

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Area Tourism Partnership Plan
Strategy for Growth

2007-2009

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Dumfries & Galloway is a region of some 2649 square miles, situated in the south west of Scotland, with a population of 148,000. Over 1 million people visit the region each year (970,000 from the UK and 60,000 from overseas) and the industry contributes around £226 million to the region's economy (£200 million by UK visitors and £26.03 million by overseas visitors). Day visitors contribute an additional £56 million.*

Around 11% of the total workforce is directly or indirectly employed in the industry.

Dumfries & Galloway possesses a high quality natural environment – a dramatic coastline, a vast area of forests, highlands and lowlands. It boasts a vibrant cultural product including festivals and events, castles and the world-famous Gretna Green. In addition to this it offers an ever-increasing range of activities, from the adrenaline rush of mountain biking to more leisurely long distance walking on the Southern Upland Way and coastal trails and fishing and wildlife watching in abundance.

The majority of visitors to the area lead an active life, take two or more short breaks a year and are keen to enrich their life through educational and cultural development. Most are at the peak of their earning power with money to spend on leisure and entertainment. Favourite pastimes include reading, travel, music, eating out and increasingly more active outdoor pursuits.

In 2001, the area secured funding from the Scottish Executive and Europe to support the development of an Area Tourism Strategy to acquire new customers and to ensure that visitors returned. Substantial investment was made in marketing the region to its main markets of Scotland and the north of England.

Tourism performance has increased significantly since 2001 and a number of opportunities remain outstanding. These opportunities will form part of the new Area Tourism Partnership Plan 2007-2009. The Plan will enable the region to build on past successes and to move forward to compete for vital tourism business on terms that are compatible with the essence of its environment and to contribute to the aspirations of its stakeholders and the economy of Dumfries & Galloway.

The Area Tourism Partnership Plan has been produced following extensive consultation with the wider tourism industry and will support tourism activity in communities across Dumfries & Galloway.

Tourism is the second most important industry in Dumfries & Galloway and is a key economic and social driver across the region. It is therefore essential that activity links with both the regeneration and community planning agendas. Further information on these agendas can be obtained from www.dumgal.gov.uk.

CONTEXT

The context in which this plan will be delivered is linked with the following key strategies:

- Tourism Framework for Change
- Smart Successful Scotland
- The Dumfries & Galloway Five Year Economic Plan
- The South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy
- Other public sector tourism strategies such as Galloway Forest Park Tourism Strategy

* UKTS 2005

Tourism Framework for Change

In 2005, the Scottish Executive introduced the Tourism Framework for Change (TFFC) in which it challenges the industry to change to meet customer needs and global trends, and the public sector to support them in this process.

The Strategy's overall objective is:

To increase the volume of tourism revenues to the Scottish economy by 50% by 2015

There are four key themes:

- Knowing your market
- Exceeding visitor expectations
- Marketing your product
- Being sustainable

Local delivery of the TFFC is through Area Tourism Action Plans and the Area Tourism Partnership will be responsible for monitoring and reporting progress.

Key targets from this framework are given in Appendix 1.

Smart Successful Scotland

This local tourism strategy is also aligned with other national strategies such as Smart Successful Scotland, which outlines tourism's contribution to the national economy.

With ever increasing focus on Metropolitan Regions, cross boundary working is key and the region must emphasise its proximity to five cities in three countries within a two hour drive-time of the region (Carlisle, Newcastle, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast)

7stanes and the Southern Upland Way are two examples of cross boundary initiatives, which offer great potential for further development.

South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy

The South of Scotland Alliance (comprising Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway, Borders Council and Scottish Enterprise Borders) has developed a Competitiveness Strategy which seeks to increase the overall performance and competitiveness of the economy of the region and maximise funding opportunities in the South of Scotland which could be key to future European Funding and other bids across the region.

It is also imperative that links are made to both the *Five Year Economic Plan* and the *Community Plan* for the region.

