



DOUGLAS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Business Plan

2014 - 2018

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Introduction

This business plan sets out Douglas Development Partnership's priorities for the period 2014 to 2018. Although the objectives have been divided into 3 sections, it should be borne in mind that virtually all of the Partnership's objectives and activities are interconnected. The document also includes an action plan which sets out the main proposals to be undertaken and the measures by which they will be assessed.

Mission Statement of Douglas Development Partnership

The whole of this business plan is driven by the Partnership's mission statement, constant since the Partnership's incorporation as a non-profit company limited by guarantee in 2000. As part of this business plan the mission statement has been reviewed and considered still relevant as a statement of intent.

The Partnership aims to improve the image and environment of the island's capital making it an even better place to live, visit and do business in by working with other organisations to develop and deliver projects and by improving levels of communication and co-ordination between partners.

Overview

While the mission statement remains unchanged, several important changes have taken place since the Partnership's previous business plan was produced in 2006. The majority of these changes are positive as there has been considerable progress in achieving the goals set out in that plan. There have been, however, some other, less favourable changes which reflect the wider environment in which we are working.

Positive changes include:

- The regeneration of the town centre's public realm, for which the Partnership lobbied strongly, is making excellent progress with a consequent improvement to the overall image of the town centre. All indications are that this initiative is likely to continue within the life of this plan;
- The Promenade improvement scheme has also commenced. Although in its early stages there are positive signs that it will make a substantial improvement to the image and appearance of the public realm in the island's 'shop window';
- The introduction of the post of Town Centre Manager has had a major impact on the Partnership's ability to manage and improve the public image of the town centre and directly enhance the vitality of the area, notably by increasing footfall at key events;
- Increased integration between the Partnership and Douglas Borough Council on issues such as byelaw and licensing enforcement and dealing with unsightly properties as a result of management responsibility for these functions being combined with the Development Partnership as part of the Development & Environment Team;
- Progress on the production of a Central Douglas Masterplan. This initiative has the potential to encourage development investment and related projects in a manner that supports the Partnership's mission statement.

Changes to the wider environment in which we operate include:

- The impact of the revised VAT-sharing agreement between the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man, which has resulted in a reduction in income to the Isle of Man Government and consequently reduced budgets available for infrastructure improvements. It is also likely to have a direct impact on local businesses as a result of reduced expenditure by government and government employees;
- The recession in the United Kingdom has undoubtedly resulted in a higher cost of living and less disposable income for Manx consumers with the consequent impact on town centre businesses. It has also led to the closure

of certain UK multiple retailers with branches in Douglas resulting in vacant retail premises;

- The continued and increasing impact of multi-channel retailing has also resulted in a change to the business mix in the town centre, increased vacancy rates and the need for the town centre to evolve and respond creatively if it is to become the vibrant heart of the community.

While the substantial changes to the economic climate have, in the main, had a less than favourable impact on our mission, they have provided an opportunity to focus political attention on economic development and the importance of image and environmental quality. As a result, political support for the aims of the Partnership appears stronger than it was during easier economic times. This provides the impetus for considerable progress to be made in delivering the Partnership's mission over the coming years.

The Plan

Most of the objectives and projects set out in this plan are interrelated. In order to provide structure to the plan, it has been divided into three subject areas:

- Physical Regeneration;
- Town Centre Management;
- Partnership.

An action plan then sets out the projects and actions that support the objectives.

Physical Regeneration

Although there were several notable improvements to the town's public realm in the 20th century, including the widening of the Promenade in the 1930s and the pedestrianisation of Strand Street in the late 1980s, there has been relatively little investment in the public realm. Consequently, the Partnership's previous business plan focused on developing proposals for the physical improvement of the town centre. This current plan comes at a time when the town centre regeneration project is well under way and the Promenade improvement scheme has started. As a result, the Partnership's continued involvement in these projects is largely to ensure that, as the detailed designs are developed, the spaces fulfil the requirements of a modern town centre and support the use of the Promenade as an important leisure amenity. More detail on these management aspects is contained in the next section.

