

**TITLE: East Cambridgeshire Parish Conference**

Committee: Commercial Services Committee

Date: 18 June 2015

Author: Neighbourhood Support Officer

[Q15]

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1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To consider evaluation of two pilot Parish Conferences held in East Cambridgeshire.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are requested;

2.1 To note the findings from the evaluation of two Parish Conference pilots in East Cambridgeshire.

2.2 To instruct officers to deliver two Parish Conferences in East Cambridgeshire per year.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 At Community and Environment Committee 4 March 2014, Members approved a recommendation of a Review Group to run a pilot multi agency Parish Conference. This decision was based on a recommendation from a Neighbourhood Panels Service Review group.

3.2 A pilot Parish Conference pilot was held on 1 September 2014 and a further Parish Conference was held on 2 April 2015. The second Conference was led by the Community Safety Partnership, with key support from Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

3.3 Consultation with Parishes has shown that 74% of Parishes favoured having Parish Conferences, twice or more per year.

3.4 Summary evaluation findings from participants at both Parish Conference events are contained in Appendix A.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Shape Your Place, the interactive web based community engagement tool ceased on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015, mainly as a budgetary saving from Cambridgeshire County Council. At Community and Environment Committee

20<sup>th</sup> November 2013, Members agreed to cease Neighbourhood Panels at the end of the financial year 2013-14. The cessation of these two initiatives meant there was a gap in and consequent need for a revised community engagement tool. Consultation with Parishes favoured taking forward Parish Conferences as the preferred community engagement initiative.

- 4.2 The two pilot Parish Conferences delivered to date have had very positive feedback from participants. Feedback suggests they are a useful and important engagement platform between Parishes and Public services.
- 4.3 The number of participants from Parishes nearly doubled from the first to the second Parish Conference. Parish representation also nearly doubled between the first and second pilot. There is strong indication from the Parishes that they would welcome Conferences being taken forward.
- 4.4 Parish Conferences are relatively low cost to deliver. The first two events have been offset by contributions from Sanctuary Housing/Cambridgeshire Constabulary. It may be possible to obtain future contributions that will reduce the net cost to the authority. Overall it could be maintained that the events are a cost effective means of engagement with Parishes.

#### 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 A budget of £2,000 was required to deliver the two Pilot Parish Conferences. Contributions from Sanctuary Housing/Cambridgeshire Constabulary supported the two Pilots and reduced the overall cost to the Council. A budget of £2,000 is required from East Cambridgeshire District Council to deliver two Parish Conferences per year. Further Sanctuary Housing / Constabulary contributions will be sought to reduce the overall cost to the Council. Budget can be used from within the existing Community and Leisure services budget.

5.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) completed.

#### 6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A – Parish Conference evaluations  
Appendix B - INRA

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<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
Service Review of Neighbourhood Panels – Stage II Report 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2013.	Room FF115	Nick Ball Neighbourhood Support Officer (01353) 616455 E-mail:
Service Review of Neighbourhood Panels – Parish Conference 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2014.		<a href="mailto:nick.ball@eastcamb.gov.uk">nick.ball@eastcamb.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix A – Parish Conference Evaluation

### Parish Conference 1 September 2014

17 Parish Councillors/Clerks and 25 agency representatives attended the event. 28% of Parishes in the District were represented.

Respondents rated the overall usefulness of the conference as useful or very useful and 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.

Suggested topics for future presentations included

- Future transport
- Health best practice.

Suggested topics for future workshops included

- Future planning for localism
- Planning applications
- Neighbourhood plans.

Both catering and venue scored were rated very good

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*

### Parish Conference 2 April 2015

30 Parish Councillors/Clerks and 20 agency representatives attended the event. 49% of Parishes in the District were represented.

96% of respondents rated the Conference overall as useful or very useful and 100% of respondents would be keen to attend a similar event. The most popular presentations were on Burial Provision for Parishes (84% of respondents rated as useful or very useful) and Grant funding opportunities for Parishes (82% of respondents rated as useful or very useful).

Suggested topics for future presentations included;

- Working relationships between District and County Councils
- Housing associations- affordable housing / application procedures /allocation procedures
- Sanctuary Housing
- Litter and fly tipping

- Road safety

The most popular workshop was Burial provision for Parishes (94% of respondents rated as useful or very useful) and Grant funding for Parishes (76% of respondents rated as useful or very useful).

Suggested topics for future workshops;

- Planning
- Getting young people involved in Parish Councils

Both catering and venue scored very good.

Additional comments included:

- *You need to make it clear to all presenters to stick to the time allocated!*
- *More time for questions*
- *Longer time for workshops. Handouts with information*
- *Workshops done by running a scenario*

**Impact and Needs/Requirements Assessment (INRA)**

<b>Name of Policy:</b>	Parish Conferences
<b>Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):</b>	Nick Ball
<b>Department:</b>	Community and Leisure
<b>Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):</b>	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
<b>Date INRA Completed:</b>	4 June 2015

**'Policy' needs to be understood broadly to include all Council policies, strategies, services, functions, activities and decisions.**

**(a) What is the policy trying to achieve?** i.e. What is the aim/purpose of the policy? Is it affected by external drivers for change? What outcomes do we want to achieve from the policy? How will the policy be put into practice?

The two Parish Conferences delivered to date have had very positive feedback from participants. Feedback suggests they are a useful and important engagement platform between Parishes and Publics services.

The number of participants from Parishes nearly doubled from the first to the second Parish Conference. Parish representation also nearly doubled between the first and second pilot. There is strong indication from the Parishes that they would welcome Conferences being taken forward.

