



European Regional Development Fund
INTERREG IIIB Community Initiative
Concerning Transnational Co-operation
On Spatial Planning 2000-2006

Priority 2: External and internal accessibility
Measure 2.2 Improved access to the Information Society



Project Number: E091

Regional Test-Beds

Citizen First Trials: Cambridgeshire, UK

Cambridgeshire, UK

Table of Content

2.1	CONTEXT OF THE REGION.....	3
2.2	OBJECTIVES OF THE REGIONAL TEST-BEDS	5
2.3	REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITIZENS/COMMUNITIES	6
2.4	DESCRIPTION OF THE PILOTS	7

2.1 Context of the Region

Cambridgeshire, an inland county to the east of England, is bounded on the north by Lincolnshire, east by Norfolk and Suffolk, south by Essex and Hertfordshire, and on the west by Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. The county is largely rural: 81% of the 133 wards are classified as rural and the north of the county is mostly low level fenland. Major centres are Wisbech and March to the north; Huntingdon and St Ives to the west; Cambridge to the south; and Ely and Newmarket (just outside the county boundary) to the east. The County's population is around 500,000 and is very diverse demographically. In terms of employment, the north is dominated by agriculture, while to the west there is more diversity with an increase in service sector employment. To the south there is a high concentration (especially around Cambridge City and its science park) of knowledge-based industry, including R&D, hi-tech manufacturing and biotechnology; the result is a world-renowned high-tech centre. There is thus a marked contrast between the university city of Cambridge, with its science park and innovation, and the fenlands to the north, where rural isolation and social exclusion are important concerns.

Given this disparity within the County, the way in which the County Council and County-wide partnerships lead the local authorities' delivery of services to citizens is critical. Moreover, the role of ICT is central to the successful implementation of the desired vision of these partnerships. Cambridgeshire County Council's current strategy for ICT services for citizens is centred upon its statement of 'vision of information age government' leading to 2005 [<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/DA52B2EA-4B48-4C81-A972-47D191A018DB/0/modernising.pdf> correct at 27/05/2005]. This ties in with the UK Government's agenda on e-Government, aiming to deliver services when, where and how our customers choose by the end of 2005. The aim is to make services more accessible to people with disabilities, and those living in remote areas. It will join up local services between the Councils, Primary Care Trusts (PCT's) and other public service providers, and help us improve the customer's experience of dealing with local public services, whoever provides them.

Part of this vision is the potential for physical one-stop-shops, recognising that some citizens want to make contact face-to-face rather than by phone or internet for instance. Thus one-stop-shops are seen to complement the other initiatives of the County Council website [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk]; the 'Cambridgeshire Direct' contact centre; and computers in libraries for internet access and learning courses. Much of this work is built around the Cambridgeshire Community Network (CCN), a broadband network built in partnership with NTL joining up council offices, libraries, schools and community access points around Cambridgeshire. The CCN provides an excellent base for the development of such initiatives, but also highlights issues and the potential for learning around how disparate agencies are brought together.

The physical points of access, supported by ICT, represented by the One-Stop-Shops are critical in addressing the 'hard core' of non-users of the internet recognized in the State of the Art Review of workpackage B.1.2. They provide the opportunity for staff to help citizens overcome issues of skills shortage or a lack of confidence in using ICT. In addition, they seek to meet the key recommendation of providing a framework for multi-agency working that does not prescribe a way forward, but rather supports collaboration between public (and private) agencies.

The continuing development of the Cambridgeshire Community Network Portal [www.cambridgeshire.net] also seeks to provide 'virtual' one-stop-shop access; the on-

line congregation of services supporting the rationale of simple access to services regardless of the provider. Again, this approach is not necessarily prescriptive but provides *opportunity* for partners to become involved.

2.2 Objectives of the Regional Test-Beds

The Cambridgeshire One-Stop Shop Regional Test-Beds will work towards setting up the Demonstration Pilots to run from September 2005 to September 2007. The Test-Beds will highlight the relevant issues to be addressed by the Demonstration Pilots, and the criteria that should be used to evaluate their development and success. This will not be done in isolation, as every opportunity will be taken to work with and learn from the MWRA in the development and implementation of the pilots.

