

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **19 November 2020**
Title: **Localities Task & Finish Group Concluding Report**
Portfolio Area: **Customer First**
Portfolio holder: Cllr Nicky Hopwood

Wards Affected: **All**

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

Date next steps can be taken: The recommendations arising from this report will be presented to the Executive meeting to be held on 3 December 2020

Authors: **Cllr Dan Thomas** Role: **Chair Localities Task & Finish Group**
Sarah Moody **Business Manager**

Contact: Cllr.dan.thomas@southhams.gov.uk
Sarah.moody@swdevon.gov.uk

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel RECOMMEND to the Executive to Consider:

1) Providing 7 day-a-week Locality service for the following dates:

- **Easter or April 01 (whichever is the earliest) – September 30; and**
- **October half term school holiday week;**

2) Creating a single point of contact for ward members with increased on-street officer visibility and problem solving capacity within each Locality; and

3) Implementing a new Locality team structure, to support recommendations 1 and 2 which will ensure:

- **Clearly defined roles that support the delivery of scheduled tasks and the work of Community groups, developing service level agreements where necessary;**
- **Improved office based and field support for mobile office.**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Task & Finish Group was initially formed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in September 2019 to undertake a review of the Localities service.
- 1.2 In light of the Council's Recovery Plan that has emerged following the COVID-19 Pandemic, the group has evolved and has sought to develop a clear role and function for the future of the Localities service. The most recent version of the adopted Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix A to this report.
- 1.3 Members have met a number of times in order to consider the strategic direction for the Localities team that the Council should adopt.
- 1.4 The Task and Finish Group considered the roles and responsibilities of officers, the role of the Localities service within our community and the working relationships with other teams that are closely aligned to the Localities team.
- 1.5 Having considered data from the summer 2020 period and individual roles within the team, this report sets out the conclusions of the Task and Finish Group.

2. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 5 September 2019, it was resolved to form a Task & Finish Group to review the Localities service and its future function (Minute O&S.25/19 refers).
- 1.2 The Localities service has not been reviewed since its inception in 2015. It is important to note that at this time the role of the Mobile Locality Officer was merely intended to "snap and send", rather than resolve issues on the ground. Since then, the roles have organically evolved to be much more customer focused and resolving issues at the first point of contact.
- 1.3 The progress of the Task & Finish Group was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic that had begun in March 2020. At this point, the Group was close to presenting a set of concluding recommendations that would have been relevant to a pre-pandemic Localities service. The Localities service subsequently played an important role in the Council's response to Covid-19, and were integral to the formation of Community Cluster groups. Their role also included the delivery of food parcels and support to the most vulnerable residents. As the local and national landscape changed dramatically after March 2020, the Task & Finish group revisited its Terms of Reference in October 2020. The Group was then able to review the increased demand on Localities across the summer period and consider the anticipated future requirements of the service in the recovery phase of the Covid-19 response.

3. Actions of the group

- 1.4 In 2019, the Task & Finish Group met with office and field based staff to better understand the function and working practices of the Localities service. This included group discussions and the shadowing of officers whilst carrying out their roles.
- 1.5 The Group reconvened on 1 October to agree its scope and terms of reference. Members of the Group discussed the success of the community cluster groups and the Localities role in this during the Covid-19 response. Members also discussed concerns on how the Locality Engagement Officer role was deemed similar to that of the elected Member role and that it was important to have clearly defined roles to distinguish the two.
- 1.6 On 13 October 2020, the Task and Finish Group looked at data from the summer working patterns of operating a Seven day working week and reviewed its success. This information is set out in Appendix B and includes public and Business engagement as well as education and enforcement. The Group Chairman requested that the Business Manager bring back recommendations on changes that could meet the demand of seasonal working in future years and how this would link in with the emerging corporate priorities and the recovery plan.
- 1.7 The Group then met on 3 November 2020 to consider and agree the final recommendations to submit to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting to be held on 19th November 2020.
- 1.8 Members and Officers worked closely together on forming the recommendations and the Group felt that the ones proposed within this report would meet the strategic priorities in the coming years, providing resilience and flexibility as required.

2 Outcomes/ outputs

- 2.1 Task and Finish Members have set out a clear set of recommendations which will deliver on the emerging corporate priorities and assist Elected Members within their Wards to deliver a visible on street presence to our communities.
- 2.2 An Operational delivery plan will be required to support the recommendations set out in this report with clear timescales of implementation.
- 2.3 A new Localities structure will need to be considered in order to achieve the recommendations as set out.

3 Options available and consideration of risk – future recommendations;

- 3.1 The Panel are asked to consider and agree the proposed recommendations as set out in the report for onward consideration by the Executive.
- 3.2 There is a reputational risk of not adopting the proposals in particular during the summer months when footfall in the South Hams is high. This would impact the street scene and public engagement with visitors and local Business's.

6 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Overview & Scrutiny Panel is responsible for considering and scrutinising how the Council is performing as an organisation.
Financial	N	
Risk	N	
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:

- Appendix A – Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference
 Appendix B – Data from the summer working