The Policy to deliver Parish Conferences is driven by a need to maintain dialogue with Parish Councils and other tiers of local government as well as Constabulary and the Voluntary Sector.

A proposal to deliver two Parish Conferences per year is being put forward.

**(b) Who are its main beneficiaries?** i.e. who will be affected by the policy?

Parish and Town Councils. The Voluntary Sector organisations involved in delivery of Parish Conferences. District Council community engagement. Cambridgeshire Constabulary community engagement and accountability.

**(c) Is the INRA informed by any information or background data (quantitative or qualitative)?** i.e. consultations, complaints, applications received, allocations/take-up, satisfaction rates, performance indicators, access audits, census data, benchmarking, workforce profile etc.

The Neighbourhood Panels Level II Service Review contained multiple levels of consultation between stakeholders and the council (November 2013).  
 Consultation with Parishes was conducted prior to the decision Community and Environment Committee 4 March 2014; (reference -N230)  
 It was resolved:  
 (iii) To agree the recommendation of the Review Group to run a pilot multi agency Parish Conference.

**(d) Does this policy have the potential to cause an impact (positive, negative or neutral) on different groups in the community, on the grounds of (please tick all that apply):**

**Ethnicity**  
**Gender**  
**Disability**

√
√
√

**Age**  
**Religion and Belief**  
**Sexual Orientation**

√
√
√

**Please explain any impact identified (positive, negative or neutral):** i.e. What do you already know about equality impact or need? Is there any evidence that there is a higher or lower take-up by particular groups? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally? Are there any barriers to accessing the policy or service?

Parish Conferences are designed as a community engagement tool. To this end they are shaped to positively address equality and diversity issues. E.g. at the April 2015 Parish Conference the Alzheimer’s Society addressed the conference on sign up to Dementia friendly communities programme. This aims to secure greater support and inclusion of Alzheimer’s patients throughout the district.  
 Other topics chosen at Parish Conferences have been based on consultation with the Parishes and from conference feedback. This has resulted in topics such as addressing burial capacity for projected cemetery growth/ addressing grant funding opportunities to fill gaps in community provision/ neighbourhood planning to ensure communities are more fully engaged in local planning policy/Community safety and identifying the most vulnerable in the community.  
 A wide range of agencies have been involved in supporting the first two conferences and this approach will be maintained going forwards in delivering future events.  
 The Conferences will continue to maintain a focus on serving the needs of communities as a whole and this necessarily includes minority interests and hard to reach/ seldom heard communities and individuals.

(e) Does the policy have a differential impact on different groups?

YES/NO/Not Applicable

(f) Is the impact *adverse* (i.e. less favourable) on one or more groups?

YES/NO/Not Applicable

(g) Does it have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate unfairly against any of the groups in a way that is unlawful?

YES/NO/Not Applicable

(h) What additional information is needed to provide a clear picture of how the activity is impacting on different communities and how will you collect this information, i.e. expert groups, further research, consultation\* etc? Where there are major gaps in information that cannot be addressed immediately, these should be highlighted in your recommendations and objectives at the end of the INRA.

Feedback from Parish Conferences is an instrumental part in shaping future events based on participant survey responses. This will include responses from Parish participants and workshop presenters.

\* The Consultation Register is available to assist staff in consulting with the Council's stakeholders. If you are consulting on a new or revised policy contact the Principal HR Officer.

(i) Do you envisage any problems with these methods of information collection? i.e. not accessible to all, timescale not long enough to obtain all of the necessary information, translation facilities not available, insufficient resources etc.

No problems envisaged.

(j) If it has been possible to collect this additional information, summarise the findings of your research and/or consultation (please use a separate sheet if necessary).

**(k) What are the risks associated with the policy in relation to differential impact and unmet needs/requirements?** i.e. reputation, financial, breach of legislation, service exclusion, lack of resources, lack of cooperation, insufficient budget etc.

No particular risks identified with the Parish Conference approach.

**(l) Use the information gathered in the earlier stages of your INRA to make a judgement on whether there is the potential for the policy to result in unlawful discrimination or a less favourable impact on any group in the community, and what changes (if any) need to be made to the policy.**

Option 1:	No major changes, the evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	√
Option 2:	Adjust the policy to remove barriers or to better promote equality.	
Option 3:	Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to promote equality.	
Option 4:	Stop and remove the policy – if the policy shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination it must be stopped and removed or changed.	

**(m)Where you have identified the potential for adverse impact, what action can be taken to remove or mitigate against the potential for the policy to unlawfully discriminate or impact less favourably on one or more communities in a way that cannot be justified?** Include key activities that are likely to have the greatest impact (max. 6). Identified actions should be specified in detail for the first year but there may be further longer term actions which need to be considered. To ensure that your actions are more than just a list of good intentions, include for each: the person responsible for its completion, a timescale for completion, any cost implications and how these will be addressed. It is essential that you incorporate these actions into your service plans.

This completed INRA will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service. **Please forward completed and signed forms to Nicole Pema, Principal HR Officer.**

All completed INRAs will need to be scrutinised and verified by the Council's Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) and published on the Council's Intranet to demonstrate to local people that the Council is actively engaged in tackling potential discrimination and improving its practices in relation to equalities. Please be aware that you will be asked to attend a half-an-hour session to summarise the findings of the INRA to the EOWG Verification panel.

**Signatures:**

<b>Completing Officer:</b>	<b>Nick Ball</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4 June 2015</b>
	<b>Allison Conder</b>		<b>4 June 2015</b>
<b>Head of Service:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	<b>2015</b>