
TITLE: NEIGHBOURHOOD PANELS

Committee: Scrutiny Committee

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[M175]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To review the performance of the Neighbourhood Panels.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are requested to note and comment on the on-going performance of the Neighbourhood Panels, and to identify opportunities for future improvement or change, for the consideration of the Community and Environment Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 In 2005 the Home Office launched the Neighbourhood Policing Model, which was a national project, which had to be rolled out across the Country by 2008. The Neighbourhood Policing Model included setting up Neighbourhood Consultation Panels to ensure that citizens were consulted on police priorities in their local community.

3.2 In East Cambridgeshire, recognising a significant opportunity, the Council and Constabulary worked together to develop a model of Neighbourhood Panel that would include wider involvement from service providers and transparent involvement for the general public, together with an open and accountable decision making process.

3.3 East Cambridgeshire District Council agreed to work with the Constabulary to set up a 6-month Neighbourhood Panel pilot for Soham and the surrounding villages. This was very successful and was extended by a further 6 months and then made a permanent across the District in 2008.

3.4 East Cambridgeshire is divided into five Panel areas that hold meetings quarterly and take action on the issues raised at those meetings, reporting back the results at the next meeting. The Panels are also used as a consultation forum and as a place to share information amongst Parish Councils and between the Parish, District and County Councils. Partners also aspire to tackle strategic issues affecting our communities using a multi-agency approach.

3.5 Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Sanctuary Housing are the main partners in the Panel process. Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service also contribute as necessary. Parish Councils have majority representation on each Panel to ensure that the Panels have a local focus.

4.0 PERFORMANCE SINCE JUNE/JULY 11

4.1 A breakdown of attendance at Neighbourhood Panels has been recorded since the June/July 2011 round of Panels and is attached at Appendix A. A summary of members of the public attendance figures for Neighbourhood Panels Jun/Jul 11 – Oct 12 is provided in the table below.

Panel Area	Jun/Jul 11	Oct 11	Jan 12	Mar / Apr 12	Jun/ July 12	Oct 12	Total for 6 Panels
South	8	15	4	12	5	9	53
Soham and East	14	15	13	12	7	5	66
West	7	14	8	10	6	7	52
Ely	30	25	25	31	27	25	163
Littleport	20	19	21	20	10	12	102

Note: This analysis does not account for repeat attendance (which the vast majority of attendees are), thus the figures are actually significantly lower than detailed above.

4.2 Since the June/July 2011 round of Panels there have been 78 priorities identified. A total of 16 priorities (or 20%) were the responsibility of ECDC to address. Every Panel area with the exception of Ely has raised at least two ECDC issues during this period (a total of 6 meetings).

4.3 Appendix B summarises the priorities agreed at the Neighbourhood Panels since Jan 2011. A response was given on every issue raised through the Neighbourhood Panel process, not just those prioritised in Appendix B.

4.4 Appendix B shows clear patterns of concern for the Panel meetings that have remained consistent since they began in 2008. In addition to area specific themes for each panel, the following remain district-wide concerns:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (particularly linked to alcohol and drugs)
- Fly-tipping and Litter
- Driving and parking related issues

4.5 The Neighbourhood Panel Newsletters detail some of the successes that the Panels have achieved. A selection of the issues tackled are summarised below:

Panel Area	Issue and Action Taken	Issue and Action Taken
South	<p><u>Fly-tipping and litter on verges.</u> Action: Additional resource was added to the cleansing side of the waste contract, and litter picking has been undertaken along the A14 and verges in the South of the district.</p>	<p><u>Anti-social Behaviour in Burwell</u> Action: A multi-agency ASB Project Group was set up to tackle ASB and as a result ASB fell and remains low.</p>
Soham and East	<p><u>Reducing Inconsiderate and Obstructive Parking throughout Panel area</u> Action: 110 non-endorsable penalty tickets issued for various offences, obstruction, parking on double yellow lines, parking without disabled permit overstaying in limited waiting bays.</p>	<p><u>ASB at Barleyfields & Cloverfields Estate, Soham</u> Action: Continued high visibility patrols by Police officers and PCSOs alongside engagement with local groups especially teenagers.</p>
West	<p><u>Drugs Activity in Haddenham</u> Action: Patrols in plain clothes and in marked vehicles have continued in the area to gather intelligence and there has been a significant reduction in such offences. Four individuals have been prosecuted for possession of Cannabis, two of these suspected of supplying young people with the drug.</p>	<p><u>How to secure road safety improvements to minor roads.</u> Action: The County Council has revised its speed limit policy and where the county council is unable to respond to a request for a change in speed limit in a settlement, because it does not meet the criteria, local communities will be able to decide on the setting of speed limits in their settlements, provided that they are willing to cover the costs involved.</p>
Littleport	<p><u>Underpass at Station road filling with water at Station Road</u> Action: The underpass is now clear of water and Network Rail has put this ditch on a programme for regular maintenance.</p>	<p><u>To work with partners to try and tackle issues of speeding and parking in Littleport</u> Action: Additional Patrols have resulted in 15 Fixed Penalty Notices. Work continues with the District Council to run a pilot project to try and tackle parking problems in the area of primary schools. Support offered to Speed watch following problems experienced with a speeding driver.</p>
Ely	<p><u>Acquisitive Crime across the panel area</u> Action: As part of efforts to tackle metal theft, officers visited local scrap dealers on a daily basis, recording who is weighing in. This information is used to target known criminals and is passed to other agencies. A priority offender's vehicle used to transport suspected stolen scrap metal was seized and the owner prosecuted.</p>	<p><u>Tackle ASB in Ely City Centre</u> Action: 7 persons given PNDs or charged with Public Order offences. Numerous stop searches and patrols carried out by PCs and PCSOs and alcohol confiscated on a number of occasions and persons moved on (DPPO). S27 directions to leave notices have also been issued on a number of occasions. Two Designed Public Place Orders (DPPO) are in place and a number of successful interventions have occurred as a result.</p>

5.0 PANEL CONSULTATION

- 5.1 As a key partner in the Panel process, surveys were sent to the Parish Councils to ascertain what value they place on the NP's. From a total of 35 City/Town and Parish Councils, a total of 15 responses were received. By Panel area: 1 response was received in Ely; 1 response was received in Littleport; 3 responses from Soham and East; 3 from parishes in the West and 7 in the South Panel area.
- 5.2 The consultation exercise asked a number of questions regarding the purpose and usefulness of the Panels. With regard to how valuable the neighbourhood panel meetings are to Parish Councils (1 being the most valuable and 5 being the least valuable) the average score across the panels was 2.4, with the panel which feels they are of most value is Ely and least valuable is Littleport and South.
- 5.3 The response to the value of the panel meetings to members of your community suggests they are perceived to be less valuable with the exception of Ely, with 3 areas averaging the least valuable score.
- 5.4 Responses were divided over the purpose of Panels and adherence to the Terms of Reference of the Panel Meetings. The South Parish Councils appear divided over their purpose, Littleport concluded that in parts the Terms of Reference had been adhered to, whilst Ely was a certain yes.
- 5.5 Appendix C summarises the findings from the questionnaire sent to all Parish/Town and City Councils. Data from panel areas with multi-parish's have been collated.
- 5.6 Overall across the panels there is mixed feeling about the value, effectiveness and future of Neighbourhood Panels. It shows that the current model does not reflect the needs of all 5 panel areas.
- 5.7 A clear message of concern has been received from Littleport Parish Council with the view that Panel Meetings are of limited value, with the exception of information sharing, presentation and consultation, and are not a good use of resources.
- 5.8 Conversely, the current model is valued by the City of Ely Council who feel they are of high value to community members, a good use of ECDC officers time and have resolved community issues. The City of Ely Council suggest panels should be advertised more in the local press or on market stalls.
- 5.9 In the South, a number of Parish Councils believed the meetings had no value to them or the local community and 3 Parish Councils have formally agreed not to provide a representative at the Panel meetings. Nevertheless a strong view was expressed that the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Panels should not be judged by the number of residents attending the meeting but a forum for Parish Council to get together. The general

consensus was that meetings should focus on more strategic issues rather than more operational issues, such as dog fouling and fly tipping.

- 5.10 Responses from Soham and East and the West Villages were few and this makes it difficult to draw any conclusions. General feedback is that the meetings are more beneficial for Parish Councils than community members which can be evidenced by the declining public attendance. Suggested improvements include focusing more on community issues and advertising more or changing the current format to 'drop in sessions'.

