**Think Communities**

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***A pledge between the public sector and the communities we serve to solve problems together, make the best use of the resources we already have, and to think differently about what communities need to thrive.***

**Introduction**

As the population across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough continues to grow, so too does the demand for statutory services.

Traditional approaches are not solving some of Cambridgeshire’s toughest and often most complex challenges, including Children’s Services (particularly Looked After Children), Older People and Adults with Learning Difficulties, Housing and Homelessness, Adolescent Services, Public Protection, NHS – Primary Care and Hospital Demand and Mental Health Services.

Doing nothing is not an option: the public sector landscape is overly complicated and structured so that service delivers often work in silos; there is little opportunity for addressing the root causes of demand rather a focus on financial challenges rather than a common set of outcomes. It is also often difficult for sectors to engage with each other.

The **Think Communities** partnership approach was set up in 2018 with the overall aim of creating a shared vision, approach and priorities for building community resilience across the county, so that those delivering public services are able to work together more effectively together with communities at the heart of everything they do.

Ultimately, the Think Communities approach will help communities to do more things for themselves and help others who are more in need, resulting in stronger, safer and happier communities.

Working in this new way will enable partners to still specialise in their own areas of service delivery and expertise, to work independently or with a shared approach, whichever brings about the most effective outcome for service users.

**Vision**

Think Community partners will work together to:

* **People:** Empower and enable communities to support themselves to find local solutions
* **Places:** Encourage communities to use their skills to support the most vulnerable in their neighbourhoods
* **Places:** Support active, healthy communities to play a key role in improving other people’s lives, helping to prevent, reduce or delay the need for costly public services
* **Systems:** Bring resources together so agencies can flexibly meet the changing needs of communities
* **Systems:** Try new things in order to deliver individual local solutions and support ideas that can be replicated

**The Opportunities**

* **For organisations across the public sector to improve delivery of services so that everyone involved shares the same vision, re-focusing on the needs of the community, to think about what communities actually need, not what their services deliver.**
* **For residents to understand the resources and assets communities already have and allows us to truly work with communities, and not just do things to them.**

**Challenges**

In order to kick start system change, a set of outcomes for residents have been set by the Public Service Board across 4 areas:

Ensure people are healthy throughout their lives

Ensure people have ‘good’ work

Creating a place where people want to live

A good start in life

**Outcomes – for communities**

* People are able to have the very best start in life
* People have access to good quality employment
* People love where they live and support each with a shared pride of place
* People have access to good quality healthcare when they need it
* Ultimately communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough feel safe, happy, healthy, connected and able to help themselves and each other

**Outcomes - for partners**

* Partners see a significant reduction in demand for statutory services and a significant increase in positive outcomes for communities;
* Partners involved in service delivery work more effectively with partners and listen, engage and align with communities and with each other to deliver public services and support community-led activity
* Service providers are able to focus on those most in need with appropriate and timely support;
* Partners offer communities a clear set of skills, tools and powers for people to help themselves and others in their neighbourhoods, resulting in increased community resilience.