



Destination Management Plan 2013-2017 Action Plan



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Contents

1.	Promoting Hertfordshire.....	3
2.	Having the right product.....	7
3.	Creating the experience.....	10
4.	Managing tourism in Hertfordshire	13
5.	Summary of action points	20
	Appendix I: Target markets	23
	Appendix II: The Net Promoter Score	26

This Destination Action Plan is accompanied by:

- The DMP Evidence Base and
- The DMP Strategy 2013-2017

1. Promoting Hertfordshire

Strategic objective 1: To raise the profile and attract more visitors to Hertfordshire

The potential market needs to be made aware of what is on offer and be provided with reasons to visit Hertfordshire. Raising profile and awareness is key to attracting people to visit and stay in the area.

The main drivers to the county are the towns and tourism facilities within it. These individual destinations must take responsibility for their own promotion but they can benefit from co-ordination and collaboration with Hertfordshire-wide initiatives.

AP 1.1: Promote individual Hertfordshire destinations

Hertfordshire is a collection of local destinations that generally have a higher and/or stronger profile than that of the county i.e. the individual towns (notably St Albans, Hertford, Hitchin, the Garden Cities etc.) and rural areas (notably the Chilterns and Lee Valley). Each destination should therefore prepare its own marketing plan working with its local stakeholders. This should involve the following tasks, as appropriate:

- Development of a brand
- Definition of appropriate target markets (see Appendix)
- Development of media relations and online marketing strategies
- Development of local campaigns including a local residents and VFR campaign
- Packaging of weekend breaks including local leisure activities (sports events, heritage etc), retailing and accommodation
- Consideration of appropriate print items
- Data gathering and monitoring

This is particularly important for the retail, catering, cultural and entertainment sectors within towns that are seeking to capture footfall from outside their normal catchment. This requires collaboration and coordination through the District Council, a local Chamber, BID or other local organisation.

AP 1.2: Develop a Hertfordshire brand

Herts is not yet a clear destination brand but the county has a number of distinct, positive brand values that warrant exploitation and can be used to reinforce the promotion of local destination brands and provide an umbrella for a range of potential thematic campaigns and individual attractions that lack their own identity and would benefit from promotion at a county level. To realise this, there is a need to:

- Research an appropriate brand (talking to consumers and local stakeholders), clarifying the brand values and noting any overlap with economic development branding initiatives. This should include evaluation of the existing Enjoy! brand.
- Produce guidance for all users (destinations and individual enterprises) on the key messages i.e. the local brand values for tourism promotion in Herts. This 'toolkit' should provide tactical tools to convey these brand values including tone of voice, imagery and colour palettes. It should make recommendations about the type of PR stories that will align with the brand.

AP 1.3: Prepare a destination marketing plan for Hertfordshire

Stakeholders need to agree priorities and a programme of action that can most beneficially be undertaken at county level, that meets partner needs i.e. complements what they are doing at destination level, and is within available resources. Relevant tasks are likely to include:

- **Agree target markets for county level marketing activities.** The four primary markets are:
 - Business tourism¹
 - (Themed) short breaks²
 - VFR and social tourism
 - Day trips

Additional niche leisure markets include:

- Walking and cycling
 - Golf
 - Boating
 - Culture
 - Entertainment (including night-time economy)
 - Film heritage
 - Planning heritage
- **Identify and agree relevant thematic campaigns.** These campaigns could vary from simple enhancement of information on the Enjoy! website to working with selected parties to create and promote special packages through a range of media.

There are opportunities to work with other agencies such as:

- Herts Economic Development Officers Group and LEP on business tourism campaigns
- Chilterns AONB, Lea Valley Regional Park, Herts CMS and the Canal & River Trust on countryside campaigns.
- Herts Cultural Officers and Arts Partnership on cultural campaigns.
- District Councils and Visit England on film tourism.
- Herts County Golf Partnership on golf tourism.

Operators should be encouraged to develop unusual or eye-catching new product relating relevant themes to the target markets.

Networking events and familiarisation trips are useful tools for identifying opportunities and establishing links for packaging and campaigns. A tourism handbook or directory should be made available online, listing all local tourism providers and what they can offer.

Having decided on the target markets and campaign priorities, a delivery plan should be prepared. This should include:

- Build a portfolio of county-wide market research. Good destination management and marketing requires good data. Some of this research will be

¹ Including conferences, meetings, incentives – and notably – inbound business delegations, working with the inward investment team

² Focusing on retail, events, heritage, culture and outdoor activity

relevant to specific campaigns and some will be required for monitoring performance. The first task is to marshal all the market research data and documentation already available (public and private) across Hertfordshire³. The next step is to fill identified gaps e.g. visitor profile information, business performance, by commissioning new or adapting existing surveys undertaken by partners.

- Prepare a media relations strategy linked where appropriate to the selected campaigns. Tasks will include:
 - Ensure that tourism PR activity is coordinated with a system for stakeholders to deliver news stories to the Tourism Officer for dissemination to the media, including Visit England.
 - Facilitate fam. trips for journalists, guide book publishers, tour and group travel operators and related agencies, working with VisitEngland and others.
 - Collect high quality images and video with a system for image management and distribution. The brand toolkit should provide guidance on the types and subjects of images to be sourced/ commissioned.⁴

- Develop an online marketing strategy appropriate to the selected tasks. The Enjoy! Hertfordshire website is a good start. There are, however, some issues with regard to the website:
 - The product database that drives the website needs updating.
 - A lack of images for individual attractions, accommodation providers and events means that many web-pages display the 'image not found' icon.
 - It is not made clear to users whether online reservation or booking of accommodation is possible via the website.
 - There are some anomalies in the website's functionality which mean that listings which give the impression of being comprehensive (e.g. Treasure Houses & Museums) actually misses certain attractions.

