



COMMUNITY ACTION DACORUM

(WORKING NAME OF DACORUM COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE)

STRATEGIC PLAN

2019 - 2022

Registered Charity No. 288080

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Our Vision:

Our Vision is for Community Action Dacorum to be recognised throughout our region as a leading provider of community services and projects of the highest quality, efficiency and value.

Our Mission:

Our Mission is to improve the quality of life and well-being of our community by working constructively with individuals and organisations to overcome the barriers they face,

Our Core Values and Beliefs:

We believe that Community Organisations play a vital role in an inclusive society. We aim to achieve this by: -

- Listening to and respecting others' ideas and aspirations;
- Giving everyone the right to equality of opportunity and the chance to make a contribution;
- Committing to quality in all that we do and emphasising throughout our activities that quality matters;
- Bringing people and organisations together to achieve more;
- Encouraging the widespread participation of volunteers in the organisation and leadership of all our activities and Business Units;
- Working always in an ethical and responsible manner;
- Responding to the need for change in a timely and responsible way.
- Seeking to develop new initiatives which address developing social needs.

Strategic Initiative 1 – Developing Our Service Provision

Building on our well-established record of delivering services to meet identified community needs, in consultation with our customers and other stakeholders, we will seek to enhance and expand our range of services and, where appropriate, adopt new initiatives to address perceived changes in social trends. We will especially aim to use our particular areas of expertise to enact positive change by: -

- Developing the range of support services offered to the voluntary sector including the integration of the recruitment and management of volunteers and the communication of opportunities available through the provision of newsletters, our website and Radio Dacorum
- Addressing language barriers through the expansion of HITS services, the training of interpreters and the provision of ESOL courses
- Contributing to health and well-being issues and tackling equality and diversity barriers through the Repair Shed, Adult Learning Courses and supporting Dacortium
- Promoting lifelong learning opportunities by the provision of suitable European projects such as the Erasmus+ programme and other appropriate training and personal development packages
- Reducing mobility, loneliness and isolation barriers through the provision and further development of Shopmobility and Community Transport services
- Supporting residents into or towards employment by offering appropriate training and language improvement opportunities
- Increasing cross-sector partnership working and encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility through Connect Dacorum and related projects

Strategic Initiative 2 – Tender Strategy and Winning Recurring Bids

- We will seek to continue to pitch for business mostly in the Public and Voluntary sectors, focussing primarily on Public sector organisations, charitable trusts, community organisations and similar organisations requiring our services.
- We will develop and implement a bid strategy and criteria aimed at ensuring we always provide high quality services which are financially viable and effective.
- Where appropriate we will tender for contracts in association or partnership with other like-minded and/or suitable organisations or where we are approached by other such organisations to take over provision of their services or activities.
- We will analyse ways to increase profit margins on all bids and contracts so that their financial viability and sustainability is undoubted.
- We will seek to improve the visibility of all tenders submitted.
- With regard to the renewal of the HITS Contracts we will: -
 - Seek to renew the contract at a profitable and sustainable level.
 - Develop a bidding strategy aimed at ensuring that our bid is competitive and successful.
 - Ensure that the existing KPIs are comprehensively met in the run up to the renewal date.

Strategic Initiative 3 – Information Technology Strategy

We will design and implement a strategy for our IT systems aimed at: -

- Continuing to simplify and streamline our work processes
- Enabling the staff to carry out their jobs efficiently and effectively
- Enhancing customer experience through the use of new technologies
- Providing comprehensive and reliable management information
- Ensuring that all systems and data are maintained securely with appropriate levels of back up and protection against unauthorised access
- Identifying current systems which need to be updated/replaced by Q1 2019/20.

