

## **Rural Cambridgeshire: Ensuring a Vibrant Future**

Report on the Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy  
Consultation undertaken during September and October 2009

## **BACKGROUND**

Cambridgeshire Together is the working name of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Board for Cambridgeshire. Cambridgeshire Together brings together representatives from key local organisations to improve the quality of life for those who live, learn, work and travel in the County.

In January 2009, Cambridgeshire Together agreed that a new Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire should be created.

The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that the work of Cambridgeshire Together adequately reflects the distinct set of social, economic and environmental issues which affect rural communities and businesses in Cambridgeshire.

The need for a Rural Strategy is clear. Significant parts of the county of Cambridgeshire experience a quality of life which is considerably below that of the national population at large. Alongside this, traditional rural life is gradually being eroded and yet local people tell us they want to keep the special 'rural nature' of the communities where they live and work.

Many of the problems in our local communities are distinctive and are rooted in their rural nature and legacy from the past. The Rural Strategy will play an important part in helping to describe and understand these conditions and will help influence and monitor how well the County's major plans and organisations are addressing them.

The report presents the findings of the stakeholder consultation that has taken place during September and October 2009 and analyses the responses in order to propose the main strategy priorities to be taken forward in the Strategy. The draft Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy will be published in the winter and then launched for a further (12 week) period of consultation. The final Rural Strategy will be published in February 2010 and will be used to check whether Cambridgeshire's plans and policies are fully meeting the needs of its rural population.

## **APPROACH TO PRODUCING THE NEW RURAL STRATEGY**

Those who live and work in rural Cambridgeshire (our rural stakeholders) have vital local knowledge and views that needed to be captured in order to help shape the most relevant and 'fit for purpose' strategy.

Stakeholders have been given a number of opportunities to contribute their views, including four District-based workshops, an online survey and an evening of rural debate.

We have consulted with parish/town councils, community leaders, smaller voluntary and community groups, businesses, Third Sector organisations, statutory agencies like the Police and NHS Cambridgeshire, Local Authority Officers, Strategic Partnerships at County and District level, and as many individuals as possible.

A total of 233 people representing 100 organisations have contributed their views. A full list of contributing organisations and participants can be found in Appendix 1.

## **CONSULTATION METHODS**

Secondary data from a large range of national, regional and local sources has been compiled to form a Rural Evidence Base. This looks at the overall trends and issues in rural England and then examines local data to provide a picture of rural Cambridgeshire.

This data was used to design the consultation, which was based around a set of 16 challenging enquiry questions, divided into three thematic areas:

### **Living in the Countryside**

- Hidden deprivation
- Availability of affordable housing
- Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices
- Availability of health care and health information
- Accessibility to services, work and training
- Changing age profile of the rural population
- Supporting communities' engagement in self-reliance and self-governance

### **Economic Wellbeing**

- Provision of sufficiently skilled workforce and appropriate affordable premises
- Maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs
- Improving skills through education and training
- Diversification of farms to support the local economy

### **Land and Environment**

- Availability of green space for recreation and habitat restoration
- Impact of climate change
- Impact of development on environmental quality
- Ensuring food security for the future

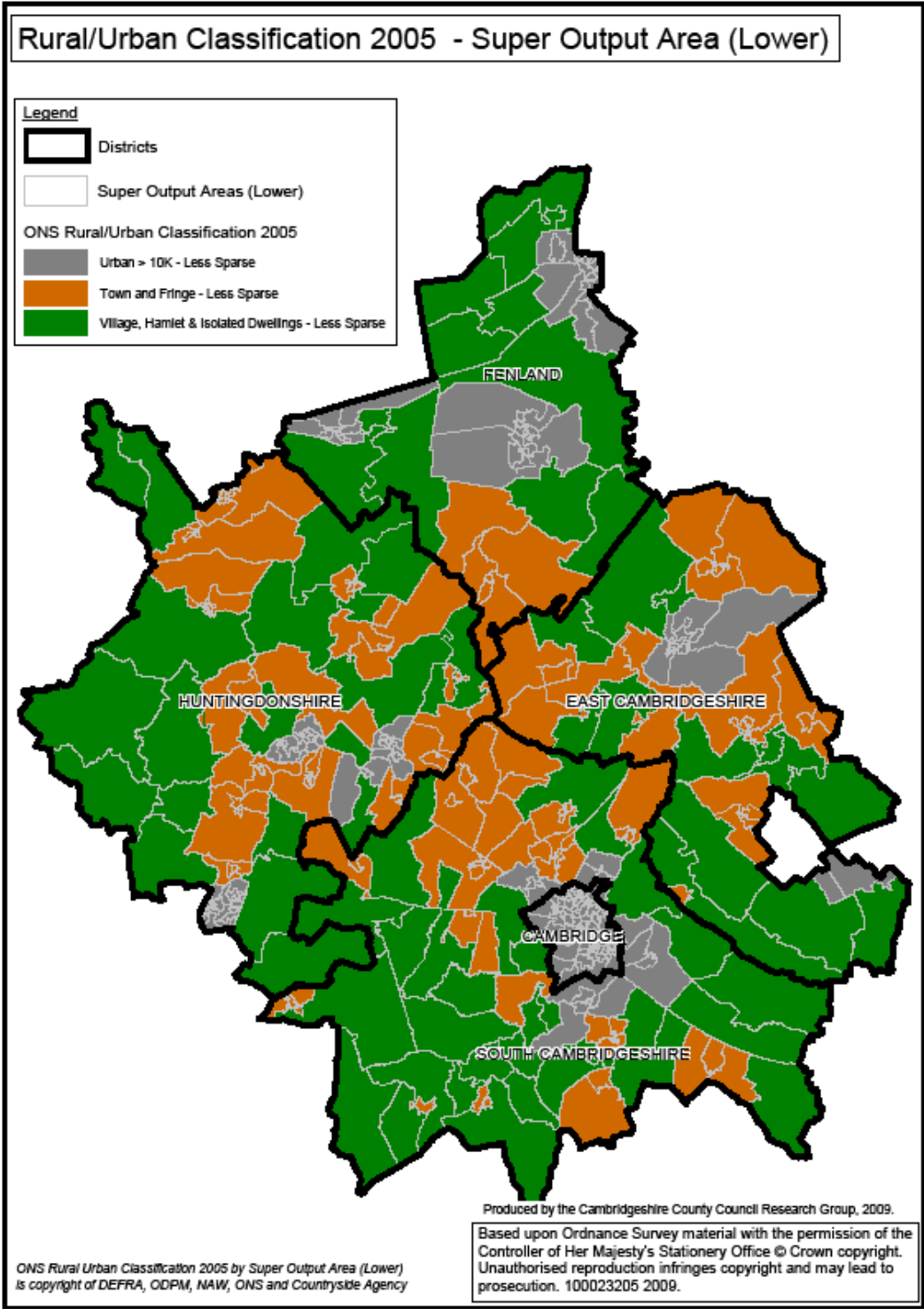
All participants were encouraged to read a document called "Summary of Evidence for Consultation" before attending the events or answering the online survey. This provided a succinct overview of the key issues and set the scene.