Research shows that visitors to destination sites have generally made the decision to visit and are coming to a destination website for accommodation and/or trip planning. As a consequence it is important that Hertfordshire raises its profile and gets content in front of people as and when they are making the decision on where to go. This process, sometimes called 'seeding content', should have priority in online tourism marketing. Strategies that should be adopted to maximise seeding opportunities are:

- Provide operators with widgets and modules that enable them to display content on their own websites e.g. events listings, activity operators, destination news etc.
- Ensure liaison with bloggers continues to be part of media relation plans, encouraging people to tag and share images of the county for all media.

Establishing a dialogue about Hertfordshire as a destination will engender more of a sense of engagement amongst current and potential visitor markets.

³ It may be appropriate to use a package like T-stats to marshal all research information. See <http://www.t-stats.co.uk/>

⁴ 'Images of England' is a new picture library showcasing the best of England's diverse offering. The vast majority of images can be used for any purpose for free and more on-brand images will be added to grow the collection over time. Destinations and national partners have the opportunity to create their own branded portal within the library to support their marketing and PR campaigns.

Attention must be paid to the systems by which customer details are acquired (e.g. perhaps separating brochure request from e-mail sign up procedures on the website) as well as via ongoing campaigns. Targeted campaigns aimed at this database will be important.

- Review the range of printed material required to support these initiatives, and its distribution. Research suggests that printed information is still valued and used by visitors whilst in a destination but only a small minority use it when deciding where to go on a holiday or short break. Given the resources committed to print at present, it is critical that existing print is carefully evaluated against clear objectives and regularly monitored. This is not done at present.

AP 1.4: Develop and coordinate events

Events are both products - supplementing the draw of the area's permanent attractions - and promotional tools for a destination. They represent an opportunity to target and attract additional visitors and related expenditure. An increasing number of destinations are staging events and festivals and some are now defined by association e.g. Carnival in Rio, the Beer Festival in Munich and, closer to home, Knebworth and rock concerts are virtually synonymous.

Although benefits are hard to measure, successful events can:

- Provide something new and/or special to do in the destination, attracting visitors who may not otherwise have chosen to visit the area. Once in the area, there is a good chance to convince them to return.
- Attract visitors and expenditure at different times of the year, helping to make the destination an all year attraction.
- Enhance the image and raise the profile of an area as a place to visit, invest, live and work in.
- Help change perceptions e.g. Skate in Eastbourne and Wight Air are specifically designed to portray a youthful image for destinations traditionally associated with older visitors.
- Generate civic pride and pleasure and encourage community involvement. There can be significant social benefits.
- Showcase an area's cultural heritage and provide opportunities for artists and athletes to display their talents.
- Create employment and encourage new skills in a range of services down the local supply chain.

The development and organisation of events is the responsibility of local destination managers (local authorities, BIDs and other public agencies), individual operators and the voluntary sector. These parties should be encouraged to develop new and existing events to reap the benefits identified above.

At a strategic i.e. Hertfordshire level, there is a need to coordinate events and marshal information to maximise their potential impact. The priorities are:

- To gather comprehensive information on all events in Hertfordshire for presentation on the Enjoy! Herts website, coordinated with District websites.
- To coordinate the calendar of events, seeking to avoid clashes and fill gaps.
- To disseminate a local weekly 'Whats On' newsletter to the industry, giving operators an up-to-date listing of events tailored to their location.

2. Having the right product

Strategic objective 2: To develop the product; invest in quality

Whilst raising awareness of what the area has to offer is important, if the product doesn't meet expectations then visitors will be disappointed and unlikely to return. The priorities for action are:

- To encourage the right mix and quality of visitor accommodation to allow the staying market to grow.
- To support the upgrading of existing visitor attractions and activities and development of appropriate new enterprises.
- To support the performance of local businesses through the development of skills and human resources.

This section identifies the priorities for improving tourism facilities and services, which are mainly the responsibility of the private sector.

AP 2.1: Enhance the accommodation stock

In order to grow the staying visitor market, there is a need to support the development of new accommodation - where there is identified demand. Complementary to this initiative, a pro-active approach should be taken to qualitative improvement of the existing serviced accommodation stock.

Subject to market research, priority should be given to:

- High quality hotel developments with ancillary amenities to encourage more business and social tourism.
- Additional rooms attached to pubs and restaurants and B&Bs in private homes i.e. boutique hotels in rural and urban areas.
- Caravan sites for touring vans and motor homes and other new forms of small scale self-catering development such as 'glamping' to satisfy the demand for such facilities close to London.
- The letting of second homes and use of redundant farm buildings for holiday cottages.

This action point will require clear supportive planning policy from local authorities.

AP 2.2: Enhance the local attraction offer

Hertfordshire has a small number of large attractions (provided by the private sector) and many small ones (provided largely by the public and voluntary sectors). New attractions are hard to fund and establish in the current climate but, where appropriate, should be encouraged to help raise the profile of the county.

Even more important is the need to constantly improve the quality of existing attractions in order to compete more effectively and provide the best quality experience. Development that enhances the quality, of the offer should be supported.

This action point will require clear supportive planning policy from local authorities.

AP 2.3: Improve business performance

There is a need to encourage both staff and management of tourism related facilities to constantly enhance skills in order to compete more effectively and provide a good quality experience for visitors. There are two key tasks:

- Encourage all those who come into contact with visitors - not just those in tourism facilities - to consider their approach to customer care and welcome. A priority is to raise product awareness of what exists both within and around Hertfordshire so that everyone can act as an informed and enthusiastic ambassador for the area.

Employers can and do deliver customer service training in-house but short, external customer service training programmes should be promoted locally e.g. Welcome Host Gold, Welcome International. Partners should help clarify demand for such training and the specific needs of employers, and link with an appropriate provider to deliver suitable programmes.

Supplementary actions could involve preparation of a tourism handbook for Hertfordshire, an internal newsletter and networking meetings to raise awareness of what Hertfordshire has to offer.

- The second aim is raise awareness of tourism management and skills training opportunities. As elsewhere, the key issue is communication with, and persuasion of, operators to take up the challenge. Stakeholders should help identify local training needs, in conjunction with economic development initiatives, alongside an awareness campaign to encourage operators to undertake management development and boost demand for staff training amongst operators.

