

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **2 March 2021**

Title: **Localities Task and Finish Group Final Report**

Portfolio Area: **Customer First**
Portfolio holder: Cllr Jeffrey Moody

Wards Affected: **All**

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

Date next steps can be taken:

The recommendations arising from this report will be presented to the Hub Committee meeting to be held on 27 April 2021

Authors: **Cllr Barry Ratcliffe** Role: **Chairman Localities Task and Finish Group**

Sarah Moody **Business Manager (Case Management)**

Contact: Sarah.moody@swdevon.gov.uk

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND to the Hub Committee that the Business Manager for Case Management (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder):

- 1. Carries out a review of the Locality Service structure in order to deliver the following:**

1.1 Environmental Protection Officers are incorporated into the Localities Service;

1.2 close working relationships between the Localities, Parking Enforcement and Waste teams are formalised;

1.3 shared officers are introduced to improve the flexibility to meet team demands; and

2) Drafts a new Locality Team structure to support recommendation 1 which will ensure:

2.1 Clearly defined roles that support the delivery of scheduled tasks and the work of community groups, developing service level agreements where necessary;

2.2 Improved office based and field support for mobile officers.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Localities Task and Finish Group was set up in October 2020 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 Task and Finish Group has sought to develop a clear role and function for the future of the Localities Service. The adopted Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group are set out in Appendix A to this report.
- 1.3 Members have met several 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 the current operating model and individual roles within the team, this report sets out the conclusions of the Task and Finish Group and makes recommendations as to the next steps.

2. Background

- 2.1 Whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives an annual report on the activities of the Localities Service, the 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 developed into being much more customer focused and actively resolving issues at the first point of contact.
- 2.2 The progress of the Task and Finish Group was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Localities service 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 and Finish Group reviewed the increased demand on Localities and considered the anticipated future requirements of the Service in the recovery phase of the Covid-19 response.

- 2.3 It is worth noting that since the Extended Leadership Team restructure in December 2019, all of the teams mentioned within this report are now the responsibility of the Business Manager (Case Management) supported by an Operational team leader.

3. Actions of the Group

- 3.1 Task and Finish Group Members initially met with Officers on 20 October 2020 to review the Community Cluster response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and discuss the relevance of this model in shaping the future delivery of the Localities Service. Members determined that it would be feasible to incorporate some of the positive elements of the response model into “everyday” work routines, however feedback suggested that the Cluster model was more successful in some areas than others. It was acknowledged at the meeting that the administrative function had increased within the Team in recent years.
- 3.2 At the Task and Finish Group meeting on 3 November 2020, Members considered the variety of duties that are currently carried out by the existing Mobile Locality officers, as well as the responsibilities of the Civil Enforcement team. Although the duties were deemed to be notably different, there was seen to be a clear overlap in the customer facing aspect of both roles, and the potential to create closer links between the two teams. Members also discussed the gaps in the current operating model for both services, and considered whether a change in identity/approach was needed to better fulfil the ambassadorial elements of the customer facing roles. Draft recommendations were considered on how better relationships could be formed between existing teams with a similar working remit.
- 3.3 A final meeting was held on 21 January 2021, at which Members considered how the working relationships between existing teams could be formalised to better meet the current and future priorities of the Council. This highlighted the ability to facilitate a more flexible service that provided increased visibility within communities, as well as better support for mobile officers. Members also discussed the benefits of the recent structure that had been developed for the South Hams Localities and wider teams, and Members acknowledged that economies of scale would be realised by aligning the Localities services across both Councils.

4. Outcomes/ outputs

- 4.1 Task and Finish Group Members have set out clear 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.
- 4.2 An Operational delivery plan will be required to support the recommendations set out in this report with clear timescales of implementation.
- 4.3 As part of the Review, the Business Manager will consider the structure of the Localities Service in order to best achieve the recommendations as set out above.

5 Options available and consideration of risk – future recommendations;

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and to propose recommendations as set out in this report to the Hub Committee for it to consider;
- 5.2 Without this review, there is a risk that efficiencies will not be achieved within the Localities Service and it will not deliver the service in accordance with the changing priorities of the Council.
- 5.3 There is a reputational risk of not adopting the proposals in particular during the summer months when footfall in the Borough is higher. This would impact the street scene and public engagement with visitors and local Businesses.

6 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for considering and scrutinising how the Council is performing as an organisation and making any necessary recommendations to the Hub Committee.
Financial	N	There are no direct implications to this report however Members should be aware that there may be future financial implications depending upon the outcome of the review.
Risk	N	As set out in paragraph 5 above
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