



Barking and Dagenham
Local Strategic Partnership

**Delivering Community Engagement for the development of
the Sustainable Community Strategy**

Phase A Milestone Report from The Campaign Company

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Barking & Dagenham Strategic Partnership have embarked on a process of developing a new Community Strategy which will set the vision and course of action for the borough for the next 10 years. This new Community Strategy will also underpin the overarching framework for other service or theme-specific plans and should provide the context in which all other corporate strategies and plans are grounded.
- 1.2 In order to enhance the engagement of relevant stakeholders in the development of that vision the Partnership appointed The Campaign Company (TCC) to conduct a programme of Community Engagement activities.
- 1.3 The purpose of engagement activities was to derive key messages from stakeholders and identified 'hard to reach' groups about where the borough is and where it wants to go. The key messages derived from engagement activities will form the foundations for the Community Strategy and set the vision and course of action that should follow. It was understood that additional awareness of an overarching strategic vision for the area would flow from engagement activities.
- 1.4 TCC is a communications consultancy with a track record of successful engagement with communities in deprived areas. This includes 'hard to reach' or traditionally disengaged groups. We work with many local authorities, health trusts, New Deal for Communities partnerships and other bodies to increase participation in decision-making processes and to ensure they are responsive to their members / wider community's needs. TCC has previously worked with Barking & Dagenham Council in conducting the public engagement strand of the borough's Community Cohesion Strategy.



2 The Engagement Process

This section outlines the approach and methodology we used during this phase of the consultation process. It describes:

- Who our target audience was
- How we consulted these groups
- What we consulted them on

Our target audience

2.1 The Partnership were keen to ensure that the following stakeholder groups were approached to participate in this phase of the project

- Those who live in, work in or visit the area with an emphasis placed on those who live in the area
- Traditional 'hard to reach' groups and those defined locally as 'hard to reach' i.e. white, working class residents.
- Partner organisations including, amongst others, members of Community & Voluntary sector organisations; Business in the area; and Council staff

How we consulted

2.2 Understanding that different target audiences require different methods and techniques of engagement to be employed led us to utilise an array of techniques and a variety of mediums, in a range of venues, to engage relevant stakeholders. We understood from previous work in the area that there would be significant challenges in engaging white working class residents and chose techniques and venues which we knew worked well to meet those challenges.

2.3 Pro-active events specifically organised to reach both traditional and non-traditional 'hard to reach' groups included the use of our videoqube, akin to the Big Brother diary room, in Barking Job Centre, the Adult Learning College in Dagenham and in the Dagenham Heathway shopping centre. An emotimap, which gives consultees an opportunity to use graphics or comment bubbles to express emotions about an area on a giant map, was used, as were paper and on-camera surveys, at Dagenham Job Centre. Barking Learning Centre provided an ideal venue for a Writing on the Wall event where consultees were given the opportunity to express their views on what is, in effect, a giant graffiti wall. Other similar activities were also arranged in the King George Hospital, Thames Gateway College, Barking Town Centre and in Age Concern operated activity centres.



- 2.4 TCC staff attended a number of events, organised by other bodies, to engage relevant stakeholders using techniques already mentioned. Events attended include the Council organised Neighbourhood Management Fun Days; the Guy Fawkes Family Fun Day; a Barking & Dagenham Chamber of Commerce Networking Event; Dagenham & Redbridge Football Club on match day and a Council organised one-day event for Private Landlords. Our staff were also sent out in to the street in both Barking Town Centre and Dagenham Heathway to conduct 'vox-pop' on-camera surveys with passers-by.
- 2.5 Bespoke surveys were developed and sent, by either email or mail or both, to Councillors; Council Staff – for whom an on-line survey was also developed; and individuals involved with CVS groups in the area.
- 2.6 Our primary activity in this phase of the consultation concentrated on engaging residents on their doorsteps. We agreed to conduct extensive doorstep work in 4 wards (Abbey, Eastbrook, Parsloes & River) and also obtain a sample of responses from residents in the 13 other wards in the borough. These 13 other wards were initially to be the subject of a sample postal survey. However, as a result of the success of our extensive doorstep activity and with the consent of the designated Council official, we altered our contact method in these 13 wards to the doorstep.
- 2.7 Community Champions, local people 'recruited' for this purpose, undertook engagement activities within their own networks in local areas.
- 2.8 Both a wikispace (open share web platform) and a Freephone Number were established and managed by TCC. These were advertised, amongst other places, on the outcards which our doorstep team delivered through doors where no contact was made. Callers to the freephone number were given an opportunity to undertake a short survey. Visitors to the wikispace could also undertake a short survey and could, if they wished, add their comments, pictures or videos to open discussion forums.
- 2.9 84 depth interviews were completed. These interviews asked more in-depth, bespoke, questions of individuals involved with the CVS, local businesses (or those involved in providing advice & support to existing businesses or attracting new business to the area), senior Council staff, a range of Council partners and senior staff in neighbouring partner organisations.
- 2.10 Following discussions with the Council, it was agreed that the engagement activities would be conducted under the banner of 'Tell Us ... What Next' utilising the Council's successful consultation brand 'Tell Us' but adding a uniqueness to the activities we were undertaking in order to differentiate it from other Council consultation activity taking place.