In order to define what we mean by 'rural Cambridgeshire', the Commission for Rural Communities' classification of rural settlement has been used. This defines settlements of over 10,000 people as 'urban', and smaller 'rural' settlements into three categories: 'town and fringe', 'villages', or 'hamlets and isolated dwellings'. In addition, settlements are

defined as to whether they are in 'sparse' or 'less sparse' areas. Map 1 shows Cambridgeshire mapped at Super Output Area using this classification.

Each of the four districts has varying social, economic and environmental conditions. Broadly there is a significant difference between areas to the north (which relate to the wider Fens area) and areas to the south of the County (most influenced by Cambridge City).

Map 1:



Each Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) sponsored the workshop relevant to its district. The workshop programme was structured to maximise the amount of time spent in interactive sessions thus giving participants a good chance to discuss both broader issues and to focus in on particular topics. A report on those specific findings has been prepared for each LSP.

The on-line survey provided an opportunity for those that were unable to attend workshops to contribute, as well being used by those that wished to follow-up on specific ideas/issues after attending a workshop. Organisations that are nationally and regionally based have also tended to contribute in this way, as have individuals restricted by time/mobility.

The final consultation event, “An Evening of Rural Debate”, was attended by Dr Stuart Burgess, the Government’s Rural Advocate and Chairman of the Commission for Rural Communities. After his keynote speech, the rest of evening was arranged around questions and a table discussion with feedback.

**CONSULTATION RESULTS**

**Strategic priorities – Main Findings**

Stakeholders were asked to consider whether the priorities identified through the initial research for each of the three thematic areas were the right ones and also whether there were any further priorities that needed inclusion. The table below sets out a summary of the main responses from stakeholders. Taking into account consultation feedback new proposed priorities have been suggested.

**LIVING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Original priority	Responses from Consultation Stakeholders	Proposed priority
Hidden deprivation	Supported priority but said that deprivation is not just hidden. Need to combine IMD and other rural factors including ‘material’ deprivation that takes into account fuel poverty, isolation/loneliness, lack of transport and fear of crime. Rural residents are felt to have higher satisfaction levels than their urban counterparts, not least because they have low expectations of service provision as a result of where they live.	Preventing rural deprivation
Availability of affordable housing	Supported priority with concerns over affordability of all housing and not just ‘social housing’. Recognised issue of ‘hidden homelessness’ where family units live with other family units in one property. Desire expressed for local housing to remain for local	Building local homes for local people

	people. Challenging current planning options was considered key to delivery sustainability of smaller communities.	
Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices	Supported priority. Stated that we need to find different models for delivery such as combined service outlets.	Protecting and enhancing rural services
Availability of health care and health information	Supported priority. Want NHS Cambridgeshire to find better models of delivery in rural areas, taking services to local places rather than expecting people to travel. Real fear of centralisation of health services.	Providing access to local health care
Accessibility to services, work and training	Supported priority. Clear demand for improving transport options to enable access to education, work and leisure/social opportunities.	Widening transport options
Changing age profile of the population	Challenged priority. Participants described this as an underlying issue rather than a priority to be tackled in its own right.	<i>Discharged – will not be a priority for this strategy.</i>
Supporting communities' engagement in self-reliance and self-governance	Supported priority. Participants recognised that communities need support to be successful, particularly around parish council role and engagement, new communities and effective partnership working. Importance of volunteering to rural community life strongly recognised. Improvements to community cohesion seen as key.	Supporting and strengthening local communities

## ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Original priority	Responses from Consultation Participants	Proposed priority
Provision of a sufficiently skilled workforce and appropriate affordable premises	Broadly supported priority but needs rewording. Issues with out-commuting amongst those with the highest educational attainment and skill levels. These skills need to be harnessed locally but there are limited high value job opportunities currently. There is a need to encourage local entrepreneurs. It was felt that premises at start-up level are available and adequate but that there are limited opportunities for expansion. Participants considered that the key is to be more creative around the development of new employment sectors which exploit the area's assets. We also need to support the ability for home-working and entrepreneurship through top-notch	Improving employment opportunities

	technology such as fast broadband connections across the whole county and mobile phone network coverage.	
Maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs	Supported priority. In all districts there was a strong belief in market towns acting as essential service hubs. In the South of the County there are no traditional market towns but participants still recognised the need for defining key service hubs. Participant also focused on the need for developing micro-economy plans.	Maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs
Improving skills through education and training	Supported priority. Participants felt this priority was of high important, particularly with regard to maintaining training and educational provision across all levels of learning. A particular need in the North of the County to improve the educational offer was identified, and across the County, participants felt there was a need to improve education and training premises. Participants recognised there are considerable barriers for young people in accessing education, vocational training and apprenticeships, particularly transport to access the provision that does exist.	Improving skills through education and training
Diversification of farms to support the local economy	Challenged priority. Participants felt this priority was too narrowly focused and that there was too much cross-over with similar priorities in the 'Land and Environment' theme.	<i>Discharged – will not be a priority for this strategy.</i> Ideas will be included within 'Land and Environment' theme.

## LAND AND ENVIRONMENT

Original priority	Responses from Consultation Participants	Proposed priority
Availability of green space for recreation and habitat restoration	Supported priority with broad agreement that green space is important for both rural and urban communities to enjoy. However wider aspects of our unique landscape and heritage were discussed and felt to need development. These include linking very local green space with wider green space strategies; building on waterways for both water-based leisure activities and tourism; stopping market towns from losing their identity and promoting local heritage, arts, crafts, culture and sport.	Making the most of Cambridgeshire's unique landscape

Impact of climate change	Supported priority. Whilst this priority was supported, it is fair to say that participants found this global issue hard to consider at a local level, although those in Fenland recognised it could have a significant bearing locally due to the area's landscape character and the need for agricultural land to stay in full production. People felt that in rural areas the best approach is through programmes that support local action. Participants were keen on prevention strategies such as not allowing building on flood plains and improving flood defences. Many mentioned fuel poverty, peak oil and peak water as real issues that need addressing now. Concern was shown over current intensive farming practices particularly those linked to denigration of peat soil, 'fen blows' and future changes to cropping to take account of changing growing conditions. It was clearly recognised that climate change has potential impacts at social, economic and environmental levels.	Mitigating the impact of climate change
Impact of development on environmental quality	Supported priority. Concern expressed regarding the aesthetics of modern development and the detrimental impact on local assets. There was much support for the importance of planners considering what is already there, the local built and natural environments to that the locality is not spoiled.	Ensuring sympathetic development
Ensuring food security for the future	Supported priority. This seems to have been a new concept for many participants. However, they understood the important role Cambridgeshire plays in local food production. Issues were identified around land management, reducing food miles and food wastage. Reviving people's connection with the countryside and knowing where your food comes from were seen as important concepts. Many supported schemes to encourage better local supply chains and distribution points. People expressed a belief that current farmers markets attract local buyers but that there are opportunities to build on the local food economy. The desire of local people to have access to allotments to increase self-sufficiency was also recognised.	Promoting Cambridgeshire's food

## **In Depth Questions - Main Findings**

The key findings have been analysed and are detailed under each consultation question:

### ***Living in the Countryside***

**Question 1** Evidence tells us that more affordable housing is needed in the small villages and settlements of Cambridgeshire. How can we increase the amount of affordable housing in Cambridgeshire's rural settlements?

- Rural exception sites are key to supporting the development of affordable rural housing.
- Need to look at the demographic profile of each community and understand local needs in order to develop lifetime homes which are accessible for those with disabilities and provide flexible accommodation.
- Parish councils need to be involved in the undertaking of Housing Needs Surveys and also in the identification of suitable land for exception sites.
- Community Land Trusts are a vehicle for empowering communities to develop their own housing and ensure that it is held in perpetuity for the benefit of the community.
- Need to review the threshold in new developments relating to the proportion of housing that is 'affordable' and the types of units built.
- Planning policy needs to consider where development takes place. Only building in larger settlements that are considered to have local services is considered detrimental to the sustainability of smaller rural parishes.
- Change planning policy to ensure planning gain can benefit smaller units and increase community facilities/services.
- Consider devolving money for affordable rural housing to a more local level. Parish Councils should take a greater lead and be enabled to have more influence over S106 agreements.
- Affordable housing should be integrated into existing housing. It should not be built in 'estates' and look like 'social housing'.

**Question 2** Population forecasts for Cambridgeshire predict continued growth and a shift towards an older age profile and a lower children population. Are the implications of more older people and fewer children in our villages and settlements being adequately addressed in terms of housing and care needs, schools and the viability of other services? What needs to be done differently?

