Christopher Holland

Date: 22 December 2009 Contact number: 01395 517543

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To: Members of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview

and Scrutiny Committee

(Councillors: Roger Boote, David Chapman, Christine Drew, Vivien Duval Steer, Steve Hall, Douglas Hull, David Key,

Frances Newth, Tony Reed, Brenda Taylor)

Members invited:

Exmouth Town Ward Members (Mrs Hardy, Graham and Wragg)
Ted Brown – Chairman of housing Review Board

Cllr Jill Elson – Portfolio Holder, Communities Ray Franklin – Portfolio Holder, Strategic Planning Andrew Moulding – Portfolio Holder, Resources

Cllr Stuart Hughes - Portfolio Holder, Communications

Officers requested to attend:

Steve Belli - Development Manager

Simon Davey – Head of Finance

John Golding - Head of Housing and Social Inclusion

Karime Hassan - Corporate Director

Kate Little - Head of Planning and Countryside

Mark Reilly - Head of Streetscene

Nick Stephen - Communications Officer

For information:

Portfolio Holders

Other Members of the Council for information

Chief Executive

Corporate Directors

Dear Sir/Madam

Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 13 January 2010 at 6.30 pm

The above meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at East Devon District Council Offices, Knowle, Sidmouth, to consider the matters detailed on the agenda below.

Yours faithfully,

MARK WILLIAMS

Chief Executive

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting.

- A period of 15 minutes has been provided to allow members of the public to raise questions.
- In addition, after a report has been introduced by the relevant Portfolio Holder and/or officer, the Chairman of the Committee will ask if any member of the public would like to speak in respect of the matter and/or ask questions.
- All individual contributions will be limited to a period of 3 minutes where there is an
 interest group of objectors or supporters, a spokesperson should be appointed to
 speak on behalf of group.
- The public is advised that the Chairman has the right and discretion to control questions to avoid disruption, repetition and to make best use of the meeting time.



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AGENDA

	AGENDA	
		Page/s
1	Public question time – standard agenda item (15 minutes) Members of the public are invited to put questions to the Committee through the Chairman.	
	 Each individual questioner exercising the right to speak during this public question time is restricted to speaking for a total of 3 minutes. Councillors also have the opportunity to ask questions of the Leader and/or Portfolio Holders during this time slot whilst giving priority at this part of the agenda to members of the public. The Chairman has the right and discretion to control question time to avoid disruption, repetition, and to make best use of the meeting time. 	
2	To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 21 October 2009.	5 - 10
3	To receive any apologies for absence.	
4	To receive any declarations of interests relating to items on the agenda.	
5	To consider any items, which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances.	
	(Note: such circumstances need to be clearly identified in the minutes; Councillors please notify the Chief Executive in advance of the meeting if you wish to raise a matter under this item. The Chief Executive will then consult with the Chairman).	
6	To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There are no items that the officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.	
7	Ward Member Involvement and Communication	11 – 18
	Members are asked to consider the practice and convention surrounding Ward Member involvement and communication with Ward Members in general. The discussion aims to recommend an agreed protocol for timely Ward Member involvement and appropriate communication channels. A copy of the agenda will be available online and also at the meeting.	
	(Cllrs Mrs Graham, Hardy and Wragg and Karime Hassan are invited to attend)	
8	Garden User Satisfaction Survey Results	19 – 43
	Members to consider the bi-annual user satisfaction questionnaire for Manor Gardens in Exmouth and Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth	
	(Cllr Cox and Mark Reilly are invited to attend)	
9	Housing Service – Performance Measures Report for May to September 2009	44 – 55
	Members are asked to consider the report and to highlight any areas where they have concerns or require information.	
	(Cllr Miss Elson and John Golding are invited to attend)	
10	Housing Benefits - Performance Measures Report	56 - 65
	Members are asked to consider the report and to highlight any areas where they have concerns or require information.	
	(Cllr Moulding and Simon Davey are invited to attend)	

		Page/s
11	Development Management - Performance Measures Report	66 – 74
	Members are asked to consider the report and to highlight any areas where they have concerns or require information.	
	(Cllr Franklin and Diviani and Kate Little are invited to attend)	
12	Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan	75
	Members to debate future work of the Committee.	