Douglas is a largely Victorian town and the vast majority of its architecture in the town centre and on the Promenade remains from that period. While this can make for an interesting and attractive townscape, some of the buildings are no longer suitable for today's uses. The nature of retailing in particular has changed and Victorian shop units are not always suitable for modern trading. In addition, there are several undeveloped brown-field sites in lower Douglas available for development and damaging the image of the town. The Partnership has not historically focused much attention on the town's building stock, as improvements to the public realm were considered the first priority. Now these are under way, this plan starts to consider the Partnership's role in encouraging and supporting property investment and development.

Objective 1

To continue to provide representation for the life of this plan on the Douglas Regeneration Committee and Regeneration Project Team in order to provide input into the design process

and deliver minor projects as required using funds from the Town Centre Regeneration Fund and elsewhere as appropriate.

Objective 2

To ensure regeneration works extend to the entirety of the Douglas Regeneration Area.

Objective 3

To continue to provide representation for the life of this plan on the Douglas Promenade Project Team in order to provide input into the design process.

Objective 4

To pursue the Living Promenade concept of ensuring that the physical improvement of the Promenade supports its use for leisure and tourism purposes alongside the Promenade Improvement Project.

Objective 5

To develop an understanding of the property market in Lower Douglas through training, liaison with property professionals and engagement with property owners and developers.

Objective 6

To engage fully with the development of the Central Douglas Masterplan.

Objective 7

To monitor emerging development activity in relation to the following key sites and commission or produce marketing information, conceptual design and development recommendations as required to encourage and support their development:

- Middlemarch;
- Parade Street;
- Lord Street;
- Cambrian Place;
- Villiers;
- Summerland;
- Castlemona;
- Market Street;
- Retail premises generally.

Town Centre Management

The establishment of the post of Town Centre Manager has enabled the Partnership to become more proactive in managing events and activities in the town centre, which increase its appeal to shoppers and leisure visitors. The ultimate goal for the Town Centre Manager is to ensure that the town centre is a place where people want to spend their leisure time. It must be well presented and offer services, events and activities that attract people. The plan also recognises that the town centre operates during the evening and night time as well as during the day.

While the Town Centre Management function is focused on the town centre, at times it will need to extend its reach to adjacent areas such as the Promenade and Quayside.

Objective 8

To reinforce the town centre's role as the heart of the island's community through public and stakeholder engagement and an integrated marketing plan which uses a variety of media including events, press, web and social media.

Objective 9

To ensure the image and presentation of the town centre is maintained to the highest possible standard by engaging and communicating with relevant partners.

Objective 10

To ensure that visitors to Douglas town centre have an enjoyable experience.

Objective 11

To engage with town centre businesses and other stakeholders to ensure a thriving town centre economy.

Partnerships

Despite being constituted as an independent non-profit making company, the Development Partnership is an alliance between the island's business community and the local authority; the Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce and Douglas Borough Council. Partnerships and partnership working are key to our method of delivering improvements. Although the Development Partnership delivers some projects directly, they are usually funded either directly or indirectly by our partner organisations. In other cases, we simply assist partners to deliver their own projects by providing inspiration, advice and assistance as required.

The following objectives aim to build upon existing partnerships in pursuance of our mission:

Objective 12

To review the Development Partnership's corporate membership scheme with the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce in order to maximise the influence and contribution of the island's business community towards achieving our mission and objectives.

Objective 13

To develop a closer relationship and more regular communication with town centre businesses.

Objective 14

To provide representation on the Douglas Community Partnership.

Objective 15

To pursue the development and implementation of a Beach and Promenade Action Plan in partnership with Douglas Borough Council in order to encourage greater use of these areas for leisure purposes.

Objective 16

To support Douglas Borough Council in lobbying for improved legislative powers for managing the image and environment of the town and implementing effective policy and procedure to enforce those powers.

