

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL



Communities Together

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

Claire Lynch
2010

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

SECTION	CONTENTS	PAGE	
1	Executive Summary	Pg 2	
	1.1 - National Indicators	Pg 2	
	1.2 - Main Issues demonstrated in Dacorum	Pg 3-4	
	1.3- Main factors contributing to positive outcomes	Pg 4	
	1.4 - How DBC Services contribute to Cohesion	Pg 6-8	
2	National Context	Pg 9	
3	Hertfordshire Context	Pg 10	
4	Dacorum Context	Pg 11	
5	Communities Together Pledge	Pg 11	
6	Launch Event for Communities Together Pledge	Pg 12-13	
7	Consultation		
	7.1 - Highfield Residents	Pg 14	
	7.2 - Grovehill Residents	Pg 15	
	7.3 - Indian Residents	Pg 16	
	7.4 - Bengali Residents	Pg 17	
	7.5 – General/ mixed focus group	Pg 18-19	
	7.6 - Teenagers	Pg 20	
	7.7 – Dacorum Card Users	Pg 21	
	7.8 - Local Strategic Partnership	Pg 22	
7.9 – Community Audit Questionnaire	Pg 23-27		
8	Case Study Evidence Base		
	8.1 - Schools	Pg 28	
	8.2 - Dacorum Borough Council	Pg 29-33	
	8.3 - Voluntary Sector	Pg 34-38	
9	Recommendations	Pg 39-42	
Appendix			
1.	Consultation with Heads of Service		
	1.1 Housing	Pg 44-45	
	1.2 Finance	Pg 46	
	1.3 Resources	Pg 47-48	
	1.4 Public Protection	Pg 49-50	
	2.	Community Cohesion Pledge – Small Group Feedback	Pg 51-55
		2.1 Session 1	
	2.2 Session 2		
	3.	Member Development Session – Small Group Feedback	Pg 56-57
		4. Poster for Communities Together Event	Pg 58
	5. Advertising Methods for Launch Event	Pg 59	
	6. Event Procedures	Pg 60-62	

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

1. Executive Summary

The Communities Together report sets out the local activities which contribute to community cohesion within Dacorum. It is accompanied by an investigation into perceptions of cohesion in Dacorum and recommendations for the 'next steps' in dealing with Cohesion in Dacorum.

One size does not fit all when addressing community cohesion; it is a complex issue which must reflect local circumstances. This document will form the basis of knowledge needed to proceed with the Community Cohesion agenda in Dacorum. Dacorum is a new town generally considered to be cohesive, however we have decided to be proactive in our approach. This report is therefore part of DBC's forward looking agenda. The research has demonstrated that there are still some barriers to cohesion which need to be addressed.

National and Local surveys, local statistics, case studies and consultation with residents, community groups, voluntary sector and heads of service at Dacorum Borough Council have been incorporated in a bid to develop a clear understanding of where the Borough currently stands in relation to Cohesion issues. The consultation involved voluntary and community organisations, local specialist interest groups, youth and elderly residents.

This information will inform recommendations about what further actions are needed and strengthen strategic direction around the area. From the findings we have strengthened our understanding of the diverse nature of the borough and have an improved understanding of the promising activities which have been occurring over the years and continue to go on within the area.

1.1 National Indicators

There are 3 National Indicators which are directly related to community cohesion although there are a number of other NI's that influence and have an effect on community cohesion

NI 1 – measures cohesion using the following question

How well do you agree that within your local area (about 15-20 minutes walking distance) people from different backgrounds get on well together?

The countywide score indicated that 81% of people agreed with this statement, the same figure is evident in Dacorum (81%).

NI 4 – Ability to Influence Decision Making

In 2009, 23% of the borough agreed that they could influence decision making locally. This is low by county and national standards. Dacorum has the lowest rate in the county where 27% of respondents agreed that they could influence decision making.

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

1.2 The main issues demonstrated in Dacorum are;

1.2.1 Intergenerational tensions

From the consultation we can conclude that there is a lack of opportunity for intergenerational mixing is likely to represent a key obstacle to community cohesion in Dacorum. This is partly the result of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and older people being fearful of younger people. However, youth have demonstrated a similar fear about older people particularly surrounding their behaviour when using alcohol. There is a severe lack of opportunity for young and old people to meet and engage in positive interaction with one another. A lack of understanding and respect between younger and older generations was seen as a key problem here, in addition to a perceived lack of positive activities for young people in the borough.

1.2.2 Youth Activities and Involvement

The most prominent concern of residents from all age groups was the lack of activities for youth in the borough. Whilst provision of youth work is a County Council function the Borough Council could take a lead in developing leisure activities through existing programmes such as 'Neighbourhood Action'. The belief is that there should be more involvement from the council to encourage youth groups to be set up, help co-ordinate and organise activities that would then be run by volunteers from within the community. It was also emphasised that more training may be needed for residents to help them fulfil the tasks that the council needs them to carry out. In addition youth are seldom involved in any decision making process and their views are by all means excluded, they are no doubt the 'silent voice' within Dacorum Borough.

1.2.3 Perceptions of the Gypsy and Traveller Community

Dacorum has two traveller sites; one is situated in Hemel Hempstead and the other in Tring. The former sparks tensions between the local community and between the travellers themselves. Residents from the local area and the travellers live divergent lives where there is no willingness or option of positive interaction. Many local residents have formed negative opinions of the travellers which are often based on the negative actions of a minority of travellers. All of the people on the site are then tarred with the same brush. Further tensions have arisen due to the need to locate a new traveller pitch. Extensive consultation has been carried out however no resolution has been reached due to a change in Government policy.

1.2.4 Disparities in wealth distribution

Dacorum is a relatively prosperous borough however like many areas there are some pockets of deprivation. Particular tensions arise between the 'have' and 'have not's' who often lead parallel lives with no opportunity of positive interaction. The socio-economic well-being of individuals is often a pre-requisite for cohesion; deprivation can lead to competition for public services, welfare, investment, jobs and housing. Deprived groups are less likely to engage positively with their local

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

community because of a lack of opportunity to do so, and more immediate demands in terms of meeting their basic needs.

1.2.5 Rural Areas

The geographical makeup of Dacorum can cause difficulties especially where villages are concerned. There is widespread belief among adults and youth alike that a lot of activities are geared towards Hemel Hempstead excluding the villages. Poor transport links to many of the villages has also been highlighted as a problem and leads to residents feeling excluded from the wider community.

1.2.6 Awareness of Activities & Communication

Although there are many areas where Dacorum performs well in partnership there are many opportunities that are not being utilised to their fullest potential. Many activities are going on in isolation and are particularly insular in their approach; this could be rectified if people were given appropriate training and were encouraged to think of possible links before proceeding with a project. This would ensure the best use of resources and promote community cohesion. In addition a variety of activities often occur with minimal participation from residents, there appears to be a break down in communication between DBC and residents which would ensure the correct audiences are targeted for particular activities.

1.3 The main factors contributing to positive outcomes;

Although some negative factors have been identified it is essential that we highlight the positive factors impacting on community cohesion in the borough. The majority of residents (81%) in the borough feel that Dacorum is a place where people of different background get on well together (Place survey 2008).

There is a strong network and links to many of the faith and hard to reach groups. During the consultation period it became evident that many of the residents including those for whom English is not their first language are content to participate in the activities already supplied through their community leaders and do not feel at all excluded despite not interacting with every other community in the Borough.

1.3.1 Third Sector

Dacorum has a thriving third sector, the passion and drive of local charities has been immensely successful in improving the quality of life of local residents and developing neighbourhoods. These agencies have proven to be particularly flexible in adapting and developing their services to meet the needs of the local community as a result there is a wide range of organisations to support the diverse needs of specific groups in the borough. The activities undertaken by specific charities receive support from the Council via core funding however this is now under review.

1.3.2 Partnership working

Positive partnerships exist within Dacorum between the council, third sector and other statutory organisations. Partnership working is continuously improving and

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

partners are continuously finding new and innovative ways of working with one another and delivering in difficult times. Nevertheless, this is an ever improving aspect which must remain a focus of concern if the needs of the community are to be met.