MARKET TRENDS

- Following several difficult years, long and short haul international tourism has rebounded with continued growth in 2005. Tourism analysts expect this growth to be sustained at an average rate of around 4% in coming years. The UK attracts the sixth biggest number of international tourists. Whilst a small percentage of visitors to Dumfries & Galloway come from overseas, the

region is well placed to maximise opportunities with increased flights into both Prestwick and Glasgow airports.

- A continued increase in people taking short breaks has contributed to this growth particularly within Europe.
- Whilst international tourism has increased, Scotland faces an ever more competitive marketplace with Britons travelling abroad in ever greater numbers.
- Key consumer and lifestyle trends affecting tourism continue to include the ageing populations. Implications for Dumfries & Galloway include more demand for quality, convenience, comfort, security, easy transportation and one-person tourism products. Other trends include the increased interest in health and well-being, arts, culture and history related holidays, all of which are strong products within the region.
- Quality remains critical as does value for money, with increasing use of the internet to source best value from luxury to budget holiday experiences.
- Independent travel as opposed to 'package deals' is becoming popular, but ease of purchase is crucial.
- Visitors are increasingly searching for experiences – cultural, human, natural and authentic – all of which are in line with the key essence of a visit to Dumfries & Galloway.
- Whilst research tells us that there remains a substantial body of existing, largely loyal, customers to Dumfries & Galloway, marketing activity should focus on attracting and converting new visitors, particularly within a 2-4 hour drive time. The domestic market of Scotland and the north of England continues to have the greatest potential, with Ireland providing a new, largely untapped market.

TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

- Seasonality is a major challenge for Dumfries & Galloway, and extending the season, will be a key focus over the coming three years.
- The key regional product development areas are culture (including romance), heritage and gardens; walking, cycling, golf and fishing; nature-based tourism such as forests, coasts and wildlife.
- Within the brand, Dumfries & Galloway's artistic attributes as well as its high quality natural environment should be portrayed. The key message will therefore be to portray the area as a superb outdoor activities destination enriched by the arts and culture.
- Recent tourism developments and projects have created a new optimism. To involve visitors in this 'buzz' the region will be conveyed as spirited, passionate, creative and genuine.
- The importance of festivals and events to the economy has been recognised in Dumfries & Galloway and an Events Partnership formed in 2005. Leader+, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway and Dumfries & Galloway Council have contributed to a Tourism Challenge Fund of £220,000 over two years. VisitScotland chairs the group and the fund has supported both the larger Beacon Festivals and many smaller events and festivals across the region. An exit strategy is currently being developed to build on existing successes.
- Business tourism, whilst limited in Dumfries & Galloway, offers opportunities for new, high spending visitors and is a market, which should be maximised. With large venues such as Easterbrook Hall and DG1 and a number of top class smaller hotel venues across the region, this is a sector waiting to be developed.
- Forest and Nature based tourism are key drivers in the region, with projects such as 7stanes and the Galloway Forest Park Tourism Strategy encouraging growth into new active markets and raising awareness nationally and internationally of opportunities in the area. However, further product development is required to build on existing success.
- Cross boundary initiatives such as the Southern Upland Way provide opportunities for growth in the short break market and new opportunities could open up should the application for Marine National Park designation on the Solway Coast be successful.

- The Tourism Framework for Change identifies, as key to the tourism agenda nationally the need for businesses to collect feedback from their own customers to help them better understand their business. Dumfries and Galloway businesses have an important role in contributing to this target.
- The demographics of an ageing population are leading to a shortage of labour and limited skill banks and this is presenting a significant challenge to the industry. Every opportunity should be taken to work with partners such as Dumfries & Galloway College to encourage tourism and hospitality to be seen as a career of choice for young people in the region and to develop appropriate training and development programmes to support the industry.

THE DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY AREA TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

The existing tourism strategy for Dumfries & Galloway ends in 2006 and an Area Tourism Partnership was formed in 2005 to develop and lead on a new plan to take the area through to 2009. A list of the members of the Area Tourism Partnership is given in Appendix 2.

The role of the Partnership is to:

- ↳ Develop a strategy for Dumfries & Galloway in line with the strategic objectives outlined in the TFFC.
- ↳ Provide strategic guidance to all those involved in promoting and developing tourism in the region.
- ↳ Receive reports from all partners on tourism activity and progress towards strategic objectives detailed in the local tourism plan.
- ↳ Make representations to appropriate bodies to further tourism interests in the region.