Members remember!

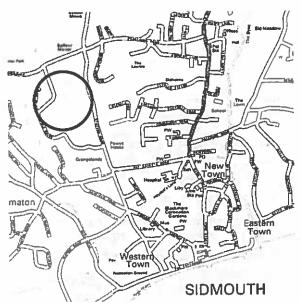
- □ You must declare any personal or prejudicial interests in an item whenever it becomes apparent that you have an interest in the business being considered.
- □ Make sure you say the reason for your interest as this has to be included in the minutes.
- If your interest is prejudicial you must leave the room unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Council's Standards Committee or where Para 12(2) of the Code can be applied. Para 12(2) allows a Member with a prejudicial interest to stay for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business but only at meetings where the public are also allowed to make representations. If you do remain, you must not exercise decision-making functions or seek to improperly influence the decision; you must leave the meeting room once you have made your representation.
- □ You also need to declare when you are subject to the party whip before the matter is discussed.

Suggestions for questioning during an Overview and Scrutiny meeting

Below are some prompts which may help you to form your own questions to ask at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting. Your questioning technique is crucial in creating an atmosphere conducive to open answers. Avoid excessive interrogation and treat those being questioned with courtesy and respect; however don't be afraid to ask supplementary questions if you feel that you haven't been given a clear answer.

- □ IS IT REQUIRED? (do we have this, does it make sense to tackle it, do we really need it).
- □ IS IT SYSTEMS THINKING? (is it evidence based and designed around the customer demands)
- □ IS THE INTENTION CLEAR? (what are we actually trying to achieve)
- □ ANY REAL OUTCOMES? (are we actually, and measurably, achieving things for our customers).
- □ WHAT IS THE COST? (both time and money)
- DOES IT COMPLY? (have we checked that it meets our obligations, the law, any formal guidance, and any Council policy or resolutions).
- OTHERS DO WHAT? (how do other organisations tackle this, best practice)
- EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT? (how do we know we're doing things well, in a timely fashion, and at "best value")
- □ WHAT IS THE RISK? (any areas of risk for the Council)
- ANYONE LOSE OUT? (are there sections of the community who might be disadvantaged by this approach, or be less able to take advantage, than others)
- DOES IT LINK? (have we linked this to other, similar, pieces of work within or outside the Council)

Getting to the Meeting - for the benefit of visitors



The entrance to the Council Offices is located on Station Road, Sidmouth. **Parking** is limited during normal working hours but normally easily available for evening meetings.

The following **bus service** stops outside the Council Offices on Station Road:

From Exmouth, Budleigh, Otterton and Newton Poppleford – 157

The following buses all terminate at the Triangle in Sidmouth. From the Triangle, walk up Station Road until you reach the Council Offices (approximately ½ mile).

From Exeter – 52A, 52B From Honiton – 52B From Seaton – 52A From Ottery St Mary – 379, 387

Please check your local timetable for times.

The Committee Suite has a separate entrance to the main building, located at the end of the visitor and Councillor car park. The rooms are at ground level and easily accessible; there is also a toilet for disabled users. The doors to the civic suite (meeting rooms) will be opened ½ hour before the start time of the meeting. Councillors are reminded to bring their key fobs if they wish to access the area prior to that time. A hearing loop system will be in operation in the Council Chamber.

For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday 21 October 2009

Present:

Councillors:

Steve Hall (Chairman)

Frances Newth (Vice Chairman)

Vivien Duval Steer

Douglas Hull Ken Potter

Officers:

Mark Williams - Chief Executive

Debbie Meakin - Democratic Services Officer

Mark Reilly - Head of Streetscene

Paul Deakin - Streetscene

Cherise Foster – Customer Service Manager Steve Belli – Development Management Manager

Denise Lyon- Corporate Director and Deputy Chief Executive

Also Present

Councillors:

Paul Diviani Ray Bloxham Jill Elson Iain Chubb David Cox

Graham Godbeer

Helen Parr

Andrew Moulding

Apologies:

Councillors:

Roger Boote David Key Brenda Taylor

Derek Button Tony Reed

The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 9.00pm.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

*18 Public question time

There were no questions from the public raised at this point of the meeting.