What we consulted them on

- 2.11 This phase of the engagement activities allowed for a broad approach to be taken to ascertaining stakeholder perceptions about:
- a) Where they live, work or visit;
 - b) Services that are provided;
 - c) Aspirations for the borough;
 - d) Physical land and infrastructure changes / improvements / concerns in relation to the borough;
 - e) Safety / Crime;
 - f) Education / training / employment / economy;
 - g) Children and vulnerable people;
 - h) Travel and transport;
 - i) Housing;
 - j) Migration;
 - k) Environment
- 2.12 We also asked respondents whether they were willing to take part in further consultation activity.
- 2.13 We developed a 'rapid response' pledge process to provide feedback to individuals engaged via our doorstep team, the Community Champions or our freephone number, which has enabled information on specific issues raised by 546 respondents to be passed on to the Council.
- 2.14 Respondents were asked to provide contact names and addresses together with information about their gender, ethnicity, age group and any disability. There were a small number of participants who chose not to provide all or some of this information.



3 Participants

The following table classifies those we have engaged during Phase A

Group	Activity	Participants
Those who live, work, visit	General Survey (Doorstep / Community Champion / Wiki / Freephone / Event Surveys)	1524 surveys completed
	Abbey Ward	- 135 surveys completed
	Alibon Ward	- 49 surveys completed
	Becontree Ward	- 49 surveys completed
	Chadwell Heath Ward	- 34 surveys completed
	Eastbrook Ward	- 163 surveys completed
	Eastbury Ward	- 48 surveys completed
	Gascoigne Ward	- 46 surveys completed
	Goresbrook Ward	- 63 surveys completed
	Heath Ward	- 85 surveys completed
Those who live, work, visit	Longbridge Ward	- 79 surveys completed
	Mayesbrook Ward	- 46 surveys completed
	Parsloes Ward	- 177 surveys completed
	River Ward	- 184 surveys completed
	Thames Ward	- 46 surveys completed
	Valence Ward	- 104 surveys completed
	Village Ward	- 63 surveys completed
	Whalebone Ward	- 59 surveys completed
	Outside of the area	- 40 surveys completed
	Area Unknown (would not say)	- 54 surveys completed
	Emotimap	67 participants
	Writing on the Wall	165 participants
	Videoqube / Vox Pops / Events	102 on-camera surveys
CVS	Postal Survey	21 surveys completed
	Depth Interviews	27 completed
Councillors	Postal / Email Survey	5 surveys completed
Council Staff	Email / On-line Survey	136 surveys completed
	Depth Interviews (Senior Officers)	10 completed
Businesses	Depth Interviews	23 completed
Council Partners	Depth Interviews	17 completed
Neighbouring Partners	Depth Interviews	6 completed
TOTAL CONTACTS MADE		2103 people



4 Results

4.1 Results and comments have been collated to allow for

- Quantitative analysis from
 - ✓ Doorstep activity
 - ✓ Community Champions
 - ✓ Freephone number
 - ✓ Wikispace
 - ✓ Paper surveys at events
 - ✓ Councillor Survey (part)
 - ✓ Council Staff Survey (part)
 - ✓ CVS Postal Survey (part)
- Qualitative analysis from
 - ✓ Councillor Survey (part)
 - ✓ Council Staff Survey (part)
 - ✓ CVS Postal Survey (part)
 - ✓ Depth Interviews
 - ✓ Writing on the Wall
 - ✓ Emotimap
- Observational analysis from
 - ✓ Videoqube
 - ✓ Vox-pops
 - ✓ Video Diarists