Objective 17

To develop a closer working relationship with local commercial property agents in order to assist with maintaining high occupancy levels with an appropriate mix of offer.

Objective 18

To continue to support the Isle of Man Government in delivering projects, initiatives and services that support the Partnership's objectives and mission.

Objective 19

To build a higher profile and greater engagement with the Manx public through the provision of events, publicity and dialogue.

Douglas Development Partnership Action Plan 2014-2018

Part 1 – Physical Regeneration

Objective	Action	Priority	Owner	Target Completion Date	KPI
Objective 1 To continue to provide representation for the life of this plan on the Douglas Regeneration Committee and Regeneration Project Team in order to provide input into the design process and deliver minor projects as required using funds from the Town Centre Regeneration Fund and elsewhere as appropriate.	Action 1.1 Attend all regular monthly/bi-monthly meetings.	Existing Commitment	ACO (C&D)	For duration of committee/team.	Attendance at 18 meetings annually.
	Action 1.2 Monitor progress and identify projects that require direct DDP input	Medium	ACO (C&D)	For duration of regeneration initiative.	No. of regeneration funded projects delivered by DDP.
Objective 2 To ensure regeneration works extend to the entirety of the Douglas Regeneration Area.	Action 2.1 Monitor political appetite to continue the regeneration works and lobby for continuation if required.	High	ACO(C&D) DBC and CoC membership of committee.	Continuous	Extension of project to entire Regeneration Area.
Objective 3 To continue to provide representation for the life of this plan on the Douglas Promenade Project Team in order to provide input into the design process.	Action 3.1 Attend all regular monthly/bi-monthly meetings.	Medium	ACO(C&D)	For duration of project.	Attendance at 6 meetings annually.
Objective 4 To pursue the Living Promenade concept of ensuring that the physical improvement of the Promenade supports its use for leisure and tourism purposes alongside the Promenade Improvement Project.	Action 4.1 Monitor development of Promenade design and bring projects forward for approval and delivery as required using funding from a variety of sources including DDP, DBC, DoI and	Medium	ACO(C&D)	For duration of project.	Number of projects delivered by DDP.

	sponsorship where appropriate.				
Objective	Action	Priority	Owner	Target Completion Date	KPI
Objective 5 To develop an understanding of the property market in Lower Douglas through training, liaison with property professionals and engagement with property owners and developers.	Action 5.1 Explore options for suitable education/training and secure funding and/or approval as required.	Low	ACO(C&D)	June 2015	Participation in suitable education or training.
	Action 5.2 Arrange network opportunities and meetings with relevant individuals/organisations.	Medium	ACO(C&D)	During 2014	Number of meetings attended.
	Action 5.3 Re-examine the potential of introducing a Business Improvement District model or similar to Douglas.	Medium	ACO(C&D)	During 2014	A board decision on whether it supports measures to introduce business Improvement Districts or similar.
	Action 5.4 Engage in liaison with the Department of Infrastructure over planning policy and its impact on town centre development.	Medium	ACO(C&D)	Throughout the life of the plan.	Number of meetings/correspondences.
Objective 6 To engage fully with the development of the Central Douglas Masterplan.	Action 6.1 Arrange regular update meetings with project manager.	Low	ACO(C&D)	Throughout project.	Number of update meetings attended.
	Action 6.2				

	Attend all meetings/workshops in relation to the development of the Masterplan	High	ACO(C&D)	Throughout project.	Number of update meetings/ Workshops attended.
	Action 6.3 Prepare full consultation feedback on behalf of DDP after consultation with Advisory Group.	High	ACO(C&D)	During consultation phase.	Submission of consultation feedback by deadline.
Objective 7 To monitor emerging development activity in relation to the key sites and commission or produce marketing information, conceptual design and development recommendations as required to encourage and support their development.	Action 7.1 Monitor emerging development activity in relation to the key sites and seek funding approval as required in order to commission or produce marketing information, conceptual design and development recommendations as required	Medium	ACO(C&D)	Continuous	Number of projects delivered.