6.0 KEY ISSUES/CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Appraising the performance of the Neighbourhood Panels over the past two years, a number of observations can be made:

- (i) Attendance by the Parish Councils and members of the general public are decreasing
- (ii) Less key priorities and new issues are being raised at Panel Meetings
- (iii) Increased staffing resource has been invested by ECDC in the delivery of the Panels
- (iv) Recognition across most panel areas that the value of the meetings are to resolve issues that require cross agency working

- 6.2 In the past year, Cambridgeshire County in partnership with strategic bodies, including East Cambridgeshire District Council, have launched 'ShapeYourPlace'. This web-based community engagement tool provides local people with the opportunity to improve their neighbourhood, raise issues and learn about things in the local community.

- 6.3 Launched on the 5th of April 2012, the 'ShapeYourPlace' site has 5 East Cambridgeshire WebPages that mirror our Neighbourhood Panel areas; Ely, Littleport, West Villages, Soham and East Villages and South Villages. The common District Council issues that are raised across the site are; waste and recycling, road improvements and general information regarding funding bids and consultations. ECDC officers have been pro-active in posting information, consultations and changes to services. Since May there has been in excess of 5,000 unique visitors and 14,500 total visits across the 5 East Cambs sites.

- 6.4 Neighbourhood Panels are not a statutory requirement for any public body other than the Police Service. The District Council has taken on the administration and financial costs arising from these meeting on the basis that they are valuable method of community engagement, partnership

working and consultation. As new technologies become available, social media has clearly become a more accessible tool for community engagement as demonstrated by Shape Your Place. It is five years since the Panels were implemented across this district and members are therefore asked to re-evaluate the purpose and delivery of Neighbourhood Panels in the context of recent performance, comments from the Parish Councils and use of new social media.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The District Council provides administrative support to the Panels. A total of 9 officers support the 5 panels, with a further 5 Heads of Service providing support to the Panel Chairman and other Panel Members as required. The Facilities Team also provide support at the meetings. Other resources provided by the Council are printing, room hire and refreshments. Partner agencies also provide officer support at Panels and in between meetings. This estimated cost to the Council of providing this function is £13,000 per annum.

7.2 No INRA is required.

8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix A – Neighbourhood Panel Attendance Figures

8.2 Appendix B – Priorities Identified by Neighbourhood Panel Area

8.3 Appendix C – Results of Parish Council Consultation

Background

Documents

Neighbourhood Panel
Terms of Reference

Location

Rm FF107
The Grange
Ely

Contact Officer

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Neighbourhood Panel Attendance Figures

South

Date of meeting	Location	Panel Members	Agency Reps	Guests/ speakers	Members of the Public	Total
28/06/11	Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth	19 (21)	5	2	8	34
05/10/11	Burwell Village College	15 (21)	11	2	15	43
10/01/12	Burwell Village College	10 (21)	14	2	4	30
27/03/12	Kirtling Village Hall	12 (21)	11	4	12	39
20/06/12	Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth	13 (21)	8	0	5	26
09/10/2012	Burwell Village Collage	15	4	1	9	29

Soham and East

Date of meeting	Location	Panel Members	Agency Reps	Guests/ speakers	Members of the Public	Total
29/06/11	Soham Village College	10 (15)	13	1	14	37
04/10/11	Soham Village College	11 (15)	11	0	15	37
11/01/12	Soham Village College	11 (15)	13	0	13	37
28/03/12	Soham Village College	10 (15)	11	3	12	36
19/06/12	Soham Village College	6 (15)	6	1	7	20
10/10/12	Soham Village College	9 (15)	4	1	5	19

West

Date of meeting	Location	Panel Members	Agency Reps	Guests/ speakers	Members of the Public	Total
25/07/11	Witchford Village Hall	13 (16)	9	2	7	31
24/10/11	Witchford Village Hall	9 (16)	7	2	14	32
23/01/12	Little Thetford Village Hall	11(16)	11	0	8	30
16/04/12	Witcham Village Hall	15	4	1	10	30
16/07/2012	Witchford Village Hall	10	3	3	6	23
01/10/2012	Witchford Village Hall	11	6	2	7	28

Littleport

Date of meeting	Location	Panel Members	Agency Reps	Guests/ speakers	Members of the Public	Total
26/07/11	Littleport Community Primary School	9 (11)	10	2	20	41
25/10/11	Littleport Village Hall	8 (11)	7	2	19	36
24/01/12	Littleport Village Hall	11 (11)	7	1	21	40
17/04/12	Littleport Village Hall	12	6	3	20	41
19/07/12	Littleport Community Primary School	5 (11)	9	1	10	25
02/10/2012	Littleport Community Primary School	11	5	0	12	28

