

# Cambridgeshire

## Area Assessment

Dated 9 December 2009



**oneplace**

for an independent overview  
of local public services

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## Cambridgeshire at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in Cambridgeshire. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

**Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from**

 Green flag: Waste Partnership is Key in Reducing Waste

**Red flags - significant concerns, action needed**

No red flags have been identified for Cambridgeshire

## The local area

Cambridgeshire is a largely rural county in the East of England. It is home to the university city of Cambridge, the city of Ely and a number of market towns.

Cambridgeshire has been designated as a growth area by the government and is experiencing much change. The population is around 605,000 but is expected to grow by 90,000 people over the next 12 years. Around 58,000 new homes are expected to be built between now and 2021.

The minority ethnic population is low overall when compared to the rest of the country. But Cambridgeshire has one of the largest Gypsy and traveller populations in the United Kingdom. The population of people aged over 85 is forecast to increase more quickly than the average for the country.

There is a concentration of research and information technology businesses around the city of Cambridge. This contrasts with the relatively low paid agricultural jobs in the rural areas of the county.

The overall picture for Cambridgeshire shows a county of prosperity and growth, but some communities face real challenges and live in poverty. The people of Cambridgeshire tend to be healthier than the England average but

there are differences in how healthy people are depending on their location, gender, background and wealth.

The next section tells you how Cambridgeshire's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

## How is Cambridgeshire doing?

### Economic Prosperity

Cambridgeshire's economy is one of the strongest in the country. Until the recession many local people benefited from a long period of growth. But this is not the case in all parts of the county. People in some areas, such as Fenland, do not have the same chances as people in other areas. The jobs are less well paid and transport links make it difficult for them to work elsewhere.

Partners responded quickly to help local people and businesses deal with the recession. As in all areas unemployment has increased and fewer jobs are available, but support has been given to those people in areas most affected. Local people are supported to start new businesses or develop existing businesses.

Many young people are well prepared to benefit from prosperity in the area. Education results are generally good and more young people are staying on in education to improve their prospects. But children from poorer families do less well at school and fewer remain in education. Action is being taken to improve this and it is important that this is successful so that all children have the same chance to do well.

### Environmental Sustainability

Successful partnership working means that well over half the waste collected is for recycling. The amount of waste created has also reduced. Good work to educate people and encourage businesses to recycle more mean this is set to continue. A new waste treatment facility opened in November 2009 and will contribute to future improvement.

Partners in Cambridgeshire are working to keep the local environment attractive and healthy. Air quality has improved by using cleaner buses and pollution has reduced because more and more people are using public transport. Other projects are helping to reduce carbon emissions. For example, 100 households in Huntingdonshire reduced their energy use by 22 per cent. Council houses in Cambridge have been made more energy efficient. But partners know much more is needed and plans are being made to tackle climate change across the county.

### Equality and Inclusion

The overall picture of life in Cambridgeshire is positive. Many people are healthy, well educated and have good incomes. But this hides some of the big

differences within the area.

There are big differences in health. People in Fenland are more likely to suffer from heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Babies born in Fenland are more likely to have a low birth weight. Children and adults living in poorer areas are more likely to be overweight and this is not good for their long-term health. How healthy people are also depends on their age, background and where they live. Partners know this needs to improve. They have assessed the needs of people living in different parts of the county. Services are being put in place to help people to live healthier lives. This includes helping people to become more physically active, to eat more healthily, to stop smoking and to improve their sexual health.

There are large differences in exam results. Education results of young people living in poorer areas and some minority groups need to improve. Narrowing this gap is a high priority for partners.

Partners do not have a common approach to tackling the problems that Gypsies and travellers often have. Some are better than others at understanding and working with the Gypsy and traveller community. Fenland District Council in particular has been successful. But partners need to do more to help improve health, education and other opportunities for this community.

Local politicians are committed to making sure that money is directed to help those who need it. They have moved money from more wealthy to less wealthy areas to achieve this and plan to do more in 2010/11. Some good work has started, but partners know that more must be done.

## Managing Growth

Partners in Cambridgeshire are working together well to manage large housing and population growth. However, the scale of the growth presents challenges. It is estimated that the population of the county will increase by about 15 per cent over the next 12 years and 58,000 new homes will be built.

