

# Service delivery and office relocation

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 In the latter part of 2015, East Devon District Council sent out a number of surveys requesting feedback from residents, town and parish councils, businesses, community and equality groups to gain feedback about service delivery in relation to office relocation.

1.2 Fundamentally, the aim of this consultation was to understand if our customers wanted us to delivery services differently bearing in mind the impact of the office relocation.

1.3 The survey and background documentation highlighted the council's commitment to providing services how and when our customers want them through our increased use of mobile and flexible working. The documentation also outlined that the council continues to be engaged in ongoing work to develop more of our services so that they are available to customers who wish to access them on line.

## 2 Summary feedback

Further to the survey work here are the headlines from the random mail-out residents' survey:

- a) 83 % of those responding had not visited our main offices in Sidmouth for the last 12 months.
- b) The main reason people visit is to discuss their circumstances with an officer and the second most common reason is to drop off letters or forms.
- c) 91% said they considered that they would be able to access services they need when we move to Honiton and Exmouth.
- d) 64% of 658 respondents didn't think they would use surgeries. The most popular suggestion for additional surgeries is Sidmouth (10% of respondents).
- e) 261 respondents that would use surgeries gave us their views on which services they would like to access through surgeries in question 6.
- f) 38% would visit us in Honiton and/or Exmouth to access our services and 62% would not.
- g) People would mainly access our services on-line (64%) or by phone (62%). 84% have regular access to the internet for personal use, mainly using a pc/laptop.

### **3 Service delivery considerations**

#### **3.1 Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support**

3.1.1 Based on what our customers have said, the council will address the need for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support through having relevant officers based both Honiton and Exmouth.

3.1.2 The service will continue to deliver customer access through its use of surgeries which already operate in Axminster, Cranbrook, Honiton and Seaton.

3.1.3 The council will also look to provide a surgery in Sidmouth and as with the other sites we will keep customer demand under review in order to be flexible to meet changing demand where required.

3.1.4 We also continue to offer home visits to customers who would prefer.

#### **3.2 Searches on land and property**

3.2.1 Based on feedback from these surveys, this service will be provided from the Honiton office in terms of customers visiting.

3.2.2 Customers will be able to access land and property details via a self service point known as a kiosk at both Honiton and Exmouth.

3.2.3 We will continue to monitor customer demand in case this changes from the current pattern of demand which shows that most customers do not access this service face to face but use other channels.

#### **3.3 Housing**

3.3.1 Housing services will be available from the new Council offices in Honiton and Exmouth

3.3.2 In respect of Housing we will continue to run 'drop in' surgeries for housing options interviews and homeless approaches. These will be operated in Honiton and Exmouth. We will also organize new tenancy 'sign ups' at both office locations, and the opportunity to report repairs and estate management issues.

3.3.3 Whilst Housing staff are likely to be based in Exmouth we will have a staff presence in Honiton and continue to undertake much of our business by way of home visits, site visits and by utilizing our community centre's throughout the district for tenants meetings etc.

3.3.4 The council will continuously improve the information on our website and establish an on-line tenant portal to report housing repairs, view rent accounts and

request a service. Home Safeguard will continue to be contactable 24/7 and take the Council's out of hours calls.

### **3.4 StreetScene**

3.4.1 There will continue to be a StreetScene presence at our depots in both Sidmouth and Exmouth. It is likely that we will also have a Recycling and Waste team presence at Greendale depot working alongside our recycling and refuse contractor. Greendale depot is located on the main road from Sidmouth to Exeter.

### **3.5 Countryside**

3.5.1 Our Countryside team are a mobile team and will be based at Honiton and across the district with a presence at Seaton Wetlands.

### **3.6 Environmental Health**

3.6.1 Environmental health officers are mobile and currently work across the district and this arrangement will continue.

3.6.2 There will be members of the Environmental Health officer team working in Exmouth on a regular basis.

### **3.7 Planning and building control services**

3.7.1 It is envisaged that there will be full reception cover for all aspects of the planning service at Honiton. For development management and building control, service will be available on an appointment rather than a drop in basis.

3.7.2 The council does not currently provide surgeries for planning and building control services and current patterns of demand do not indicate this is required. Noting the expressed requirement in the survey feedback for access to Planning at Exmouth and the possible demand at Sidmouth due to our relocation, the council proposes these services will be available on an appointment basis as part of a trial.