



## The Dearne Approach Findings Summary

July 2013

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## **Background**

Building on the previous work to develop Local Integrated Services, the Dearne Approach was developed as a pilot with the objective of changing commissioning of services at a neighbourhood level. This is to be achieved by identifying the needs of individuals and communities, and delivering on those outcomes using reduced resources in an innovative and cost saving way, through co-design and co-production with communities in the Dearne.

The Dearne Approach focuses on the communities living within; Thurnscoe, Goldthorpe, Bolton-upon-Deerne and Highgate.

22 local people living in the Dearne were recruited and trained as Community Researchers. They used a variety of methods to engage and collect the opinions of 541 adults and 84 young people.

## **Living in the Dearne - Overall Satisfaction**

The overall satisfaction of people living in the Dearne has dropped by just over 10% in the past 3 years from 69.1% (Think Local 2011) to 57.7% (The Dearne Approach 2013). The main reasons given for being satisfied were because people were 'good friendly people', those who were dissatisfied generally said it was because the area was 'run down'.

"Have lived here all my life, good people around and a community spirit" Goldthorpe

"The place is run down and feels neglected" Bolton-Upon-Deerne & Highgate

## **Top 7 Issues Having an Impact on Lives in the Dearne**

Respondents were asked what issues were having the most impact on their lives. The top 7 issues were as follows:

### **Access to GPs**

Access to GPs ranked highest overall (26.8%), however this is significantly more of an issue for people in Thurnscoe (37.4%) in comparison to Goldthorpe (19.8%) and Bolton-Upon-Deerne & Highgate (20.1%). The main issues being, patients are struggling to access appointments as well as poor communication between staff and patients which is considered quite negative at times.

"When you can access GP services you receive poor treatment / attitude and no continuity of care" Thurnscoe

"It's impossible to get appointments when you work" Goldthorpe

"Even when really ill you sometimes have to wait 2 weeks for an appointment" Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

### **Housing Issues**

Issues related to housing were apparent in all areas but were ranked highest in both Thurnscoe (32.4%) and Goldthorpe (35.7%). These problems were perceived as a knock on effect of empty and badly managed properties. There is a strong feeling in the Dearne that private landlords often rent out houses without carrying out any checks on the tenants who take no pride or responsibility in looking after their homes and the surrounding area.

"Reduces property values, it depresses you and the area. No one has any pride"  
Goldthorpe

"The houses make the area look bad. It causes crime, and people are not happy living amongst it" Thurnscoe

"The gardens are disgusting; if your garden used to be a mess then you got told to clean it. There are rats running about, 10 bags of rubbish in the garden, it needs sorting and it's not just private renters" Goldthorpe

"It encourages a congregation of dysfunctional members of society who constantly create havoc and then move on. Authorities don't deal with problems they just simply move it on"  
Bolton- Upon-Dearne & Highgate

### **Debt & Benefit Problems**

Debt and benefit related problems are the highest in Goldthorpe (29.8%), 25.6% in Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate with lowest levels of 22% in Thurnscoe. These issues cover a wide spectrum of financial issues, in particular the needs of working families that are struggling financially on a day-to-day basis.

"Aware of people borrowing to cover bills, then have to borrow to pay the first borrowed amount. It's a chain reaction" Thurnscoe

"People around here are turning to loan sharks, not realising about interest rates and spiralling debt. This all affects mental health" Goldthorpe

"Struggling to get out of debt from being unemployed for 18 month. More bills than wages coming in" Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

### **Unemployment & Training**

The lack of employment and training opportunities is an issue across the Dearne as a whole, however, this appears to be more of an issue in Thurnscoe (30.8%) followed by Goldthorpe (23.8%) and then Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate (25.6%). The biggest barrier to employment is the apparent lack of local employment opportunities (22.6%). Many would prefer to work locally due to travel costs which were stated as the second highest barrier to employment (19.4%).