1.3.3 Community events

Community events which bring people of different backgrounds together, such as the Multicultural evenings held at many schools across the borough, have an extremely positive impact on cohesion. More events like this or a designated borough wide event would improve cohesion to an even greater extent. Community events are one of the best ways for local people to meet each other and learn about the different cultures in their area. It is essential that these events are accessible for all, and that everyone is made to feel welcome, regardless of their background or circumstances.

1.3.4 Education and schools in the borough

Many of the schools across the borough are making a positive contribution to providing young people with a sense of identity and supporting community cohesion. This is achieved through citizenship lessons and extra curricular activities in the form of music, dance, drama and cooking which represents and promotes different identities. In addition many of the schools within the Borough have presented multicultural evenings for residents which not only seek to improve understanding of a variety of cultures but also bring the community together to enjoy an evening of music, dance and drama

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

1.4 Dacorum Borough Council Services

Dacorum Borough Council provides a variety of statutory and non statutory services to the residents of the borough, many of which contribute to the sense of cohesion. Each head of service was interviewed in a bid to ascertain how they believe their service affects community cohesion. A semi-structured interview technique was adopted which addressed the definition of community cohesion as outlined by Communities and Local Government The table below is a summary of the evidence gathered (Full details of interviews with Heads of Service can be found in Appendix 2)

Community Cohesion in Dacorum				
Dacorum Borough Council Service	Common vision and shared sense of belonging	Celebrate diversity and difference	Similar life opportunities for all	Building strong relations in the workplace, school and in the wider community
Public Protection	Neighbourhood Action works locally to achieve an agreed set of priorities for the area	Partnership work with schools – citizenship/ anti-social behaviour	Environmental Health – disabled facilities grants/ home repair grants promote independent living	Six Neighbourhood Action Areas
	Councillors are more accountable to the electorate through direct work of neighbourhood action	Dacorum Mela & Communities Together Pledge Launch Event	Educational work regarding healthy lifestyles	Community Safety and ASB awareness in schools
	Business – appreciation of its role in community safety	Anti Social Behaviour Awareness day (ASBAD)	Food Safety Training for Businesses	Schools involved in visual audits
	Grovehill –			Community

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

	Shop watch scheme			Alcohol projects
	Adeyfield – Community Alcohol Project			
Housing (currently under review)	Review of tenant empowerment structure	Dacorum Ethnic Leaseholder Tenant Association (DELTA)	Ensuring tenants are aware of rights and responsibilities	Review of how tenant participation can link into the wider structures already in place
	Tenant led inspection process	Tenant Empowerment	Access to knowledge and landlord	
	Consultation with tenant groups		Ability to influence through structures put in place	
	Housing Advisory Panel		Decent Homes Programme	
	Tenants Steering Group		Support for people with rent arrears	
	Dacorum Ethnic Leaseholder Tenant Association (DELTA)		Support for prisoners accessing housing	
Finance	Corporate aims and objectives are reflected in the budget		Housing/ Council Tax benefits	Grants to the voluntary sector
	Service planning		Partnership working with work solutions and citizens advice	
			Awareness campaign and	

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

			advertising to inform low income families of benefits	
Resources	Procurement ensures that all products are tendered for in a similar way	Multicultural events held in Market Square	Procurement ensures that a good quality is maintained that is value for money	Helping vol sector reintegrate people back into the community
	Market Square used for community events	Variety of religious, faith and ethnic groups using buildings	Cost of keeping building in good repair covered by DBC	HR – Family friendly workforce
	Community Groups/ Neighbourhood Associations are allocated premises to enable them to flourish		HR – Equality regarding recruitment etc	ICT – provided to some of the community centres and parishes
	Service facilitates by giving the community the raw materials needed to flourish			‘High Barns’ Resident Group working with council to access funding
	High Barns Resident Group (chalk mines)			Neighbourhood Shopping area predominantly full

2. The National Context

2.1 Community Cohesion has emerged as a key policy agenda since the Northern riots of 2001 in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley. The Cattle reports (2001) highlighted the need for local authorities to bring communities together, promote good relations and prevent isolation in a bid to avoid a situation where communities are living 'parallel lives'. The 2007 White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" reinforces this concept while all maintained schools now also have a statutory duty to promote community cohesion (2007).

2.2 Nationally the increased levels of immigration, coupled with instances of religious radicalisation and the growth in support for political movements on the far right are amongst the many issues that can affect how our communities work. Although these issues are not widespread in Dacorum, they can influence how people feel about belonging within their neighbourhoods and their perceptions of people around them.

The Local Government Associations Guidance (prepared jointly with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Home Office, and Commission for Race Equality and Inter Faith Network (UK)) defines community cohesion as;

- having common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

A cohesive community is one in which local people feel involved in the developments that take place around them and can have a real say in the way in which local services are planned and delivered.

2.3 The signs of a strong community are also measured by the extent to which local people feel that people from different backgrounds (like race, faith, age etc) live harmoniously in the town and together make a unique contribution to our future. Strong and active communities are also characterised by the extent to which people are taking an active part in their local neighbourhood and make a positive contribution.

3. Hertfordshire Context

3.1 Hertfordshire County Council has recently developed a County Community Cohesion Strategy. This has been achieved through the formation of a Community Cohesion Strategy Group. The Group is made of representatives from:

- All ten district councils
- Black and Minority Ethnic community
- Faith communities
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Infrastructure Consortium (Voluntary & Community Sector)
- Housing Associations
- Police
- Primary Care Trusts
- Schools (Schools Standards & Effectiveness)

3.1 The Group used the views, evidence and experience discussed at the workshop alongside a detailed evidence base prepared by HCC staff to inform the development of the Strategy. **Dacorum Priorities as outline in the Hertfordshire Strategy are as follows;**

- Tackle inter-generational issues and integration of youth communities
- Engage with ethnic minorities, particularly Muslim women and children, to improve integration
- Increase community participation and engagement to determine local priorities through neighbourhood action
- Tackle deprivation and ensure that potentially excluded communities have the opportunity to be involved.

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

4. Dacorum Context

4.1 Dacorum Borough Council has demonstrated its proactive attitude in tackling community issues and has developed a number of innovative approaches, such as “ASBAD” (Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Day) which aim to inform and raise awareness of Anti-Social behaviour and the consequences while also bringing a variety of youth from different wards and socio economic backgrounds together in a safe and secure setting. DBC supports youth in greatest need through free diversionary activities for the under 12 during the summer holiday period and all year round through the adventure playgrounds which are situated in 4 wards within the borough; Adeyfield, Bennetts End, Chaulden and Grovehill.

4.2 In addition adult learning is high on the agenda with an exciting new community project Dacorum Horizons (see pg xx). A multi agency approach has been adopted through Dacorum Learning Partnership which includes Dacorum Borough Council, West Herts College, Community Action Dacorum, Volunteer Centre Dacorum and a wide range of voluntary organisations and training providers.

4.3 Other agencies in Dacorum also work in a cohesive and beneficial manner particularly the Council, Police, Fire and Rescue and the voluntary sector. New and innovative ways of working together and involving the community are continuously used.

5. Communities Together Pledge

5.1 Community cohesion as a concept is almost all-encompassing. Our communities’ cohesiveness is affected by a complex and ever-changing mix of history, politics, people movement, personal circumstances and environmental factors.

5.2 The community cohesion pledge was developed by residents, councillors and representatives from the third sector. The pledge was developed in two sessions. The first was an information session to ensure that all members of the working group were informed about what community cohesion means and where the concept has stemmed from. There was an open discussion about what community cohesion meant to them and the floor was left open for questions. The second of the two events was used solely to develop the community cohesion pledge (See appendix 2 & 3 for full details of consultation for the Community Pledge and Member Development Session).

