (where possible)
6. Stock information on other businesses (where possible) and promote the wider offer
7. Work proactively with DBC to take key decisions on the development of the strategy

These will be set down in a member's charter to keep responsibilities clear.

The tourism partnership will meet formally twice per year but additional ad-hoc events may be developed if needed (leaflet exchanges, members fam trips etc).

Destination Groups

The strategy will facilitate the development of destination groups, initially within the key foci of Hemel, Berkhamsted and Tring (although further groups could be developed later for the more rural areas). These groups will be composed of local stakeholders (public, private and third sector) and may choose to meet formally or informally. Their remit will be to coordinate delivery of actions locally in support of the overall strategy thereby ensuring a more cohesive approach.

DBC officers will support both the tourism partnership and destination groups but will devolve certain actions and activities to these groups where relevant.

There may also be the need as the strategy develops to appoint specific working or task-and-finish groups to help achieve specific actions. These will be created as needed and will be composed of experts and influencers, however they will be short term in nature around the designated task. If longer term actions are required they will come under the purview of the Tourism Partnership.

5.2 Finance

The development of this strategy will be largely dependent on the budget available, dictating the scale of some of the actions or perhaps the order and timing of their delivery. Core funding is in place from DBC over the two years of the strategy (to end of 16/17 financial year) but is not guaranteed beyond that point. The council is committed to tourism but will need to see significant financial input from elsewhere to justify further investment beyond the life of this strategy.

At present DBC are committing £60,000 p.a. to the strategy with £40,000 p.a. covering the full time tourism officer post and leaving £20,000 p.a. as a budget for delivery. The strategy is designed to stretch this budget as far as it will go and maximise its impact but even so it is not enough to support all the aspirations.

In order to deliver the strategy therefore there is a need to not only supplement the working budget but also if possible reduce the council's proportion of the investment in delivery of a destination strategy by 2017. To that end the strategy will be pursuing a three tier business model to raise the required broad base of finance.

5.3 Membership

The core of the business model is simple base membership scheme. Here stakeholders gain access to specific benefits for a nominal fee that is implemented on a graduated scale based on business size (and potential resource). Membership will be charged on a yearly basis with renewals due at the end of the financial year (01st April).

Membership benefits

- Full use of the Dacorum brand - including access to the copy bank, image library and other tools and resources
- Inclusion on the destination website with an enhanced listing (priority page position or additional features over basic)
- Opportunity to have your special offers promoted on the destination website
- To receive a prominent presence in Dacorum marketing (e.g. editorial of B2C newsletters)
- Inclusion in DBC organised press and family trips
- Access to collated tourism research and intelligence useful to your business
- Provision of networking opportunities through the tourism partnership
- Priority access (first refusal) on any pay-to-play services purchased that year
- Inclusion as a member of the tourism partnership and opportunity to help shape how tourism develops in the destination

Membership should not be a static offer but should evolve and grow new benefits as time goes on, opportunities arise and needs change. However the focus needs to remain on high yield/low input elements and to reserve more specific, saleable opportunities for the pay-to-play services.

Example membership fees 2015/16

Type of Business	Annual Fee
Band 1	
Restaurants, pubs, individual shops	£75
Attractions up to 20,000 visitors per year	£75
Serviced Accommodation with up to 5 bedrooms	£75
Self Catering accommodation with up to 2 units	£75
Campsites with up to 50 pitches	£75
Activity providers with up to 3 employees	£75
Band 2	
Attractions between 20 - 50,000 visitors per year	£140
Serviced Accommodation with 6 - 20 bedrooms	£140
Self Catering accommodation with between 3 and 5 units	£140
Campsites with over 50 pitches	£140
Activity providers with between 4-10 employees	£140
Band 3	
Attractions between 50 - 100,000 visitors per year	£205
Serviced Accommodation with 21 - 50 bedrooms	£205
Self Catering accommodation with over 6 units	£205
Activity providers with more than 10 employees	£205
Band 4	
Attractions over 100,000 visitors per year +	£345
Serviced Accommodation with over 50 rooms	£345
Self catering accommodation with over 20 units	£345
Large group businesses or national chains	£345

In-kind contributions

Whilst financial contributions are standard to access membership, the strategy does appreciate that some prospective members may not be in position to contribute financially by virtue of their structure or resources. Therefore any registered charities, other non-profit making entities or those with restrictions in their governing articles may instead contribute in-kind time or other resources in place of the membership fee. In kind contributions will need to cover the equivalent value and be calculated as follows:

Nature of contribution	Value
Donation of goods	Purchase value of goods
Unskilled labour (e.g. distribution of leaflets etc.)	£50 / day
Skilled labour (e.g. content creation, photography etc.)	£100 / day
Professional services (e.g. design, legal advice etc.)	Value of services

These value ratings are based on those set out by the National Lottery for ascertaining in-kind contributions so represent a fair and even playing field.

Year 1 investment

During the first some (if not many) of the member benefits will not be up and running or not ready to be implemented in their fully functioning form. Therefore for year 1 the onus is on encouraging stakeholders to "invest" in the direction and outcomes of the strategy (in essence paralleling the commitment of DBC) and ensuring we have a surplus up front to deliver with and then access to membership benefits as they develop.

Therefore in year 1 the model is essentially the same but is sold and promoted differently so expectations are managed in advance and equally so that the strategy is not hamstrung but lack of funds in the early stages.