"I am sick of going to work and I can't afford anything and people who don't work have a better life than me" Thurnscoe

"Feel like people turn to drinking, drugs, losing self esteem & respect for themselves due to the lack of opportunities" Goldthorpe

"This really needs addressing. There are no jobs for those wanting one, however people are not willing to travel far but there are no local jobs" Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

"Being a single parent for a long time, there is no support or training given to help you get back into work" Goldthorpe

"No employers want to train poorly educated people" Thurnscoe

"There are no apprenticeships in the area that I am aware of. My son has had to take a job in a factory even though he wants a trade" Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

### **Teenage Anti-Social Behaviour & Gangs**

Even though this is viewed as a problem across the Deane, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and gangs is a higher priority in Thurnscoe (27.4%) than in Goldthorpe (25.1%) and Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate (18.4%). This has become a significant problem for people living in the Dearne, especially when it comes to going out at night. People are intimidated by gangs of young people hanging around. However, there is acknowledgement that there is also nowhere for teenagers to go to. Therefore, on some occasions they are just hanging around.

"Hanging around the street, throwing and smashing things, you feel really intimidated"  
Thurnscoe

"Gangs drinking in the only available playground in Bolton. They vandalise the parks and spit on the slides" Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

"There are several gangs in the village not only teenagers but adults that are well known to be ruthless and dangerous" Goldthorpe

"There is nowhere for them to go, they have nothing to do apart from hang out on street corners" Goldthorpe

### **Dogs Mess & Causing Nuisance**

Many respondents talk about dog mess and nuisance dogs across the Dearne. This is having an effect on where people can take their young children out to play as dogs are left free to roam in the play areas and owners do not pick up after their dogs. Dog mess and nuisance is the biggest problem in Bolton-Upon-Dearne (25.6%), followed by Goldthorpe (21.1%) and Thurnscoe (15.6%).

"Walking kids to school it's disgusting, you have watch and make sure it's not on their shoes before they walk into school" Thurnscoe

"There are many dog owners that do not care" Goldthorpe

"Dog owners take dogs walking in play areas for children." Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

### **Drug Dealing and Usage**

Drug dealing and usage was ranked as the 7th priority issue overall for people living in the Dearne (18.8%), anecdotally this issue appears to be one that respondents feel is on the increase and is causing a great deal of worry. The majority of respondents who felt this was an issue had concerns around how widely known it is that people are growing drugs in the area but acknowledged that most do not report it through the fear of reprisals.

"Young adults are now experiencing drugs, problems that could lead to crime to fund the habit. More kids starting on drugs and not going to school. Adults are out at unsociable hours causing a nuisance" Thurnscoe

"I live next door to a heroin user and dealer. People are always in and out buying and taking drugs" Goldthorpe

"It smells so strong, pedestrians wanting fixes at local outdoor spots. Cars collecting drugs, this all leads to anti social behaviour" Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

"More help needs to be given for people with drug problems, and also tougher sentences for people dealing as this ruins lives" Thurnscoe

"There are known growers in the area, and the authorities know about it but don't do anything which is maddening" Goldthorpe

"Very open use of drugs, it's depressing hearing how aware kids are of drug abuse"  
Goldthorpe

"People see how much more money they can earn selling and growing drugs" Bolton-Upon-Dearne & Highgate

### **Young People's Opinions**

Similar issues were collected from young people living in the Dearne. However, they also expressed that lack of facilities and activities for them (69%) and street litter, including broken glass in play areas (67.9%), was having an impact on their lives.

"Looks a mess, the council try to keep it clean but people cause the problem"

"Broken glass everywhere, it's really dangerous"

"Nothing to do, nowhere to go"

"Nowhere to go that's age appropriate"

### **Contacting Services**

Over half (59.1%) of respondents stated that they did not contact any services in connection with their issues raised. This was mainly due to a number of reasons including not knowing who to contact, negative experiences of previous contact and fear of reprisals or loss of privacy.

