

‘Perception Area’ has proved extremely valuable, in allowing us to consult with, and listen to, many different members of our communities; especially those who normally avoid involvement in more traditional consultation methods. Many of these Green Heart Partnership consultations have shown that people, of all ages, think deeply about their communities and have many ideas of how things can be improved for the benefit of all. In several parts of the county, this involvement has proved so enjoyable that people have been inspired to continue helping with an aspect of the resulting work or even in the longer life of a project, once Perception AREA have completed their work.”

Catherine Davis
Hertfordshire County Council
County Arts Development Officer

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EN10 →

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PerceptionAREA

EN10

Borough of Broxbourne

The project: The Borough of Broxbourne planned to redevelop the Wormley Community Centre, a run-down and under-used facility on the Wormley Estate and recognised a valuable opportunity to engage with the community through a consultation scheme in the design and regeneration process.

The idea: The Perception AREA creative team devised an artist-led consultation to gain the confidence of the Wormley Estate residents. The artist, an individual with particular skills in communicating with people from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, would be 'embedded' within the Estate itself and over a period of time, come to understand first hand what the residents' real concerns and needs were.

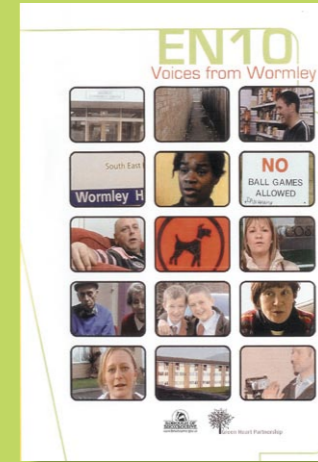
Perception AREA commissioned digital artist Simon Honey to join the creative team and to become a resident of the Estate for three months.

The work: The team identified the Estate caretaker and the local shopowner as project 'champions', who introduced Simon into the community as a temporary resident. Living and working from his Estate flat Simon visited residents in their own homes, met with the community in local shops and public spaces and led creative workshops.

Simon interviewed, filmed and photographed his fellow residents to explore their ideas about the redesign of the community centre and the surrounding space and how the range of interest and age groups could be considered and provided for through the centre's activities.

The project team liaised closely with Simon over the three months, ensuring this non-confrontational approach empowered the community to share their views. The process produced a 20 minute film entitled 'EN10' which was presented to council members and residents. Following on from this a specialist architecture team, Fundamental, was brought in to the team, to run design workshops with targeted community groups. The design specialists used the film to directly inspire and focus their creative concepts. The groups' suggestions and insights were communicated through drawings and model-making, to be integrated into the architect's plans for the renovation of the centre.

The results: The consultation was an effective method of informing the client about the level of financial commitment required to respond to the real needs of the community under the broad remit of refurbishment. The film and the workshops fed directly into the architectural designs for the refurbishment and local environmental improvement options, which reflected the day to day use of the centre, effectively saving the council money and shortcutting unnecessarily ambitious designs. The project has motivated the Borough of Broxbourne and Broxbourne Housing Association to address the use of the centre and introduce changes in the programme to provide a broader range of activities.



“The Perception Area process has helped to facilitate and mentor the team with both the development of ideas and the project management framework. I have been impressed by the provision of added value funding; through this way of working, we have enabled a consultation process to become more interesting and engaging for the community.”

Clare Watson,
Projects Manager,
Borough of Broxbourne