

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Date: **17 March 2016**

Title: **LOCALITY DELIVERY**

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 generated for the Executive will be considered at its next meeting on 7 April 2016 (*e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision*)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To agree the adjustment of the locality service as detailed in section 5 of the report to meet existing business demand; and**
- 2. Continue to adopt this approach pending ongoing monitoring and a further report in 6 months.**

1. Executive summary

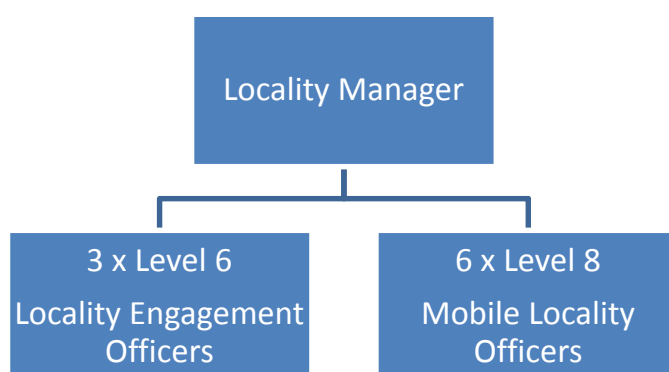
- 1.1** The report explains how the locality service is currently operating and proposes adjustments to the service to meet current business need. The report also seeks to allay Member concerns which have recently emerged through Member consultation.
- 1.2** Locality working is a key part of the Council's transformation programme. The locality service has been in operation for 9 months. It is an evolving service and covers work previously conducted by a wide range of departments across the Council. The

South Hams locality service consist of ten staff, comprising six Mobile Locality Officers, three Locality Engagement Officers and a Locality Manager.

- 1.3** Whilst the value of the Mobile Locality role is widely appreciated there has been much debate about the Locality Engagement roles. The report therefore recommends an adjustment to the Locality Engagement roles to best meet business needs and ensure value for money.

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. In essence 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 six Mobile Locality Officers who cover designated areas across the South Hams. These officers are paid a Level 8 salary (£17,372-£19,742 per annum) and are each equipped with a Council branded 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. Types of tasks undertaken by Mobile Locality Officers include:

Mobile Locality Task	Volume
Play Park Inspections	14 weekly, 80 monthly
Planning site notices	Over 1,000 from June-Dec 2015
Property monitoring	639 sited checked monthly
Meter readings	396 meters read quarterly
Abandoned vehicle checks	83 from June-Dec 2015
Fly tips checks	36 from June to Dec 2015

Dog fouling monitoring	52 first quarter of operation
Council Tax Empty Home Visits	458 first quarter of operation

2.2.1 Regular information gathering (normally supply of photos or completion of short forms) for Council Tax, NNDR, Planning Enforcement, Environmental Health Nuisances and Water Quality Testing have also recently been added to the Mobile Locality Officers tasks.

2.2.2 It is important to note that the majority of 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 2,000 notices are posted over the course of the year the savings soon stack up.

2.2.3 Mobile Locality Officers frequently receive praise from staff across the organisation for their can do attitude and efficient turnaround times. Development Management has been particularly appreciative of the role.

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 three Locality Engagement Officers who each cover designated areas across the South Hams. These officers are paid a Level 6 salary (£23,698-£27,123 per annum) and are agile workers using their own vehicles for travel, working mainly within their defined community areas. The Locality Engagement Officers do not line manage the Mobile Locality Officers. The original job description devised with iESE Transformation Limited in 2014 states the main purpose of these roles as follows:

2.3.1 To provide a locality level, face to face point of contact improving the customer experience by creating a seamless response to customer need by:

- a. *Responding to customer enquiries*
- b. *Interacting with special interest groups and partners*
- c. *Encouraging prevention and customer empowerment to contribute to the development and*
- d. *Implementation of the Councils' customer enabling strategy and programmes*
- e. *Resolving issues on the ground*
- f. *Ensuring the highest clean, green and safe standards are maintained*

g. Having a deeper understanding of council wide services, with some discretion within policy guidelines

2.3.2 However, there has been much debate about the interpretation of this job description and its relevance at the present time. There have been three Member Locality Working Group meetings; an Executive Briefing and meetings with Senior Leadership Officers to help further define this role.

2.3.3 It is recognised the value for money of these roles in their current guise is difficult to quantify. It is widely known however, that face to face customer interaction is costly and that support is required elsewhere in the Council to service business demand. In particular as T18 embeds it has emerged that there is a gap in the organisation to service complex place-based case management.

2.4 Locality Manager

There is one Locality Manager shared between the two authorities. As well as line managing nine South Hams members of staff this role also directly manages a locality team of six in West Devon. 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 is particularly relevant to the proposal to the adjustment of the present Locality Engagement role detailed in 5.3 of this report.

3. Outcomes/outputs

3.1 By adopting the recommendations proposed in section 5 of this report the Locality Manager seeks to achieve a service which is well regarded by Members; demonstrates clear value for money and services business need.

3.2 Success will be realised when Locality Engagement roles are clearly defined and IT is in place to support more efficient Mobile Locality working. Success will be measured through performance monitoring which is detailed in section 5.3.7 of this report.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 The Council potentially has three options for addressing a change in service focus. Risks associated with each are detailed in the table below:

Option	Risk
1. Continue with current service delivery	Medium risk - Not fully satisfying Member and business need.
2. Make adjustments to current service delivery	Low risk – resources are in place and a plan is proposed which can be reviewed and scrutinised by Members based on evidence.

3. Alternative service delivery	High Risk - No known external providers and loss of control of front facing service.
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4.2 The options have been developed based on current service information, Member feedback and initial discussion with Leadership Team service leads around current business need and service development.

4.3 Based on the wide Member consultation and feedback it is recommended that Option 2 is pursued. The proposed adjustments to the service are detailed in section 5.3 of this report.

5. Proposed Way Forward

5.1 As a direct result of the consultation detailed in section 4 it is proposed a number of adjustments are made to the locality service. They are as follows:

5.2 Mobile Locality Officers

Continue to support, develop and monitor the Level 8 Mobile Locality role. The implementation of Civica Mobile software will allow Mobile Locality Officers to self-serve and considerably reduce time spent 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 this work to be prioritised and are working with Civica to achieve a workable solution promptly.

5.3 Locality Engagement Officers

It is proposed to adjust these roles to best suit existing business demand. 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.

5.3.1 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*

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

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

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

5.3.5 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.

5.3.6 It is proposed that 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. Locality Engagement Officers however, will no longer deliver generic customer service style events at venues with limited footfall e.g. coffee mornings.

5.3.7 It is recognised that whilst the Locality Engagement Officer role is not as easy to quantify as the Mobile Locality role, mechanisms need to be in place to monitor and quantify the value for money of this role. It is therefore proposed that regular statistics are compiled on the number of cases completed, events attended and communities engaged with. These statistics will be closely monitored and will help inform future service delivery.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	O&S is responsible for monitoring the T18 programme and overseeing performance.
Financial	N	There are no direct financial implications of the contents of the report.
Risk	Y	As outlined in section 4.0 of the report
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	