*19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September were confirmed and signed as a true record.

*20 Development Management Quarterly Measures Report

Steve Belli presented the quarterly measures report, reminding the Members of the principles for both front line staff and managers, that had now become embedded in working practices. Improvements in performance included:

- Average end to end times for all applications dropping from 57.2 days to 48.8 days in April – June 2009;
- 55.5 days for minor applications compared to 69.3 days for the previous quarter

*20 Development Management Quarterly Measures Report continued

- No backlog of applications has built up over the quarter despite the volume received;
- Pre-application enquiries down to 16.1 days to respond to, improving on the previous quarter at 20 days;
- Permitted development enquiry time down to 1.5 days.

High levels of satisfaction were recorded following the surveys of applicants to ask how they found the planning process.

One area of preventable demand identified related to agents. Many agents would call on the day after consultation was completed, to enquire how their application was progressing. There was work to be done in managing the expectation of the agents in explaining that it was not possible to issue a decision notice as soon as the consultation period ended. A regular forum is held with agents and this issue would be discussed at their next meeting.

The number of appeals had decreased with performance being above the national average of 35%, at 22.2%

Members raised some questions on the report, including:

- Did quicker end to end times mean that the quality of assessing the applications was affected? No, consultation with Towns and Parishes and directly affected neighbours continued; no corners cut in the process; and officers took professional pride in the service they provided.
- Were mystery shoppers used to provide user satisfaction information? No, a random sample of actual applicants were contacted by telephone, and asked how they found the service, regardless of the outcome of their application.
- Ward Members would be sent a copy of the officer report on the application where
 there is a difference in opinion of the Ward Member and the Team recommendation on
 a householder type application; the Ward Member could ask for the application to go
 before Development Management Committee, but the Chairman of DMC had the final
 say. For minor applications, the Ward Member has the right to call the application to
 Development Management Committee if there were reasonable planning grounds.
- Using the new website for viewing and making comment on applications was causing concern for some Members who felt more training was required. Nick Wright from the planning service had undertaken some training with the Towns and Parishes, and Members were advised to contact him to make arrangements for training.
- Each application was treated on a case by case basis as requested by the customer and validation was carried out in accordance with the published guidance on the type of application, but not to a rigid regime.
- Reception enquiries would be added to the quarterly report under capability at the point of transaction survey.
- End to end charts were difficult to read and officers were asked to review the way this
 information was presented.

Paul Diviani, Chairman of the Development Management Committee, advised Members of the benefits of the pre-application service, and his request for the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee to look at a proposal for charging for pre-application advice. He welcomed the quarterly measures report, which showed clear improvements and evidence that the systems thinking approach is delivering good improvements.

*20 Development Management Quarterly Measures Report continued

The Chairman added his congratulations to the work undertaken by the service in adopting the new approach and the improvements made as a result.

RESOLVED:

that the report on Development Management Quarterly Measures

April – June 2009 be noted.

*21 Preventable demand in the Customer Service Centre

The Chairman reminded Members of the origins of the report, as a request by Councillor Douglas Hull to investigate why there were difficulties in contacting the Council by telephone at certain times.

Cherise Foster, Customer Services Manager, presented a further report covering comparable periods following phases one and two of the new refuse and recycling scheme. Despite an increase in call volume following phase two, preventable contacts had decreased to 38% of the refuse and recycling cases recorded.

David Cox, Portfolio Holder for Streetscene, ran though a number of improvements made following phase one, and circulated a paper highlighting the volume of collections and the percentage of those collections missed at 0.22% for October 2008 to September 2009.

In preparation for phase three, which covered Honiton, further improvements were being made:

- the information leaflet for householders, which included information about the roadshows being held;
- · complete lorry fleet should be in place;
- many part-time/casual staff used for the first two phases taken on as full time staff;
- new routing software to aid efficiency of routes and easily handle changes of routes;
- meeting with the new bin delivery contractor to ensure better service delivered and feedback on success of delivery.

