

Darwen Market Town Initiative Healthcheck and Action Plan

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Brief

BE Group was commissioned by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Darwen Town Centre Partnership to undertake a Market Town Healthcheck and Action Plan for Darwen. It had four objectives:

- Review and expand previous consultations and research, to gather an accurate picture of Darwen and its rural hinterland
- Create a vision for the town
- Develop a Darwen Market Town Partnership which engages both urban and rural communities
- Consult and gain community commitment to the process.

Activities

- Extensive consultations with Parish Councils, community groups, local associations and local schools
- Business survey of over 50 firms
- Public consultation events at Darwen Gala and Barlow Institute
- Discussions with key stakeholders including Blackburn with Darwen Primary Care Trust, Access Point, Groundwork Blackburn, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Darwen Police Constabulary
- Research into a range of statistical and physical audit data
- BE Group established sub-groups to support the larger Darwen Town Centre Partnership, they included:
 - Market Square, Transport and Accessibility Group
 - Townscape Heritage Group
 - Market Group.

Outcome

BE Group developed a vision with the community:

“Darwen will be an inclusive town that celebrates its distinctiveness and has strong links with its countryside. It will nurture enterprise, have a thriving town centre, a vibrant market and will provide a high quality environment for all who live there.”

A total of 34 projects devised. These included: masterplanning the town centre, creating an orienteering trail in Bold Venture Park, creating an urban arboretum trail, website, encouraging public art along key gateways into Darwen, creating a centre of equestrian activity and auditing children's and young people's services.