Ely

Date of meeting	Location	Panel Members	Agency Reps	Guests/ speakers	Members of the Public	Total
27/07/11	The Council Chamber, ECDC	9 (12)	10	1	30	50
26/10/11	The Council Chamber, ECDC	11 (12)	8	3	25	47
25/01/12	The Council Chamber, ECDC	10 (12)	10	0	25	45
19/04/12	Council Chamber, ECDC	7(12)	6	3	31	47
16/07/2012	Council Chamber, ECDC	9	4	2	27	42
03/10/2012	The Council Chamber, ECDC	12	7	1	25	43

Priorities Identified by Neighbourhood Panels – June 11 – Oct 12 Rounds

	Soham & East	South	Ely	Littleport	West
June/July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsiderate/obstructive parking throughout the Panel area. • Anti-social behaviour at the Barleyfields Estate Soham. • Litter and chewing gum throughout the Panel area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling speeding offences across the panel area. • Addressing driving and parking offences across the Panel area. • Investigating the low-flying aircraft in the Bottisham area. • Addressing Newmarket/Suffolk cross-border issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing alcohol-related ASB in City Centre – especially within the Sacrist Gate vicinity. • Tackling Drugs Activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to address drugs activity. • Tackle speeding along Wisbech Rd. • Parsons Lane -tackle dog fouling and fly tipping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling speeding offences across the Panel area. • Addressing illegal parking across the Panel area. • Supporting the creation of a cyclepath along the A142.
October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social behaviour at the Barleyfields and Cloverfields Estates Soham. • Reducing parking and driving offences across the Panel area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding offences across the Panel area. • Driving and parking offences across the Panel area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol-related ASB in City Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to address drugs activity. • Promote Speed Watch in the town. • Parking issues in Station Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To investigate drugs activity in Haddenham. • To tackle neighbourhood nuisance and anti-social behaviour on The Orchards Estate in Little Downham.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the state of rural roads, especially in Coveney, Lt. Downham and Pymoor. Providing information and joint partnership approach to environmental pollution issues in Stretham.
January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metal Theft across the Panel area. Speed and Parking Management across the Panel area. Resolution of outstanding infrastructure issues on Barleyfields Estate, Soham. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speeding offences across the Panel area. Driving and parking offences across the Panel area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisitive crime in Ely. Alcohol related ASB in and around the cathedral area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To address the problem of dog fouling in Littleport Town Centre. Drugs activity in Littleport. Acquisitive crime in Littleport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing support to Sanctuary Housing regarding issues in Stretham. Acquisitive crime across panel area. Clamp down on fly tipping, especially Tyres.
March/ April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metal Theft across the Panel area. Speed and Parking Management (Police and Partners). Write to Deloitte 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speeding offences across panel area Driving and parking offences across panel area Dog fouling, fly-tipping (need better reporting as incidents reported) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol related ASB in and around the Cathedral Area. Obstructive and Inappropriate Parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoplifting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support Sanctuary with Stretham case Green Laning (Hive Road area, and Coveney & Wardy Hill and from Block Fen).

	<p>regarding resolution on Barleyfields Estate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Safety – parking and speeding issues raised at previous meeting and letter sent to schools. 	<p>have dropped off) and litter on verges.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding (Sutton, The Brook and the Americas) A1421 and A1123). • Affect of EA works in area in general (suggestion for Peter Doktor brought forward)
<p>June/July 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding in Wicken. • Speed checks in Soham, Isleham and Fordham. • Parking on double yellow lines, Soham around schools and Isleham outside CO-OP. • To check access in Collage close Soham and other school access routes during peak times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding in Ashley, Bottisham, Burwell and Burrough Green. • Street Lighting issues within the villages – particularly the County Council's approach to consultation on this issue. • Increasing attendance at the next Panel meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking issues – including Lisle Lane, Kings Avenue and Queen Adelaide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding –Sutton and Haddenham. • Greenlaning in Witcham, Wardy Hill, Coveney, Little Downham, Haddenham areas. • Flytipping around recycling sites in area – Haddenham and Sutton • Litter along highways, particularly outside villages.

<p>October 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti social behaviour in Soham. • Speeding within the panel area. • Circulate the police stats website link. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Speeding • Improving awareness of the Parish Council Code of Conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Parking on High Street • Riverside anti-social cycling • Improvements to the traffic regulation Order High Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Speeding • Neighbourhood Watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding – in previous priority areas (The Americas in Sutton)
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