

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee**

Date: **6 September 2016**

Title: **LOCALITY MODEL REVIEW**

Portfolio Area: **Customer First**

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 presented to the Hub Committee on 20 September 2016

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RECOMMENDATIONS

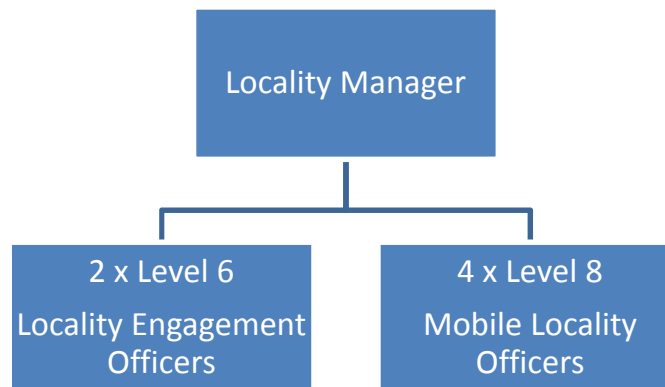
- 1. Continue to adopt the locality model pending ongoing monitoring and a further report in 12 months.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1** The report details how the locality service is currently operating and includes performance figures. The report also details future plans to develop the locality service to continue to meet Council needs.
- 1.2** Locality working is a key part of the Council's transformation programme. The service has been in operation for 14 months. It is an evolving service and covers service elements previously covered by a number of departments across the Council. Work delivered to date by this focussed locality team has been well received.
- 1.3** In essence the locality service 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.

2. Background

2.1 The following background information provides an overview of how the locality service is currently working. The locality service is 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 - see page 2 of appendix A West Devon Locality Team. These officers are paid a Level 8 salary and are each equipped with a Council vehicle, uniform and iPad. These officers undertake a wide range of routine tasks and have undergone extensive training to help them fulfil their new role. 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 of tasks undertaken by Mobile Locality Officers include:

- a. Regular information gathering (normally the supply of photos or the completion of short forms form) 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 and fly tipping reports
- d. Dog patrols
- e. Planning notices
- f. Water quality testing
- g. Waste and cleansing issues – meeting with customers to resolve issues and encourage recycling

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. Daily recording sheets are in place to ensure individual workload is monitored. Plans are underway to introduce further tasks around proactive service monitoring for street cleansing and grounds maintenance.

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. Since go live in June 2015 over 20,000 requests have been handled through this inbox.
- 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 Manager

There is one Locality Manager shared between the two authorities. As well as line managing six West Devon members of staff this role also directly manages a locality team of nine in South Hams. The main purpose of this role is to lead, manage and motivate a team of staff in the localities team and ensure effective deployment of resources.

2.4.1 A further key part of this 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 June 2015 to April 2016 the West Devon Locality team delivered the following key outputs:

- a. Undertook 420 public toilet inspections
- b. Affixed 700 planning notices
- c. Remedied over 640 residential waste and recycling issues
- d. Dealt with 47 abandoned vehicles
- e. Dealt with 270 fly tips
- f. Undertook 560 dog patrols
- g. Delivered over 3,500 household election forms
- h. Checked over 250 empty homes for Council Tax purposes
- i. Attended over 150 community events engaging with 1,600 residents

3.2 Since April 2016 the Mobile Locality Officers have continued to undertake the key tasks detailed above they have also carried out Water Quality Tests in over 100 locations.

3.3 The Locality Engagement Officers since April 2016 have undertaken 8 Joint Local Plan events and engaged with 368 residents to encourage them to have their say. They have also settled over 100 informal complaints since June of last year, successfully preventing them from escalating to stage 1 of our formal complaints procedure.

3.4 The Locality Team regularly receives praise from residents and officers alike for their can do attitude and efficient turnaround times. See Appendix B. Localities Feedback Examples April – August 2016.

4. FUTURE LOCALITY SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 Mobile Locality Officers

The future focus is to continue to support, develop and monitor the Level 8 Mobile Locality role. We will ensure the introduction and implementation of Civica Mobile software which will allow Mobile Locality Officers to self-serve and considerably reduce time spent by Locality Engagement Officers allocating daily work requests. At present the assignment of workload is labour intensive and causes some double handling. ICT are aware of the need for Civica Mobile to be prioritised and are working with Civica to achieve a workable solution promptly.

4.2 Locality Engagement Officers

Once Civica Mobile is in place and Customer First Case Management is fully resourced the current workload of Locality Engagement Officers will reduce because they will no longer be settling a backlog of corporate complaints or passing on work requests on behalf of Mobile Locality Officers. It is therefore proposed to adjust these roles to best suit Council need. As the T18 programme continues to be delivered, there is a recognition that the Council's response to

place-based case management issues needs to be strengthened. There will also be a need to strengthen contract management within west Devon with the start of new waste and cleansing service external arrangement.

4.2.1 Locality Engagement Officer resource is needed to deliver functions such as:

Commercial Services E.g.

- a) Support with new housing developments: co-ordinating services to deliver bins; approve cleansing schedules on newly adopted roads, etc.
- b) Place based consultation 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, etc.

Customer Services E.g.

Support to fulfil the Community priority in the Council's emerging Annual Delivery Plan. It has been identified that a refreshed and streamlined "community offer" is needed. This "offer" would include support to communities on:

- a) *Localism Act – the Right to Bid*
- b) *Council grants and funding*
- c) *Council services*
- d) *Asset transfer protocol*
- e) *Neighbourhood and Parish Plans*

4.2.2 This place-based function will provide Members with assistance for community requests and ensure communities are able to progress projects more swiftly than historically has been the case.

4.2.3 It is envisaged that this approach will ensure good service delivery and practical on the ground solutions tailored to community and Council needs.

4.2.4 There is a strong skill set and willingness within the Locality Engagement staff to deliver effectively and efficiently in the proposed work areas detailed.

4.2.5 Locality Engagement Officers are well placed to service this place-based business need. Their 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. In addition they will encourage customers to access Council services online, by helping residents to sign up to the customer portal as opposed to telephoning the Council's Call Centre to access services.

4.3 Monitoring and Reporting

It is recognised mechanisms need to be in place to monitor and quantify the value for money of the locality service. Continued work is to be undertaken with the Business Development Team and Finance to produce insightful performance figures. These statistics will be closely monitored and will help inform future service delivery.

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Internal 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	

Supporting Information

Appendices:

A. West Devon Locality Team

B. Localities Feedback Examples April – August 2016