Part 2 – Town Centre Management

Objective	Action	Priority	Owner	Target Completion Date	KPI
Objective 8 To reinforce the town centre's role as the heart of the island's community through public and stakeholder engagement and an integrated marketing plan which uses a variety of media including events, press, web and social media.	Action 8.1 To deliver 4 large, high profile events annually attracting at least 1,000 people.	Medium	TCM	Annually	Delivery of 4 large high profile events.
	Action 8.2 To support third party event organisers such as businesses, charities and community groups by encouraging and assisting the delivery of 12 events.	Medium	TCM	Annually	12 charity or community events.

	<p>Action 8.3 To retain and increase the Partnership's social media following by 500 annually.</p> <p>Action 8.4 To produce an annual PR plan and hold a monthly meeting with the PR advisor.</p> <p>Action 8.5 To maximise exposure in the local media through the production and issue of at least 12 press releases annually.</p> <p>Action 8.6 To develop 20 Sunday events annually.</p> <p>Action 8.7 To develop a programme of at least 5 events annually that link with special dates in the Manx calendar.</p> <p>Action 8.8 To secure music and dance licences for at least two outdoor town centre venues.</p> <p>Action 8.9 To produce a guidance pack for prospective event organisers in Douglas.</p>	Medium	ACO(C&D) & TCM	Annually	500 increase in social media following.
		Medium	ACO(C&D) & TCM	Annually/Monthly	1 PR Plan and 12 monthly meetings.
		Medium	ACO(C&D) & TCM	Annually	12 press releases.
		Medium	TCM	Annually	20 Sunday events.
		Medium	TCM	Annually	5 calendar related events.
		Low	ACO(C&D)	Summer 2014	2 licences.
		Medium	TCM	March 2014	Guidance pack produced.
<p>Objective 9 To ensure the image and presentation of the town centre is maintained to the highest possible</p>	<p>Action 9.1 To introduce an agenda item at the monthly DDP Advisory Group meeting on the subject of "Town Centre</p>	Medium	ACO(C&D)	January 2014	Agenda item included at each meeting.

<p>standard by engaging and communicating with relevant partners.</p>	<p>Housekeeping"</p> <p>Action 9.2 For the Town Centre Manager to undertake a monthly town centre inspection, to communicate all issues arising to the responsible partner and to report on findings at each DDP Advisory Group meeting under the "Town Centre Housekeeping" item.</p> <p>Action 9.3 To develop an initiative for improving the appearance of vacant retail units during 2013.</p> <p>Action 9.4 To convene a quarterly town centre streetscene management group.</p> <p>Action 9.5 To maintain an efficient and effective system of licensing pavement cafes and 'A' boards.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Existing Commitment</p>	<p>TCM</p> <p>TCM</p> <p>ACO(C&D)</p> <p>TCM</p>	<p>January 2014</p> <p>January 2014</p> <p>January 2014</p> <p>Continuous</p>	<p>12 monthly inspections.</p> <p>No. of vacant units improved.</p> <p>4 streetscene management group meetings.</p> <p>No. of licences issued.</p>
<p>Objective 10</p> <p>To ensure that visitors to Douglas town centre have an enjoyable experience.</p>	<p>Action 10.1 To deliver 100 small scale events such as street entertainment, busking, charity events and street trading.</p> <p>Action 10.2 To maintain involvement with the Disabled go initiative and maintain an overview of disabled access issues.</p> <p>Action 10.3 To conduct annual research into town</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Existing Commitment</p>	<p>TCM</p> <p>TCM</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Continually</p>	<p>100 small events.</p> <p>No of Disabled Go events attended.</p>