The final pledge agreed during the consultation was as follows;

- RESPECT What Dacorum means to me.....
- Celebrating success together
- Valuing and respecting each other
- Have pride in our people and our community
- Sharing values
- Encourage a sense of belonging
- Reach out and support others

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

6. Launch of Communities Together Pledge

6.1 The launch of the Communities Together pledge took place on Saturday 10 July 2010 in the Market Square in the 'Communities Together @ Dacorum Mela' event held in partnership with Cllr Suqlain Mahmood (see appendix 4 for a copy of the Communities Together poster).

6.2 The aim was to bring the pledge to the people of Dacorum in an enjoyable manner that would promote cohesion and also raise awareness of the extent of diversity within the borough. The pledge gave residents the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to making it happen.

There was a rich variety of cultures represented. Performers included;

Gospel Singing	Park High School Dohls
Belly Dancers	Spotlight Street Dancers
Dacorum Indian Society	Salsa Dancers
Maveen Tap Dancers	Carter School of Irish Dancing
Dacorum Majorettes	Samba Band
African Drummer	Global Pindd Bhangra
Muriels Line Dancers	Rani Jaggo Giddah Dances
Rock Challenge - Tudor School	Sona Walis Punjabi Songs
Irish Pippet	African Drumming Workshop
Bollywood Dancing	

A variety of charity stalls and information stands were also available at the event including;

Stags Rugby Club	Youth Connexions
Cultural Learning Project	Alzheimer Society
Sustainability	Fire Brigade

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

Energy Saving Trust	Volunteer Centre
Guide Dogs for the Blind	DCFL
Arts and Crafts	Indian Dress
Beauty Therapist	Indian Food Stall
Faith Stall	Recycling
Age Concern	

There were 3 guest speakers at the event;

- Mike Penning, MP announced the prize winners for the sustainability art competition.
- Mayor Roger Taylor was also in attendance and gave a speech.
- Sabina Iqbal chair and founder of the deaf parenting association launched the Communities Together Pledge.

7. CONSULTATION

A mixed methods approach was used for consultation. The consultation started initially with semi structured focus groups which were used in a bid to gain qualitative data from a number of sources. The data was recorded and analysed; the headline results from each focus group are as follows;

7.1 HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS

A short focus group was held with residents in Highfield. The general perception is that people are not proud to say they live in Highfield because of the negative image that surrounds the area. They discussed that in some areas there is a close knit community and reference was specifically made to the St Francis Charity Shop which is ideal for residents to meet to chat. However there are some families with high dependency needs who lower the reputation of the area and in still fear among residents. This causes a separation within the area where people fear those they don't know with the idea that they are from another 'problem family'.

7.1.1 Segregation

There was also discussion about segregation, not only within the community but between different communities. The youth no longer mix with other outside of Highfield and have become very territorial. This could be overcome if the youth from different areas were taken away on shared events by bus rather than trying to cater for every ward separately.

7.1.2 Intergenerational

There are also intergenerational tensions – an overall negative perception of youth in the area. Adults spoke about the unruly youth that congregate around the Lemmon Place Cafe and youth that try to sell cigarettes at the Bellgate Shops. The problems are said to be exacerbated by the excessive amount of shops in the area that sell alcohol, especially to underage drinkers. The youth play areas are overrun with teenagers being anti-social which leads to children and adults not wanting to enter the area.

7.2 GROVEHILL RESIDENTS

A short focus group was held with Grovehill residents. The general feeling was that they are some very negative images surrounding the area particularly the school within Grovehill and the children who attend. Those questioned expressed that this is exacerbated by the fact that the secondary school make no attempt to participate in Community Activities or promote the school. The lack of community was linked with the amount of residents who actually commute in and out of Hemel for work which is typical nationally.

7.2.1 Intergenerational

There are also negative feelings in general towards the youth – the belief that the kids are in control therefore other residents and shopkeepers can not do anything. There was also discussion around the aspirations of the youth, no self confidence or goals in life and have no sense of community is what it means or how you should behave to become part of it. This has been linked to lack of parenting skills and the lack of responsibility that many adults within the area take for their children.

7.2.2 Gypsy and Traveller

The feeling toward the Travelling community in Grovehill is very negative due to the fact that one of the pitches are located close to the residential area. Particular problems were highlighted surrounding the use of the adventure playground – the perception was that some of the Gypsy and Traveller youth stop the other children from using the equipment. There is no doubt that these two communities live side by side but seldom interact. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that much of the publicity surrounding the site is negative eg from the local media. A few 'problem' families on the site who engage in crime give the entire site a bad name.

7.3 ELDERLY RESIDENTS IN THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

Indian residents were consulted at a group session which is run in partnership with Age Concern.

7.3.1 Language

Many of the individuals in the group do not speak English therefore it was not possible to hold the semi-structured discussion that had previously been planned. We also became aware that the ladies did not like to be questioned formally, which is understandable – the technique was adapted to suit the situation. A very informal chat was held with those who spoke English, asking them to translate when needed.

7.3.2 Sense of belonging

When asked about the sense of belonging in the area it was emphasised that the ladies feel very much part of their own community but not of the wider community. This however did not seem to be an issue for them, they are happy and content in the activities that they engage in and find it difficult to try to integrate in the wider community due to speaking limited English. This too however was not an issue for them; they are content with only speaking limited English and have no wish to take English classes.

This is however different for elderly Indian residents who move into care homes, it was emphasised that there is often a greater sense of isolation as the links with their own community and the activities within that community break down.

7.3.3 Health

The only issue that was raised was the lack of recent communication from the PCT. It was emphasised that in the past they had regular talks from the PCT but that this had been stopped. This is a very important aspect for the elderly in the community as it keeps them up to date with what is going on and increases their sense of belonging.

7.4 BENGALI RESIDENTS

Bengali residents were consulted by adopting an informal method; setting up in the foyer enabling those who wanted to speak to do so but not forcing people to engage, this would ensure that they would speak openly and honestly.

7.4.1 Language

Again a lack of English is a barrier for some of the community – usually using family members to translate or explain on their behalf. There was one issue of a housing problem which the family needed more help with however, they verbalised that the council was dealing with this and they were happy with the process.

7.4.2 Allocations Policy - Housing

Improved communication with regular updates would be a benefit. This flags up an issue that all communities face; a lack of knowledge and understanding about the allocations policy and how it works. This is an area which must be addressed, not only for residents involved in the process but as a myth busting exercise.

7.4.3 Anti-Social Behaviour

Residents discussed that some of them live in flats with high proportions of ASB. Youth are congregating, urinating and smoking cannabis in the corridors. The youth are not residents in the flats however are gaining entry due to residents leaving the communal doors open. In addition some of the residents live in flats with high proportions of new ethnic minorities.

7.4.4 Access to Public Services

They felt that they are integrated in the wider community and are aware of public services but that many of their neighbours have not been in England long and do not have the same knowledge. They pointed out that many neighbours have no community spirit and have no pride in the area with which they live and don't get involved. The belief was that it would be beneficial if somebody could do a door to door visit in the area which is particularly problematic. This could be three fold - an opportunity to find out how these individuals feel about living in Dacorum while also acting as an opportunity to inform people about home safety and public service

7.5 GENERAL FOCUS GROUP

A general focus group was held which incorporated young people, the older generations, ethnic minority groups and also represented a number of the wards within Dacorum including some of the rural villages. Due to the diversity of the focus group many more issues were raised during this session when compared to previous sessions.

7.5.1 Sense of Belonging

There was a general feeling that people feel attached to their local neighbourhood on a street by street basis but that 'Dacorum' had no identity for them to feel attached to. Also, community groups such as dance lessons, schools and churches helped to create a sense of community spirit.

7.5.2 Youth Activities

It was emphasised that there was a serious lack of facilities for youth in the borough. The belief was that funding should be available for volunteers within the community to take youth on away days particularly in the summer holiday period. The belief is that there is not enough integration between youth from different areas.

At the other end of the spectrum it was emphasised that there is a variety of sporting clubs and activities for youth who wish to engage. This raises an issue around what members of our community are getting involved. Why are others not getting involved? Are they socially excluded or simply not interested.

