



# Plan for Neighbourhoods

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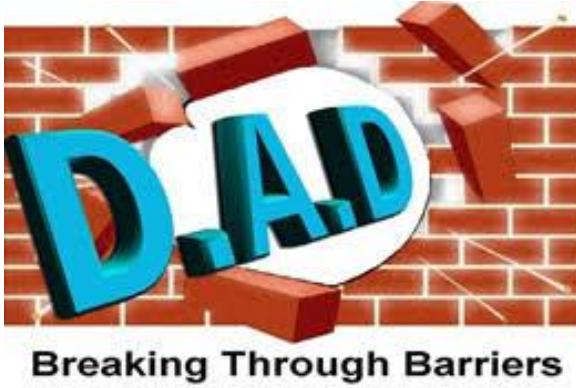
**Community Engagement  
Summer 2025**

# 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!

## 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

# 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

## 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.

## 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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