AP 2.4: Encourage new business starts

More people could be encouraged to become actively involved in tourism. For some this might be a lifestyle choice but for others it could be a business career opportunity e.g. establishing a B&B or creating a business out of an activity interest. Support and advice should be provided to help people pursue these ambitions. Related initiatives should include:

- Development workshops for existing and aspiring local B&Bs, pub accommodation and other facilities focusing on good practice in the development and operation of visitor accommodation.
- Sense of Place workshops including use of local produce⁵.
- Marshaling information on available business support assistance.
- Training needs appraisals and signposting to suppliers.
- Promotion of national quality assurance schemes.
- Networking opportunities.

AP 2.5: Encourage the young and unemployed to choose tourism careers

There is a need to improve the image of the industry as an employer and to ensure that young people participating in 14-19 education have access to tourism-related

⁵ Hertfordshire has a range of local producers but the promotion of local produce is low key. This is a missed opportunity. Much the same applies to local arts and crafts.

programmes, particularly hospitality courses. It will be important to continue to build upon other activities that provide information on, and encourage enthusiasm for, tourism careers.

There is an important role here for the industry and the education sector to promote career opportunities in schools by talking to students, focusing on the breadth of what they would learn and how they could apply it, organising open days in educational institutions and giving them the chance to get first-hand experience through work experience and placements. This is an initiative that should be explored with the industry, education establishments and other interested parties⁶.

Working with the unemployed

Tourism South East, in collaboration with Job Centre Plus and Isle of Wight College, delivered a pilot project in 2012, delivering Customer Service training for people who are unemployed and looking to work in the tourism industry. The aim of the pilot was to give candidates two days training, focusing on a particular part of the industry, with those attending receiving a Welcome to the Isle of Wight (Welcome Host Gold) certificate and City and Guilds Level 2 Customer Service Award. Candidates attended for 5 days in total, and also received a First Aid at Work certificate.

The Needles Park took part in the initiative. The Training Coordinator Naomi Søndergaard interviewed all 6 of the course attendees and was so impressed with the high calibre of interviewee that the Needles Park offered seasonal work to all 6 candidates. Gavin Pullman, Catering Manager comments *'It was refreshing to interview people who were enthusiastic about the prospect of working in catering. Each candidate has brought a different skill set to the job and they have all been happy to learn all aspects of catering. Naomi played a key role in assessing candidates' suitability for our park'*

The Isle of Wight College Contracts co-ordinator Cath Love commented *'The College in Partnership with Job Centre Plus has been designing and delivering training packages for the unemployed across the Island. The College were very keen to work with TSE and the Needles and we are delighted at the success of this project'*.

⁶ This includes People First, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service and Working Herts, an agency that assists people who are not in employment, education or training to realise their opportunities for employment.

3. Creating the experience

Strategic objective 3: To develop the tourism infrastructure; provide an outstanding experience

The primary requirement for any destination is to create an accessible, attractive and safe place to visit. The more attractive the destination, the greater the draw and the easier it is to attract visitors. Quality of experience is also the most effective promotional tool for subsequent visits.

There is a need to ensure that the infrastructure is in place, catering for the needs of visitors and maximising the tourism potential of the area. This is about strengthening the experience on the ground and providing the right environment to support a thriving tourism sector. The priorities are to:

- Invest in the quality of the urban areas
- Enhance access to the countryside
- Develop the transport and other tourism infrastructure

These initiatives are largely the responsibility of the public sector.

AP 3.1: Invest in the settlements

Many of the towns in Hertfordshire are in the process of finding a new purpose and direction in the light of strategic changes to retail in the High Street⁷. For most settlements, if not all, tourism has a significant role to play as towns seek to draw in footfall from beyond their normal catchment area to support retail and other functions.

A new focus on tourism should be seen as a broadening of existing town centre initiatives, rather than a new, additional responsibility i.e.:

- Enhancing accessibility with better public transport facilities, park and ride etc.
- Improving gateways and communication routes i.e. street cleaning and decoration.
- Enhancing the public realm, drawing on any inherent resources such as interesting architecture, heritage buildings, parks and open spaces, water features etc.
- Encouraging private property maintenance and decoration.
- Encouraging the development of visitor accommodation including B&B, pub rooms, self-catering, caravan sites and attractions where appropriate.
- Providing convenient access to toilets, particularly on arrival, including private/community provision.
- Improving security by managing the night-time economy and reducing crime.
- Reviewing signage and information around the town centre to ensure that visitors are made welcome and can easily find their way around.
- Offering a calendar of events and street activities.
- Supporting independent, specialist retailers including local markets.
- Supporting local cultural facilities, museums, theatres, galleries, cinema, stadia.
- Supporting local entertainment; restaurants and bars, clubs, commercial leisure.

⁷ This initiative builds on the Herts 'Vibrant Towns' initiative and the Shop Herts/Shop Local campaign but giving emphasis to tourism.

- Interpreting the local story e.g. guided walks and access to other information⁸.
- Walking and cycling trails within and around the settlement.

In order to draw in more ‘tourists’, greater emphasis should be placed on targeted marketing i.e. extending initiatives to a wider audience, geographically and thematically, including more packaging of the leisure offer (local accommodation and attractions such as heritage sites, cultural events, galleries, leisure parks, gardens, boat trips etc). This extends the appeal by offering something else to do, extending the visit or offering an alternative activity to shopping e.g. for a partner.

The overall goal should be to find a special niche and/or distinctive feature(s) for each settlement.

