

Planning Aid in Action: Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan Launch

Background

Grovehill is a ward in Hemel Hempstead featuring in the 37% most deprived wards in the country. It consists of an urban estate and a more rural settlement (Picketts End). Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) is very keen for the community of Grovehill to develop a neighbourhood plan (NP) which will steer the future of Grovehill and be led by the people who live and work in this neighbourhood.

DBC has successfully obtained a grant of £20,000 from the Government to assist with developing one of the first NPs in the country and, as well as providing officer support, has engaged Ann Skippers, a planning consultant, to facilitate the process and support the community when necessary as well as ensuring all bases are covered and that the lessons learnt are captured so that other communities can learn from the experience.

The NP has strong political support from local councillors and the Portfolio Holder.

An event was run in partnership with:-

- Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) – supporting and arranging event.
- Local businesses – providing raffle prizes and support on the day.
- Residents – supporting and arranging the day/event.
- CABE Design Council – support in the wider NP.

“A good, fun day, it was good to try to bring the Plan to people and be part of an event such as this. It was useful for me to be involved with a Local Neighbourhood Plan as these are likely to be more common in the future.”

Volunteer

Planning Aid’s support included:-

- The co-ordinator held initial meetings with the local community and local authority to plan the event.
- Two volunteers and the co-ordinator supported the event by engaging residents in the process.



What was the outcome of the project?

We achieved our objectives for the day. These were to launch the Neighbourhood Plan, raise awareness about it, offer people an opportunity to get involved on the steering group and to gather some basic information about the issues residents and businesses are concerned about - as well as to bring the community together through a festive fun day.

Over 100 people attended the session with comments being made on the day and several short surveys taken away to engage the wider community.

The Neighbourhood Plan will now try to gather volunteer support from the local residents to progress it. Planning Aid volunteers will provide training and support to the process.