Some local people struggle to afford houses in parts of Cambridgeshire. But in 2008/09 nearly 900 affordable homes were built and money has been secured to help to make sure house building continues during the recession. But it is not growth at any cost. Partners have learned from past experiences and are making sure new housing developments have facilities such as schools in place when they are needed. Councils and other partners make sure new developments are safe, well-designed and include open spaces for people to enjoy.

Parts of Cambridgeshire suffer from traffic problems and this will get worse as more people live there. Longer-term solutions are not yet in place and depend on government money, for example to improve the heavily used A14. But partners have successfully encouraged local people and visitors to use public transport and cycle. A guided bus-way is due to open in late 2009 or early 2010 and offers people an alternative to driving into Cambridge.

It is important that partners make sure that people in poorer areas of the

county benefit from growth. This will mean attracting business to these areas and helping those in difficulty. For example, at the moment there is no countywide approach to stopping homelessness or helping those who become homeless.

## Safer and Stronger Communities

Crime in Cambridgeshire is higher than in similar places. Although it reduced last year some types of crime are increasing this year. For example, domestic burglary is up by a quarter on last year. Crimes where people are injured have increased recently. Many were a result of domestic abuse and by people with alcohol problems. The police and partners are taking action. For example, the police and partners have set up a violent crimes task group to deal with excessive drinking in Cambridge. The police and partners are working well to deal with domestic abuse, which is the most common form of violence in rural areas.

Over three-quarters of people feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together, which is about average compared to similar areas. But there are big differences across the county. People in Cambridge City are most confident but people in Fenland are much less confident.

There are big differences in opportunity across Cambridgeshire. Research has shown that this can cause unrest. It is therefore important that partners tackle some of these long-standing differences that, if not dealt with, can cause problems for local people.

## About Cambridgeshire

A recent survey shows that in Cambridgeshire 86 per cent of people are satisfied with their immediate local area as a place to live. This is broadly the same as the average for similar areas and higher than the national average of 81 per cent.

Cambridgeshire covers an area of over 3,000 hectares in the East of England. It is a county of contrasts, from the rural Fens in the north to the historic university city in the south. Half the population in Cambridgeshire live in rural areas. The area is also home to a number of market towns.

The county's growth is changing the shape, size and nature of its communities. At the moment the population is around 605,000 but is expected to grow by 90,000 people over the next 12 years. The area is part of a growth area. Substantial growth in new housing is planned for the area. The ages of people living in Cambridgeshire differs across the county. For example, there are a higher proportion of children living in South Cambridge, younger adults in Cambridge and over 50s in Fenland. The area is home to low numbers of people from different backgrounds when compared to other parts of the country, although people from various ethnic backgrounds are concentrated in certain areas. Cambridgeshire has one of the largest Gypsy and traveller populations in the United Kingdom.

The overall picture for Cambridgeshire shows a county of prosperity and

growth, but some communities face real challenges and live in real poverty. Unemployment is relatively low although it has risen in line with the national trend over the past year.

People in Cambridgeshire tend to be healthier than the England average but there are differences in how healthy people are by location, gender, ethnicity and poverty.

Cambridgeshire Together is the countywide strategic partnership. This partnership includes councils, health services, the police, fire service and people from community and voluntary groups. They have agreed on priorities to improve the quality of life for people and have set improvement targets.

The priorities are:

Economic Prosperity (supporting the role of Cambridgeshire as a centre of knowledge and innovation, especially in low carbon technologies)

Environmental Sustainability (meeting the challenges of climate change while maintaining a high-quality environment)

Equality and Inclusion (supporting vulnerable groups and enabling them to participate fully in community life, and encouraging healthier and more sustainable lifestyles)

Managing Growth (providing affordable housing and creating successful communities)

Safer and Stronger Communities (involving citizens in service planning and improvement and ensuring that communities enjoy good quality of life and health, with low crime, unemployment, discrimination and inequalities)

## How well do priorities for Cambridgeshire express community needs and aspirations?

A big challenge facing Cambridgeshire is to make improvements in poorer parts of the county. There are areas where people are unable to get jobs, afford houses, and cannot easily use hospitals, doctors, dentists and care services when they need them. In these areas, health is often worse and people don't live as long as they do in other parts of the county. Some children in these areas do not do well at school.

The public services in Cambridgeshire understand the problems and have agreed a set of aims to deal with them. There are some good examples of where councils are moving money around to make sure that people with the greatest need can improve their lives. There has already been some success in improving people's health, helping people to live healthier lifestyles and helping some groups of children to do better at school. However, there is still a long way to go to make sure that all people in Cambridgeshire have a good quality of life.