The Portas Review⁹ points out the need to ‘re-imagine’ high streets as destinations for socialising, culture, health, wellbeing, creativity and learning, not just selling goods. They should be akin to the best modern shopping malls i.e. 21st century urban entertainment centres, bringing together eating out, leisure and culture. The mix in High Streets should include shops but could also include housing, offices, sport, social, cultural enterprises and meeting places. The review seeks to breathe economic and community life back into high streets and town centres. *“I want to see all our high streets bustling with people, services and jobs. They should be vibrant places that people choose to visit. They should be destinations.”* Every town should have a clear vision of where it wants to get to with coordinated planning and management. This should include marketing to those outside the normal catchment area i.e. tourism.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) e.g. Hitchin and Royston have very similar aims and objectives to those expressed in the Portas Review and the resources they command enable targeted implementation, albeit in relatively confined areas. This approach is, and should be, encouraged in other settlements¹⁰.

Quality should be the watchword using benchmarks such as the criteria necessary for Purple or Green Flag status.

At a more local level, all Community Councils should be encouraged to undertake local audits, surveys and consultations to identify areas, facilities, services and themes of interest to visitors and to draw up plans for improvement (public realm, private property), local circular walks, information, interpretation and promotion. There is often the need for assistance in getting started; setting goals, deciding priorities, stimulating ideas, looking for sources of funding etc. This should be done in the context of a wider community regeneration project but with a tourism focus, based on some or all of the criteria referred to above, as appropriate.

AP 3.2: Invest in the countryside

Hertfordshire has a number of attractive countryside access sites. These facilities, managed in large part by the public sector, attract large numbers of visitors and residents and their on-going maintenance and enhancement is critical to the attractiveness of the county¹¹.

⁸ Local Heritage groups should be encouraged to undertake an audit and identify gaps in interpretation.

⁹ The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets, Mary Portas, 2011

¹⁰ Consideration is being given to BID applications in Watford, St Albans, Bishops Stortford.

¹¹ *“Hertfordshire’s rights of way network is used by residents, but also visitors and tourists from the surrounding counties and even overseas visitors”* (RoW Improvement Plan).

As with residents, visitors are looking for a clear network of attractive, well-maintained, signed, safe routes including local routes out from, around, and between settlements and the opportunity to access the longer distance regional trails supported by appropriate information and good interpretation, including guided trips, that adds value to the visitor who is unfamiliar with the area.

This initiative is all about support for the on-going work of the Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) rights-of-way team, the Countryside Management Service and local initiatives that seek to enhance the network of recreational trails (walking, cycling and riding) and access to it for visitors as well as residents.

For those who need to drive to explore the countryside by car, there could be a network of leisure drives supported by appropriate information linking viewpoints, attractions and settlements.

AP 3.3: Enhance the public transport network for visitors

Most visitors arrive by car in Hertfordshire. However, a significant proportion arrives by train and some would prefer not to use their car once arrived. For these visitors, a good local public transport service is critical to their overall experience, particularly those who may want to use a service as part of their experience, linking with a walk or cycle ride.

Although the local public transport network is relatively good, there is a need to include tourism in local transport plans and community schemes. Tourism is a minority market on the public transport network in Hertfordshire but visitors do provide valuable additional revenues and can help sustain local services.

Most public transport improvements will benefit visitors as well as residents but, for visitors, there is a particular need to:

- Ensure that promotion of public transport is targeted at visitors both pre-arrival and once they are in destination.
- Promote the walking and cycling opportunities linked to public transport.
- Develop a 'green guide' to Hertfordshire (in print and on the web) which highlights and promotes access by cycling, walking and public transport to local attractions as part of the 'Active Travel' initiative.
- Improve bus and rail infrastructure, notably bus shelters and rail stations and associated information/ timetables along with interchange facilities.

AP 3.4: Implement a tourist information strategy

Information delivery plays an important role in moving visitors around the destination and making sure they are aware of everything that is on offer.

Information within destinations is the responsibility of local destinations but the provision of tourist information should be reviewed across Hertfordshire, to highlight gaps and/or look for opportunities for improvement e.g.:

- Mobile media and related websites
- In-destination print information
- TIPs in attractions/shops and accommodation centres
- Use of libraries
- Signposting and information panels

4. Managing tourism in Hertfordshire

Strategic objective 4: To establish the appropriate infrastructure for effective destination management

A successful tourism destination is one where a range of different stakeholders and businesses come together to deliver a consistently good experience for the visitor. This, in turn, relies on tourism being embraced by all sectors as a positive contribution to communal objectives. This aspiration can be hard to achieve because of the number and diversity of parties that are involved:

- The private sector is responsible for the development, management and marketing of individual facilities.
- The District (Parish and Town) Councils are responsible for physical destination development and management on the ground.
- HCC manages transport, the countryside and rights-of-way.
- The LEP has responsibility for economic development and employment.
- The education sector develops skills.
- The voluntary sector contributes resources to the running of many local facilities.
- Other agencies such as Lee Valley Regional Park, Chilterns AONB, Visit England etc also service tourism within the county.

Destination management is about harnessing the energies, resources and expertise of all stakeholders and getting them to commit to the Plan and pull in the same direction. Without this in place, progress is likely to be slow and disjointed.

The priority is to establish the right organisational structures, to gain effective co-ordination and collaboration between the sectors and a clear understanding of respective roles and responsibilities in order to deliver the DMP.

Organisational change is timely given the changing positions and circumstances of many of the players. In particular, the growing interest of some district councils in the visitor economy and the current concern expressed by HCC about its unilateral financial support for tourism in the county.

AP 4.1: Establish Local Destination Management Boards

The 10 District Councils in Hertfordshire take different approaches to tourism but each authority is involved in activities which involve or have a bearing on the visitor economy.

It is recommended that each authority creates an internal Destination Management Board comprising senior representatives from those departments involved in cross-cutting tourism activities e.g.:

- Regeneration/economic development
- Countryside
- Transport, highways, signposting and public realm
- Planning and licensing
- Leisure, arts, cultural services
- Communications

Such a Board may well exist for other purposes but, notwithstanding, each district council should be encouraged to review tourism in their area, prepare their own DMP

or similar plan, be represented at county level, get involved in the individual initiatives as appropriate and allocate responsibility for visitor economy issues to a department through their Destination Management Board.

