



Our Neighbourhood Panels point the way

With 'Localism' being advocated at a neighbourhood level, Neighbourhood Panels in East Cambridgeshire have been setting the agenda and taking **action on every issue** of concern raised at the meetings, for several years already.

The current economic climate and the outcomes of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review are posing particular challenges to managers in public service agencies. It is clear that different ways of thinking are needed and agencies will need to participate fully in partnership arrangements, together with local residents.

Neighbourhood Panels in East Cambridgeshire are doing something of this already, but need to develop further. The Panels discuss local issues (raised at each meeting by residents and Panel members) which are clarified and then acted upon by the agencies working together.

The agendas of the Panel meetings in January have reflected the current major issues with consultation on NHS Services in the Community, an update from the Police Authority and information about budgetary implications (following on from the Comprehensive Spending Review).

Each meeting will have, as always

- feedback on actions taken to address the issues of concern and priorities identified at the last Panel meeting;
- involvement of local residents in outlining issues of concern about their locality;
- a focus on **action**, to address the issues raised, and identify the priorities.

Neighbourhood Panels, which began in 2007 with a pilot in Soham, have helped to bring about a range of local improvements for local people. The success has been down to parish, District and County councillors as well as managers from the 'partner agencies' - including: health, environment, transport, police, anti-social behaviour, housing and children's and young people's services - working together.

Feedback on the actions taken is reported on at the next Panel, although most local actions are taken within days of the meetings. Some of the impacts of the actions include:

- Reduction in fly-tipping;
- Reduction in 'green laning' (4x4s driving along droves/by-ways)
- Production of action plans to combat dog fouling;
- Reduction in levels of crime;
- Reduction in reported acts of anti-social behaviour (ASB);
- The introduction and work of the Speedwatch scheme across the District – a reduction in the numbers of recorded speeding vehicles;

East Cambridgeshire's success has recently led to other districts in Cambridgeshire adopting a similar 'multi-agency' model.

However, officers from the partner agencies within the District, together with local councillors, are not complacent and are currently carrying out a Review in order to make the Panels even more engaging, efficient and effective.

East Cambridgeshire's Panels continue to evolve and develop, and have even more potential for the future – with agencies and local residents working together.

I hope that you will be able to come along to the next Panel meeting on **Wednesday, 30th March at 7.00 – 9.00pm in Kirtling Village Hall** – you will be very welcome !

If you are unable to attend, but would like to raise an issue of concern, please contact Cllr Andrew Camps or contact Alan Williams, Neighbourhood Panel Coordinator, on 01353 – 665555.

For further up-to-date information on the East Cambs Neighbourhood Panels and the current Neighbourhood Profiles, use N in the A-Z section of the East Cambridgeshire District Council website: www.eastcambs.gov.uk or use the following links

South Panel area

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/atoz/n> **(General)**

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/node/7043>

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/node/7048> **(FAQs)**