

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **27 February 2018**

Title: **LOCALITIES TEAM UPDATE**

Portfolio Area: **Customer First**

Portfolio holder: Cllr Mott

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **N/A**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:

Any recommendations will be published to the Hub Committee on 12 March 2018

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To note the progress made in the Localities Team and to make any necessary recommendations.**

1. Executive summary

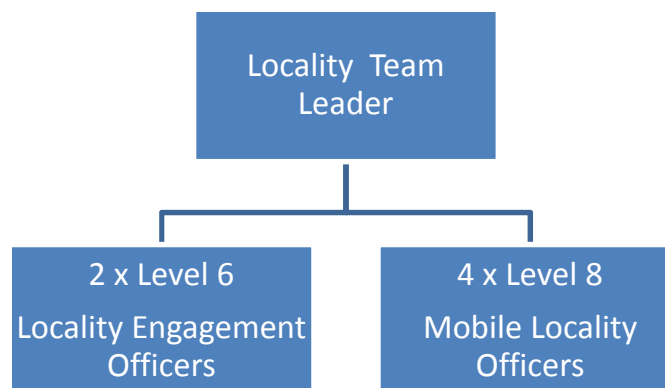
- 1.1** The Localities Manager brought a report to the Overview & Scrutiny (Internal) Committee in September 2016, detailing how the Localities service had been operating in the first 14 months since its inception in the summer of 2015, with further details on future plans to develop the locality service to continue to meet Council needs. The Overview & Scrutiny (Internal) Committee recommended that the locality model should continue to operate pending ongoing monitoring and a further report to be brought back in 12 months (minute O&S(I) 26 refers).
- 1.2** Some changes have taken place in the structure and operation of the Localities Services since the previous report, not least of which is that the

Localities Service has been brought within Customer First under the Case Management Manager, and a Localities Team Leader, was appointed in October 2017 to directly manage the Team in line with the structure of other Case Management teams across the organisation. Given the broad range of activities carried out by the Localities Team, regular updates are given to the Group Managers for both Customer, First & Support Services and Commercial Services.

- 1.3 In essence, the Localities Team acts as a liaison and support service providing information and support to Members, multi-agency partners, residents and officers on a wide range of resident-facing Council services.
- 1.4 Locality working was a key and innovative part of the Council's transformation programme, and the Localities Team has now been in operation for two and a half years. The Service continues to evolve and covers service elements previously covered by a number of departments across the Council. Work delivered by this focussed Localities Team continues to be well received both within the Council and by residents and partners.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Locality Team was a new service which came into operation in June 2015. The locality service acts as a liaison and support service which undertakes work on behalf of a number of services across the organisation. There are three distinct job roles in the locality service as shown in the diagram below:



2.2 Mobile Locality Officers

There are four Mobile Locality Officers who cover designated areas across West Devon. These officers are paid a Level 8 salary and are each equipped with a Council vehicle, and iPad. These officers undertake a wide range of routine tasks and continue to undergo extensive training to help them fulfil their roles. Current IT provision means Mobile Locality Officers are manually issued their workload on a daily basis via email. They receive work requests during the course of their day via iPads.

2.2.1 Mobile Locality Officer Tasks

Types and range of tasks undertaken by Mobile Locality Officers include:

- a. Regular information gathering (normally the supply of photos or the completion of short forms) for Assets, Council Tax, Elections, NNDR, Planning Enforcement and Environmental Health and Commercial Services.

- b. Property inspections including toilet checks and fire alarm testing
- c. Abandoned vehicle reports
- d. Fly-tipping reports
- e. Dog patrols
- f. Planning notices (and individual householder notifications)
- g. Private water supply quality testing
- h. Tree inspections to assess the condition of the trees
- i. Environmental nuisances
- j. Waste and cleansing issues – meeting with customers to resolve issues and encourage recycling
- k. Disabled Facility Grant Visits
- l. Identifying street defects for repair / replacement

2.2.3 It is important to note that many of the tasks undertaken by Level 8 Locality Officers were previously undertaken by a range of specialist officers in the organisation who were paid Level 6 and above. The targeted use of Mobile Locality Officers for these tasks is therefore much more cost effective. For example, the average hourly rate of a qualified Planning Officer is over £5 more per hour than a Mobile Locality Officer. When one considers approximately 1,000 planning notices are posted over the course of the year the savings soon stack up.

2.2.4 The workload of Mobile Locality Officers, whilst varied, is felt to be manageable. Online daily record sheets are in place to ensure individual workload is monitored. Plans are underway to introduce further support to other areas- see below.

2.3 Locality Engagement Officers

There are two Locality Engagement Officers one covering the North of the Borough the other covering the South. These officers are paid a Level 6 salary and are agile workers using their own vehicles for travel, working mainly within their defined community areas. Their role is to provide a locality level, face to face point of contact improving the customer experience by creating a seamless response to customer need.

2.3.1 Locality Engagement Officer Tasks

Types of tasks undertaken by Locality Engagement Officers include:

- a. Handling the locality inbox – this is the main conduit for all locality communication and work requests. Around 6,500 individual requests for Mobile Locality Officer work, are managed through the inbox each year.
- b. Attendance at engagement events and Link Meetings to inform residents of Council services.
- c. Interacting with special interest groups and partners.
- d. First point of contact for Members and communities unsure of how to progress or remedy issues and a point of ownership in resolving issues.
- e. Processing place based cases in W2 and dealing with customer complaints.