Their main purpose should be to encourage greater co-ordination of in-house tourism related work and, crucially, to help make sure that tourism is on the agenda throughout each Council. NB: An awareness of the cross-cutting nature of many services (e.g. toilets, leisure centres, museums) can also help support those services for the benefit of residents.

AP 4.2: Create a new tourism partnership for Hertfordshire

There is no formally prescribed model for partnership working in destinations within or between the sectors. Different arrangements are being made in different areas and each local situation requires a tailored solution. However, the professional consensus is that a pro-active partnership approach involving the private sector, the local authorities and other public agencies is important. The model must be flexible and adapt as experience dictates.

In order to facilitate this dialogue and collaboration between the private and public sectors, it is recommended that a new informal partnership – Herts Tourism Partnership (HTP) - is established between the public and private sectors. This partnership should also include the education sector and other ‘associate’ stakeholders e.g. VisitEngland and community representatives who could be invited to attend as required.

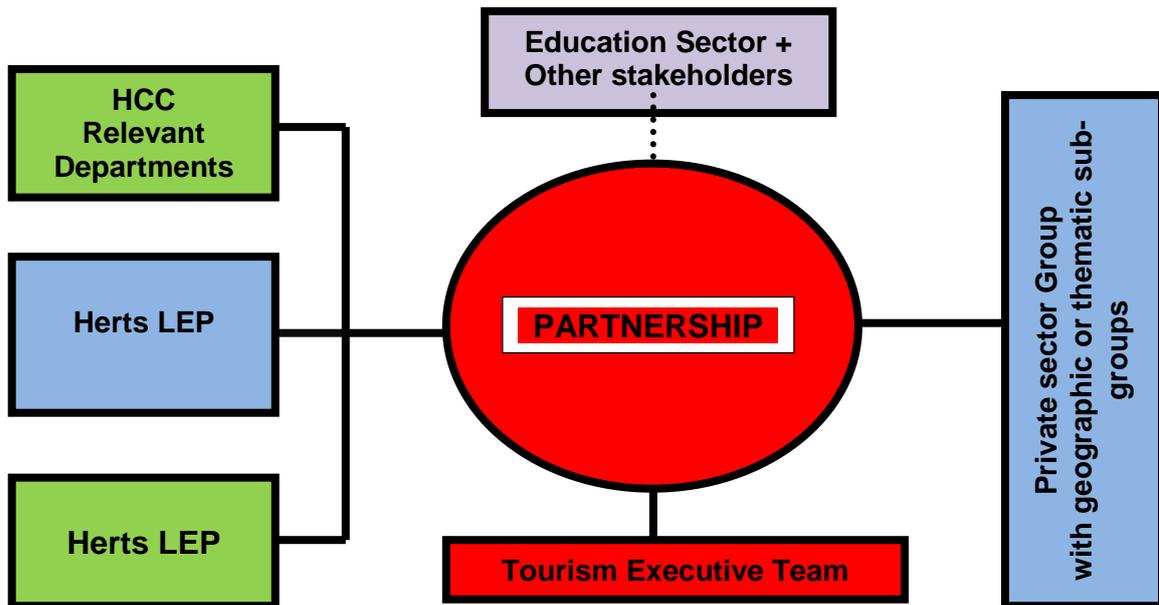
The HTP should play a key role in setting priorities, planning activity, tackling issues and co-ordinating action i.e. taking the lead on implementing the DMP. The structure, constitution, membership and objectives of the Partnership should be down to constituent members to decide. It is recommended that a simple MoU is drawn up with terms of reference and lines of communication.

The model we suggest is for the HTP to include representatives from the LEP, relevant HCC departments and the individual district councils.

- The LEP
- Relevant HCC departments
- District Councils

Private sector representatives could be drawn from existing HTLP members or any new private sector group that is established (see below).

Fig 4.1: Tourism structure for Hertfordshire



The Partnership should meet quarterly and at other times as required, although it is anticipated that there will be a regular informal dialogue between members. It is recommended that the meetings cover the headline areas of this DMP Delivery Plan¹².

The Partnership should develop appropriate communication protocols for reporting to local communities and other stakeholders.

AP 4.3: Establish a new private sector visitor economy group for Hertfordshire

There is a need for a representative body for the private sector in Hertfordshire to press the interests of the visitor economy sector, to promote better communication within the sector and develop private sector initiatives. The Chamber of Commerce and/or the Hertfordshire Hoteliers Association should be encouraged to review the current position and take the lead in the establishment of a new, wider, more proactive group, expanding their current roles.

The structure, constitution, membership criteria, fees and objectives of the Group should be reviewed by members. It is recommended that the group creates/ elects a representative steering group to act on their behalf. This might emerge from a county-wide forum for all visitor economy businesses in Hertfordshire, an event which could become an annual feature. Subject to numbers, there may be a case for geographic or thematic sub groups.

The new Group should take on limited responsibilities in the short-term, to allow it to evolve in a sustainable way. It is crucial that the group does not take on too much too early. The priorities should be to:

¹² It is common practice for such partnership meetings to be chaired by someone from the private sector.

- Attract membership across all sectors throughout Hertfordshire through B2B promotion.
- Provide a networking opportunity for members through meetings and other means, and the opportunity to collaborate on shared opportunities and best practice.
- Provide a formal two-way conduit between the private sector and public sector stakeholders as part of the destination management planning process.
- Deliver content to those involved in destination marketing.
- Use membership funds to resource the Group and contribute to destination marketing corporately and through the activities of individual members.
- Evaluate its activities.

The Group should pro-actively communicate with, and seek to represent, the tourism sector in Herts as a whole, not just its members. Clearly, it has a vested interest in such engagement as it will want to attract more members. We see an important collaborative role for the local education sector within the Group.

Experience from elsewhere suggests that a successful private sector group will need a facilitator to:

- Provide a secretariat and contact point and maintain industry contacts.
- Promote membership and communicate with members.
- Organise an annual forum for the sector plus ad hoc B2B events etc.