VISION

To establish Dumfries & Galloway as a world-class destination in which our visitors receive a superb quality of service, where our products and services exceed their expectations and thus maximise the long-term economic and social benefits which sustainable tourism can bring to the region.

MISSION

To put the visitor at the centre of every decision we make and focus on turning every visitor into an ambassador for Dumfries & Galloway.

OBJECTIVES

1. *To assist the industry to better understand their market, to monitor their performance and to maximise the use of modern technology.*
2. *To maximise our natural resources in an integrated and sustainable way*
3. *To continue to raise awareness of Dumfries & Galloway through effective marketing*
4. *To build on existing success and maximise our natural assets*
5. *To improve the Quality and range of the visitor experience*

Objective 1

To assist the industry to better understand their market, to monitor their performance and to maximise the use of modern technology

An important role for the Area Tourism Partnership is to offer consistent, quality support and advice to tourism businesses, partners and visitors across Dumfries & Galloway. With ever decreasing resources, this presents a major challenge in such a diverse and large geographical region and working in partnership is once again key to success.

In order for businesses to target their marketing effectively and become more competitive, they require a better understanding of their customer. They also need the skills and expertise in order to maximise opportunities presented through the web and e-commerce.

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead
Work to understand our visitor better and recognise how we can exceed their visit expectations	By contributing more effectively to data collection schemes such as the Accommodation Occupancy Survey and the Visitor Attraction Monitor, undertaking visitor satisfaction surveys and, based on these findings, introduce an appropriate visitor information strategy for the region.	VS/ATP
Develop an information Strategy for Tourism in Dumfries & Galloway (industry, partners and consumer)	By undertaking an audit of existing communication channels and developing an appropriate strategy based on the findings	ATP/VS/DGC/SEDG
Provide support to enable tourism businesses in the area to be in a position to maximise the use of appropriate technology to gather and process information effectively and to take on-line bookings		

Objective 2

To maximise our natural resource in an integrated and sustainable way

Visitors are increasingly seeking an unspoilt, environmentally friendly holiday experience and Dumfries & Galloway is exceptionally well-placed to offer this – from touring on quiet roads, low level/long distance walking and fishing the well-stocked rivers to adrenaline pumping activities such as mountain biking.

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead
Encourage tourism businesses and the wider community to work together to package key products	By identifying key product groupings (e.g. Nature based, food etc) and facilitating the formation of product development networks based around key products and highlighting opportunities to lever funding	VS/SEDG
Contribute to the consultation on the potential for a D&G Marine National Park	Through improved communication with the tourism industry followed up by appropriate identified activity	SEDG/DGC
Contribute to the debate on the potential for a Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve	Through improved communication with the tourism industry followed up by appropriate identified activity	SNH
Raise the awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism in Dumfries & Galloway	By encouraging businesses to undertake Energy Audits and join the Green Tourism Business Scheme	SEDG/VS

Objective 3

To continue to raise awareness of Dumfries & Galloway through effective marketing

Effective partnership working is key to providing competitive advantage in Dumfries & Galloway. Much has been done over the past five years to improve brand awareness and to encourage collaborative working particularly amongst the tourism industry.

However, much more needs to be done, and this objective focuses on marketing activity and encouraging local collaborative initiatives which could benefit from maximising resources and leveraging funding from sources such as the VisitScotland Marketing Challenge Fund.