4.2 Detail on results from all of our activities can be found in the following places

- a) General Survey – **Appendix 1**
- b) Councillor Survey – **Appendix 2**
- c) Council Staff Survey and Depth Interviews (Senior Officers) – **Appendix 3**
- d) CVS Postal Survey and Depth Interviews – **Appendix 4**
- e) Business Sector Depth Interviews – **Appendix 5**
- f) Partner Depth Interviews – **Appendix 6**
- g) Neighbouring Partner Depth Interviews – **Appendix 7**
- h) Writing on the Wall and Emotimap – **Appendix 8**
- i) Videoqube, Vox-Pops & Video Diarists – **captured in separate DVD**



5 Conclusions

What people think about Barking & Dagenham

5.1 **Crime, Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour**

From the General Survey, of all the people who feel negative about the area, almost 30% of them cite reasons which fall under this one category. *'Gangs of kids hanging about on the streets intimidating people and vandalising private and public property'* is a common reason given. This theme is also ranked quite highly amongst issues raised by those with a positive view of the area with additional community policing resources recognised by a number of residents. Even of those expressing a neutral view, over 17% mention issues in this category. It is also recognised as the top reason why people feel the area has improved or declined in recent times and is cited as one of the significant reasons why people feel optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the area. More than 30% of people identify it as the issue to be tackled which will make the area a better place to live. It gets similar priority in a range of similar questions asked of Councillors, Council Staff, Businesses and Partners. Clearly this is one of the main drivers of how people feel about their area past, present and future regardless of whether they view this as a negative or positive factor.

5.2 **Community & Neighbours**

'Nice area with nice neighbours' was a common view expressed by people in the General Survey who were categorised as feeling generally positive about their area. As with issues relating to Crime, Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour, this issue was highly ranked by those who feel the area has got better. Observationally, people who have recently moved to the area, as opposed to long-established residents, are generally positive about their local community and neighbours. *'I moved from Leyton and I really like Dagenham. It's quiet and there is a good community spirit.'* Similarly, long-established residents tend to have a more negative than positive outlook on their community, *'There's no feel good factor in the area – I'm ashamed to say where I live. I used to be proud to say I'm an East Londoner – now, I'm just ashamed.'* It is also mentioned in both a positive and negative way by other groups surveyed and is one of the main drivers of how people feel about their area.

5.3 **Education (Schools) & Training**

Highlighted both as a factor in improvements in the area and as a major area of future work by those residents who participated in our qualitative research and by Councillors, Council Staff, Businesses, those involved in CVS organisations and Partners. Identified as at the heart of increasing aspiration and addressing worklessness, professionals with knowledge and experience stress that future plans should ensure that tackling the skills deficit and educational achievement gaps should be prioritised.



5.4 **Facilities & Services for Young People**

The 3rd highest ranking issues for those who participated in the General Survey and for Council Staff when responding to the question on how to make the area better. *'Kids hang around the street at night with nothing else to do and nowhere else to go'*. This issue also features highly in our qualitative research with residents and depth interviews with CVS organisations with a number of those people also suggesting that young people should be more involved in the design and delivery of services.

5.5 **General Facilities & Regeneration**

Regeneration and the provision of general facilities (e.g. shops and restaurants) commonly features as a reason why people who participated in the General Survey felt positive about the area, why it had got better in the last 10 years and was also the top issue cited in terms of optimism expressed about the future both in the General Survey and our qualitative research with residents. It ranks in a similar way with Councillors, Council Staff and members of CVS organisations. As with other significant drivers of how people feel about their area, this issue also commonly features as a reason why General Survey participants, Council Staff and members of CVS organisations feel negative about the area, feel the area has got worse and are pessimistic about the future of the area. *'Too many take-away shops'* is a common complaint. *'There are no decent shops or restaurants. Thames Gateway should not be the only place to have them. When we have to do a corporate function we have to go to Havering'* Seen as a priority by partners as a significant opportunity to enhance the economic position of the area and its residents, there is some concern that full advantage might not be taken of the opportunities which currently present themselves. *'Crossrail, Thames Gateway and the Olympics are all significant developments but we need to make sure that we all work together to take advantage of them'*. When prompted during our more qualitative research about the Olympics, a number of residents were pessimistic about any positive impact the games may have on the area or for residents of the area.