Other functions may evolve over time, subject to identified needs and resources e.g.:

- Defining training priorities and supporting the delivery of effective solutions
- Career promotion in schools
- Creation of niche marketing campaigns
- Annual awards
- Research activities

AP 4.4: Establish a tourism executive team

There are a number of activities identified in this DMP Action Plan that will best be delivered, or facilitated, at a county level i.e.:

- The Hertfordshire destination brand (AP1.2)
- Strategic marketing initiatives i.e. thematic campaigns, market research, media strategy, online marketing (website, social media), print (AP1.3)
- Promotion of events (AP1.4)
- Training initiatives (AP2.3) and business development (AP2.4)
- Promotion of tourism as a career (AP2.5)
- Tourist information (AP3.4)
- Servicing the partnership (AP4.2)
- Monitoring (AP4.5)

These activities along with more general coordination and advocacy will require some form of executive, adequately resourced to deliver them. Resources should include:

- A staff complement that includes a part-time strategic director, a tourism manager with good communication and implementation skills and part-time junior to assist with organisational issues.
- An operational budget to facilitate the identified activities.

There are different potential models for this executive team and differing views on what would be appropriate:

1. Maintain a team within the County Council or LEP and deliver directly (e.g. Cotswold Tourism is run by Gloucestershire LEP while Visit Essex is run by the County Council) or commission third parties to deliver services (e.g. Hampshire is going this way).
2. Contract another party to manage and deliver county-wide tourism services. This could be an external agency like TSE, the Chamber of Commerce or an internal body such as one of the District Council tourism teams taking on the wider role. The latter option has appeal but may not be acceptable to some stakeholders¹³.
3. Hive off tourism to an arms-length PPP company (e.g. Experience Oxfordshire) or a social enterprise (e.g. Visit Surrey). This model has worked best where the tourism sector is of sufficient scale to attract major private sector contributions e.g. Kent, Bath, York but even the best PPP models still depend on the majority of funds from the public sector. The social enterprise model was established in the hope that it would attract more funding but this has simply not happened.

HCC and the LEP have stated that they are not prepared to take responsibility for the executive team i.e. Option 1, although they are prepared to provide support to a newly structured, representative tourism organisation, subject to commitments from other stakeholders. Option 2 would therefore appear to be the only realistic alternative. This option needs to be pursued further with the Chamber of Commerce and the Hoteliers Association in the first instance.

In funding terms, there are three scenarios:

1. The existing budget from HCC is cut to £50,000 and no other funds are attracted. This would allow for a minimal service only that would be hard to sustain or justify.
2. The existing budget of just under £100k is maintained by HCC or 50% is match funded from other sources, notably the other districts and private sector contributions. This would not allow for any activity beyond the current marketing initiatives. These could be re-prioritised but would be inadequate to deliver all the potential Hertfordshire-wide destination management initiatives properly.
3. Stakeholders, recognise the full potential and are prepared to invest in the initiatives identified above, generating core funding of, say, c£200k+.

The key unknown is the extent to which any HCC contribution will lever out additional resources from existing or new partners, which it needs to do not only to satisfy HCC but also to raise additional sums.

In other counties, core funding has been attracted from one or more of the LEP, the County Council, the Districts, private sector partners (notably train companies) and external project funding (RDP, EU). The options now need to be explored in the new context of the DMP.

¹³ Visit Norfolk is now run by a private company. Visit East Anglia won the contract to manage the development of Norfolk tourism from November 2012, following a tendering process overseen by New Anglia LEP and Norfolk County Council. The agreement runs until early 2015 and is also supported by local district councils, the Broads Authority, and private sector partnerships including Visit Norwich and the Greater Yarmouth Tourism Authority.

AP 4.5: Monitor performance

An important part of destination management is ensuring that action is based on sound evidence and a thorough understanding of progress achieved.

Monitoring the success of the strategy should take place against a set of performance indicators. An overall target for tourism growth has been set in the strategy but beneath this, it is helpful to set some more specific targets. The table below shows a range of possible indicators which can be introduced subject to resources, amended and added to over time.

Strategic indicators

- Volume, value and share of business:
 - Visitor trips, nights, spend – annually, by visitor type (based on benchmarks set out in evidence Base)
 - No of jobs in tourism
- Business performance:
 - Serviced and self-catering accommodation occupancy – annual average for constant sample, indexed against English average¹⁴
 - Attraction visitor numbers, based on constant sample, (index English average)¹⁵
 - Users of promoted routes based on visitor counts at key locations¹⁶
 - % of enterprises indicating that levels of business had increased over previous year (broken down by type of enterprise)
 - Business confidence levels, based on survey
- Visitor satisfaction (Net Promoter Score, see Appendix)
 - Percentage of visitors satisfied with the overall experience and services received

Objective 1 additional indicators

- Brand awareness
- Responses to direct marketing campaigns
- No of Herts features in media stories with related value
- Enjoy! website performance, no of unique visits
- No of event days and attendances at constant sample
- No of contacts on consumer database

Objective 2 additional indicators

- No of new bedrooms
- No of establishments with TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence
- No of new attractions
- No of enterprises featured in other monitored listings i.e. selected guide books;
- Number of new enterprises
- Number of new jobs created by enterprises
- Attendance at training courses and take up of advisory and support services
- Number of schoolchildren taking tourism courses

Objective 3 additional indicators

- Monitor of town centre enhancement schemes
- Number of Green and Purple Flags and other regeneration awards
- No of promoted routes in countryside
- Public transport improvements

Organisation indicators

- Membership of private sector organisation
- Percentage of tourism enterprises satisfied with destination services for tourism

¹⁴ A representative sample of operators should be asked to share their figures in exchange for benchmarking their business against the rest of the sample

¹⁵ As above

¹⁶ A National Trail User Survey template is available

NB: The accommodation occupancy and attraction/activity visitor number surveys (above) could be included in a wider, regular (half yearly) on-line 'How's Business?' survey, using some of the questions used in the enterprise survey conducted for the DMP. Subjects to cover should include market conditions and prospects. It would also be helpful to gather information on a broader range of topics on a less frequent basis, maybe annually. These could include views on the DMP process and performance and the extent to which they feel involved or informed of the process.