There are some good examples of public services, including schools and colleges involving local people in decision making but there is more work to do. Some examples of involving local people are new. For example, children in care have helped to improve training given to social workers. The influence and opinions of young people in Soham have helped to improve the area. Local people in Burwell have worked with local services to reduce anti-social behaviour. However, only one in three Cambridgeshire residents feel that they can influence local decisions and less than one in four residents feel this way in Fenland. Partners across Cambridgeshire want to increase the influence that local people can have on services and are finding new ways of making sure that this happens.

Partners have improved the way that they work together and, in some areas, this is very strong. Cambridgeshire Horizons is managing good progress on new housing developments. RECAP, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough recycling partnership, is successfully getting local people to recycle more and reduce the amount of waste sent to tips. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is improving life experiences and opportunities for young people.

It is recognised that Cambridgeshire Together is still developing its role. Organisational relationships, structures and accountabilities are now getting better. Partners know that more work must be done to get the best out of all the public sector resources that are available.

Partners know the important role voluntary organisations can play in delivering better results for residents. They have set up an agreement to work better with voluntary groups. This agreement says what should be done and who should do it. Work with voluntary organisations is increasingly businesslike with agreements in place rather than simply receiving grants for providing a service.

There are some good examples of where local services are working together to prevent future problems and to save money. For example, reducing teenage pregnancies; helping people to stop smoking; reducing anti-social behaviour; encouraging active lifestyles; and improving local schools. Even so, more needs to be done. For example, to make sure that people do not have to stay in hospital when they are ready to go home; to make sure that people living in rural areas can use the services they need; to provide good areas for Gypsies and travellers to use; to reduce homelessness and to support children who are not doing well in school.

## Economic Prosperity

### Business Growth

Cambridgeshire's economy is one of the strongest in the country. But it has suffered in the economic downturn. It is thought that between three to four per cent of jobs may be lost between 2008 and 2010 mostly through job losses in small businesses. Numbers for new businesses in Cambridgeshire in 2008/09 are not yet available, but information suggests that new business enquiries have now started to increase since the recession. Partners are supporting businesses and are checking local economic conditions to see what

action is needed.

Partners are acting quickly to the economic downturn. Tackling it has become a priority for each council individually and for Cambridgeshire Together collectively. The County Council gave £500,000 to help communities throughout the county. This included extra voluntary and community sector funding to give debt and welfare advice, such as the village visiting service in South Cambridgeshire. Some voluntary organisations also had rent-free periods to release their own money to support families in need.

#### New Businesses and Developing Businesses

Local people are supported to start new businesses or develop existing businesses. The Cambridge and Rural Enterprise Advice and Mentoring Programme (CREAM) has been good at protecting some jobs and creating new small businesses and jobs in more rural areas. There have also been schemes to improve skills and build businesses in less well-off areas. These include the Boathouse in Wisbech and the Creative Exchange in St Neots, which provides flexible modern workspaces and support for creative industries at affordable rents. 'The Hive' is planned in Cambridge to house social and environmental businesses.

#### Reducing Unemployment

Partners have specific aims to reduce unemployment in Fenland, but the recession is working against achieving those targets. Unemployment has increased since autumn 2008. In July 2009 job vacancies were down by between 20 and 35 per cent from July 2008. There are now many more applicants for advertised jobs and fewer chances of casual employment. Partners have used free Business Link East enterprise taster sessions to encourage some people into self-employment and supported others to get bank finance. Youth unemployment has risen in Cambridgeshire, mainly in Huntingdonshire. Cambridgeshire Together is looking to bid for government funding to help create 150 jobs for young people in the worst-affected areas, especially in Fenland and Huntingdonshire.

#### Economic Well-being of Children and Young People

More young people stay on in education to improve their employment prospects. Many 16 to 18 year olds, who have left school, including those considered more vulnerable, stay on in education, employment or training. In December 2008, nearly 800 more were in education than in December 2007. Of 16-18 year olds, 5.2 per cent were not in education, employment or training in December 2008 against a target of 5 per cent for 2011.

But, young people from low-income families do not do as well as others. In Fenland, fewer young people remain in education than in the rest of the county. However, this has started to improve with 2.5 per cent more Fenland pupils in learning in spring 2009 than in spring 2008. The proportion of young offenders engaged in education, training and employment has declined over the last three years in spite of targeted work by partners and is well below national averages. Closing the gap in achievement is a high priority for partners.