Specifically, the objectives are:

1. Identification of Citizens and their communities' needs through a baseline survey (building on 2002's ODPM-funded Invest to Save Bid 'e-Government for All' report), to be performed by an external research organisation and to include consideration of hard-to-reach and hard-to-engage groups. This to inform the channel strategy as part of the Corporate Customer First workstream.
2. Review of the drivers, specification and design of Fenland District Council's One-Stop Shops in its market towns, and links to their 'Customer First' strategy (<http://www.fenland.gov.uk/ccm/content/corporate-level/customer-first.en>).
3. Analysis of the Cambridgeshire Community Network Portal (www.cambridgeshire.net) in terms of the one-stop shop approach taken, the consideration of citizen needs and the way in which partner organisations have been involved.
4. Analysis of MWRA's findings on One-Stop Shop implementation in the context of Cambridgeshire to inform strategy, notably through consultation with Cambridgeshire's Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).
5. To incorporate this learning in the planning and delivery of, and evaluation criteria for, the Demonstration Pilot phase of CitizenFirst, including moving CAPs towards multi-agency service delivery and the documentation of operational issues and sustainability models by September 2007.

2.3 Requirements of the Citizens/Communities

2.3.1 Requirements identified from baseline reports

The baseline reports of workpackages B.1, B.2 and B.3 have been contributed to by all partners, and culminated in the State of the Art Review of citizen-centric services. This work highlighted issues such as public awareness and engagement that mean take-up lags behind supply, and the demand for a variety of access channels partly as a result of this. The concept of one-stop shops have a potentially important role to play in ensuring access for a 'hard core' of non-users of the internet. An important recommendation that is a necessary underpinning to these approaches, however, is to ensure targeting of hard-to-reach and hard-to-engage groups in order to overcome isolation and promote various access channels as appropriate. This requires further research which is to be part of the planning for the Demonstration Pilot phase.

Cambridgeshire County Council will have a role to play as a catalyst in the development of service delivery by partner organisations operating within the County. As such, the requirements of citizens are a central concern to ensure that initiative and resource is not misdirected, but makes a real difference in meeting those needs. The research undertaken will be used in support of this.

2.3.2 Direct one to one consultation with Citizen and Communities

Through their Customer First strategy, Fenland District Council have commissioned research to consult citizens on their needs and preferences in the way that they access Council services. Through their 'Speak Out' questionnaire and work by BMG Research, they have noted for instance the continuing desire for face-to-face access and town-centre locations.

To add to the understanding gained from such work, citizen and community needs will be addressed by a new piece of research by an external organisation, building on 2002's ODPM-funded 'e-Government for All' report, in which the demand for one-stop shops was evident given that 66% of respondents were interested in that channel. In addition the Demonstration Pilots will make use of a user forum in order to gain feedback and steer from citizens themselves, ensuring the citizen-centric nature of the work.

2.4 Description of the Pilots

Putting customers first is Fenland District Council's key priority. As part of its 'Customer First strategy', FDC is looking to provide access to its services via a new website, a contact centre and through One-Stop Shops in each of its four market towns (Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech).

This ties in with feedback received by the Fenland Strategic Partnership (FSP) from work by BMG Research, indicating that town centres had a crucial role to play in the provision of services at the heart of Fenland's communities. As a consequence of this feedback the FSP has identified 'Improving Access to Services and Information' as a strategic aim in its Community Strategy Document. The strategy contains a three year action plan for Fenland, included in which are a number of initiatives relevant to the strategy as follows:

- Develop 'one-stop shops' in towns, which bring together a range of partner organisations, community services, community information and computer/internet points
- Work across partner organisations to 'join-up' and co-ordinate the provision of community information so that individuals have better access to the right information about local opportunities.
- Develop 'information shops' in villages which provide access to a range of community services, information and computer/internet points
- Increasing access to facilities (especially leisure facilities) for young people

The test-bed work with Fenland DC will look to learn from the current approach to the vision and underlying drivers outlined above. This will help inform the County Council's channel strategy and the best practice to be outlined in the final deliverable of the sustainability models.

A second theme to the One-Stop Shop work is about *virtual* access via the Cambridgeshire Community Portal. In March 2004 the Portal was launched as more than simply a website, but a single point of access for individuals, community residents, organisations and businesses to the resources and services of your community partners. The Portal aims to make a significant contribution to improving access to information and services within Cambridgeshire. You will no longer need to know in advance who is providing particular services in order to access them. Relevant content from all public services will be accessible in one place.

The approach to delivering this virtual one-stop shop is again to provide the basis for elucidating best practice and establishing a sustainable way forward involving multiple agencies.

Timescales:

May-August 2005:	Agreement of test-bed locations and baselining of current situation
September 2005– September 2007:	Operational assessment of pilot locations based on internal evaluation and feedback from staff and citizens
July-September 2007:	Contribution to guidelines and sustainability models providing One-Stop Shop experience of Mid-West Ireland and Cambridgeshire