7.5.3 Empowerment

The belief was that DBC do not encourage residents to do things for themselves. They have been too involved in the past when more money was available and have taken the ownership and responsibility away from residents.

There was also concern that neighbourhood PSCO's had a role to play in this as residents report all issues to the police rather than trying to sort things out by themselves. The belief was that more mediation tactics should take place between residents. This would motivate people to get involved more.

7.5.4 Responsibilities

There was widespread belief that in some areas parents do not take responsibility for their children and their actions. The quality of parenting is seen to be poor with little or no discipline and a break down of the family unit which can often cause issues.

Also there was discussion that the 'root' of problems are not tackled by the statutory services. Eg. A bus route was stopped in one area due to vandalism, yet the culprits were allowed to roam free.

7.5.6 Separation of community groups

There was some concern regarding the separation of different cultures and faiths within the borough. Hence there were a lot of activities for each separate group but that these groups have very little chance of interaction. Particular concern was raised as there was a belief that the more deprived white communities in the area are excluded more as there have been no initiatives to include them in projects.

7.5.7 Geography of the area

There appears to be serious issues surrounding transport for individuals that live in the more rural areas. There is a lack of activities particularly for the younger generations, bus timetables are infrequent and the cost is too great to allow youth to utilise this to its fullest potential.

7.5.8 Two tier system

Residents were concerned that they didn't know who to complain to as county council was in charge of certain things and the district council were in charge of other areas. There have been situations when residents have been dismissed because it is a 'county council' matter, why should this be the case?

7.5.9 Influence decision making

There is a belief that the council don't listen to residents; consulting on measures that has already been decided as a token gesture. Why should they be consulted and given hope that they something can change something if they have no influence?

Also, the belief that door knocking is the best way to find out residents views; the likelihood of getting them to attend evening meetings is slim.

Youth should also be consulted more as they have a major role to play in our community.

7.6 TEENAGERS FROM A LOCAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

7.6.1 What is Community Cohesion?

They believed that community cohesion was not about individuals but bringing people together, integration and community spirit. The belief was that education is vitally important – we need to;

- Improve the image of ethnic minority groups in the borough
- Hold events
- Cultural diversity days
- Encourage different year groups to mix
- Encourage parents and young people to learn together
- Sub-communities – personal choices

The discussion also brought about the fact that they are proud to be Hemel Hempstead – ‘Dacorum’ doesn’t actually mean anything which can often hinder a sense of belonging

7.6.2 Is there a better term for ‘Community Cohesion’?

The teenagers did not agree with the ‘community’ part of the phrase and identified that difference is important and that we should not get so worried over ensuring that people have shared beliefs.

“Don’t get bogged down – it’s not that bad”

It also became apparent that they believed the media created a bad image of certain groups which often ‘gets in the way’ of people coming together.

7.6.3 What should we all be doing?

The belief is that the education system is the best way to ensure inclusion at the grass roots, not at strategic level. There are already lot of good activities going on that people just don’t know about – we need to promote the good things that are happening and ensure that everyone benefits from them.

Schools could open their doors; allowing the younger generations to teach others. They also stressed the importance of having activities for young people to engage in to stop them from hanging around the streets.

7.7 DACORUM CARD USERS

Previous consultation had been carried out with Dacorum Card users. The purpose was to ascertain if the Dacorum card continues to meet its aims of combating social exclusion. The card had originally been introduced in December 1996 as part of the council's anti-poverty strategy. The card is available for residents who receive one or more means tested benefits.

7.7.1 Social Inclusion

The card was seen as very beneficial for enabling those on lower income to take an active part in society. There are services that would otherwise be inaccessible for people without the card especially those with young children. It also encourages mothers to do activities with their children. However the majority of participants were of the view that the Dacorum Card assists in overcoming social exclusion. The predominant reason for using the Dacorum Card was for sports activities such as swimming, golf, gym, tennis and badminton. It was also used for travel, theatre, cinema and for purchasing furniture in Paradise Furniture Project.

Nevertheless, it was emphasised that there are some negative connotations with the card that prevents some people from wanting to use it as other people will know they are a receiver of benefits.

7.8 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

7.8.1 The Local Strategic Partnership Dinner took place in January 2010. Community Cohesion is one of the Cross Cutting themes in the Sustainable Communities Strategy and as such a stand was developed for the event. There were two interactive activities in the display, the first of which was a myth busting exercise which enabled attendees to separate the true statements from the false. There are many myths that circulate in and around the borough this was an opportunity for the LSP to become aware of these and ascertain which statements were true and which were false.

7.8.2 In addition an identity quiz was compiled, this quiz asked attendees to match the profile with the photograph and was aimed at highlighting how people often 'judge a book by the cover'. Negative and incorrect perceptions can often hinder community cohesion causing people to avoid interaction with the divergent other for whom they have no understanding, this can often fester into a sense of fear. This activity was very successful in that it encouraged attendees to re-evaluate how they approach other people.

7.8.3 There was also a section which enabled attendees to voice their opinions on how we could promote a sense of belonging. The following ideas were put forward;

- Give power to individuals
- Encourage the community to engage in budget allocations
- Encourage people to embrace one another's culture
- Involve people through consultation in important decision
- Encourage organisations to work together
- Involve grass root organisation
- Engage, Communicate, Celebrate and Encourage
- Support National Invitations – 'Big Lunch'
- Celebrate local street and neighbourhood events

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

7.9 COMMUNITY AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

A sequential mixed method approach has been adopted therefore an understanding of the topic has been developed through the qualitative methods discussed previously. The results have been coded and incorporated into questions for a closed end questionnaire which was distributed electronically within the borough through the mailing lists held within the council and the voluntary sector organisations. In addition the questionnaire was advertised in the local news paper and could be accessed via the consultation page on Dacorum Borough Councils Website.

The headline data from the questionnaires are as follows;

1. Do you enjoy living in Dacorum

The majority of residents answered 'yes to some extent' (53%). 65% of respondents wrote a literal response to explain why they answered in the way they did.

40.4%	Yes, definitely	
52.8%	Yes, to some extent	
6.0%	No	
Please tell us more about why you answered in the way you did.		64.8%

The disparities in statements truly represent the difference between wards and neighbourhoods in Dacorum.

"I live in Boxmoor I don't think there could be a better location"

"Lovely countryside, good transport links, lots going on in Hemel, Berkhamsted and King Langley – WEA classes, languages, concerts, church life"

"There are green fields, beautiful views, good (road, rail, air canal) transport links, good access to shopping areas, lower than average crime and moderately good council services"

"The litter in the street, the jobs, the cost of living here, the less than highly rated local authority, the crime where I live (Grovehill) and the selfish attitudes of lots of people around here"

"The people, the level of leisure activities in the way of music theatre dance etc are appalling for a town of this size. The whole area has descended into a state of disrepair. Dirty, compared with neighbouring towns Hemel is an eyesore"

"I don't appreciate some of the people with no morals or ambition, disruptive teenagers and noise from people coming from the leisure centre"

"Transport, infrastructure, noise pollution and a rubbish county council"

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

2. How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate area?

The majority of respondents answered “fairly strongly” (37%), followed by ‘very strongly’ (34%), not very strongly (21%) and ‘not at all’ (6%)

34.0%	<i>Very strongly</i>
36.8%	<i>Fairly strongly</i>
20.8%	<i>Not very strongly</i>
6.0%	<i>Not at all</i>

3. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree/Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
People are willing to help their neighbours	21.2%	53.2%	16.8%	4.4%	3.2%
I like to get involved in community activities	17.2%	42.8%	25.2%	9.2%	4.0%
This is a close knit community	7.6%	26.8%	35.6%	21.6%	7.2%
People in this neighbourhood share the same values as myself	6.8%	36.8%	33.6%	15.6%	6.4%
People of different ethnic backgrounds get on well together	4.8%	42.4%	38.8%	7.6%	5.2%

People are willing to help their neighbours

The majority of individuals agreed with this statement 21% ‘strongly agree’, 53% ‘agree’, only 4% of respondents ‘disagree’, 3% ‘strongly disagree’.