Educational results for children in Cambridgeshire are generally good and improved in 2008. The percentage of pupils getting five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE (including English and maths) is now above national and regional averages. This included improvement for a number of children in less wealthy areas.

There have been specific efforts to raise the hopes and results of primary pupils in Wisbech and Cambridge. Seven schools in Cambridge and eight in Wisbech got extra support to improve the results of six year olds in Wisbech and both six and 11 year olds in Cambridge. The project will be extended to some schools in Chatteris and March. Careers education to tackle low aims has been extended to primary schools, with careers conferences in some places for 10 and 11 year olds.

## Environmental Sustainability



### Green flag: Waste Partnership is Key in Reducing Waste

Councils in Cambridgeshire are very good at helping people recycle and compost high levels of waste. The overall level of recycling and composting achieved in 2008/09 was 52 per cent; continuing a year-on-year improvement. All but one of the partners has already exceeded the national target of 40 per cent for recycling and composting. The amount of waste sent to landfill continues to reduce.

Good joint working with councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is encouraging local people to recycle more in the future. High levels of recycling are achieved through working with local residents. This includes carrying out education on recycling in schools and information in languages for non English speakers. The Cambridgeshire recycling bus tours schools in the county with its own teacher. Work is done in secondary schools as part of the national curriculum on green issues.

The partners (RECAP) have a website ([www.recap.co.uk](http://www.recap.co.uk)). This provides a 'one-stop' shop for information on recycling and waste prevention in the county. Usage is increasing each year.

RECAP won the Government Business Award in March 2009 in recognition of its expertise and new ways of working in waste management. The Partnership's winning project is a scheme to encourage local businesses to recycle their waste. This included the setting up of recycling collections and the development of a useful guide to help small and medium sized businesses understand legislation and the waste services on offer. The councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough contributed money and successfully bid for over £200,000 of government money to fund the scheme. The government is using the scheme as an example of best practice across the country.

A target of achieving between 55 to 60 per cent recycling by 2020 has been set. Actions to achieve this are being put in place, following consultation with residents.

Large investment is being made to continue to deliver improved waste and

recycling services in the longer term. The County Council has agreed a 28-year, £730 million contract. A new mechanical biological treatment (MBT) opened at Waterbeach in late 2009. This will sort Cambridgeshire's waste to increase recycling. The Council successfully bid for £35 million in government Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits to help pay for the scheme. The scheme will also include a visitor centre where people, including local children, can learn more about recycling and find out about the MBT plant. More facilities for the composting of household collected kitchen and garden waste will also be provided under the new contract.

## Environmental Sustainability

### Environmental Sustainability

Partners are working to reduce the energy used by households and local businesses. They also want to increase the number of journeys made on public transport and to increase awareness of environmental issues. Partners have succeeded in increasing cycling, and the number of people using local buses.

Several projects are helping to reduce carbon emissions. One hundred households in Huntingdonshire reduced their energy use by 22 per cent. Council houses in Cambridge have been made more energy efficient. In Fenland a wall insulation project increased energy efficiency and helped vulnerable people to reduce their energy bills. Looking forward, there is scope to achieve much more. Plans are in place to create an education centre that aims to make new buildings more environmentally friendly. In Huntingdonshire a project shows the public how energy savings can be made at home. Partners should take the opportunity to work together more to reduce carbon emissions. A programme is being developed to help manage the problem of flooding across Cambridgeshire, but this work is still at an early stage.

### Attractive and Healthy Environment

Partners in Cambridgeshire are working to keep the local environment attractive and healthy. Air quality has improved by using cleaner buses and pollution has reduced through the Travel for Work Partnership. Work makes sure that local natural areas are protected. The Great Fen Project resulted in the joining of two existing national nature reserves, giving a protected environment for wildlife and a green space for people to enjoy.

## Equality and Inclusion

Overall most people in Cambridgeshire have a good quality of life. But this is not the case in all areas. Some rural areas are remote and have poor access to services and facilities. Inequalities issues are most obvious in Fenland but there are other inequalities in parts of the county. In Cambridge there are big differences in levels of income between people living in different parts of the city and comparatively high concentrations of people from different backgrounds. One child in five lives in a household claiming housing or council tax benefit. Half of all claimants live in a fifth of the geographic area. People living and working in the city are among the most highly qualified in the country but a large proportion of adults do not have any qualifications. The southern area of East Cambridgeshire is relatively prosperous. But the district

has poor areas because of declining traditional industries, limited public transport, and rural isolation.