- Concerned that the shift towards an older age profile means current housing provision is not suitable for older residents or to allow them to be cared for in their own community.
- Housing should be planned for elderly people in every village to free up current family homes in order to encourage a balanced age profile.
- Concerned regarding declining rural services and the need to travel for basic services. Suggest we need to consider mobile services (such as mobile libraries) more and what further opportunities they provide.

- Village schools (and halls and other services) are key to attracting young families to an area and better access needs to be developed.

**Question 3** Levels of deprivation in Cambridgeshire are not equal across the board. Some areas rank more highly than others on deprivation measures such as prosperity, health, education and fuel poverty. In addition, the sparse population in some areas means that deprivation is hidden. What more can be done to address rural deprivation in Cambridgeshire?

- Support local neighbourhood management / partnership working as a method of engaging and supporting communities in areas of deprivation and for tackling complex issues. Call for partners to be better at sharing resources.
- Strong recognition of issues of hidden deprivation that are often not evident through the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Issues such as isolation, fuel poverty, poor broadband connectivity, lack of transport, fear of crime, and lack of access of services need to be more fully understood and investigated.
- Resource needs to be targeted at areas of known deprivation, particularly Fenland.
- Service planning is currently undertaken with too much emphasis on hard statistics without sufficient weight being given to understanding real local issues and experiences.
- Increasing educational attainment, raising aspirations and increasing employment opportunities will help keep young people in an area of deprivation.
- Consider developing 'parish hubs', where parishes group together, if services are not viable in individual villages to address isolation and infrastructure issues.
- Address the digital inclusion agenda, as research shows a direct correlation between digital and social exclusion. With more and more services being online, rural isolation where broadband coverage is not so good can exacerbate this.

**Question 4** The national decline in rural services (shops, pubs and post offices) is being felt in Cambridgeshire as much as in any other part of the country. What opportunities are available to maintain/increase service provision within rural communities e.g. pubs, garages, shops and post offices, etc? Are you aware of any innovative schemes and solutions to rural service provision? What role can community buildings play in accessing key services in the future?

- The decline in rural services is clearly recognised, as is the fact that current models of delivery will not be viable in the future due to people's lifestyles (out-commuting, shopping in supermarkets, etc).
- A multi-service approach where a number of different services are combined and delivered through a single location is a possible solution.
- Community buildings are vital for hosting services and providing a hub for community activity. Other key facilities such as schools, police stations and fire stations could play a similar role. The success of LAPs is an example of how this can work.
- Use of mobile units (particularly existing ones such as mobile libraries) is a way of providing services in communities where there is no other infrastructure. There are opportunities to look at integrated information services and transactional services.

- Further support is required by communities to assist them in developing local community enterprises that might develop and deliver future rural services.
- Investigate if planning policy relating to 'change of use' of premises is restricting the growth of multi-use centres and reduce the red tape/bureaucracy around farm shops and local produce.
- Look at ways of subsidising local businesses in terms of rent / rate relief to encourage vibrant high streets with essential services not empty shops.
- Local Authorities (at all levels) could take on leases on vacant units and then act as landlords by leasing premises back to community ventures at peppercorn rents.
- Better use of existing facilities, e.g. CAPS, will help develop services in partnership.

**Question 5** Lack of access to adequate transport provision is a major issue for residents in rural areas, impacting on their ability to access services (where there is no local provision) and even travel to work.

How can we improve access to transport? What might the local solutions be and what role could community-based transport play in the future?

- Current transport provision in the County is a huge concern. Lack of access is particularly felt by older people and young people.
- Better understand how accessibility planning can provide modelling for ensuring the best local solutions for transport and access to services.
- Whilst a number of ideas for rural transport solutions exist, e.g. car sharing schemes, taxi-sharing schemes, moped schemes, dial-a-ride, rural car clubs, it is recognised that to be successful these need government subsidy and volunteer support.
- Better co-ordination of existing transport options (e.g. through the Community Transport Brokerage Scheme) and local information is highlighted as needing attention and consideration should be given to devolving transport budgets to parish level.
- Improve the image of Community Transport schemes making them more appealing for all sections of the community.
- There is concern over the future cost and impact of high levels of car ownership on the environment in rural areas. Call to encourage people to think differently about how they travel.
- Consider demand responsive schemes as operating in Lincolnshire. No more empty double-decker buses – use smaller 'hopper' buses that are more flexible and have less environmental impact.
- More consultation is needed on the types of transport needed and when/where people want to travel.

**Question 6** Under the law, eligible Parish Councils have a 'power of wellbeing' which permits them to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social, or environmental well-being of an area. This might include such things as saving and supporting local assets such as shops, pub or post office, or providing medical/health centres, a mobile library, meals on wheels or making local grants. Are parish/town councils and other community groups receiving adequate support to develop their capacity to influence plans and policies, to acquire and develop their own assets and to provide some services more locally? What further support do they need?

- Although the Power of Wellbeing as a concept is known by parish council, they are struggling to implement it on a practical level due to clarity, support and finance.
- Better technical knowledge and support is needed in order to help parishes make decisions, access funding streams and influence authorities.
- There are opportunities here for parish councils to become more involved in providing community services but help through Partnership working is needed.
- Where services are under threat, could interest-free loans be provided for emergency funding of initiatives? In this way, money would be available when needed and could be repaid through the precepting process in the following years.
- Parish (Community Led) Plans are key within this and enable local people to identify improvements for their local area and work with partners to carry them out.
- Support Parish Councils to lead and motivate communities to take action on climate change and utilise opportunities at a local level.