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead
Develop the Natural Place brand message and effective communication of key messages to all stakeholders	Through the development of guidelines for use by all partners and businesses across the region to be communicated by means of an effective communication plan	VS
Attract and retain visitors by maximising the national and local VisitScotland promotions to boost occupancy	Through two seasonal campaigns and an all year programme of visitor communications by email and post	VS
Continue to market to raise awareness of local tourism products to local residents and to visitors	By developing an annual marketing plan based on resources available and identifying opportunities to support industry initiatives to showcase local products and services e.g. Dumfries & Galloway shop	VS and all agencies
Co-ordinate local partnership marketing activity, working collaboratively to maximise resources	Through sharing of information on market intelligence and best practice and through joint product-specific campaigns to focus on the region's environmental and cultural heritage	VS/ATP
Develop new/build on existing cross boundary initiatives	By working with other areas on national projects such as Homecoming and piloting product specific campaigns such as Biker tourism with Northern Ireland and the Southern Upland Way with Borders	VS/DGC

Objective 4

To Build on Existing Successes and Maximise our Natural Assets

Dumfries & Galloway has a wealth of natural and built resources. However, high levels of investment are needed to build on existing assets such as Dumfries Town Centre, the waterfront in Stranraer and its potential to tap into the Irish market, and the eastern gateway around Gretna and Annan. Work is underway in all three major re-generation projects and this objective includes supporting the tourism elements of these key initiatives.

The area also has a wealth of culture and heritage and high quality local food, arts and crafts products on which to develop activity to contribute to the tourism ambition.

We also need to better understand our customer and their wants and needs, and to exceed their holiday expectations.

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead
Undertake an audit of activity within the Tourism Strategy 2001-2006	Identify activities which are complete and those which still require further implementation and add to the current plan by end March 2007	ATP
Support key regeneration projects which will contribute to the economic success and the 50% growth ambition for tourism in the region	Identify appropriate tourism support for projects identified within the 5 year Economic Plan and the South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy	ATP/Local Economic Forum
Further develop the profile of the area as a rural cultural centre focussing on the arts and culture and heritage	Working closely with DGAA and other appropriate businesses to maximise on opportunities such as Homecoming	DGAA/Events Partnership
Continue to support the Theme Towns	Work with tourism businesses to develop their product and enhance their marketing expertise	SEDG/VS
Continue support for maintenance & evolution of successful initiatives	Work closely with partners on initiatives such as 7stanes & Red Kite Trail	ATP

Objective 5

To improve the quality and range of the visitor experience

Travellers are becoming ever more discerning and sophisticated and critical of quality and value for money. Greater use of the internet to price-compare and find the best deal highlights this trend.

Dumfries & Galloway is well placed to offer a wide range of holiday experiences and with friendly people and varied and dramatic natural landscapes we need to ensure that the quality of the accommodation, infrastructure, evening entertainment and transport to and around the area supports this high quality experience.

This objective therefore focuses on ensuring that tourism is everyone's business through training, quality assurance, events and festivals, shopping, entertainment and an integrated transport system across the region.

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead
Support the development of events and festivals which have a positive economic impact on the region	By actively supporting the aims and objectives of the Festivals and Major Events Strategy (FAME) and by identifying national opportunities which will benefit the region	Events Partnership/VS
Raise the awareness across the region of the importance of a warm welcome for the visitor	By working with Pride and Passion, Springboard in schools and in communities to encourage local people to be proud and passionate ambassadors for the region	ATP/Springboard
Lobby for an improved and integrated transport system in Dumfries & Galloway	By appointing an industry representative to the South West Scotland Transport Partnership and contributing to the debate with the North Channel Partnership	ATP/DGC
Raise the quality of the tourism product across the region, recognising that 'Tourism is Everyone's Business'	By focusing on quality assured businesses or those working towards quality assurance; by sharing examples of best practice; by ensuring that the region offers 'the total package' to visitors by working with retail outlets, transport providers and entertainment businesses	VS/ATP/SEDG
Improve Access to the Countryside	By supporting the development of coastal and inland path facilities, the 7stanes, the Southern Upland Way and national and local cycle routes	All agencies
Continue to raise the standards of customer service within the tourism sector		SEDG/VS/ATP
Broaden the range of accommodation and products across the area and make it easier to find out what is available and to book accommodation	Through product development and increased use of ICT and e-business	SEDG/VS/ATP

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead
Improve the tourism signposting across Dumfries & Galloway	Review the Dumfries & Galloway Tourism Signposting Strategy to ensure up to date and accurate signage and an achievable programme of maintenance	DGC/VS/ATP

APPENDIX 1

Tourism Framework for Change Targets

TARGET 1 – By 2006, the Scottish Executive will establish a Tourism Research Network, involving the industry, culture and heritage organisations, the Enterprise Agencies, academics, local authorities and VisitScotland to ensure that appropriate research takes place, is disseminated appropriately and meaningfully to all stakeholders and is used to drive innovation and product enhancement.