Inequalities are high within the district of Fenland. Life expectancy is lower than the rest of Cambridgeshire. The average number of early deaths is much higher than the Cambridgeshire average. This is caused by poor diet, low levels of exercise, high levels of smoking and a high level of road traffic accidents. Teenage pregnancy rates are higher than across the rest of Cambridgeshire. Raising skills levels in the district is a key challenge that must be addressed to help break the cycle of living in poverty, by attracting higher skilled jobs to the area.

#### Making sure that all people are healthy

Compared with other parts of the country, people in Cambridgeshire generally live long and healthy lives. But there are areas within the county where health problems are more common. Children and adults living in poorer areas are more likely to suffer poor health. More work is needed to reduce the number of people with alcohol problems. The population of Cambridgeshire is growing and it is important to make sure that all people, wherever they live, can use the health and care services that they need.

The health services, local councils and voluntary organisations in Cambridgeshire are taking action to reduce health differences in the county. They have assessed the needs of people living in different parts of the county. This is helping to put services into place to help people to live healthier lives. This includes encouraging people to become more physically active, to eat more healthily, to stop smoking and improve their sexual health. Health improvement programmes are starting to reduce obesity in Fenland, Huntingdon and in the north of Cambridge City. Early results show that around 70 per cent of people lost weight. GPs are working with people who are at risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Sexual health teams have worked to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies in Fenland. Improved mental health services have been put in place for children and young people. Plans are in place to support the health needs of travellers and Gypsies, migrant workers, children in care and youth offenders.

#### Healthy children and young people

Many schools and childcare settings promote healthy lifestyles well. But few children's homes are judged to be good or better in this area. Current performance is very similar to the national average. The number of children who are overweight at age five and 11 is below national figures but increasing. Many young people take part in high-quality physical education and sport, but less than half are satisfied with their local parks and play areas. A recent survey of parents of children with special educational needs shows that they are generally satisfied with local services. But mental health services for vulnerable young people are not as good as in similar areas. Plans draw attention to emotional and mental health as priorities but there are no clear actions or targets to drive improvement. Health inequalities are identified and action targeted well to address health issues such as teenage pregnancy, smoking and childhood obesity.

#### Making sure young people do well at school

Children and young people in Cambridgeshire do well and education results are good overall. However, there is a difference in results for some groups of young people. Narrowing this gap is a high priority for local councils and schools. Partners within Cambridgeshire have identified which children need extra support at school. These groups include children and young people living in poorer areas, children in care, children from some ethnic groups (including Gypsies and travellers) and children and young people with learning disabilities.

While there is better progress for some groups, the difference for some children and young people is still too great. Education results of young people living in poorer areas need to improve. The County Council knows this and is planning to do more.

#### Older people leading independent lives

Partners across Cambridgeshire have successfully helped older, vulnerable and disabled people to lead independent lives. This means that fewer people go into residential and nursing homes, if they prefer to stay at home. It also means that fewer people have to stay in hospital when they are ready to go home.

The needs of older, vulnerable and disabled people are understood by partners. They have spoken to members of the public and voluntary organisations to see what is important to them. This has led to new targets being set and changes to the way money is spent, for example, to support people with dementia.

Councils in Cambridgeshire are providing a range of activities to help older people keep a good quality of life. These include library schemes, exercise opportunities and a project which helps older people to stay in their own homes.

Partners have worked with carers to better understand the problems they face and the way that their lives can be made easier. A new plan is helping to achieve this. An employment scheme has been put in place to help to make sure there are skilled and experienced workers available to care for older and vulnerable people.

While it is clear that improvements have been made in supporting older, vulnerable and disabled people, challenges lie ahead. Every year there are more and more older people living in Cambridgeshire. The proportion of people who are over 85 is increasing faster in Cambridgeshire than in other parts of the country. Partners must be able to continue to provide the services that an ageing population needs and expects. A new plan sets out key aims to make sure older people feel safe in their homes, feel in control of their lives, do not feel isolated, and enjoy good health and quality of life.

#### Gypsies and travellers

Cambridgeshire's Gypsies and travellers face a number of challenges. Around 7,000 Gypsies and travellers live in the area, with over half living in houses. A study in 2006 identified the need for more sites in South Cambridgeshire and Fenland. There is a target of a further 273 pitches by 2011. By 2008 the area

had achieved only 26. The study also found serious health problems and poor educational results. Other problems included high levels of racism from neighbours, feelings of isolation and loss of identity, and drug abuse on estates.