Strategic Initiative 4 – Marketing Strategy

We will develop a Marketing and Promotional strategy aimed at: -

- Making our name better known to the local community
- Promoting greater awareness throughout the local community of the range of services we are able to provide and the variety of projects we undertake
- Implementing the Marketing Plan already in the process of preparation by Q2 2019/20 involving: -
 - Implementing a standard naming convention throughout the organisation
 - Redesigning our website
 - Allocating resources to implement improved and consistent communication programmes
 - Leveraging the Roundhouse asset to achieve our marketing objectives

Strategic Initiative 5 – Human Relations Strategy

We value the vital contribution all trustees, staff and volunteers make to the success and viability of the Charity. We will aim to recognise and enhance this by: -

- Seeking to ensure that our terms and conditions and remuneration package are competitive in terms of our market sector in so far as the financial viability of the Charity permits
- Seeking innovative additional ways in which to reward both staff and volunteers outside the remuneration package
- Implementing a training and development programme aimed at keeping all trustees, staff and volunteers up to date, enabling them to develop their skills and expertise, and increase their contribution and value to the organisation
- Recognising that people work in different ways and reflecting this in providing a legally compliant, safe and flexible working environment
- Developing a suitable Health and Well-being policy
- Adopting a fair, transparent and ethically responsible policy for the recruitment of all trustees, staff and volunteers
- Developing a succession plan for all key trustee and management posts
- Seeking to recruit additional suitable trustees to fill skill gaps at Board level and increase the diversity of Board membership
- Maximising wherever possible the participation of volunteers in the organisation and leadership of all Business Units enabling them to fully utilise their strengths and aptitude
- Implementing a regular, open and transparent communication and consultation programme to keep all our people informed and involved in the ongoing development of the Charity
- Encouraging team working and agreeing principles as to how this can best be improved
- Utilising where appropriate recognised external quality standards to ensure our HR policies conform to best practice in our market sector

Strategic Initiative 6 – Fundraising Strategy

We will develop a Fundraising Strategy to supplement operational revenue by Q2 2019/20 aimed at: -

- Providing funds for the required acquisition, improvement and replacement of fixed assets
- Seeking new funding streams where our areas of expertise can provide new opportunities
- Developing and seeking sponsorship arrangements for the provision of some services where appropriate
- Conducting all commercial trading and services and organisation-wide fundraising through our wholly-owned subsidiary company, DCVS Trading Limited
- Encouraging individual business units to undertake limited local fundraising to support their own operations

Strategic Initiative 7 – Financial Strategy & Forecast

- We will aim to generate an operational surplus regarded as sufficient to run the business of at least £50,000 in each of the three financial years of the plan
- All Business Units will be expected to generate sufficient income to cover all their direct costs and make at least some contribution to overheads unless they are specifically exempted by the Board of Directors on the grounds that their activities are regarded as essential to the achievement of our charitable objectives.
- All financial targets in the Plan will be based on the consolidated figures of the Charity and its subsidiary/subsidiaries unless otherwise specified.
- We will take appropriate steps as necessary aimed at minimising or mitigating any detrimental impact of Brexit on the benefits generated by our involvement in European projects.
- We will set financial targets for each financial year of the Plan shortly before the beginning of that financial year in the light of the business, economic and political circumstances prevailing at the time
- For Financial Year 2019/20 we will aim to: -
 - Reinvest at least 10% of any surplus back into the business
 - Seek to build up and maintain our free cash reserves so that the level is within the target range set by the Board of Directors in our Reserves Policy.
 - Increase prices at or above the rate of inflation
 - Designate funds for capital expenditure to execute our strategic initiatives
 - Identify future opportunities for business development consistent with our charitable objectives
 - Review our portfolio mix in order to seek increased profits
 - Identify areas of non-operational funding

