



Service Review of Neighbourhood Panels

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A brief history of Neighbourhood Panels

- Started as a pilot in the Soham area in 2006.
- Launched across the District in 2008.
- Set up when there were very limited alternatives to face-to-face public meetings.
- Times have moved on....



Strengths

- Opportunity to raise issues with key service providers in the District.
- The meetings provide a 'face' for the public services.
- The partner agencies have a positive attitude towards working together to problem solve.
- Greater awareness of the needs and priorities of communities.
- They are a cost effective way for the Constabulary to deliver on the requirement to hold a 'beat meeting'.



Weaknesses

- **Decreasing attendance** – average public attendance for the Soham: 9 = 0.05% of the population of the Soham and East Panel.
- **Issues Raised in 2012-13** – 44 out of 76 were ‘fault reporting’. All issues could have been dealt with another way.
- **Complying with the Terms of Reference** – 5 out of 6 key tasks not being met.
- **Consultation with the Parish & Town Councils** – least valued as a method of community engagement. Most valued as a forum for sharing information.



Cost effectiveness

- Each panel meeting has officer representation from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire County Council, Sanctuary Housing and East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC).
- 4 ECDC staff are involved in every Panel meeting.
- Estimated cost to ECDC of at least £13,000 per year (this includes staff time, printing, venue costs).



Conclusions of the Service Review Group

- Neighbourhood Panels are not an effective form of community engagement.
- They are not cost effective.
- More efficient and effective mechanisms are now in place for issues to be raised and resolved – e.g. ShapeYourPlace.



Moving Forwards

- Consultation with Parish/Town Councils on alternative options - responses back by 5th Dec 13.
- ECDC Committee decision on proposal to cease involvement in Panels Nov 13.
- Subject to decision to cease Panels, last Panel meetings held in January 14.
- Proposed new model in place for 2014-15.