Some district councils are better than others at understanding and working with the Gypsy and traveller community. Fenland District Council has been very successful. The County Council supports children and young people to enter and stay in education. In South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City there is a travellers' health project to improve family healthcare services. Although partners are working together better, to help meet the needs of Gypsies and travellers, more needs to be done.

## Managing Growth

### Provision of Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Many local people cannot afford to buy houses in Cambridgeshire. Almost three-quarters of Cambridge City residents could not afford to buy starter homes. Even where prices are lower in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland; over half of residents cannot afford to buy. Partners are working well to make sure more affordable homes are built and nearly 900 were completed in 2008/09. But the demand for affordable homes is higher than the number of homes built. Government funding for affordable housing will be cut by half in 2010/11. Linked to the recession this means that recent rates of house building and affordable house building are likely to reduce.

Not enough is being done to help homeless people. Homelessness is an important issue across the county and the situation is getting worse. Partners have agreed that more has to be done to help homeless people. The problem will be made worse by likely increases in single person households, and older households, including the frail elderly. But it is not clear how these needs will be met across the county in the future.

Cambridgeshire Horizons is the partnership of public and private organisations, working to achieve growth in Cambridgeshire. Because of the economic downturn, it has negotiated reduced housing targets with the government. But, partners have made sure developments continue despite the recession and Cambridgeshire Horizons secured money to bring forward the Trumpington Meadows development to 2010. Investment also continues in the facilities that local people need now and will need in future. An access road to Addenbrooke's Hospital is due to be finished in spring 2010. Plans are in place to protect natural spaces in Cambridgeshire, like Fen Drayton Lakes.

### Safe, Well-designed, Accessible and Well Managed New Developments

Partners make sure new developments are safe, well-designed, and accessible. A 'Quality Charter' outlines the need for community facilities, to be provided at the right time as housing is built. At Orchard Park, a development of 900 homes, a new primary school has been finished. The recession threatened progress, but partners stepped in to make sure a community centre was completed. New communities, in Cambourne, Orchard Park, Accordia and the Vie development in Cambridge have well-designed, safe

open spaces for residents. Accordia was the first residential scheme to win the Stirling Prize for architecture. Plans are in place to make connected green spaces across Cambridgeshire. A new country park and big areas of public open space are planned for the southern fringe developments.

Local people are now involved in creating new communities. Partners have learned from experience to make sure that successive developments are better planned. Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council work well together to plan for growth around Cambridge. Joint committees help to make sure that plans link together.

### Appropriate Infrastructure for New and Established Communities

Traffic congestion is an issue on Cambridgeshire's roads. Partners have consulted widely on future transport needs and solutions, including proposals to reduce congestion in Cambridge. There is a report on ways to tackle the issue, but no way forward has yet been agreed. The upgrading of the A14 by the Highways Agency continues, but is not expected to be completed until 2016. The condition of major roads in the county has improved, but footways and smaller roads have not improved as planned. More investment is planned for 2009/10 to improve conditions.

Some improvements are being made that should soon benefit residents. The guided bus-way is due to open in late 2009 or early 2010. This offers an alternative to driving into Cambridge. It links Huntingdon, St Ives and Cambridge and includes two new park and ride sites. But changes to government funding could mean that plans to build a new rail station at Chesterton, linking with the guided bus-way might not go ahead.

New housing developments around Cambridge are being planned so that people can live and work in the same area or travel to work on public transport, on foot or by bike. Cycling has increased. In 2008/09, a quarter of trips within the six market towns were by bus, cycle or on foot. Cambridge has been awarded 'Cycle Demonstration Town' status. The number of local bus journeys is increasing significantly but local people are not satisfied with services or the information given. Despite the County Council introducing a passenger transport website to provide better information, local people are less satisfied with local bus services and transport information now than in 2006/07.

## Safer and Stronger Communities

### Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

Levels of crime in Cambridgeshire are higher than in similar places. Crime has reduced over a number of years and fell again slightly last year. But some types of crime are rising this year, especially in Cambridge City, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire. Domestic burglary is up by about a quarter on last year. But vehicle crime has reduced overall. Cambridge City has most burglaries and the biggest increase by almost a half over the last year. There have also been rises in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire.

