



# Love your Neighbourhood: “Could this week get any better?” ...

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## Summary

*Love Your Neighbourhood* offers the possibility of a measurable approach to community interventions, where benchmarks for individual communities can be established across multiple domains of deprivation and measured over a long term basis to evidence intervention impact. It does this by drawing on several relevant data sources, to identify specific community needs. The Neighbourhood Action Team then enlist the support of relevant professionals whose services match the identified needs of residents in a large, multi-professional *Love Your Neighbourhood* event as a way to engage with and tackle relevant issues.

This rationale is a product of Dacorum's recognition that single agencies alone do not have the skills or the resources to support residents' needs, especially as the demand for Dacorum Borough Council's services has grown dramatically.

Within the constraints of austerity for local government, this approach to community development delivers value for money and fundamentally tangible outcomes for residents.

In February 2015, the Neighbourhood Action team piloted the Love your Neighbourhood approach in the Highfield community. 5 days of events were held, each dedicated to a specific need identified through analysis of data, and these were;

- Health and Wellbeing
- Making Ends Meet
- Community Safety
- Employability and Upskilling
- Community Celebration

Service providers from across the borough were invited to attend the events offering residents free activities and information about their services. Highfield was selected by Neighbourhood Action as the pilot area for *Love Your Neighbourhood* as it is ranked the 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived ward in Hertfordshire. However this approach can be used in all wards as it focuses specifically on each community's needs.

### **Overall the objectives of Love your Neighbourhood events are to:**

1. reduce barriers for residents within their communities
2. increase opportunities for residents by encouraging effective partnership working between the Council and other service providers
3. create an approach for community development that is both value for money and relevant to all residents in the borough at meeting need

The event cost £5.45 per person per event. This is highly dependent outgoings vs. attendances meaning future events could vary in cost in comparison. However, future plans to

## Attendance

Event Day	Adult Attendance	Child Attendance	
Health and Wellbeing	38	53	
Making Ends Meet	19	16	
Community Safety	27	60	
Employability and Upskilling	17	60	
Community Celebration Day	89	162	
<b>Total Attendance for the Week</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>399</b>

Total attendance for the week was 399 residents. The table indicates that other than the Community Celebration day, the most popular event day for adults was Health and Wellbeing whereas Community Safety and Employability and Upskilling were most popular for children.

## Outcomes of Love your Neighbourhood

### 1. Day 1 - Health and Wellbeing

The *Health and Wellbeing* day was heavily influenced by the Herts Valley CCG priorities for Dacorum. Service providers and activities included: Hertfordshire Health Walks, sexual health screening, various free exercise workshops, weight management advice and mental health advice for over 60's.

#### Outputs:

- 20 residents signed up for further information on the free physical activity classes provided by 'Get Set Go Dacorum'.
- 3 self-referrals to the family weight management programme starting in April
- 49 adults and children participated in the free exercise workshops

### 2. Day 2 - Making Ends Meet

The *Making ends Meet* had a number of organisations attending focussing on enabling residents to make their money go further. It included, A Citizens Advice Pop-up Shop, benefits entitlement, managing rent arrears, cooking on a budget, free child care entitlement and a community swap shop where residents could bring 5 items and swap them for anything that had already been donated.

#### Outputs

- 4 residents signed up to being involved in a community allotment project
- All residents who attended we taught how to make pizza for 24p, ingredients were provided and they were able to take this home along with a recipe

9 residents took part in the community Big Swap and were able to swap items they no longer needed for something different that had been donated to the event

### 3. Day 3 - Community Safety

The *Community Safety* day was joined up with an already established Council initiative 'Clean Safe Green'. Using the established Community Safety Partnership, the event offered residents

advice on Anti-Social Behaviour, fire safety, information on recycling, property management and crime prevention.

### **Outputs**

- 7 women approached Dacorum Refuge for advice on DV they were given 'Are you being abused' surveys and contact details for National Helplines and how to access refuge support
- 4 women shared their own experiencing of fleeing DV, their experiences
- 2 women were looking for volunteering opportunities with the refuge, 1 after experiencing DV herself. They were directed to other refuges that can take on volunteers
- 1 woman had been previously supported by the refuge and wanted to update them on her progress since leaving
- 1 woman asked for information to pass on to a friend she suspected was experiencing DV this was both physical and emotional abuse

Other Community Safety outputs include:

- 9 enquiries about joining the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- 8 Resident homes were fitted with front door safety chains
- 1 resident contacted us to say they will be updating their approach to home security as a result of the community safety day and that after speaking to the recycling team, they have started composting

## **4. Day 4 - Employability and Upskilling**

The *Employability and Upskilling* day event focused on a number of different strands to developing resident's skills. It looked at career progression, job applications, current vacancies, further education and volunteering opportunities. Additionally, there was a significant push on increasing the aspirations of the younger generation at this event. The 'When I grow up I want to be...' event encouraged children to draw themselves in their dream job. Other opportunities like cadets were also promoted.

A group of 7 residents and their children arrived at the event an hour before it started. They were invited in whilst setting up continued. The residents expressed the significance of such events being held during the holidays, as they felt there was very little to do in the area that was appropriate for the entire family.