Key Performance Indicators

To be determined

SWOT Analysis _ Appendix 1

STRENGTHS

- **Highly Capable, Professional and Experienced Senior Management Team**
- **Loyal, Committed and Capable Staff**
- **Informed, professionally qualified and commercially minded Directors/Trustees engaged with Organisation**
- **Excellent body of volunteers**
- **Stable and Viable Financial Position**
- **Although we would wish to see them greater, we currently have an acceptable level of Reserves following sale of 7 Marlowes**
- **Good Management Information which is fit for purpose**
- **Good Relationship and Strong Reputation with DBC and HCC**
- **Well regarded in the Charitable, Third Sector and Public Sector communities for offering wide-ranging and diverse professional services and as a centre for help and advice**
- **Good contacts with local businesses via Connect Dacorum**
- **Good networking with other charities and partners**
- **Experienced at finding sources of funding**
- **High quality expertise in a number of specific specialist fields**
- **Good project management skills**

WEAKNESSES

- **Dependent on HITS and European Projects success for continued sustainability**
- **Significant loss of income from HITS and/or European Projects would have worrying impact on financial position**
- **Not all Business Units as well managed as they could be at line manager level**
- **Number of direct reportees to Senior Managers could be considered too great**
- **Lack of professional marketing, PR and promotional skills in both charity and Board**
- **Gaps in Board/Trustee skills, diversity and experience**
- **Younger/new blood needed among Board/Trustees**
- **Insufficient succession and contingency planning for key Board and Senior Management personnel and posts**
- **Insufficient time and money spent on training to strengthen and update management and business skills in both Trustees and staff**
- **Limited staff and other resources to enable us to cover the wide range of activities in which we are involved**
- **Lack of synergy/cross-selling by Business Units who do not always look for opportunities to work together**
- **Business Units too insular**
- **Insufficient fundraising and sponsorship etc**
- **Promotion of CAD as a brand inadequate and confused promotional strategy**
- **Volunteers not always utilised enough especially in regard to their strengths**
- **Not all Business Units fully covering their fully absorbed costs**
- **Need for a sustainable replacement programme for fixed assets, especially mini buses**
- **Lack of IT Strategy**
- **Reporting relationship between new Trading Board and Charity Board and Committees requires definition**

OPPORTUNITIES

- Synergy/Cross-selling can be exploited across all business units
- Strengthen Brand Image of CAD by implementing Promotional strategy
- Roundhouse provides good chance to develop into Information Centre to promote all services
- Even more volunteers could be recruited and utilised more widely within the Charity following takeover of VCD
- Could develop or offer more of our services over a wider geographical area by spreading into neighbouring towns and counties, either alone or in partnership with others
- Links to local businesses could be exploited more extensively for sponsorship, support, fundraising and recruitment of volunteers
- Could develop better fundraising skills and systems in-house to reduce dependence on contract and grant income
- Could exploit Radio Dacorum more for fundraising, promotion etc
- Build relationships with favourably disposed groups to raise profile and funds for specific projects
- Implement Campaign to recruit more users/clients for Community Transport and Shopmobility
- Exploit opportunities for interpretation and translation requirements in private sector as a part of the drive for increased international trade post Brexit
- If there is a Brexit deal with EU, could apply for increased funding under Erasmus+ 2020/27 project
- Seek improved internal efficiencies in some areas (currently staff costs = activity costs)

THREATS

- Commissioning/Tendering for Contracts increasingly replacing Grants as part of the Public Sector relationship with the third sector following continued Public Sector financial cutbacks
- New commercial entrants seeking to offer many of our traditional services providing increased competition
- Brexit likely to reduce European projects opportunities and income therefrom in the longer term
- Any detrimental impact of Brexit on the economy and public finances as a whole may affect the charity sector significantly
- Loss of funding revenue through decisions taken politically over which we have no control
- Downward trend in Shopmobility activity may continue especially if High Street activity/footfall continues to decline
- Working practices and investment may not improve sufficiently or quickly enough to keep pace with the times and the competition, especially in the use of IT and removal of paper
- Squeeze on HITS margins may continue resulting in reduced profit
- Artificial Intelligence and other IT systems likely to provide increased competition to replace HITS services in longer term
- Increased regulation of charities by the Authorities
- A major HITS problem or loss of contract could make the whole organisation vulnerable