Measure - Creation of Tourism Research Network and qualitative feedback on its operation.

TARGET 2 – Every tourism business, culture and heritage organisation and local authority will collect feedback from their own customers to help them ‘know their visitors’ – who they are, why they have come and what they want out of their trip – and use this to form their business strategies.

Measure – Culture and heritage organisations, local authorities and the Tourism Innovation Group will provide qualitative feedback about the collection of data and its impact. Feedback will also come from the Tourism Research Network, which will require this information to be submitted.

TARGET 3 – VisitScotland will increase the proportion of businesses in their Accommodation QA schemes to 90% by the end of 2008, develop and extend QA schemes for more sectors, and ensure that the QA scheme criteria are constantly reviewed to reflect changing and rising consumer expectations.

Measure – VisitScotland will report an increase in QA businesses, and will provide qualitative feedback on extensions and amendments to the scheme.

TARGET 4 – Pride and Passion will double the number of ‘Friends’ each year until 2010, with each friend making a commitment to improving the quality of their product and to passing on the quality message to others.

Measure – Pride and Passion will register over 3,000 ‘Friends’ by 2010.

TARGET 5 – To help managers and business owners, People 1st will work with government and education to ensure industry has the opportunity to get the skills industry needs. People 1st will develop a Training Action Plan (TAP) which will focus on three areas identified in the research and at the Skills Summits as crucial to the competitiveness strategy of Scottish tourism. These are:

- Management and Leadership;
- Workforce skills especially customer service and chef skills; and
- Retention – of staff within businesses and within the industry as a whole.

Our aspiration is that this will result in year-on-year improvement in staff satisfaction (working towards 80% by 2015) and customer satisfaction (working towards 90% by 2015), leading to year-on-year improvement in productivity.

Measure – People 1st will report on the creation and implementation of the Training Action Plan, and its outcomes. All agencies involved in the development of people and skills will report a year-on-year improvement in staff satisfaction (working towards 80% by 2015) and customer satisfaction (working towards 90% by 2015), leading to year-on-year improvement in productivity.

TARGET 6 – The Scottish Executive will help provide affordable homes in places where they are needed most. This will include £1.2 billion of direct investment in affordable housing over 3 years, a shared equity home ownership scheme, and a massive investment programme to address infrastructure shortages.

Measure - The Scottish Executive to provide over 16,500 social rented homes and nearly 5,000 low-cost homes over the period 2005-06 to 2007-08.

TARGET 7 – The Tourism Innovation Group will foster collaborative working between tourism operators, encouraging them to use innovation tools to come up with creative ideas. TIG, groups of tourism businesses and trade associations such as ASVA will work with local authorities, the Enterprise Agencies and VisitScotland to spot emerging trends of visitor needs and plan the product and sectoral development needed to meet them. Culture and heritage organizations will also develop new activities and experiences in response to emerging markets. The result will be an increased propensity to return and to recommend Scotland as a great destination.

Measure – Visitor propensity to return to Scotland and to recommend Scotland as a great destination will increase. TIG, ASVA, Enterprise Agencies, VisitScotland and culture and heritage organizations will provide qualitative feedback on product development.

TARGET 8 – Tourism businesses will work with local authorities and culture, heritage and sport organisations to set up local product development networks for the heritage, history and events segment of the market. These networks will develop and market, with VisitScotland support, new products which anticipate and exceed visitor demands, and as a result increase the number of visitors to Scotland. EventScotland will contribute to this target by attracting and marketing major events which meet changing visitor demands.

Measure – The Area Tourism Partnerships will report back on establishment of Product Development Networks. Number of visitors will increase. Product Development Networks and EventScotland will provide qualitative feedback.