I like to get involved in community activities

The majority of respondents agreed with this statement, 17% ‘strongly agree’, 43% ‘agree’ however 9% ‘disagree’ and 4% ‘strongly disagree’.

This is a close knit community

27% of respondents agree with this statement yet 22% disagree, 7.2% strongly disagree.

People in this neighbourhood share the same values as myself

37% agree with this statement, 16% disagree and 6% strongly disagree

People of different ethnic backgrounds get on well together

42% agree with this statement, only 8% disagree and 5% strongly disagree

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

4. Thinking about yourself, how much support would you get in the following situations?

	<i>A lot</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Not Much</i>	<i>None at All</i>	<i>N/A</i>
If you are unwell and you need help around the home	45.2%	34.4%	11.6%	5.2%	2.8%
If you need help with heavy household and gardening jobs	26.4%	40.0%	20.8%	8.8%	3.6%
If you need advice about an important change in your life	27.2%	40.8%	15.6%	10.4%	5.2%
If you were upset because of problems with your spouse, partner, family member or somebody close to you	28.0%	39.6%	16.4%	10.0%	4.8%
If you need someone to look after your children, an elderly or disabled adult you care for	20.8%	32.4%	15.6%	9.6%	20.8%
If you need someone to look after your home or possessions when away	38.4%	35.6%	10.8%	9.2%	2.8%

If you are unwell and you need help around the home

45% of respondents answered ‘a lot’, 34% ‘some’, 11.6% ‘not much’, 5% ‘none at all’

If you need help with heavy household and gardening jobs

26% of respondents answered ‘a lot’ 40% ‘some’, 21% ‘not much’, 9% ‘none at all’

If you need advice about an important change in your life

27% of respondents answered ‘a lot’, 40% ‘some’, 16% ‘not much’, 10% ‘none at all’

If you were upset because of problems with your spouse, partner, family member or somebody close to you

28% of respondents answered ‘a lot’, 40% ‘some’, 16% ‘not much’, 10% ‘none at all’

If you need someone to look after you children an elderly or disabled adult you care for

21% of respondents answered ‘a lot’, 32% ‘some’, 16% ‘not much’, 10% ‘none at all’

If you need someone to look after your home or possessions when away

38% of respondent answered ‘a lot’, 36% ‘some’, 11% ‘not much’, 9% ‘none at all’

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

5. Thinking about the Borough of Dacorum as a whole, please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree/Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	
All residents are treated fairly and equally by DBC	7.6%	32.0%	34.0%	17.2%	8.4%	
All residents have equal opportunities to access good education	7.2%	32.0%	28.8%	24.4%	6.0%	
All residents receive fair and equal health care	8.0%	39.6%	27.6%	16.8%	6.4%	
All residents are protected fairly and equally against crime	5.6%	37.6%	31.2%	17.6%	7.2%	

All residents are treated fairly and equally by DBC

The majority of respondents ‘agree’ with this statement 32%, 17% ‘disagree’, 8% ‘strongly disagree’

All residents have equal opportunities to access good education

The majority of respondents ‘agree’ with this statement 32%, 24% ‘disagree’ and 6% ‘strongly disagree’

All residents receive fair and equal health care

The majority of respondents ‘agree’ with this statement 40%, yet 17% ‘disagree’ and 6% ‘strongly disagree’

All residents are protected fairly and equally against crime

The majority of respondents ‘agree’ with this statement 38%, 18% ‘disagree’ and 7% ‘strongly disagree’

6. Thinking again about residents living in the Borough of Dacorum, please tell us how much you agree or disagree that residents in Dacorum do the following

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Nearly Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Not Often</i>	<i>Never</i>
Obey and respect the law	0.8%	48.0%	39.2%	9.2%	0.4%
Behave responsibly	0.8%	38.8%	46.0%	11.6%	0.4%
Behave morally and ethically	0.8%	34.8%	49.6%	11.6%	0.8%
Treat all races equally	3.6%	37.2%	44.0%	12.0%	0.4%
Help each other	2.4%	36.0%	46.8%	10.8%	1.6%
Treat others with fairness	1.6%	38.0%	44.4%	12.0%	1.2%

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

and respect					
Respect and preserve the environment	2.0%	22.0%	40.8%	28.0%	4.4%

Obey and respect the law

Only 1% of respondents answered 'always', 48% answered 'nearly always', 39% 'sometimes', 9% 'not often'

Behave responsibly

Only 1% of respondents answered 'always', 39% 'nearly always', 46% 'sometimes', 12% 'not often'

Behave morally and ethically

Only 1% of residents responded with 'always', 35% 'nearly always', 50% 'sometimes' 12% 'not often'

Treat all races equally

4% answered 'always', 37% 'nearly always', 47% 'sometimes', 11% 'not often', 2% 'never'

Help each other

2% answered 'always', 36% 'nearly always', 47% 'sometimes', 11% 'not often', 1% 'never'

Treat others with fairness and respect

2% answered 'always', 38% 'nearly always', 44% 'sometimes', 12% 'not often'

Respect and preserve the environment

2% answered 'always', 22% 'nearly always', 41% 'sometimes', 28% 'not often', 4% 'never'

7. In your local area, how much of a problem do you think there is with people not treating each other with respect and consideration?

The majority of respondents answered 'not a very big problem' - 57%, , 16% 'not a problem at all', 21% 'fairly big problem' and 4% 'a very big problem'

15.6%	<i>Not a problem at all</i>
57.6%	<i>Not a very big problem</i>
21.6%	<i>A fairly big problem</i>
4.4%	<i>A very big problem</i>

(For full details of literals responses contact Claire.lynch@dacorum.gov.uk)

8. CASE STUDY EVIDENCE BASE

Case studies have been gathered from a variety of statutory and third sector organisations in a bid to portray the type of cohesion maximising activities that are being carried out throughout the borough. This has been broken into three distinct sections; Schools in Hemel, Dacorum Borough Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

8.1 SCHOOLS IN HEMEL

8.1.1 Adeyfield School

In March 2009, Adeyfield School invited five charities to pitch ideas for projects to over 100 year 7 students, as part of their citizenship programme. One of the projects selected by the students was put forward by Age Concern Dacorum, who wanted to give their day care clients a trip to the seaside. The students worked together to organise a day trip to Clacton for 88 older people, volunteers and staff. This involved everything from speaking to clients about where they wished to go, researching the location as to the locality of shops, toilets, restaurants and disabled access to pricing up coaches and seeking funding to buy refreshments. The students took the initiative to contact local restaurants to secure a discount for the day care clients and created laminated cards to present on arrival. The day was a great success, with much enjoyment had by the day care clients. The project created an increased awareness among the young people of the needs of older people, and the benefits to be gained from supporting others in the community.

8.1.2 Hemel Hempstead School

Hemel Hempstead School presented its Multi-Cultural Evening in November 2009. This was the 2nd of its kind within the school. The event combined music, dance and drama, bringing together many diverse cultures in safe and enjoyable surroundings that the whole family could engage with. The pupils from Hemel School entertained the audience with their Samba band, Street Dance and a Drama scene. In addition Bollywood dancers from the Indian Society were invited to perform as were Irish Dancers and Morris Dancers. In addition a variety of stalls and food was served after the show and workshops were held for attendees to get involved in.

8.1.3 Astley Cooper Community Fair

In Spring 2010 Astley Cooper School participated in intergenerational activities in a bid to create a positive and enjoyable atmosphere for the older and younger generations to interact. Local elderly people were invited to the school for tea and entertainment. The pupils cooked and prepared all the food and the event proved to be successful and enjoyable for all those involved.