"I don't know who to phone, they should make people aware of the different services and give out numbers" Goldthorpe

"Said it would get looked into and never heard a thing back" Thurnscoe

Afraid of repercussions and abuse" Goldthorpe

Anecdotally through the researchers there were examples of groups / organisations operating in the Dearne that people were very positive about. In particular; libraries, the Salvation Army and the Dearne Enterprise Centre gained many positive reviews.

### **Use of Local Services**

Involvement with community organisations & groups in the Dearne is quite low. The most popular facilities appear to be Goldthorpe Library (41% of people in Goldthorpe have used the library) and Thurnscoe Library (37% of people in Thurnscoe have used the library). The range of services available at libraries are one of the main reasons why people use them over other services.

The Dearne Enterprise Centre is used by 17.5% of people particularly those living in Goldthorpe & Bolton-Upon-Deerne & Highgate. Station House is mostly used by Thurnscoe residents. This is mainly down to geographical location, however, feedback regarding these organisations is extremely positive.

A third of respondents (34.9%) feel that local groups and organisations help bring the community together and provide support for that community. However, 38.4% of respondents stated that people are not aware of what is on offer and that these groups either do not advertise enough or are not advertising in the right places.

### **Community Capacity and Involvement**

At a first glance, current levels of community involvement are quite low with less than a quarter (24.5%) stating they are currently involved in their community. 22.9% of respondents stated they would like to get more involved within their community. However, anecdotally many people are already involved in many ways from helping out elderly neighbours to attending community meetings. They just don't perceive this as community involvement or volunteering.

### **Next Steps**

The research and engagement findings from this report will feed into the area arrangements for the Dearne and provide insight into the next phase of service re-design and development of a community led enterprise (CLE).

The following case studies can be used as examples of community members interviewed as part of the research for the Dearne Approach.

**Helen: Female, 21-30, White British, Thurnscoe, Works Part Time.**

Helen is actively involved in various groups and organisations in the local area and overall she is very satisfied with the services provided. However, she is very dissatisfied with the area that she lives in for a number of reasons including GP services, lack of facilities causing anti social behaviour, and lack of support regarding debt and training.

Helen feels there is a lot that could be done to improve GP services. One of which is the availability of appointments and another being staff recording complaints that they have received by residents.

Helen explains that there is a lot of anti social behaviour especially from teenagers who have nothing to keep them occupied. She also feels that services are letting the area go to ruin and not paying enough attention on improving the area like the park facilities. She feels there is nowhere for younger children to play which is free and accessible. Helen has also raised the issue that the outdoor facilities are untidy, for example, the baby swings are surrounded by cans, glass, and dog mess. She also believes that the elderly are unable to enjoy the local parks as they are scared of going due to anti social behaviour.

Helen has suggested that members of the community could come together to form a park watch. Another suggestion is for the authorities to increase fines and penalties for various offences. This may in turn deter any anti social behaviour making it easier to maintain the condition of the facilities so there are places for children to go.

Anti social behaviour has also affected how she feels within her property. Helen fears being burgled, has to double check her windows continuously and keeps doors closed at all times. She fears for her safety when she is in her home, and this affects her enjoyment of living. She is also deprived of sleep at times as teenagers are out at unsociable hours and neighbours play loud music whilst taking drugs.

Helen has also had issues with debt throughout her life, and feels that more could be done to support her and others to tackle this. As a result of debt problems she has experienced poor living conditions and due to working part time, she is not aware of the additional benefits or support that she could get. She suggests that there should be a direct link for budget and debt advice.



**Katie: Female, 31-40, Thurnscoe, Unemployed, Full Time Carer.**

Katie is a recovering alcoholic, and currently caring for her husband who is disabled. Katie feels that she is being forced out of the village by other residents.

Katie is extremely dissatisfied with the area due to a large number of issues which she has raised. For example; drug and alcohol problems, racism, access to GPs, and anti social behaviour. Amongst these issues drug dealing and abuse has caused the most impact on Katie as well as anti social behaviour. She feels the community are definitely less likely to complain through fear of repercussions.