**Question 7** There are health inequalities in Cambridgeshire by location, gender, ethnicity and deprivation. In addition, ‘distance decay’ results in people making less use of healthcare services the further they are away from their provision and this is a significant problem for the most rural parts of the county. Is enough being done to promote healthier lifestyles in rural areas? Does anything need to be done differently to provide better access to healthcare and health information? How can communities and healthcare agencies work better together and develop innovative solutions to health inequalities?

- Centralisation of health services such as through polyclinics is not appropriate for rural health delivery. There are real community fears relating to centralisation and access issues relating to distance and transport.
- Great value is placed on local health surgeries, clinics, drop-ins and information provision through outreach and there is a need to consider using existing community facilities more creatively.
- The idea of a travelling ‘health bus’ was suggested to tour rural areas providing primary care and advice.

**Question 8** Recent research tells us that approximately one in ten residents in Cambridgeshire have taken part in a civic activity in the last twelve months. Do you think there is equality of opportunity for all members of the community currently to contribute towards and play an active role in their community? What do you consider to be the key barriers to people being able to play an active role and how could these be broken down?

- Lack of awareness of social dynamics, lack of confidence and knowing how to get involved (particularly if new to an area or from a minority ethnic group) are the key barriers.
- Working people have busy lives that restrict their ability/desire to get involved or to commit to the amount of time required.
- Bring people together through Neighbourhood Panels and participatory budgeting.

## ***Economic Wellbeing***

**Question 1** Evidence shows there is a need to raise the level of skills and educational attainment of local people to support the rural economy. What are the main barriers/threats faced by rural individuals when they seek to raise/maintain their skill levels through education and training? How can a greater number of young people be encouraged to remain in rural areas with weaker economies?

- The main threats/barriers to raising skill levels are:
  - Adequate training facilities
  - Transport to / Access to training (including lack of local provision)
  - Cost of continuing training / education
  - Lack of Parental support
  - Lack of choice in the courses available
  - Lack of aspiration
- Particular concern in Fenland over the withdrawal of the College of West Anglia development in March.
- To encourage young people to remain we need to provide better employment opportunities by providing inward investment to bring quality jobs (including apprenticeships) to the area. Being able to afford to purchase their own home is also key to getting people to stay in the area.

**Question 2** Central to rural Cambridgeshire's economic success is the ability to attract, retain and develop a workforce with the right skills to meet business needs and the provision of suitable workspace for business growth. Is there a sufficient skilled and available labour force for businesses to grow and develop without having to move away to larger urban centres? Are there sufficient workspace and business premises available at affordable rents for businesses to develop?

- Cambridgeshire has an adequate workforce with varying skill levels, however there is a lack of available jobs locally with people having to out-commute or move away from the area to get a suitable job.
- There are plenty of incubation units for high tech/office-based sectors but there is a lack of premises for craft-type business/workshops and mid-sized growing-on businesses.
- Need to focus on entrepreneurial skills development and indigenous approaches to growing businesses locally so that they reflect the needs of local people.
- More appropriate knowledge, information, support and advice is needed.

**Question 3** Market Towns are essential hubs for service delivery and the rural economy. What support services need to be located in our market towns to support the populations both in the towns and in the surrounding rural hinterlands? Do our Market Towns provide sufficient heritage and cultural appeal to act as foci for encouraging the development of

tourism? Could more be done to encourage visitors? Is enough being done to offset the impact of recession by addressing the issue of vacant shops and attracting shoppers?

- A clear strategy for the County's market towns is currently lacking and needs to be developed, particularly around economic and service development.
- Market Town Partnerships are weak and currently very little work is being undertaken.
- More needs to be done to increase the tourism offer provided by the County's rural areas by exploiting the heritage in our market towns and raising the profile of visitor assets.
- Rent and rate relief, provision of free parking and distribution of shoppers' guides were all seen as ways of beating the recession and attracting shoppers.

**Question 4** Policy suggests there needs to be great recognition of the ways that economic growth can enhance community sustainability, especially providing opportunities for people to work near where they live. Can business support/other services be better marshalled to facilitate enterprise and entrepreneurial development? Is enough being done to support the use of new technologies to promote rural economic development? Has enough been done to support social enterprise and other options for improving job opportunities and the financial strength of families and communities?

- Improving broadband speed and mobile phone coverage across the County is vital for bringing the entire area into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These things are key for local businesses and also to enable home-working, for job seekers and to facilitate entrepreneurship. The provision of touchdown space with WiFi access for more flexible working also needs investigating.
- Use of the internet/social networking might encourage external capital, technologies and institutions to the local area to boost our economy.
- Call for more support from business and social enterprise infrastructure agencies and specific mentoring around high tech, creative, vocational, voluntary, recreation and tourism sectors.
- Cambridgeshire County Council should consider the example set by Essex County Council who have formed 'Banking on Essex' using £50m of its cash reserves. Loans of up to £100k can be accessed by local businesses over one year old with less than 250 employees.
- As a way of 'leading by example', Cambridgeshire County Council should investigate ways of ensuring more of its goods and services are purchased locally.