### **Outputs**

- 1 application for work experience with Osbornes
- 9 residents enquired into further education courses with West Herts College, they were invited to the open event taking place in March 2015. Course enquiries included; Access to Nursing, Public Services, Child Care, Gym Instructor, Catering and Construction
- 52 entries were received for the 'When I group up I want to be...' Entries included; a vet, a painter, a plumber, a snowboarder, a zookeeper, an author, a hairdresser and a policeman.
- As mentioned, Dacorum Refuge had two residents approach wanting to volunteer; they were signposted to another refuge that took volunteers
- 1 young person signed up to Dacorum Borough Council's Young Action Entertainers
- 2 work experience students helping with the Love your Neighbourhood event, contributing to a college award

- 1 volunteering opportunity supporting the Love your Neighbourhood event

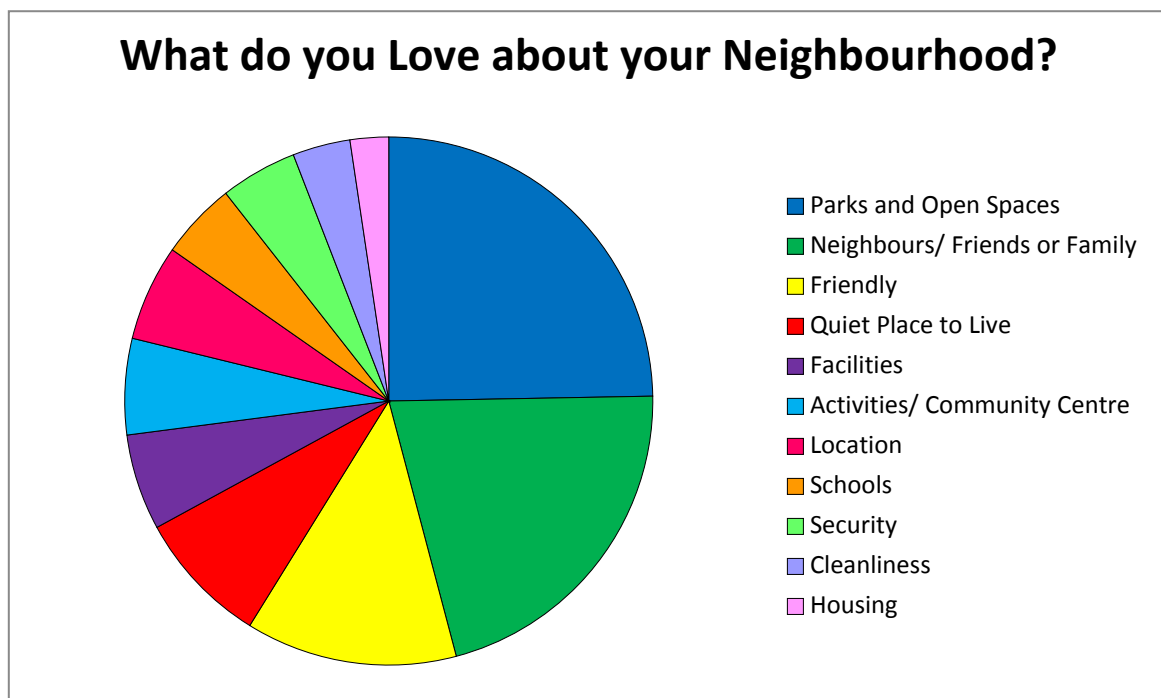
## 5. Day 5 - Community Celebration Day

The Community Celebration day offered residents the opportunity to celebrate where they lived and give feedback on the *Love Your Neighbourhood* event. The local food co-ordinator offered residents over 300 free planted herbs to take home and grow, there was also face painting, rides, stalls and competitions. Service providers from all days were offered the opportunity to attend the event.

Residents who attended stayed for the whole three hours, with many bringing picnics with them. This emphasised the community spirit created within the event.

One exercise carried out this day was a questionnaire on what residents loved about their Neighbourhood. Residents were able to write out post stick notes or dictate them to an officer. These were then displayed in the event entrance. A total of 85 comments were collected and categorised.

The pie chart shows the features residents at the *Love Your Neighbourhood* Community Celebration Day love most about their neighbourhood.



## Added Value – DBC Visibility and Positivity

One significant difference between *Love Your Neighbourhood* and previous Neighbourhood Action events is the promotion of the Council's 'brand'. Using the example of steering group meeting, issues are presented and solutions are debated among the group. As the sole focus is on issues, the majority of topics discussed have a negative impact on the attending resident's view of the Council, particularly when concerned with on-going issues or issues that remain unsolved. *Love Your Neighbourhood* also focusing on issues, but bypasses the sharing of specific

problems at the event simply providing a number of 'solutions' for residents to actively tap into. Therefore it promotes a more proactive Council. The use of fun and free family activities reinforces this message, and the access to a new demographic of residents, this being children, means that this positive perspective of the Council is influencing future generations of service users. Activities such as the Community Payback vote allowed residents to still have their say and feel they were making a difference to issues within the community.

The majority of feedback from residents, particularly those who were parents was to thank the Council for organising the event as it gave them a productive but also fun event to attend during the half term.

## **The Future of Love your Neighbourhood**

Love your Neighbourhood allows Neighbourhood Action to deliver successful and effective interventions in all areas of the borough.

For future events, Neighbourhood Planning Meetings will be set up and used as platforms for residents and Councillors within the community to contribute to the events. This input would allow true insight into their needs and will be pivotal in the Councils approach to co-designing services.

Key service providers will be asked to sit on an overarching board, securing their engagement with the community and again strengthening best practice and data collection at the events.

Events can be tailored to each community, allowing each area to choose between holding a large multi-agency event or smaller concentrated activities. We would continue to monitor any outcomes achieved by the Love your Neighbourhood approach.

Council services would continue to be promoted through events, with all departments being notified of upcoming events.