Katie has drug dealers as neighbours who are Class A drug users themselves. This has encouraged other drug users to regularly come to buy and use drugs in a property close by. The drug use has caused her issues and immense distress, and her son is continually surrounded by heroin users, which is not a healthy environment for a child to be brought up in. Anti social behaviour by teenagers who are taking drugs is also an issue.

Anti social behaviour now means many children's facilities cannot be used due to broken glass from bottles and intimidation from people hanging out at them. Katie states that the "teenagers that are taking drugs are wrecking the facilities for them".

Katie feels more should be done to control anti social behaviour caused by alcohol use and has brought up the fact that there are continuous fights in the area surrounding a local pub.

Katie suggested there should be surveillance installed which she thinks would minimise or deter criminal behaviour and keep it under control. She also suggested that more should be done to encourage the community to take part in tackling the issue together, which will in time "develop a better system", for example, make it easier to report drug issues etc.

Katie also feels that the community would be more encouraged to help make a difference by reporting incidents if they were given regular updates regarding the complaints made.

Other issues which were raised by Katie included health and GP services provided to the community, support for people with learning disabilities, and racism.

Katie described health services as "incompetent" and feels that in particular there seems to be a lack of support and information readily available for people with learning disabilities. She has also noticed that there is a need to tackle racism within the area.

**Steven: Goldthorpe, aged 15**

Other than playing football, Steven says that there is not a lot going on locally for people his age. He suggests that people need to listen to the younger members of the community if they want to find out what they are interested in and why some of them are causing trouble. Steven thinks that crime and anti social behaviour are big problems and that this is mainly because *"people just don't have respect for each other"*. He believes older people are always thinking that if there are a couple of his (younger) friends together that they are thugs who are just trying to intimate people.

Steven says it's always the same story; *"some kids are taken off the street but it's not always the right ones, services target the wrong people. The police and everyone else tar us all with the same brush."* He says he has been pulled over on a number of occasions by the Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) when there has been just him and one other friend. He thinks the SNT have no respect for people his age. On 'Mischief night' he says he was pulled over twice walking home on his own from football. He was sick of being pulled over so asked them to drive him home but they refused.

Steven used to attend football at Dearne Side Leisure Centre. He thinks it was great as it gave him and his friends something else to do. However, to many people were turning up so it had to be stopped. Steven says this meant there was nothing to do outside the house apart from hang about on the streets. He thinks there are no cool places to hang out and so he mainly stays in playing his Xbox. He sometimes attends the gym but has to lie about his age as the rules say you need to be 16. He doesn't understand why these are the rules.

The Youth club has now started football, which Steven is really happy about. When he was younger he used to really enjoy all the activities connected with the youth clubs but now he is 15, he thinks there is nothing apart from football to suit his age group.

Steven is fairly satisfied with Goldthorpe as an area to live in and says that some of the streets are quite nice. However, he also says that *"you can't leave any clothes out that are a good make else they will get nicked"*. He feels some areas are unsafe, particularly around his Dads street. He says that the people who hang around there are intimidating and can sometimes get aggressive because of drink and drugs.

In the past, Steven was bullied which made him frightened to go to school. He says that he is popular now so it no longer happens. Financially things at home are really tight, everything he wants to do means travelling and his Mum can't always give him the money for the bus etc. Stephen used to have a free bus pass but that was stopped. He feels that he will continually have to rely on public transport that he thinks is costly and unreliable as car insurance is just not an option due to the cost.

When Steven thinks about the future, he is scared that the only local jobs are call centre or factory work which is not what he wants to do. However, his parents have told him if he continues into further education he will have to get a part time job as they can't afford to support him. He would love to get a construction apprentice job when he leaves school like his Dad did but he thinks that will never happen and no local employers would be willing to take him on without any experience.

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