5. Summary of action points

The following table summarises the above action points, identifying:

- Priority and Phasing
- Resource implications and Risk level
- Lead and Support agencies
- Other potential funding contributors

Key to acronyms in summary table

LEP	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
DISTRICTS	District/Borough Councils and their agencies e.g. BIDs
PS	Private Sector Group
TOURISM	Hertfordshire Tourism Executive
ROW	HCC Rights of Way
CMS	HCC Countryside Management Service
EDUC	University, Colleges, Schools as appropriate
P1	People First
VOL	Voluntary sector
VE	Visit England (includes RGF funding for marketing)
NR	Network Rail / Rail and Bus Companies
Projects, funding sources	
GPF	Growing Places Fund
RDP	Rural Development Programme
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
THI	Townscape Heritage Initiative
Resource requirement and Risk Level	
H	High
M	Medium
L	Low

Notes:

1. Priorities and phasing should be the subject of early discussion by the HTP.
2. Resource requirements are 'order of magnitude' and can vary significantly depending on the range of the project. In broad terms, Low might be up to £25k, Medium up to £100k and High is above £100k.
3. Risk levels are based on commercial viability or failure to implement correctly. Risk assessments should be completed when each initiative is undertaken.

Action Point	Action Point	Priority	Phasing (years)	Resource requirement	Risk level	Lead agency	Support agencies	Other potential funding contributor
Strategic Objective 1: To raise the profile and attract more visitors to Hertfordshire								
AP1.1	Promote individual Hertfordshire destinations	1	1-5	L/M	L	DISTRICTS	TOURISM	VE
AP1.2	Develop a Hertfordshire brand	1	1	L	L	TOURISM		
AP1.3	Prepare a destination marketing plan for Hertfordshire	1	1-5	M	L	TOURISM	PS, DISTRICTS	VE, Individual operators
AP1.4	Develop and coordinate events	1	1-5	L	L	DISTRICTS, PS	TOURISM	Event organisers
Strategic Objective 2: To develop the product; invest in quality								
AP2.1	Enhance the accommodation stock	2	1-5	H	M	PS		
AP2.2	Enhance the local attraction offer	1	1-5	M/H	M	PS	DISTRICTS	HLF, VOL
AP2.3	Improve business performance	1	1-5	L/M	L	PS	TOURISM, LEP	Business development/training funds, P1
AP2.4	Encourage new business starts	1	1-5	L/M	M	PS, LEP	TOURISM	Business development/training funds, P1
AP2.5	Encourage young/unemployed to choose tourism careers	1	1-5	L/M	L	EDUC	PS, TOURISM, LEP	Apprenticeship schemes etc, P1

Action Point	Action Point	Priority	Phasing (years)	Resource requirement	Risk level	Lead agency	Support agencies	Other potential funding contributor
Strategic objective 3: To develop the tourism infrastructure; provide an outstanding experience								
AP3.1	Invest in the settlements	1	1-5	H	L	DISTRICTS	LEP, HCC	GPF, HLF, THI
AP3.2	Invest in the countryside	2	1-5	M/H	L	ROW/CMS	DISTRICTS	RDP, VOL
AP3.3	Enhance the public transport network for visitors	2	2-5	M/H	M	HCC, NR	DISTRICTS	
AP3.4	Implement a tourist information strategy	1	2-5	L/M	L	DISTRICTS	TOURISM	VOL
Strategic objective 4: To establish the appropriate infrastructure for effective destination management								
AP4.1	Establish local Destination Management Boards	1	1-2	L	L	DISTRICTS	VE	
AP4.2	Create a new tourism partnership for Hertfordshire	1	1-2	L	L	LEP/HCC, PS	DISTRICTS, EDUC, VE	
AP4.3	Establish a new private sector visitor economy group	1	1-2	L	M	PS	TOURISM, LEP	
AP4.4	Establish a tourism executive team	1	1	M/H	M	LEP, HCC, DISTRICTS, PS	VE	
AP4.5	Monitor performance	1	1-5	L	L	TOURISM	DISTRICTS, PS, HCC	

Appendix I: Target markets

The effectiveness of marketing efforts will be maximised through focusing on the specific types of consumer who would be most receptive to what the area currently offers. This includes gaining more visits from existing visitors and attracting some new, higher value segments.

Below we set out the list of target market segments split into two categories:

- Primary: These offer the best strategic match between market potential and opportunity. Marketing activity will focus around these key segments.
- Secondary: These have less immediate synergy with the local product offer but are worthy of attention within the strategy because they can help achieve wider objectives such as increasing spend.

We also set out some specialist niche markets that will be relevant to short breaks, those visiting friends and relatives and day trips (and secondary markets).

Priority market segments

Segment	Description	Looking for?
Business visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large non-discretionary individual market proportionate to local economy • High value discretionary market for business events¹⁷ • Largely non-seasonal, helping to fill shoulder and off-peak seasons • Can return as high spending holiday visitors • More likely to travel to areas not traditionally known for holiday visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serviced accommodation • Conference and meeting facilities • Other ancillary facilities • Long stay accommodation
Potential business tourism initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshal information on venues and activities, including LA owned venues. • Create and package interesting programmes for incentives, taking advantage of Hertfordshire's excellent leisure and cultural opportunities. • Promote a 'joined up' approach between destinations, venues and suppliers to make the event organisation process more straight forward, • Encourage strong, proactive ambassador engagement at local, regional and national levels. • Link with London & Partners. • Consider a dedicated venue finding and booking services as a separate activity, perhaps under a separate banner (e.g. Essex, Gloucestershire). 		
General short break takers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often older couples / empty nesters • Higher spending than families • Significant % of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range and choice across all types of accommodation, quality places to shop and eat, cultural events, heritage attractions, natural environment, gentler

¹⁷ Business visitors spend an average of £178 per day, over 50% more than the average spent by leisure visitors. See Business tourism action plan by Visit England for further evidence of benefits.