	centre visitor perceptions and experience.	Medium	TCM	Annually	Feedback from visitor research.
Objective 11 To engage with town centre businesses and other stakeholders to ensure a thriving town centre economy.	Action 11.1 To introduce a structured relationship management system assisted by ICT.	Low	TCM	January 2014	Effective relationship management system in place.
	Action 11.2 For the TCM to make an introductory visit to all new town centre businesses.	High	TCM	As new businesses establish.	No. of introductory visits made.
	Action 11.3 For the TCM to make 12 courtesy visits per month to town centre businesses.	Medium	TCM	Monthly	12 courtesy visits.
	Action 11.4 To continue administrative support for ShopWatch & attend quarterly meetings.	Existing Commitment	ACO(C&D) & TCM	Continually	4 quarterly meetings
	Action 11.5 To use social media channels to assist in publicising special initiatives and events on behalf of town centre businesses.	Medium	TCM	Continually	No. of special events and initiatives publicised.
	Action 11.6 To take an active lead in Douglas's Purple Flag accreditation bid.	High	ACO(C&D) & TCM	October 2014 round.	Purple Flag accreditation achieved.

Part 3 – Partnerships

Objective	Action	Priority	Owner	Target Completion Date	KPI
Objective 12 To thoroughly review the Development Partnership's corporate membership scheme with the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce in order to maximise the influence and contribution of the island's business community to achieving our mission and objectives.	Action 12.1 To arrange a meeting with Chamber's representatives on both the Board and Advisory Group along with the Chamber Chief Executive to agree a strategy for engaging with the business community.	Medium	ACO (C&D)	April 2014	New strategy in place.
Objective 13 To develop a closer relationship and more regular communication with town centre businesses.	Action 13.1 To establish a series of quarterly town centre surgeries/seminars.	High	TCM	Quarterly from January 2014	4 surgeries per year.
Objective 14 To provide representation on Douglas Community Partnership.	Action 14.1 Attendance at each meeting.	Existing Commitment	ACO(C&D)	Bi-monthly	6 meetings attended annually
Objective 15 To pursue the development and implementation of a Beach and Promenade Action Plan in partnership with Douglas Borough Council in order to encourage greater use of these areas for leisure and associated purposes.	Action 15.1 To take the lead on producing an action plan and holding regular working group meetings.	Medium	ACO(C&D)	Bi-monthly	No. of action plan initiatives delivered.
Objective 16 To support Douglas Borough Council in lobbying for improved legislative powers for managing the image and environment of the town and	Action 16.1 To monitor progress in bringing powers forward at each Advisory Group meeting and Board	High	Board and Advisory Group	Monthly	New legislation in place.

implementing effective policy and procedure to implement such powers.	meeting and consider DDP role in lobbying as required.				
Objective 17 To maintain high occupancy levels with an appropriate mix of offer in Douglas town centre.	Action 17.1 To continue to convene regular meetings with commercial agents and other key individuals and agencies.	Medium	TCM	Quarterly	4 meetings held annually.
	Action 17.2 To work with a range of partners to ensure Douglas is pro-actively marketed as a high quality location in which to invest in and occupy property.	High	ACO(C&D)	Initial marketing in place by June 2014 with continual monitoring and improvement.	Vacancy rates and occupancy profile. Maintain vacancy rate at under 10%.
Objective 18 To continue to support the Isle of Man Government in delivering projects, initiatives and services that support the Partnership's objectives and mission.	Action 18.1 Monitor opportunities for DDP to assist with the delivery of projects, initiatives and services.	Low	ACO(C&D)	Continually	No. of projects delivered.
Objective 19 To build a higher profile and greater engagement with the Manx public through the provision of events, publicity and dialogue.	Action 19.1 To review and improve the DDP Website.	High	ACO(C&D)	By April 2014	Improved website.
	Action 19.2 To actively manage the Douglas Town Centre Social Media Channels. Action 19.3	High	TCM	Continually	500 increase in following annually.

	To retain a high profile shopfront presence in the town centre and review and update office displays at least annually.	High	ACO(C&D)	Annually	No. of changes to office display.
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