



Plan for Neighbourhoods

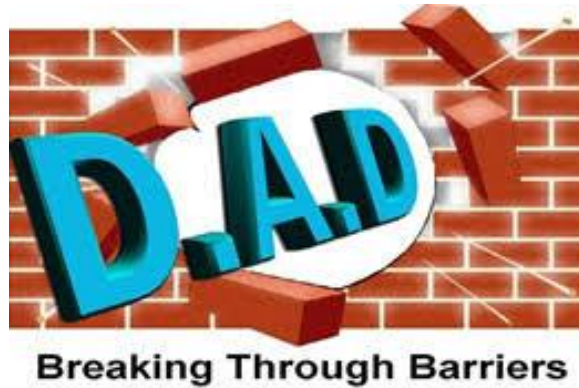
**Community Engagement
Summer 2025**

Community Engagement

- Undertake meaningful engagement to ensure local communities are central to Plan for Neighbourhoods.
- Building trust and empowering the local community requires consistency, dedication and time, and evidence that people's priorities have been acted upon.
- Plan for Neighbourhoods encourages partnership working with localised groups and organisations.
- An engagement strategy was developed & a focus group was formed with our local VCS partners as a lead.
- All engagement to be completed by mid October.

Delivery Plan

- Working with the VCS a plan for community engagement was agreed.
- Darlington Connect would lead the delivery.
- Supported by five VCS organisations.




Survey

- A survey monkey style questionnaire had already been finalised to identify the barriers that people face to being included in their communities.
- Additions & amendments were made to include the Plan for Neighbourhoods community engagement questions.
- Key elements:
 - Neighbourhood location – ward/postcode
 - What people liked about where they live
 - What would they change/add to their neighbourhood
 - Concerns & issues – related to ASB, employment & skills
 - Demographics
 - Incentive - £250 single draw prize!

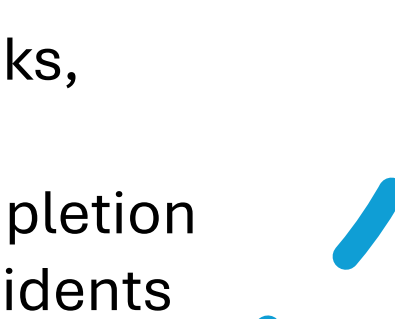
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Events – Market Square

- DBC timetable of Market Square events
 - Free merchandise
 - Attended a total of 18 events with a wide range of audiences
 - Darlington by the Sea
 - GOLD Tea Dance
 - Misfits Market
 - Folklore Festival
 - S&DR 26 Mile Event
 - Additional event – Cockerton Community Carnival
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Events – Community Based

- Targeted events in the five identified areas:
 - Bank top – Eastbourne Community Hub, Eastbourne Park
 - Branksome – Wyvern Academy
 - Northgate – Corporation Road School
 - Red Hall – Red Hall Community Centre
 - Skerne Park – Skerne Park Youth & Community Centre
 - Motorised bouncy cars, mini golf, arts & crafts, sports, games
 - Refreshments - hot and cold drinks, finger snacks, fruit
 - Incentives for questionnaire completion
 - Opportunity for dialogue with residents
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Events – Bespoke

- Working with DAD we were able to offer a series of bespoke events:
 - Completion of the survey in resident's homes
 - Learning Impairment network & drop ins
 - Independent Living Hub
 - Independent Living Forum
 - Information sent to all parent/carers via DASH playscheme social media
 - Darlington Social Club for the Blind & Visually impaired, supported with completion of the survey & provision of alternative formats for screen reader users
 - Promoted via Talking Newspaper
 - Visits to four care homes in the designated neighbourhoods
 - Social worker for sensory impairment - promotion of the survey & available support to complete
 - Visit made to Darlington Deaf Club, provided surveys with the offer of a BSL signed session.

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Events – Alternatives

- Organisations in the targeted areas have been approached directly to support survey promotion & completion
 - Darlington Mosque
 - Parkside Nursery
 - Sheltered Housing Schemes
 - Pop Up – Cockerton Village
 - Possible Northlodge Park event



Survey

- In addition to the face-to-face support
- Survey translated into 7 different languages
- Easy Read version made available
- QR code was used to enable people to complete online
- Staff at events supported completion
- 52,788 surveys have been posted to every household in Darlington, helping to ensure every resident is given the opportunity to provide their views & opinions about their neighbourhood
- Option to complete online or drop off at Darlington Connect

Advertising

- Requested support of ward councillors to promote via their networks & social media sites
- Request to schools within targeted areas to share on parent mail, social media sites, newsletters, etc
- DBC sites, Darlington Connect Facebook page, social media sites of partner organisations
- Shared on local community Facebook groups, such as 'You know you're from Darlo when' & area based social media sites
- Posters in local shops, community centres, etc.
- Leaflets in TBBT bags in targeted areas

Outcomes to date

- Excellent collaboration with the VCS sector, without their support none of this would have been possible, in such a short time frame
- 1466 surveys have been completed
- Delivery of the final surveys to residents 19th September
- Strong representation in relation to the demographic's of Darlington
- Common themes
 - Provision for young people
 - Locally based activities “where people live”
 - ASB – motorbike nuisance

What next...

- Community engagement will continue to evolve & feature throughout the life of Plan for Neighbourhoods
- Work will begin with Teesside University to analyse findings to support the regeneration plan
- Findings will create foundations for further specific themed engagement in each area
- Findings will also be used to support other areas of work across Darlington