**Question 5** The future of the financial and environmental sustainability of the food and farming sector is in question with significant changes in agricultural commodity prices and in elements of policy which is likely to have a visible impact on the way Cambridgeshire's countryside is managed. Are there opportunities for value added production and farm diversification activities through developing current activities? Should we be encouraging

local supply chains between farmers/food producers and local communities? What needs to be done to make this successful?

- Opportunities exist but are quite 'niche' so support is needed with diversification activities, particularly around business planning and regulation. Opportunities for low carbon business development particularly need exploring and promoting.
- Review best practice elsewhere in Europe.
- Changes needed to policy and better support needs to be provided by local authorities in the development of local supply chains. A Cambridgeshire Local Food Policy is needed.

### ***Land and Environment***

**Question 1** Building on the environmental assets of the Fens, there are ambitious habitat restoration projects proposed that will return intensively-farmed land back to native wetlands for nature conservation, education, countryside access and tourism. Is sufficient weight being given to green space planning to cope with the recreational needs of a growing population? Could more be done to develop the Cambridgeshire countryside as a high quality visitor destination and a usable asset for local people?

- Insufficient weight has been given to green space planning and more political buy-in is needed to raise awareness of and demonstrate the benefits of the uniqueness of Cambridgeshire's countryside for food production, recreation, tourism and possible future energy production. Regionally, there is a good direction but more local green space provision is needed and planning needs enhancement.
- More needs to be done to promote the uniqueness of the fenland area for cycling, bird watching and waterways.
- Need a balanced approach to land management between ecology, food production and recreation.
- Need a hierarchy of green spaces with the development of not just larger areas but of smaller public green spaces around villages as well.
- Cambridgeshire Together should recognise and support the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan which sets out guiding principles for improved countryside access.
- Develop cycleways along the Dutch model where they are built on the edges of fields, rather than at the side of the roads, making a more pleasant, safer cycling experience.

**Question 2** Rural areas have a significantly higher carbon production rate per person than urban areas. This is principally due to greater emissions from heating homes and use of transport. Are the likely effects of climate change in Cambridgeshire being addressed in plans for future development and other investment decisions? Could more be done to help rural communities and businesses consider climate change adaptations? To what extent should local assets and the countryside be given over to the production of energy (e.g. wind power, bio fuels, etc) and how can the impact of this be minimised?

- Climate change is an increasingly important issue and adaptations need to take place at a local level. They also need to be building into future planning policy so that new development is ready for any possible impact.
- Greater lead should be taken by local authorities. Consider grants for householders looking to install solar / wind energy solutions and reduce planning constraints to make getting permission to install easier.
- Would like to see more parish level projects that raise awareness of the practical actions that can be taken.
- Need to consider local multi-use land policies which value local assets such as woodland, orchards and food.
- Cynical around bio-fuels and whether they are a viable solution. More investigation needed.

**Question 3** Major growth in houses, businesses and related infrastructure and human activity is probably the principal influence on how rural Cambridgeshire's land and environment looks and performs now and into the foreseeable future. Are plans for growth being used effectively to combat trends which are affecting the decline of rural services and the viability of rural areas? Are sufficient measures being taken to minimise the impact of new development on environmental quality?

- This question was not well answered by the participants.

**Question 4** To maintain future food security our food must be reliable and resilient to shocks and crises and be produced and brought to market as sustainably as possible. Ensuring food security must sit alongside other priorities such as tackling climate change and securing a healthy natural environment. Is enough being done to forge new connections between local food and farming so as to promote the profitability and sustainability of both sectors? What will the effects of climate change be on the way food is produced in Cambridgeshire and how can environmental sustainability be achieved in the longer term?

- Impact of climate change are likely to affect Cambridgeshire's food security and therefore our food producers will need to be flexible and adapt to change.
- Currently too few connections between local food and farming and we must look to reduce our food miles to delivery environmental sustainability.
- People need re-educating about the seasonality of food – this is particularly linked to education in schools, community centres, hospitals and maintaining the skills for growing food. We must also educate about reducing food wastage.
- Ensure local produce is clearly labelled as such so that people can choose to buy local produce over that grown elsewhere/overseas.
- Need to consider how we can make best use of technology to ensure land is as productive as can be, as well as adding variety to production.
- Water resources are already fully committed for existing uses in the Anglian region and climate change will affect the future amount and distribution of rainfall. This is likely to increase demand for irrigation as farmers strive to grow crops in drier conditions. Changes to growing crops with lower water demand could benefit water resources and the water environment.

## Prioritising of Issues – Main Findings

In order to understand the issues stakeholders felt to be most important and relevant in their District and across the County, stakeholders taking part in all methods of consultation were asked to consider and vote for their top three issues. The results of this exercise are shown in the table below:

Area	Top rated priorities
East Cambridgeshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of affordable housing (12.7%)</li> <li>• Accessibility to services, work and training (12.7%)</li> <li>• Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices (11.8%)</li> </ul>
Fenland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility to services, work and training (17.8%)</li> <li>• Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices (11.1%)</li> <li>• Supporting communities' engagement in self-reliance and self-governance (11.1%)</li> </ul>
Huntingdonshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of affordable rural housing (14.7%)</li> <li>• Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices (14.7%)</li> <li>• Accessibility to services, work and training (13.3%)</li> </ul>
South Cambridgeshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility to services, work and training (including transport) (13.6%)</li> <li>• Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices (11.4%)</li> <li>• Supporting communities' engagement in self-reliance and self-governance (11.4%)</li> </ul>
On-line consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of health care and health information (36.4%)</li> <li>• Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices (31.8%)</li> <li>• Changing age profile of the population (27.3%)</li> </ul>
Countywide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility to services, work and training (14.2% of the votes)</li> <li>• Decline in rural services such as shops, pubs and post offices (11.9%)</li> <li>• Availability of affordable housing (10.0%)</li> </ul>

## NEXT STEPS

The outputs from all the consultation activities will be fed into the development of the draft Rural Strategy which will then be launched for further public consultation. The draft Strategy will be advertised widely to encourage as many stakeholders as possible to offer up their views, with a specific invitation being sent to those who have participated to date to invite them to comment further.