Crimes where people are injured increased across the county this summer. Crimes of more serious violence have increased since last year and are now more common than elsewhere in the region. Some of this increase is because the police and partners are encouraging victims to report domestic abuse so that offenders can be dealt with. Because many crimes are caused by people drinking too much the police and partners have set up a Violent Crimes Task Group to tackle excessive drinking in Cambridge City. There are also media campaigns encouraging young people to drink sensibly and a street pastor scheme to help those under the influence of alcohol.

The police and partners are targeting work to improve the safety of people in their communities. They have reduced re-offending by young people to levels comparable with similar areas and plans are in place for further reductions. Parenting workers are being funded, Youth Inclusion Support Panels are set up, arts work is in place, and a volunteering programme is running. Support is made available to young people who are at risk of going into custody if they do re-offend. A programme is in place to help these young people into education, employment or training but by most measures the Youth Offending Team perform less well than similar places.

Generally, people in Cambridgeshire do not believe drunk or rowdy behaviour or drug taking and drug dealing are a problem locally. But it is more of an issue for people in Fenland. Crime and anti-social behaviour in hotspot areas of St Neots has reduced by 46 per cent because of work to educate young people on the dangers of alcohol misuse. This project may be rolled out to all districts.

The police and partners are working well to tackle domestic abuse. This is the most common form of violence in rural areas. Partners have developed a three-year plan. Work has concentrated on supporting people to report domestic abuse. As a result the number of cases is increasing every year. In more than a quarter of cases, the offender has committed a similar crime before. Repeat offenders are targeted and more specialist support is provided to victims.

People in Cambridgeshire generally do not consider that anti-social behaviour is a major problem. More than half of residents think that their views are sought about crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area. But there is much less confidence that the police and other partners are successfully dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour, especially in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland.

Partners have successfully reduced anti-social behaviour across the county through activities aimed at getting children back into school, particularly in Linton, Sawston, Wisbech and Huntingdon. In Cambridge City the partners have worked with children and schools to raise awareness of the effects of anti-social behaviour and what they can do to reduce it. In Burwell, one initiative has reduced crime levels and helped some young people back into employment. The CrimeBUSter project in Fenland, has promoted community safety and reduced the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour across 19 villages. A Dispersal Order was implemented in Wisbech and young people identified by the police were offered discounted activities at Fenland Leisure Centre to divert them from anti-social behaviour. Sixteen young people who took advantage of activities at the leisure centre have had no further contact with the police. A quarter of local residents now say they feel safer at night

and 12 per cent feel safer in the daytime.

### Safer Communities

Some older and vulnerable people now feel safer at home. Targeted work with older people has raised awareness of bogus callers, crime prevention and improving home security. The police have made dealing with these offenders more of a priority.

Partners work well together to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the county's roads. In 2008 this was the lowest number ever recorded in the county. But numbers are still comparatively high. The partners have secured money to research accidents on waterside roads. This is a particular problem in Fenland, where deaths in road accidents are above average.

### Getting Along Together

Over three-quarters of people feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together, which is about average compared to similar areas. But there are big differences across the county, people in Cambridge City are most confident but people in Fenland are much less confident. Actions are planned to deal with this in Fenland. Both Huntingdonshire District and Cambridge City Councils work with new arrivals from Eastern Europe to make services more accessible to them.

Partners do not have a common approach to tackle the disadvantages that Gypsies and travellers often experience. Some district councils are better than others at understanding and working with the Gypsy and traveller community. Fenland in particular has been very successful. The County Council supports Gypsy and traveller families to help children and young people to enter and stay in education. Partners have developed a personal, social and health education course, promoting greater understanding of the Gypsy, Romany and traveller way of life. In South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City there is a travellers' health project to improve access to family healthcare services. Partners are now developing a more joined-up approach. But identifying the further 233 residential pitches for Gypsy families required in the county by 2011 will be a challenge.

Councils in Cambridgeshire are encouraging local people to get involved in deciding about local issues. This includes planning new developments, identifying what issues are important locally and deciding how best to protect local natural areas. But the way and extent to which local people are involved varies across the county. The number of people who feel they can influence decisions varies a lot between districts. There are also very different levels of civic participation and this is low overall. The County Council has increased the importance it attaches to people power and plans to give people more influence in the future. This includes making sure the needs and opinions of rural residents and businesses are understood and met. There is more work for partners to do on this.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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