Membership incentives

Further incentives are recommended to incentivise membership, these could include:

- 10% early bird discount for those renewing more than 1 month before renewal cut-off
- 10% discount for referring another member and then a further 2% per additional member referred (to maximum of 20% discount)
- Ability to purchase a multiple year membership at this year's rate

5.4 Pay-to play opportunities

Beyond basic membership fees, we can also offer specific marketing opportunities based on dedicated campaigns and promotions undertaken throughout the year.

All pay to play offers are opportunities and developments specifically negotiated by DBC through partners and offer opportunities for businesses to gain reach and access to audiences they would otherwise struggle to do so alone.

Importantly pay to play services are open to members and non-members alike (although paid up members have preferential access).

Examples of pay-to-play services could include:

- Participation in marketing campaigns
- Advertising in Dacorum print publications
- Attendance at consumer & trade events facilitated by DBC, both as a stand share but also with the option of distribution of literature and data capture from consumers/leads in attendance.
- Prime advertising space on Dacorum website
- Promotion of special offers / advertising in B2C e-newsletter

Pricing Policy

Fees will vary dependent on cost of opportunity and likelihood of sign-up, but at all times DBC should aim to maintain a margin of at minimum 12% over actual outlay and running costs.

A selection of main opportunities will be mapped on an annual basis and standardised rates published. These can then be topped up and added to with other opportunities as they arise. However based on the strategy the following opportunity costs could apply:

Opportunity	Unit Detail	Unit Cost
Website Homepage Banner	Monthly	£ 250.00
	Link to own website (supplement)	£ 50.00
Website Key Landing page Banner (x4)	Monthly	£ 167.00
	Link to own website (supplement)	£ 33.00
Website Sidebar Advertising spot (x3)	Primary monthly	£ 125.00
	Secondary monthly	£ 95.00
	Tertiary monthly	£ 75.00
	Link to own website (supplement)	£ 25.00
B2B Newsletter Advertising spot (x6)	Per issue (Quarterly)	£ 100.00
B2C E-newsletter Advertising spot (x6)	Per issue (Quarterly)	£ 250.00
Dacorum Map Advert (x12)	Per printing	£ 500.00*
Trade Shows	Stand share (small show) - 2 spaces	£ 750.00*
	Stand share (large show) - 3 spaces	£ 1,250.00*
	Literature display (small show) - 10 spaces	£ 175.00*
	Literature display (large show) - 15 spaces	£ 250.00*
Campaign inclusion	Featured - 10 slots per campaign	£ 350.00*
	"Hero" focus - 2 slots per campaign	£ 600.00*

* Estimated but should be cost + 12% minimum

Sourcing external funding

Specific funding from external sources should be proactively sought to deliver specific actions and projects. The nature of the funders and value will differ but invariably funders will be looking for cooperation in projects with numerous beneficiaries and long term benefits and applications. Funding could be sourced from:

- 2015-2020 Chilterns Leader programme
- Hertfordshire LEP
- Lottery funds
- Potential EU funded projects with partners (Interegg is currently open for application to the new programmes)

This funding could be channelled towards specific areas of activity in the strategy e.g.

- Dacorum training course development
- Itinerary / App development
- Commissioning research

5.5 Financial Targets

The table below summarises the financial targets for this strategy on a year by year basis

	Yr 1		Yr 2		Yr 3 (projected)	
	Target no's	Value	Target no's	Value	Target no's	Value
Investors	55	£8,780	0	0	0	0
Membership	0	0	90	£13,331	1220	£17,353
Pay to play services	77	£13,055	148	£35,945	208	£45,950
External Funding	n/a	0	n/a	£3,500	n/a	5,000
Sub-total	n/a	£25,335	n/a	£52,776	n/a	£68,303
DBC investment	n/a	£60,000	n/a	£60,000	n/a	£30,000
Total funds	n/a	£85,335	n/a	£102,776	n/a	£98,303

Breakdown of how these were arrived at is included in the modelling spreadsheets in appendix 3

5.6 Actions to manage and deliver

The actions in the following table represent the key steps and stages Dacorum Borough Council and its tourism team will need to undertake to ensure delivery of the plan over and above the integral actions associated with the plan itself.

Project	Description	Priority	Deadline	Cost	KPI
5.1	Officially publish and share strategy with tourism partnership and stakeholders within Dacorum	***	15/05/2015	Low	Strategy published
5.2	Coordinate implementation of the Plan and assist partner organisations and businesses to fulfil their actions	***	Ongoing	Low	Plan objectives achieved
5.3	Engage Visit England, Tourism Alliance and other wider bodies to secure their support and assistance for the Plan, and to raise awareness of Dacorum as a credible destination.	**	31/03/2016	Low	Recognised by VE as official DMO for Dacorum
5.4	Monitor progress on delivery of the plan including annual review after year 1 and final review end of year 2.	***	15/03/2016 & 15/03/2017	Low	Plan adjusted after midpoint monitoring & final results incorporated into follow-on DMP
5.5	Hold discussions with potential funding bodies (LEP, Leader, HCC, lottery etc) to identify potential elements within the plan that could attract funding and % level.	***	30/06/2015	Low	Advice sought from potential funders
5.6	Launch year 1 investor proposal to stakeholders	***	31/05/2015	Low	Proposal launched
5.7	Launch year 1 advertising rate card	***	30/06/2015	Low	Rate card launched
5.8	Launch year 2 membership package	***	31/01/2016	Low	Membership launched
5.9	Membership renewal reminders	***	01/02/2016	Low	80% retention of members
5.10	Year 2 advertising rate card	***	30/04/2016	Low	Rate card launched
5.11	Begin developing a full Destination Management Plan (DMP) to take the destination forward	***	28/02/2017	Med	DMP commenced