## **LIBRARY OF REPORTS**

The following reports are also available to download from Cambridgeshire ACRE's website – [www.cambsacre.org.uk](http://www.cambsacre.org.uk):

### **Development of Rural Strategy – Proposal**

An outline of the work to be undertaken by Cambridgeshire ACRE on Cambridgeshire Together's behalf.

### **Rural Cambridgeshire: Ensuring a Vibrant Future - Summary of Evidence for Stakeholder Consultation**

Summary evidence base. Recommended reading for any stakeholder taking part in consultation activity.

### **Rural Cambridgeshire: Ensuring a Vibrant Future - Evidence Base**

Detailed evidence base of local data, together with evidence at regional and national level.

### **East Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy Consultation Workshop Report**

### **Fenland Rural Strategy Consultation Workshop Report**

### **Huntingdonshire Rural Strategy Consultation Workshop Report**

### **South Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy Consultation Workshop Report**

District-based reports from each of the Rural Strategy Consultation Workshops held.

## APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN CONSULTATION

### **Abbotsley Parish Council**

Jukes, Ruth  
Millgate, Wendy  
Staughton, David  
Wisson, Julie

### **Anglian Water Services**

Berkshire, Linda

### **Barton Parish Council**

Page, Robin  
Scott, Tim

### **Benwick Parish Council**

Chapman, Mark

### **Bluntisham Parish Council**

Lumb, Margaret

### **Bourn Parish Council**

Pountain, Gill

### **British Red Cross**

Hall, Sarah

### **Buckden Parish Council**

Hayward, Terry

### **Business Link East**

Budd, Diane  
Margetts, Duncan

### **Calor**

Minifie, Sarah

### **Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service**

Reeve, Jez

### **Cambridge Housing Society Limited**

Atkinson, Carl

### **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils**

Hayes, Brian

### **Cambridgeshire ACRE**

Bennett, Kirsten  
Brown, Alison  
Brown, Rachael  
Carter, Mike  
Handley, Mike  
Hellowell, Mike  
Hodgkinson, Mark  
Johnston, Sarah  
Nelson, Chris  
Peacock, Philip  
Shilton, Catherine  
Spreadbury, David  
Stazicker, Elizabeth  
Weekes, Julie  
Williams, Hazel  
Yates, John

### **Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

Carter, Paul  
Crabtree, Lydia  
Davis, Will  
Lidstone, Nick  
Page, Simon  
Tuohy, Gemma  
Williams, Rebecca

### **Cambridgeshire County Council**

Baker, Trevor

Bowman, Keith

Criswell, Steve

Davey, Mike

Duthie, Peter

Farrer, Bob

Hutson, Laura

Jordan, Terry

Kemp, Mark

Kemp, Martin

Martin, Janet

Mills, Guy

Moulton, Gavin

Nelson, Paul

Nelson, Paul

Pelly, Katherine

Reynolds, John

Smith, Sandie

Steedman, John

Taylor, Cathy

Tod, Peter

### **Cambridgeshire DAAT**

Mitchell, Brian

### **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service**

Burgess, Nigel

Neish, Jon

Taylor, Mark

### **Cambridgeshire Football Association**

Hill, Jim

### **Cambridgeshire Police Authority**

Rogers, Ruth

### **Campaign for Rural England**

Fieldhouse, Shirley

**Cam Sight**  
Chaskalson, Annette

**Christchurch Parish Council**  
Sutton, Will

**Care Network Cambridgeshire**  
Beel, Sue  
Blonal, Thora  
Corbishley, Heather  
Randall, Helen

**Children and Young Peoples Service**  
Calvert, Anna  
Preece, Alison  
Riddle, Lisa

**Church of England**  
McCurdy, Hugh

**Circle Anglia Housing Group**  
Coulson, Fiona

**Citizens Advice Bureau**  
Singh, Kulbir

**City of Ely Council**  
Ashton, Brian

**City of Ely Perspective**  
Eden, Philip  
Overall, Shirley  
Overall, Terry

**Colne Parish Council**  
Prangnell, Gill

**Commission for Rural Communities**  
Burgess, Stuart

**Community Renewal**  
Boldero, Nigel

**Cottenham Village Design Group**  
Smith, Mike

**East Cambridgeshire District Council**  
Brown, Fred  
Cook, Oliver  
Cornwell, Julie  
Moakes, Peter  
Oliver, Eileen  
Perkins, Doug  
Petts, Jackie  
Schumann, Dan  
Turner, Phillip

