

East Cambridgeshire Parish Conference 1 September 2014

WORKING TOGETHER – evaluation

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As a result of a multi-agency review, last year, of the Neighbourhood Panels process operating within East Cambridgeshire, it was decided that the process would cease after the January 2014 series of meetings.

To retain the opportunity for a face-to-face dialogue between the partner agencies and local councils and the opportunities for joint working between local councils, the partners to the panels process delivered a pilot Parish Conference.

The first East Cambridgeshire Parish Conference was held on 1 September 2014 at Beechurst Hall at Soham Village College; there were approximately 50 attendees made up of officers of the partner agencies, clerks and members of local councils within East Cambridgeshire.

Feedback on the conference was requested by way of an evaluation form passed out at the end of the conference. 19 completed forms were returned. This report brings together the findings from these forms.

Key findings:

- Respondents rated the *overall usefulness of the conference* **4 / 5**
- **100%** of respondents would be *keen to attend a similar event*
- **69%** of responses came from parish or town clerks
- *Engaging communities in the allocation of section 106 planning obligation monies* was rated the most useful presentation (**4.1 / 5**)
- Suggested topics for future presentations included future transport, health, best practice
- In Session 1 *protecting community services and assets* was rated the most useful workshop (**4 / 5**)
- In Session 2 *Management of open spaces* was rated the most useful (**4.5 / 5**)
- Suggested topics for future workshops included future planning for localism, planning applications, neighbourhood plans
- Both catering and venue scored in excess of **4 / 5**
- Additional comments included:
 - *Delightful and very good refreshments*
 - *The conference was extremely well organised and useful with lots of variety*
 - *The collection of organisations present for discussion was very good and useful*

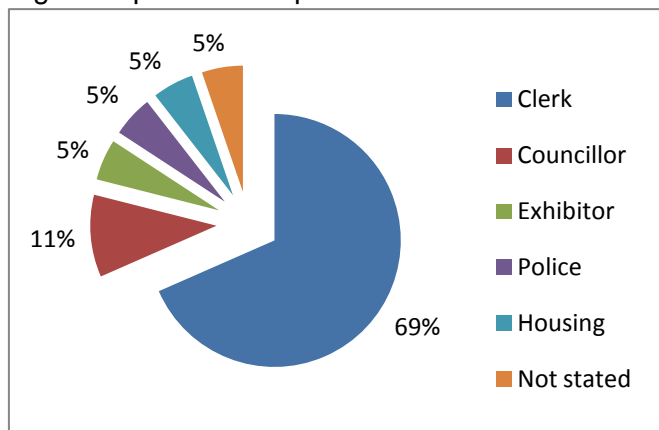
Areas for consideration for future any conference

- Timing of conference – comment was made that it was *difficult for councillors who work to attend at 4pm*
- Extend time for workshops - several respondents felt not enough time was given to workshops
- Structure and lead on workshops – strong leadership of workshops is required to ensure single or specific topics are not allowed to dominate discussion
- Number of presentations – if 4.5 hours is considered too long or the amount of time given to workshops is to be increased, the number of presentations may need to be reviewed

Respondents

A total of 19 forms were returned, 13 by town / parish clerks, 2 councillors and 1 each from Police, Housing, exhibitor and 1 who did not state (fig. 1).

Figure 1: profile of respondents



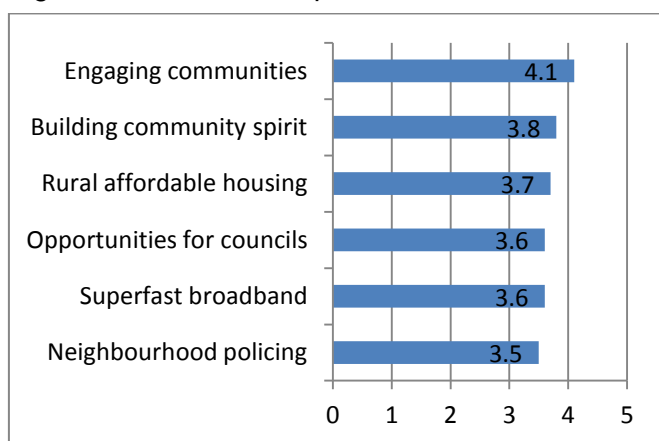
Presentations

During the conference there were a total of 6 presentations:

- Engaging communities in the allocation of section 106 planning obligation monies
- Superfast broadband
- Neighbourhood policing update
- Rural affordable housing
- Opportunities for local councils to build capacity in their community
- Engaging our communities, building community spirit

Respondents were asked to rate their usefulness, 1 being of NO use to 5 being VERY useful. Results are shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: usefulness of presentations



Comment was made regarding the Police update "many statistics re the last year, more interested in ongoing investigations".

Respondents were then asked if there were any topics, not covered in the conference, they would like covered in a future conference. Results are shown in table 1.

Table 1: presentation topics for future conferences

Lead	Topic
County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future transport
District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning issues
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of parish health • Initiatives to meet local health needs • Reducing ill health
Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models of best practice • Future roles of parish councils
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling drug problems in villages • Less statistics about the past year and more about on going investigations

Workshops

Attendees were asked to select 2 workshops to attend during the conference. One to attend in Session 1 and one to attend in Session 2.