TARGET 9 – By 2010 every tourism business – including those operated by public and voluntary sectors – will be using e-technology to maximize sales and improve the visitor experience (from internet booking to e-marketing to hand-held e-guides), and will continue beyond 2010 to improve the e-service they provide.

Measure – Scottish Tourism Forum will provide evidence that all tourism businesses are using e-technology effectively by 2010. STF will provide qualitative feedback on progress each year.

TARGET 10 – The Scottish Executive and VisitScotland will study how best to develop a National Box Office which will provide online booking of performances, and prompt parallel online purchase of linked products such as travel tickets.

Measure – The Scottish Executive and VisitScotland will provide qualitative feedback on development of National Box Office.

TARGET 11 - The Scottish Executive will publish a National Transport Strategy in 2006 which will consider all modes of travel and the needs of everyone using transport, including visitors. Consideration of our future transport infrastructure needs will be addressed by the Strategic Projects Review which will begin by 2006. The Scottish Executive will also undertake specific research into the travel behavior of visitors to Scotland and will consider any actions arising from this research which will improve the visitor experience.

Measure – Our National Transport Strategy will be completed in 2006, and will set the context for the Strategic Projects Review which is to follow. The research project will be completed by spring 2006.

TARGET 12 – Tourism businesses, culture and heritage organizations, local authorities, VisitScotland and visitscotland.com will use effective marketing techniques to increase the number of visitors who come to Scotland as a direct result of marketing.

Measure – Number of visitors who come to Scotland as a direct result of marketing will increase. VisitScotland will report on Return on Investment and visitscotland.com will report on conversion rates. The Scottish Tourism Forum and culture and heritage organizations will report back on where their customers heard about them – from customer feedback.

TARGET 13 – Tourism Businesses and VisitScotland will increase the membership of the Green Tourism Business Scheme each year, so that by 2010 30% of businesses who participate in the VisitScotland QA scheme are also at entry level or above. Our aspiration is to have all QA tourism businesses – including those operated by the public and voluntary sectors – at least entry level by 2015.

Measure – Membership of Green Tourism Business Scheme will increase year on year.

TARGET 14 – A Sustainable Tourism Partnership will be set up from March 2006, building on the Tourism Environment Forum, to promote sustainable tourism throughout Scotland. This will involve private industry partners, as well as organizations such as VisitScotland, the Enterprise Networks, local authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland and the National Parks.

Measure – Establishment of Sustainable Tourism Partnership and qualitative feedback on its work.

APPENDIX 2

Members of the Dumfries & Galloway Area Tourism Partnership

Name	Representing	Email
Mr Gordon Hood	Chairman	wallamhill@aol.com
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Mr Mark Hannay	Caravan Parks	mark@hannay.freeserve.co.uk
Mrs Liz Chambers	Self Catering	mail@nunland.co.uk
Mr Tom Gillespie	Chamber of Commerce	evelyn@gillespie-leisure.co.uk
Mr Rab Smith	Retailers Association	rabsmithuk@aol.com
Mr Ian McLatchie	Scottish License Trade Association	imclatchie@hotmail.com
Mrs Delia Holland	VisitScotland	Delia.Holland@visitscotland.com
Mr Tony Fitzpatrick	Dumfries & Galloway Council	TonyF@dumgal.gov.uk
Louise Vickers	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway	Louise.Vickers@scotent.co.uk
Ms Lynn Walker	Scottish Natural Heritage	lynn.walker@snh.gov.uk
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Councillor Joan Mitchell	Elected Local Authority Member	JoanM@dumgal.gov.uk
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<u>Observers</u>		
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Sandi Hellowell	VisitScotland	sandi.hellowell@visitscotland.com

APPENDIX 3

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY AREA TOURISM PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN 2006-2009

Objective 1: To assist the industry to better understand their market, to monitor their performance and to maximise the use of modern technology