2.4 Locality Team Leader

The new Localities Service was initially set up and managed by the Level 3 Localities Manager. However, since the Localities Manager's move to another post, the structure of this service has been revised. Localities now form part of the larger Case Management team within Customer First, and managed by the Case Management Manager, who manages all of the Customer First Case Managers across both Councils. The Localities Team is now directly

managed on a day to day basis (in line with other services within case management) by a Team Leader, who was appointed in October 2017 (a role shared between the two authorities). As well as line managing two Engagement Officers and 4 Mobile Locality Officers at West Devon, the Localities Team Leader directly manages a team of nine in South Hams. The main purpose of the Team Leader role is to lead, manage and motivate a team of staff in the Localities Team and ensure effective deployment of resources and to develop the range of locality services and support.

- 2.4.1** A key part of the Case Management Manager's role is working with the Extended Leadership Team to develop the Locality Service and ensure business demand across the organisation is met. This has meant the flexing of locality resources to provide support in areas experiencing exceptionally high workload e.g. Customer First Case Management.

3. PERFORMANCE

- 3.1** From January 2017 – January 2018 the West Devon Locality Team delivered the following key outputs:

- a. Undertook 480 public toilet inspections
- b. Position and deliver 600 planning notices
- c. Dealt with 62 abandoned vehicles
- d. Dealt with 314 fly tips
- e. Undertook 450 individual dog patrols
- f. Delivered over 1500 household election forms
- g. Carried out 250 private water quality supply tests

- 3.2** The Locality Engagement Officers attend key community events such as the Okehampton and Chagford shows to promote the key Council messages and have 10 roadshow events planned to raise awareness about the upcoming waste changes.

4. FUTURE LOCALITY TEAM DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 Mobile Locality Officers

The future focus is to continue to support, develop and monitor the Level 8 Mobile Locality role. Now that the Localities Service has had an opportunity to bed in, and to reflect the evolution of the role, we are due to start a review of the Localities Service to ensure that the Mobile Locality Officers are carrying out tasks at the right level, and are providing support to the residents that need it most. There are upcoming ICT solutions which will further support the on-street officers by providing automatic work allocation in a consistent format that is easy to monitor. GPS vehicle tracking will also be introduced to ensure that work is geographically allocated in the most efficient way.

Officer workshops are scheduled to ensure working practice consistency across the South Hams and West Devon, and a process guide will be developed as a result of this, which will act as a training guide for the officer who will replace a retiring member of the team.

In January 2018 the Mobile Officers received training from the Department of Work and Pensions on how to deliver digital assistance to Universal Credit applicants who would otherwise have difficulty in completing these purely web based application forms. This will be a new service offering, initially in the "PL" postcodes, but rolled out throughout West Devon in September 2018.

Cross network gamma sim cards have been ordered to ensure that Mobile Officers are able to stay connected, and safe, in the most rural parts of WD.

4.2 Locality Engagement Officers

4.2.1 The Locality Engagement Officer resource is needed to deliver place based case management functions such as:

Commercial Services.

- a) Support with new housing developments: co-ordinating services to deliver bins; approve cleansing schedules on newly adopted roads, etc.
- b) Place based conversations with householders when new services are introduced or withdrawn
- c) Monitoring and remedying householder repeat service failure issues - reducing Call Centre calls, complaints to Members and improving service consistency
- d) Liaison point for communities wanting to engage on community projects – litter picks, composting schemes, car parking, events.
- e) High level contract monitoring functions and liaison with waste contractors in response to resident and partner complaints

Customer Services

- a) Attending Community and Parish events to promote key council messages and creating partnerships with key community stakeholders
- b) Gathering information on local issues through a variety of methods, and resolving these through internal connections.
- c) Becoming skilled and knowledgeable in key service areas to be able to offer Locality based practical support to residents, whilst also promoting the channel shift agenda. i.e., supporting residents to access their Council Tax online whilst reducing the call burden on the CST.
- d) Offering Locality based practical, and service specific support, to Okehampton residents to compensate for the potential loss of the Okehampton CST Office.

4.2.2 This continued place-based function will provide Members with assistance for community requests and ensure communities are able to access all of our services as easily as possible.

4.2.3 This approach will ensure good service delivery and practical on-the-ground solutions tailored to community and Council needs.

4.2.4 The remaining Locality Engagement Officer for West Devon is extremely committed to ensuring the best outcomes for residents and the local area and is well placed to service this place-based business need. The officers time spent to date in making links with communities via meetings and engagement events means they have gained a sound working knowledge of their patch and an appreciation of key issues.

4.2.6 As well as delivering the work detailed above the Locality Engagement Officers will continue to be used at heavy footfall, high profile events to convey key messages about Council service delivery, e.g. large scale changes to waste collection, and the promotion of the garden waste subscription service.

4.3 Monitoring and Reporting

Improved documentation of processes, such as direct reporting of dog patrols to parishes, will increase awareness of the daily work of the Mobile Officers, and ensure that parishes who are paying for a service, know that they feel they are receiving good value for money. The majority of the MLO work is quantifiable, but more work is needed to measure the “real” community benefit, and to ensure that the MLO resource is best used to deliver the functions that are most important to the organisation and the community.

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for considering and scrutinising how the Council is performing as an organisation.
Financial	N	There are no direct financial implications of the contents of the report.
Risk	N	Section 3 of the report shows the service is performing well.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	

Background papers:

Overview & Scrutiny (Internal) Committee: agenda and minutes September 2016.