8.2 DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

8.2.1 Neighbourhood Action

Neighbourhood Action was preceded by Area Working which was introduced in Dacorum in two areas in 2002. A pilot scheme covered the areas of Markyate, Flamstead and Great Gaddesden working collaboratively with existing Parish Councils. This pilot focussed on the issues facing rural communities. A second pilot in Woodhall Farm and Grovehill in Hemel Hempstead set up the 'small steering group / larger forum' model directly involving members of local communities and covering the needs of the urban areas. Both areas implemented successful improvement plans which engaged local people and elected representatives. In 2004 a change to Local Working expanded the project into other areas and provided the basis for the Neighbourhood Working schemes that are operating today.

There are 6 Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS) within Dacorum. Four are located within the Neighbourhoods of Hemel Hempstead and one in the rural area of Watling. The areas in Hemel Hempstead are: Highfield, Adeyfield, Grovehill and Woodhall Farm, Gadebridge, Warners End and Chaulden and Bennetts End. The rural area includes the Parishes of Markyate, Flamstead and Great Gaddesden and is a partnership between the three Parish Councils who have identified local needs through parish plans.

The NAGS within Hemel Hempstead were launched in 2008. All residents and businesses within the areas were invited to open meetings in their areas and consultation took place about their concerns, likes, aspirations and needs for their areas. Volunteers were recruited to join local steering groups and become involved in their communities, giving them a voice and the opportunity to engage with multiple agencies, become involved in identifying local priorities and participate in the delivery of services.

There have been a variety of community events in each of the areas the following are four examples;

October 2008

Neighbourhood Action teams took to the streets of Highfield, Grovehill, Woodhall Farm, Adeyfield, Gadebridge, Warners End and Chaulden as part of the Big Tidy Up Campaign.

November 2008

Neighbourhood Action members from Gadebridge, Warners End and Chaulden lead an environmental project in partnership with DBC, Police, Fire Service and Cavendish School.

February 2009

KIDZOO, a youth club for 7 – 13 year olds is launched in Gadebridge by volunteers supported by the Neighbourhood Action Officer and the board of the local youth centre.

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

March/ April 2009

Nail and beauty course held for young people in Highfield.

May 2009

Representative from Dacorum Borough Council and Herts Police attend 'Question Time' for local residents and pupils.

8.2.2 Participatory Budgeting

How and why the council spends money and makes budget decisions is a topic of concern for residents. Greater transparency is requested from residents on a regular basis. There is no better way to rectify the situation than by giving residents the choice to vote on how the money is spent. Not only does this improve resident involvement but it is in line with the Empowerment agenda and is an ample example of ensuring that money is directed in the direction that the community want.

Participatory budgeting is currently being piloted in Adeyfield East. £50,000 has been allocated to allow residents to bid and vote for the project which they feel is most deserving of the funding. This puts power in the hands of residents yet also brings diverse groups together for the bidding process which will be held in a local community centre.

8.2.3 Tomorrows World Today's Challenge

The Dacorum Partnership directed and shaped a week of events for an exciting and innovative initiative exploring the real meaning of sustainability. The event was coordinated by the Corporate Policy and Innovation Team. Partnership work was carried out with Plan- It Eco who brought experience and thought provoking edge to a number of sessions throughout the week. The events covered the multi faceted meaning of sustainability, not only thinking about the traditional 'green' issues and the environment but remembering the economic and social aspects as well. Partners were engaged within the partnership to hold many diverse activities, reaching different audiences throughout the week. The events included were;

- Dacorum Partnership Dinner
- Business Breakfast and Training Session
- DBC Staff Training, Sustainable Funding Workshop
- Dacorum Green Team, Teacher Training
- 'Thinking Globally, Acting Locally' Public Meeting hosted by Dacorum Environmental Forum
- 'Tring & Ecuador' Public Meeting hosted by Tring in Transition
- 'Berkhamsted Sustainable Community Workshop hosted by Transition Town Berkhamsted
- Community Fair to engage with residents who may not have engaged in other ways
- STRIVE was introduced in Astley Cooper School to year 7 pupils who have been developing the new National Curriculum's Personal Learning and Thinking Skills through a series of subjects and community schemes

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

- Partner projects occurred throughout the borough

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

8.2.4 Dacorum Clean Safe and Green Communities

In April 2009, Dacorum Borough Council amalgamated the Street Care department with Grounds Maintenance with a view to improve the aesthetics and the cleanliness of the borough, improve team work efficiency and most importantly to engage with the Dacorum residents to promote active citizenship and build strong and inclusive communities. The campaign aims to;

- Empower the front line staff to embrace the service changes and become Clean Safe and Green (CSG) ambassadors.
- To inform and inspire residents including hard to reach groups to take responsibility through conservation maintenance and litter picking.
- To educate and encourage schools to carry out litter audits/ picks and register for school assemblies.
- To create a multi-skilled partnership between Community Police, Council Officers, residents, Highway Agency, Councillors, schools and businesses to carry outward walks to identify and remove environmental eyesores from graffiti to overgrown hedges.
- To recognise and celebrate the spirit of community groups and individuals that make their community a cleaner, safer and greener place to work and live with a CSG Community Award
- To create an Environmental Roadmap leaflet with useful numbers to help keep Dacorum free of environmental eyesores.
- To tour a CSG road show trailer with a mascot across the borough with information and interactive activities on litter for all ages

The campaign achieved its objectives in bringing together every sector of the community to love their neighbourhood through carrying out clean, safe and green activities which in turn reduced the fear of crime. Amongst the residents this raised a sense of ownership and community spirit and opened up communication channels with the Police, Council and Hertfordshire Highways to keep their neighbourhood free from environmental eyesores.

Achievements and outcome;

Ward walks; Identified and removed over 300 environmental eyesores and collected 91 bags of litter in just 13 days in 13 areas of the borough.

Road shows; Residents made 400 clean safe and green promises on the Neighbourhood Promise wall and hundreds of butt boxes and car bin tides were distributed.

Community Activities; 27 community/ conservation groups such as churches, businesses, youths etc had collected 171 bags of litter.

Ex offenders and anti-social behaviour teens; Re-planted public gardens, removed graffiti and litter picked.

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

Schools; 17 schools received litter audits/ picks and litter awareness assemblies. One school came second place in Herts County anti-litter campaign through support and guidance.

CSG Community Award; The winner of this award has encouraged her neighbours to help her litter pick and cut grass verges.

Adopt a road; A resident has encouraged so far 30 neighbours to choose a road to litter pick and identify environmental eyesores.

8.2.5 Community Safety Partnership

In January 2010 the Community Safety Partnership worked together to present a day of informative workshops for year 7 pupils from Adeyfield Secondary School. The event was staged at Leisure World in Hemel Hempstead, free of charge and partner organisations presented and provided displays and information. This is just one of a series of similar events that have been organised by Co-ordinator Clive Townsley over the past two years. Adeyfield School, Astley Cooper, Kings Langley and Longdean have all been involved. The pupils learn about healthy eating, first aid, anti-social behaviour and fire safety. The day acts not only to inform the pupils but to foster relationships with the relevant authorities throughout the borough.

8.2.6 Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Day (ASBAD)

In July 2009 the Anti-Social Behaviour Team organised and presented the third Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Day for youth aged 10-16 in Dacorum. Young people are given the opportunity to enjoy a range of activities however there is also seriousness to the day which highlights the consequences of anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol use and the importance of fire safety. Each of the three ASBAD days had different fun activities for the youth ranging from scalextric and the rodeo bull to fun filled activities at Phasels Wood. The days are intended to bring kids that are known to the authorities due to their negative behaviour patterns together with children from the local schools to learn about ASB and to foster relationships between the youth and the services attending.

8.2.7 Skids

Skids is a driving project for youth in Dacorum who have been in contact with the anti-social behaviour team and are displaying deteriorating behaviour patterns. The project takes place over two days and gives youth the opportunity to drive a car in a safe a secure setting. The day also incorporates the dangers of drink driving, allowing the young people to drive with the drink driving effect goggles. This gives them an understanding of how difficult it is to drive while under the influence.

The hope is that this outlet will prevent joy riding and other forms of Anti-Social Behaviour by channeling their interests in a constructive manner. The project is also a chance for the youth to integrate with others and have fun while gaining confidence and self worth.