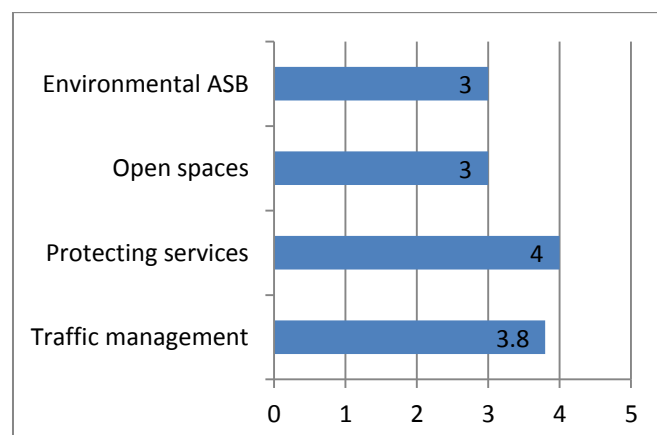
There were a total of 4 workshops available:

- Environmental Anti Social Behaviour
- Protecting community services and assets
- Traffic management
- Management of open spaces

Respondents were asked to rate their usefulness, 1 being of NO use to 5 being VERY useful. Results are shown in figures 3 and 4 below.

Session 1

Figure 3: usefulness of workshop Session 1



Respondents were also asked what could be done to improve these workshops. Responses included:

Environmental Anti Social Behaviour

- *Focus on one agenda item and cover in more detail*

Protecting community services and assets

- *Discussed specific problems in one parish rather than address the questions*

Traffic management

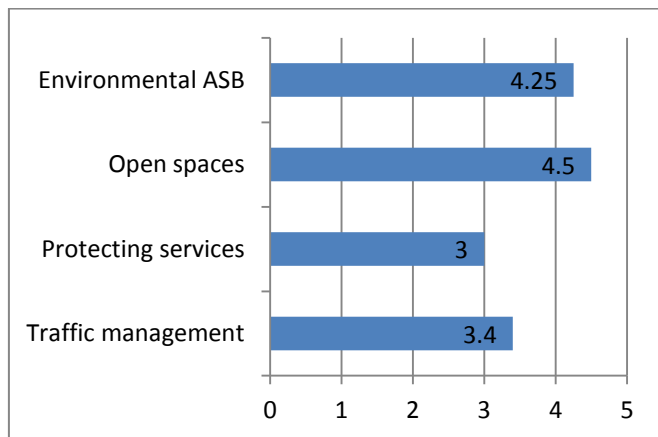
- *More time wanted*
- *More time, wasn't able to cover all issues*

Management of open spaces

- *Rather taken over by one member's concerns*
- *More time to explore schemes which qualify for grants and how to apply*
- *Maybe longer – could you offer facilitated evenings for councils struggling with open space issues for support and encouragement*
- *More time*

Session 2

Figure 4: usefulness of workshop Session 2



Once again respondents were also asked what could be done to improve these workshops. Suggestions included:

Environmental Anti Social Behaviour

- *Short on time*
- *Contact information available on hand-outs*

Protecting community services and assets

- *More precise information on potential community assets*
- *More time*

Traffic management

- *More time*

Management of open spaces

- *More structure*

Future topics

Respondents were asked what topics, not covered, would they like covered in future conferences. Suggestions included:

- Future planning of parishes for Localism
- Planning applications
- Highways suggestions on various issues, e.g. speed management and parking
- Food banks – are they necessary?
- Neighbourhood planning
- The role of sport in promoting positive health
- Preparing Parish Councils for severe austerity

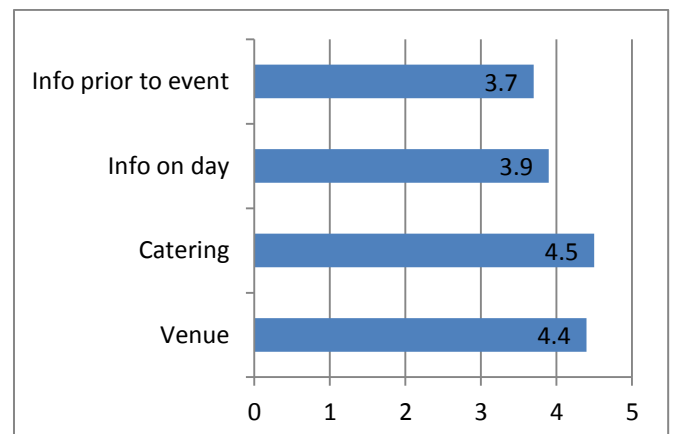
House keeping

Respondents were asked to rate the following aspects:

- Information received prior to the conference
- Information received on the day
- Catering
- Venue

1 being VERY poor to 5 being VERY good. Results are shown in figure 5.

Figure 5: satisfaction with housekeeping



Overall

Asked to rate the usefulness of the overall conference 1 being of NO use to 5 being VERY useful respondents rated the overall conference **4/5**.

Asked if they would be keen to attend a similar conference in the future **100%** said YES.

Additional comments included:

- *Excellent refreshments*
- *Delightful and very good refreshments*

- *As an exhibitor I would want more 'traffic' to my stand*
- *The conference was extremely well organised and useful with lots of variety*
- *Vegetarian food wasn't clearly labelled and was mixed in with meat items*
- *Difficult for Councillors who work to attend at 4pm*
- *4 – 8.30 is too long*
- *Circulate information prior to conference further in advance*
- *The collection of organisations present for discussion was very good and useful*
- *Longer time would improve the value of workshop sessions*

Further information

For further information about the East Cambridgeshire Parish Conference please contact Julie Cornwell at East Cambridgeshire District Council julie.cornwell@eastcambs.gov.uk or Wendy Lansdown at Cambridgeshire County Council

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For further information on the feedback evaluation please contact Helen Page at Cambridgeshire County Council

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