**Eastrea Village Hall Trust**  
Ford, Brian

**Eltisley Parish Council**  
Pinner, Roger  
Pettifor, Anne  
Pinner, Pat

**Ely Diocese**  
Hancock, Mary

**Environment Agency**  
Separovic, Paul

**Eurinco**  
Fane, Peter

**Farcet Parish Council**  
Rickman, Janette

**Federation of Small Businesses**  
Stroud, Colin

**Fenland Council for Voluntary Service**  
Lymburn, Rodger

**Fenland District Council**  
Atkinson, Di  
Brown, Nigel  
Horn, Dan  
Otter, Wendy  
Pain, Alan  
Thornton, Hetty

**Friends of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park**  
Robinson, Malcolm

**Gamlingay Parish Council**  
Bacon, Leanne  
Rayner, Kirstin

**Government Office for the East of England**  
Bhattacharya, Mohua  
Evans, Mike  
Matthews, Elaine  
Redstone, Amanda

**Greater Cambridge Partnership**  
Kromdijk, Ank  
Staynesforth, Jane

**Guilden Morden Parish Council**  
Davis, Jane  
Hoad, Anna

**Holywell-cum-  
Needingworth Parish  
Council**

Holloway, Alan  
Mitcham, Sandra

**Horningsea Parish  
Council**

Davison, Peter

**Huntingdonshire District  
Council**

Banerjee, Maggie  
Craig, John  
Garner, John  
Hanby, Gill  
Jablonski, Chris  
King, Samantha  
Mastrandrea, Frank  
Probyn, Richard  
Rogers, Terry  
Smith, Dan

**Hunts Forum**

Farrow, Julie

**Impington Parish Council**

Ing, Brian

**Individuals<sup>1</sup>**

Anonymous x 4  
Booth, Gavin  
Duberly, Hugh  
Fairhaven, Lord  
Fuller, Carol  
Hampton, Alan  
Hampton, Sue  
Hendy, Janet  
Ison, John  
Key, Martin

Parfect, Melvyn  
Robinson, Malcolm  
Sawyer, Linda  
Taylor, Basil  
Walker, Mick  
Wilderspin, Polly

**Isleham Parish Council**

Malkin, Jeanette

**Jobcentreplus**

Green, Mark

**KWA Architects**

Warth, Megan

**Little Downham Parish  
Council**

Adams-Payne, Debbie  
Winters, Owen

**Little Paxton Parish  
Council**

Mathson, Jean

**Living Sport**

Callard, Amanda  
Fairhall, Simon

**Luminus Group**

Chapman, Andy  
Finney, Nigel

**Madingley Village Hall**

Byam-Cook, Edward

**Manea Surgery**

Carson, Belinda

**Mepal Village Hall**

Stazicker, David

**Metropolitan Housing  
Partnership**

Edwards, John

**National Probation  
Service Cambridgeshire**

Drury, Adrienne  
Walker, Mick

**NHS Cambridgeshire**

Bawden, Jessica  
Donnelly, Maureen  
O'Meara, Inger  
Sargeant, Lincoln  
Smith, Sue

**Old Hurst Parish Council**

Sawyer, Linda

**Orwell Parish Council**

Reid, Katie

**Parson Drove Amenities  
Group**

Cook, John  
Killingworth, Alan

**Parson Drove Parish  
Council**

Booth, Gavin

**Perry Parish Council**

Alford, John

**Prince's Trust**

Cawthorpe, Andrew

**Ramsey Community  
Centre Trust**

Curtis, Stanley

**Sanctuary Hereward**

Osborne, Mark

---

<sup>1</sup> Some who represented organisations at events, also chose to submit individual views through the online survey.

**Soham Town Council**

Tuite, Anne

**Somersham Parish Council**

Smith, Jennet

**South Cambridgeshire District Council**

Barrance, Tom  
Barron, Gemma  
Hales, Richard  
Hawkes, Kathryn  
Kritzinger, Nicole

**Stapleford Parish Council**

Farrar, Michael

**Stapleford Parish Plan Steering Committee**

Warth, Lynda

**StART**

Bicknell, Kirstin

**St Ives Town Council**

Hodge, David  
Luter, Brian  
Salt, Jonathan  
Walters, Angie

**Sustrans**

Wilson, Rohan

**Sutton Parish Council**

Deacon, David  
Harnwell, Jean

**The Magog Trust**

Bond, Michael  
Clarke, Douglas  
Foreman, Kathleen

**The National Trust**

Broadbent-Yale, Philip  
Soans, Chris  
Squires, Teresa

**The Wildlife Trust BCNP**

Gerrard, Chris

**Voluntary and Community Action East Cambs (VCAEC)**

Grant, Roy  
Hayter-Smith, Avril

**Warboys Green Futures Group**

Ball, Betty

**Warboys Library**

Clarke, Christine

**Warboys Parish Council**

Kessel, Stephen  
Pryke, Sally  
Reeves, Roy  
Western, John  
Wyatt, Angela

**Waterbeach Parish Council**

Williamson, Jane

**West Wratting Parish Council**

Richards, Jennifer

**Whittlesey Town Council**

Stebbing, Derek

**Wilbrahams Memorial Hall**

Ryan, Anthony

**Wisbech Community Development Trust**

Stevens, Chris

**Wisbech Town Council**

Frusher, Neville  
MacRae, Vivien

**Wistow Parish Council**

Rice, Deborah

**Witcham Parish Council**

Balmforth, Ashley

**Young Lives**

Bell, Lenja  
Howlett, Lia