8.2.8 Fire Brigade – LIFE

Hertfordshire Fire Brigade provides LIFE training for youth that have been in contact with the ASB team or the police and may be on a downward spiral in relation to their behaviour. Many of the youth come from socio economically deprived areas and have had minimal opportunities or family support to achieve. The one week long project begins at 7am with breakfast making and then they train the boys in Fire Safety. The week is finished with a celebration at an award ceremony and certificate to congratulate them on their achievements.

The project is a fantastic opportunity for the youth to gain confidence and experience in a fun, challenging and safe surrounding, an experience that they may otherwise not have had the opportunity to participate in.

8.3 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

8.3.1 Global Pindd

Global Pindd offers a Saturday Pakistani Community Learning Programme geared towards children and women living in Hemel Hempstead. The group has been running since May 2009, its main focus is to educate however it also acts as a social network for all who attend. The main aims of the project are to promote community cohesion through the integration of the hard to reach groups. Most of the attendees come from the three most deprived areas of Hemel Hempstead, Highfield, Bennetts End and Grovehill. In addition the group acts as an alternative forum for the Pakistani community to learn about their native and British cultures whilst, also learning about the history of England and the various belief systems that are held here. Citizenship and Parenting lectures have been provided by outside speakers. The group also aims to counter extremism and drug misuse which has recently become an issue for some of the Pakistani community living in Hemel Hempstead.

The group have a different guest speaker every week such as the local Scouts, Police, Hate Crime Unit, Fire Brigade, Hemel Birthing unit and most recently the local MP has spent a morning at the Group's premises. This improves relations and builds confidence within the community. It is vitally important that this hard to reach group are given the opportunity to become active members of their society; this forum acts as the basis for building confidence and teaching people about the importance of knowing their own culture but also respecting other cultures. Interfaith speakers are lined up to attend the school, and one of the organisers speaks regularly at other groups, i.e scouts about the local Pakistani Community and their religious beliefs.

Partnership work has been carried out with the local scout group and there are hopes that in future a similar type of group will be run through Global Pinnd. Additional activity that may be built up from the project is the potential for integration work and cross community work to improve cohesion within the area.

The Global Pindd youth organised the first ever Hemel Hempstead community Mela in August 2009. This was a very successful community integration event held in the town centre and is due to be organised again in July 2010.

8.3.2 Hemel Hempstead Boxing Club (Markyate)

Hemel Hempstead Boxing Club caters for youth from a mixture of ethnic backgrounds. The club runs three times a week and is coached by volunteers from a boxing background. The scheme is particularly beneficial for teaching youth about commitment and determination and has a more practical side of acting as a diversionary activity for youth.

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

There have been some problems with finding the group permanent accommodation; however the neighbourhood action team are proactively trying to rectify this situation at present. The club currently have a portable ring that must be build and dismantled during every coaching session and was funded through a local business in Hemel.

8.3.3 Indian Society

The Indian Society is well established in Dacorum. There are a number of strands to this society which cater from the youth to the elder generations. The Cinnamon Club is a cooking club for residents which specialises in Indian cookery. There is also a Safron club which is geared towards the older generations and teaches them Yoga; Transport is provided for both clubs by Age Concern.

In addition there are music and dance classes held at the weekend in the Local community centre for the younger residents. The music classes in particular encourage the parents to learn with the child which promote intergenerational activities.

8.3.4 Muskaan

Muskaan is a voluntary group which supports and organised a range of activities for Pakistani and other muslim women. The group have worked in partnership with the Cultural Learning project and CAD to provide basic ESOL and IT classes to members and provides bi-lingual support throughout the activities.

This has proven particularly beneficial for building the confidence of members, giving them the opportunity to develop basic English speaking and IT skills in a safe and secure surrounding with the appropriate support. Learners can then participate in the full ESOL courses which are available through the West Herts College and other FE colleges. This has helped residents when completing the citizenship process, enabling them to comprehend the English language section.

There has been a focus on Health; offering a variety of women only exercise activities to residents such as Bollywood Dance, aerobics and swimming. In addition nutritional and healthy living information and advice is supplied.

Past activities have included Badminton classes, funded through Badminton England and coach trips for shopping and away days. A monthly session was also held for women to report ASB and provide information about domestic violence, a process which served its purpose through informing and empowering residents eradicating its need.

They organise an annual Mela to celebrate the festival of "Eid" with a variety of activities for children and women including stalls in henna painting, food and beauty. The group has worked in local primary and secondary schools by running workshops like henna painting, urdu calligraphy, story telling etc to promote cultural awareness and understanding which has proved very popular.

8.3.5 Dacorum Midsummer Community Fair

In June 2009 Community Action Dacorum organised the Dacorum Midsummer Community Fair. This is an annual event which has emerged due to the recognition of a gap in community activities like this. The event varies every year however 2009 was made up of charity fundraising stalls and non stop community dance entertainment featuring;

- Bollywood Dancers,
- Salsa Dancers,
- Belly Dancers,
- Majorettes,
- Street Dancers,
- Irish Dancers,
- Modern dancers
- Tap dancers

The event was supported by Dacorum Borough Council who funded a giant bungee trampoline which was very popular with all ages. The event is a fantastic opportunity for all walks of life to join together and celebrate their culture through dance and song.

8.3.6 Christmas Shopping Night for Senior and Disabled Shoppers

In December 2009 Volunteer Centre Dacorum organised a special shopping event in the Marlowes Shopping Centre in the town centre of Hemel Hempstead. This annual event has been a seasonal highlight for local senior and disabled shoppers for around 25 years. For some it is their only night out of the year. They really do appreciate the chance to do their shopping without battling through the crowds and they really enjoy the festive atmosphere, hospitality and entertainment. The event is a perfect example of intergenerational activities where the younger, more mobile volunteers assist elderly and disabled shoppers with their Christmas shopping. It depends on an army of volunteers who transport the special shoppers to and from the Marlowes, push wheelchairs around the shops and offer a supporting arm or carry shopping. Other volunteers are involved in entertainment and many of the shops open with staff working in a voluntary capacity for that one night.

8.3.7 Dacorum Horizons

The Dacorum Horizons is an exciting new community project funded as part of the National Learning Revolution to encourage people into formal adult learning. Free morning and afternoon learning taster sessions are on offer from Thursday to Saturday each week. Sessions are run by West Herts College on creative writing,

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

sewing and digital photography. Apsley Paper Trail has also run popular sessions on making greeting cards and hand-made paper and printing.

In addition Dacorum Horizons is geared towards providing practical advice to help people through the economic downturn, including career development days such as 'Starting your own business', 'Help with job search and interviews' and 'Budgeting your way through the recession'. Dacorum credit union are also on hand for those wanting financial advice and job vacancies are available in the shop for visitors to browse through.

The shop is supporting local charities, including Community Action Dacorum and Ian Rennie hospice by selling cards and gifts, and low-cost handmade jewellery from students at West Herts College is also on sale.

Dacorum Learning Partnership includes Dacorum Borough Council, West Herts College, Community Action Dacorum, Volunteer Centre Dacorum and a wide range of voluntary organisations and training providers. Dacorum Cultural Forum is also involved.

Informal learning can benefit individuals, businesses and the community as a whole. It contributes to health and wellbeing by building confidence, resilience and good social relationships.

8.3.8 Paradise Training

Paradise Training is part of Community Action Dacorum and has been established as a training provider since 1999 and was initially set up to assist offenders gain skills for work e.g. Fork lift training. Since then the project has grown and expanded the target groups which include:

- Offenders/ Ex-offenders
- Individuals recovering from mental and emotional distress
- LDD
- Physical Disabilities
- NEET Young People
- Children/ Young people excluded from school
- Muslim Men
- Migrant Workers
- Refugees
- Gypsy and Travellers

The manager of Paradise Training worked alongside Connections Personal Advisers linked with the Traveller Service and HAFLS workers. Two sites were visited – Three Cherrytrees (Irish Travellers) and Rye Park (Fairground Travellers) to establish the type of courses that they would like to attend. The programme was funded jointly by Connexions (under 19's/25's) and HAFLS (over 19's) and delivered by Paradise Training at their premises and identified venues.