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
1.1 Work to understand our visitor better and recognise how we can exceed expectations	Contribute more effectively to data collection schemes such as the Accommodation Occupancy Survey and Visitor Attraction Monitor	ATP Sub Group/VS		Increase numbers contributing by 50% by March 2008	2
	Undertake annual visitor satisfaction survey, review feedback, assess service delivery and introduce changes as appropriate on annual basis	VS		75% of visitors to D&G satisfied/very satisfied with their visit experience	2
1.2 Develop an Information Strategy for Tourism in D&G (Industry, Partners and Consumer)	Undertake an audit of existing visitor information & communication methods and develop a strategy based on the findings	VS		Agreed Strategy in place by December 2008	2
	Undertake an audit of existing industry/partners information & communication methods and develop a strategy based on the findings	DGC/VS/SEDG		Agreed Strategy in place by April 2008	2
1.3 Provide support to enable tourism businesses in the area to maximise the use of technology to gather and process information effectively and to take on-line bookings		VS/SEDG/DGC			

Objective 2: To maximise our natural resources in an integrated and sustainable way

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
2.1 Encourage tourism businesses & the wider community to work together to package key products	Identify key product groupings (e.g. Nature Based Tourism, Food etc)	VS/SEDG		6 Product Development Network groups in place with operational plans to support future activity by September 2007	8
	Facilitate the formation of Product Development Networks based around the key products & highlight opportunities to lever Funding	VS/SEDG			8
2.2 Contribute to the consultation on the potential for a D&G Marine National Park	Organise meeting to inform & consult with ATP	DGC/SEDG		Meeting held December 06	8
	Communicate the outcomes of the consultation and any actions to the wider tourism industry	ATP		Consultation January 2007	
	Support identified activity as appropriate	ATP		ATP Position paper outlining future activity – April 2007	
2.3 Contribute to the debate on the potential for a Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve	Organise meeting to inform & consult with ATP	SNH	SNH/LEADER+	Meeting held February 2007	14
	Communicate the outcomes of the consultation and any actions to the wider tourism industry	ATP		Consultation March 2007	

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
	Support identified activity as appropriate			ATP position paper outlining future activity – May 2007	
2.4 Raise awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism in Dumfries & Galloway	Encourage businesses to undertake environmental improvements (energy, water and waste management)	SEDG		Increase number by 10% year on year	14
	Encourage businesses to join the GTBS	VS		Increase number by 10% year on year	13

Objective 3: To continue to raise awareness of Dumfries & Galloway through effective marketing

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
3.1 Develop the Natural Place brand and effective communication of key messages to all stakeholders	2 Brand Workshops for key partners	VS		2 Workshops delivered by March 2007	12
3.2 Attract & retain visitors by maximising national and local VisitScotland promotions to boost occupancy	Develop 2 seasonal campaigns and an all year programme of visitor communications by email & post	VS	VS	ROI: 1:15	12
3.3 Continue to market to raise awareness of local tourism products to local residents and to visitors	Develop an annual marketing plan based on resources available to identify opportunities to support industry initiatives to showcase local products and Services e.g. D&G shop	VS	VS and all agencies	Coverage achieved.	12
	Provide monthly D&G product news and updates to the national niche portfolio and consumer PR teams. 2 press visits annually 1 on-pack food promotion in 2007-01-12 monthly e-updates to industry			12 updates per year 2 press trips/articles annually Initiative achieved by Dec 07 12 updates per year	
	Create a shop window for local D&G produce	DGC	DGC	Outlet in operation by April 2008	
3.4 Co-ordinate local partnership marketing activity, working collaboratively to maximise resources	Programme of partner & industry workshops to share market intelligence and develop ideas linking USPs & activities/facilities	VS		2 workshops delivered by April 2007	7 & 12

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
	6 joint campaigns – wildlife/NBT, walking, cycling, gardens, golf & events/culture	VS		6 joint campaigns delivered ROI: 15:1	
	7stanes marketing and Galloway Ranger newspaper promoting the Galloway Forest Park and private sector attractions in the area	FCS			
3.5 Develop new/build on existing Cross-boundary initiatives	2 initiatives such as Biker Tourism trial with N.I. and Homecoming with South of Scotland partners	VS/DGC		Project Plans in place by June 2007	7