	Hertfordshire's visitors	activities such as walking
<p>Potential short break initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshal information on potential themes (shopping, eating out, attractions, events and general sightseeing) along with niche activity ideas see below. 		
Visiting friends & relatives/ social visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale relative to local population • All year round market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events, attractions, shops, pubs, good food • Serviced accommodation • Function facilities with ancillary attractions
<p>Potential VFR tourism initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Share a Little Sunshine': This is a campaign encouraging Florida residents to invite out of state friends and family to visit them in Florida. From the website www.sharealittlesunshine.org, people can choose one of a selection of e-invites to send to friends/family. Some of the e-invites contain videos of Florida whilst all contain discounts and special offers for attractions located near to the sender's postcode. Those that send out an invite are entered into a quarterly prize draw. In one year the campaign saw over 10,000 invites sent and 40,000 discount vouchers redeemed. The campaign is upfront about conveying the importance of tourism. The website proclaims "The more people we share our state with, the more our local economy benefits." Campaign materials include a poster that says "85 visitors = 1 job". The campaign includes a Facebook page where people who live or who have visited the State can upload images. www.facebook.com/FloridaSunshine. • Residents' Weekends: A number of destinations across the UK (including St Albans) have established events designed to encourage visits to attractions by resident and VFR markets. Although each event is organised slightly differently, they generally involve offering residents free or discounted entry to some or all of the destination's attractions. The events have a variety of objectives but some organisers have explicitly highlighted VFR markets as a target in the hope that by familiarising residents with attractions that they might not otherwise have visited, they, in turn, will take their friends and relatives to these places. Northumberland County Council reported that 5,000 people took up offers during their 2012 Residents first Weekend. http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=9494 http://www.thecityofgloucester.co.uk/whats-on/search-results/gloucester-residents-weekend-2012-p1323593 • Prepare "A Perfect Day in Hertfordshire" whereby local residents are asked to identify something special that they would want to show or tell a friend about. This could be written, an image, a film, a soundtrack etc which would be made up into a composite piece for residents to share with friends and relatives. This might well generate PR value as well. 		
Day visitors from home or holiday base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents • Residents of London, eastern region or SE • Those staying on holiday in London, eastern region or SE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half and full day itinerary ideas; things that can't be found easily in home area; distinctive attractions and activities • Accessible countryside, places to shop and eat, visitor attractions • Evening entertainment • Easy access by car and train
<p>Potential day trip tourism initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some destinations, notably Kent and Essex, have partnered successfully with transport providers, packaging travel and attractions. Essex has had successful marketing campaigns with Ryanair and the operators of Harwich ferries. Kent has worked effectively with the rail operating companies. There is particular scope in Hertfordshire given the good rail access and number of operators e.g. film heritage in Borehamwood and country walks from rail stations. There is a clear overlap in the interests of destination managers and transport operators but many of these opportunities for joint marketing are not fully exploited. 		

Secondary markets		
Overseas visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest impact but high spend • Difficult to reach, best done working with others (e.g. transport carriers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Albans • Serviced accommodation • Heritage
Transit visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People visiting London but looking for better value accommodation • People using local airports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive reasons to stay in the area, notably price but also, Warner Brothers

Niche markets within the above		
Walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People whose primary trip purpose is walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive trails • Serviced (particularly B&B) close to route
Golfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf short breaks & golf as primary activity and as an activity on more general break 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good courses • Easy access (including PAYP) • Affordable green fees
Boaters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renters and boat owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe environment • Convenient moorings
Cultural visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in museums, arts and other cultural activity • Interested in planning/architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History and heritage; arts and culture, distinctive experiences, attractive scenery, good quality dining
Film tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show audiences • Location spotters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good information • Special opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence suggests around £2.1 billion of visitor spend a year might be attributable to UK films.¹⁸ The impact of film tourism is recognised in the marketing campaigns of tourist boards around the world. Films can increase visitor numbers and support investment at featured attractions. • Movie Maps have been hugely successful: surveys have shown that they encourage people to visit parts of England that they had not previously considered, and generate impressive returns to investment. 		
Spa tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated pampering • Add-on activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good hotels and facilities • Special deals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In St Albans, one of the major hotels has linked up with Westminster Lodge to provide spa packages. 		

¹⁸ The Economic Impact of the UK Film Industry, Oxford Economics, September 2012

Appendix II: The Net Promoter Score

There is a need for more detailed information on visitor profiles. This should be gathered via a local visitor survey conducted every three years. This should include a review of customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is an underlying driver in any DMP. Ideally, a local base level study should be undertaken on customer satisfaction levels, to be repeated on a regular basis during the life of the DMP.

One proposal is to develop a simple, short survey that would be electronically based and capable of being completed on a smart phone or other device. The aim would be to get direct feedback on the destination. In addition, questions could also be asked about intentions to return, the appropriateness of different communication channels. Email addresses should also be captured. This could be piloted in one area before extending to other parts of Hertfordshire.

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) calculates the likelihood that respondents would recommend a visit to a destination. NPS assumes that every destination's customers can be divided into three categories: Promoters, Passives, and Detractors. By including in the survey the simple question "How likely is it that you would you recommend <Destination> to others?" it is possible to track these groups and get a clear measure of the destination's performance through its customers' eyes.

Customers respond on a 1-to-10 point rating scale and are categorised as follows: Promoters (score 9-10) are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and refer others, fuelling growth. Passives (score 7-8) are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings. Detractors (score 1-6) are unhappy customers who can damage the brand and impede growth through negative word-of-mouth.

To calculate the NPS, take the percentage of customers who are Promoters and subtract the percentage who are Detractors. The diagram below illustrates the calculation. The firm that developed the measure suggests that a healthy brand with good growth potential will operate with a NPS of between 50-80%.

Source: <http://www.netpromoter.com/np/calculate.jsp>