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

Initial barriers were a) transportation to the venue, b) gaining permission from parents (particularly mothers allowing their daughters to attend a course where there may be Traveller young men), c) ensuring those who were signed up to remember to attend, d) how to handle the behaviours of some of the male adult Travellers.

A non-English trainer was recruited and briefed on the difficulties of the males e.g. banter, play arguing, intimidating body language, repetitive demands. The trainers worked hard to establish common ground (ex-military with a boxing background) and ignored much of the feuding between them but set out boundaries. The group started with 6 males but rose to 11 after talk amongst the site residents. The subject they had requested was block paving and after the initial 5 weeks a further 3 weeks was provided.

To engage the young females a visit was made to the mothers to build up trust. They suggested a female mini bus driver or a female escort. Our visit to the site was supported by the head of the Gypsy Section/ HCC and the Traveller Education Officer/ CSF. Trust was then established and the young females were permitted to attend the centre for a beauty course and also needlework – the needlework volunteer was also the minibus driver so this added to the trust for the project as a whole.

To ensure attendance it was required that weekly visits were arranged 6 weeks prior to the start of the course – this ensured the potential learners were committed to attending and it was firmly planned. We also avoided times when we know they would be attending a family wedding or holiday times when the whole site would be vacated especially with fairground work and school holidays.

Good relationships were developed between the Travellers and the workers. The young females were keen to add to their dress-making skills however this could not continue due to Connexions funding. This would be a good area to continue work, especially as we have identified a subject they are interested in. The outcomes are up-skilled young women who do not engage in many interests outside of their families and more integration with outside organisations. A degree of trust was established between the Travellers and the training organisation. Travellers do visit the training centre and 2 drop in to practice their driving theory skills on the internet – some still visit for help with official forms. The ongoing positive relationship with a community group who usually receive negative feedback from individuals and organisations will enable Paradise Training to work with them again in the future.

9.

10. Recommendations

9.1 Future Research

There are such disparities within Dacorum in terms of socio-economic well being and location that it is difficult to draw conclusions from data which represents the whole Borough. Problems are masked when looking at borough wide statistics which can prove problematic. Future research should be targeted at a neighbourhood level as this is where issues can be highlighted and targeted effectively to improve the lives of residents who need it.

Demographic analysis will become more robust with the introduction of two new officer posts to the council. The Citizen Insight Officer and Data Analyst posts will allow interrogation of information and data to better plan our services to the needs of the Borough. Also the use of Output Area Classification and Local Knowledge software will give these posts the tools to research at lower level super output areas (a few streets) making deprivation and disadvantage easier to identify and address

9.2 Intergenerational

A program of work must be developed in partnership with schools, community groups and elderly services. This could include activities such as befriending between the elderly residents and youth. Entertainment could also be provided by the youth in each of the elderly residential schemes in the area.

This programme could be discussed and developed by youth themselves as they are often a hive of interesting and fascinating ideas.

9.3 Youth Activities

Further investigation must be carried out to identify why certain groups in Dacorum are not taking advantage of the clubs and societies on offer. These groups should be targeted and given extra knowledge about what is actually out there and encourage them to attend if they do not receive this encouragement from family members.

9.4 Youth Involvement & Democracy

A long term strategy must be developed which looks to incorporate youth in the borough in every aspect of our decision making processes. Youth in Dacorum are the 'silent voice' which could be overcome by working together with the schools to incorporate the council's community cohesion work with that of citizenship lessons.

The Communities Together pledge must be introduced to each of the secondary schools in the borough. Each school will be asked to develop a project to meet at least one of the criteria outlined in the pledge.

9.5 Youth in Rural areas

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

Additional work must be carried out with youth in the rural areas in a bid to circumnavigate the problems they face interacting with their friends from different areas. Options must be explored such as setting up youth groups in the area and finding out what they would like to see. Further research must also be carried out regarding travel expenses and alternative options.

9.6 Segregation

An attempt must be made to start joint projects between schools and youth clubs in different locations. This can be achieved through the citizenship programs which will seek to motivate schools in different areas to tackle any issues together.

9.7 Housing

A myth busting exercise must be completed which will seek to inform residents about the process of allocations and how the point system works. Leaflets should be developed and each front line housing staff must be trained to ensure a static understanding is maintained throughout the service and residents are being given a clear and understandable picture of what the process entails.

9.8 Partnership work with schools

Schools are vitally important in the engagement of residents and ensuring that people understand their roles responsibilities as a citizen. Currently different departments have different levels of interaction with schools; some with different contacts yet none of this is co-ordinated to ensure the best use of time and resources.

An action plan must be developed with all departments who engage with the schools in a bid to gain the most from each interaction. In addition a main point of contact should be maintained for each school and any additional programmes of work that people want to engage in should be recorded.

9.9 Partnership working through Consultation

A variety of consultation takes place in Dacorum through-out the year yet much of this is in isolation. The voluntary sector is as close to the community as one could imagine yet their resources are seldom used to help achieve our goals.

Consultation should be aimed at trying to involve people who are otherwise not involved which may involve door knocking during visual audits or tapping in to community groups and getting them to nominate/ ask people they know (also known as the snowball sampling technique). Also, if teams of front line service users worked together with the consultation team to recruit people for focus groups etc there may be a more representative sample.

The idea of consulting with the same group of people that are already engaged defeats the purpose of consultative procedures and we need to overcome this.

9.10 Activities for Disabled and Able bodied people

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

An annual event should be co-ordinated and supported by DBC through staff time to encourage residents and help them to create a programme of events for disabled and able bodied people to enjoy together.

There are key organisation which could be approached initially, volunteers could be maintained through the volunteer centre and a co-ordinating role could be maintained by DBC staff.

9.11 Community Catalysts

Representative within the community are vital for successful engagement. DBC have 'street block voices' for tenants as a means of passing information from residents to the council and vice versa. Yet there is no similar concept for other residents in the borough.

Residents can be identified through front line service users on a regular basis and through the volunteer centre as 'community catalysts'. Hence their role would be to pass word on to the rest of the community about consultation and events that the council would carry out. It would be essential that each resident is not 'overloaded' with work which would put them off immediately.

9.12 Shared Activities

There is a breath of clubs and activities held across Dacorum, many of which occur in isolation. It would be beneficial if groups could be encouraged to interact more, hold events, exhibitions and knowledge changing sessions where pupils can demonstrate their skills to other groups. This not only acts as a confidence boost for people who participate but it increases interaction between groups which otherwise would have no interaction.

9.13 Positive Local News Stories

The media has a serious impact on the perceptions of residents particularly when the front pages are covered with negative stories. Work must be done with the editor of the paper in a bid to encourage a programme of work where the front page would be filled with positive stories about residents. This could happen on a monthly basis which would prove very beneficial in celebrating the successes within Dacorum.

9.14 Events

More borough wide and neighbourhood events must be encouraged by DBC, possibly with an incentive of small financial aid to run them or alternatively officer time or training to empower residents who have the will but lack the knowledge to organise and execute such events.

9.15 Job Centre

The current economic climate has resulted in the number of residents going thorough the doors of the job centre to increase massively. This puts added pressure

Community Cohesion in Dacorum

on staff and can be a serious confidence knock for people who can not find employment.

Work must be done with the job centre to ensure that staff pressure and perceptions are not coming across to clients who are already low in confidence. Also, if a mentoring group could be set up through the volunteer centre it would be very beneficial. Residents who appear discontent could be signposted to the groups where group activities and support are on hand.

9.16 Brand recognition in Dacorum

It is no shock to hear that the word 'Dacorum' ignites some every negative thoughts among residents. 'Dacorum' is seen as the council therefore residents feel no attachment and feel disengaged as residents.

The name of the council should be reconsidered in better financial times than we are currently in. This may appear to be a 'shocking' request to make but a new image; new brand for 'Dacorum' is needed that residents actually feel some attachment to