Objective 4: Build on existing successes & Maximise our Natural Assets

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
4.1 Undertake an audit of activities from Tourism Strategy 2001-2006	Identify activities which are complete and those which still require further implementation Add further activity to Action Plan 2007-2009	ATP		Actions agreed and added to Partnership Plan by end March 2007	
4.2 Support key regeneration projects which will contribute to the economic success and the 50% growth ambition for tourism in the region	Identify appropriate tourism support for projects identified within the 5 year Economic Plan and the South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy – Stranraer Waterfront, Gretna/ Lockerbie/Annan and Dumfries Town Centre	Local Economic Forum DGC/SEDG/VS		Ongoing	8
4.3 Further develop the profile of the area as a rural cultural centre focusing on the arts, culture and heritage	Work closely with DGAA and other appropriate businesses to ensure we maximise on national and local opportunities	ATP/DGAA			
4.4 Continue to support the Theme Town initiatives	Work with tourism businesses to develop their product and enhance their marketing expertise	SEDG/VS			
4.5 Continue support for maintenance & evolution of successful initiatives	Work closely with partners on initiatives such as 7stanes & Red Kite Trail	ATP			

Objective 5: Improve the Quality and Range of the Visitor Experience

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
5.1 Support the development of events and festivals which have a positive economic impact on the region	Actively support the aims and objectives of the DGC Festivals and Major Events Strategy (FAME) by identifying 3 national opportunities which will benefit tourism in the region Maximise Homecoming 2009	Events Partnership		Project plans in Place by June 2007 Project Team in place April 2007 Project Office/Plan in place June 2007	8
	Monitor & evaluate the effectiveness of these opportunities	DGC/VS		ROI Minimum 10:1	
	Use results of the evaluation to inform further activity post 2007	ATP/Events Partnership		Results incorporated into FAME strategy post 2009	
5.2 Raise awareness of the importance of a warm welcome to D&G and encourage local people to be proud and passionate ambassadors of D&G	By working with Pride and Passion, Springboard, schools and communities to encourage local people to be proud and passionate ambassadors for D&G	ATP		4 workshops held by September 2007	4
	Introduce a 'pride in your community' award scheme	ATP		Scheme in place by December 2007	
	Promote the uptake by the industry of 100K Welcomes	ATP			
5.3 Lobby for an improved and integrated transport system in	ATP to appoint a representative to the South West Scotland Transport Partnership – to take forward ATP	ATP		Level of visitor satisfaction	

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
Dumfries & Galloway	position and report back to ATP ATP to contribute to the debate with the North Channel Partnership				
5.4 Raise the quality of the product across the region recognising that 'Tourism is Everyone's Business'	Focus support on Quality Assured businesses or those working towards Quality Assurance (where scheme is available)	VS		750 Quality Assured Businesses in D&G by December 2009	3
	Encourage businesses to be the best they possibly can within the star grading thereby exceeding customer expectations	VS/ATP		5% increase in grading scores overall by December 2009	3
	Investigate ways of sharing current examples of best practice			Development of portfolio of case studies by December 2007	
	Explore ways of working more effectively with the broader tourism industry – retail, entertainment and transport	ATP		Proposal in place by April 2008	
5.5 Improve Access to the Countryside	Support the development of coastal & inland path facilities and ensure sustainability of 7stanes trails after EU funding ceases in 2007	DGC/SNH		Strategy in place by 2008. Core path network identified and published	8
	Develop the Southern Upland Way as a world class walking experience	SUW Partnership		80 businesses along the SUW to be in Quality Assurance by Dec 2008	8

What we will do	How we will deliver	Who will lead	Funding	Measure	TFFC Target
	Support the development of national and local cycle routes	DGC/FCS/SNH			8
5.6 Continue to raise the standards of customer service within the tourism sector					
5.7 Broaden the range of accommodation and products across the area and make it easier to find out what is available and to book accommodation					
5.8 Improve the tourism signposting across Dumfries & Galloway	By reviewing the Dumfries & Galloway Tourism Signposting Strategy to ensure up to date and accurate signage and an achievable maintenance programme.	DGC/VS		New strategy/maintenance programme in place by December 2007	2