Members robustly questioned the Portfolio Holder and officers Mark Reilly, Head of Streetscene, and Paul Deakin from Streetscene on the statistics presented, and management issues in general surrounding the collection of refuse and recycling, including:

- What lessons had been learnt from the first two phases, and assurances that such
 improvements would lead to fewer calls to the CSC to clarify. Improvements were reiterated on items like the information leaflet and an increase in roadshows to help with
 public understanding of the new refuse and recycling scheme.
- Comparative figures on missed collections were being sought from other authorities in order to benchmark.
- Survey by MEL/WRAP on participation had shown an 84% take up on recycling service in Ottery St Mary and there was confidence that the estimate of 66% for the remaining phases was correct.
- Attempts had been made in the past to seek accurate information from the County Council about road closures or works that may disrupt recycling and refuse collections; as well as reporting issues of parking on narrow roads that prevented access to larger vehicles. It was hoped that newly elected County Councillors would help facilitate talks to improve this situation.
- Missed bins were regularly reported to the Refuse and Recycling Board and particular effort made to resolve cases where multiple missed collections had occurred.

*21 Preventable demand in the Customer Service Centre (cont'd)

Members were keen to see future improvement to the preventable demand identified from the telephone calls made to the Council following phase 3 and welcomed the success of the new refuse and recycling scheme to date.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report on Preventable Demand in the Customer Service Centre, and actions taken by the Board and

StreetScene to reduce it, be noted;

2. that a report on Preventable Demand is presented to the

Committee following the roll-out of phase three.

22 Use of Resources Action Plan

Simon Davey, Head of Finance, updated Members on the action plan drawn up in response to the Areas of Improvement indentified by the Council's external auditors. This followed the first Use of Resources assessment under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment for 2008/09.

The Council had achieved a scoring of level 2, "performing adequately". In previous assessment level 3 had been achieved; however the criteria had now changed and many authorities have seen a drop in their score on assessment as a result. The full report on the assessment would be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee.

Jill Elson, Portfolio Holder for Communities, raised concern on how to include all the work carried out in terms of networking and facilitating with partner authorities and other agencies, which was difficult to measure but took up resources. Mark Williams, Chief Executive, updated Members on a report being presented to the Strategic Management Team to define what a partnership constitutes; narrowing the scope would mean an easier task in identifying resource use.

Andrew Moulding, Portfolio Holder for Resources, endorsed the action plan and added that many of the areas identified by the external auditors were issues already known to the Council and processes already underway to address. These issues included strengthening internal audit and evidencing fraud work.

Ken Potter, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, advised Members that his Committee would be considering future plans to deal with identified areas such as internal audit and completion of the new risk register. Information from the risk register on fraud would be used to produce an action plan specifically targeted at that issue.

RESOLVED: that future reports on

that future reports on the progress on the Use of Resources Action Plan be submitted to the Audit and Governance

Committee for monitoring.

RECOMMENDED: that the Audit and Governance Committee refers any areas

of concern in the Action Plan to the Service Delivery and

Performance Committee for consideration.

*23 Quarterly Monitoring of Performance – 2nd Quarter 2009/10

At the previous meeting of the Committee, the Head of Organisational Development took Members through some of the indicators where graphs on comparative performance had been provided. The way this information had been presented had been changed and improved to make it clearer for Members; the information had been arranged around the Council's corporate priorities.

*23 Quarterly Monitoring of Performance – 2nd Quarter 2009/10 (continued)

Members attending this meeting had not been present at the previous meeting and therefore had not had the benefit of this presentation and were concerned about how the information was presented. Denise Lyon, Corporate Director, explained how the summary sheet represented projects under way for each Corporate Priority and how subsequent information set out those projects.

Members still had concerns about putting the information in context, using the statistics on Affordable Housing as an example, where it was not clear exactly how many houses had been delivered. Jill Elson, Portfolio Holder for Communities, updated Members with detail on the related performance indicators, which helped to place the information into context.

RESOLVED:

- that the report on Quarterly Monitoring of Performance 2nd Quarter 2009/10 be noted;
- 2. that further review of the presentation of the report is made to help put the information into context.

*24 Benefits Service Inspection

Simon Davey, Head of Finance, discussed with Members the recently published report from the Audit Commission, following their inspection of the Benefits service.

The overall finding was that the service was fair; with uncertain prospects for improvement. Following the changes to processes under the systems thinking review, claims were being processed quicker. However the Audit Commission criticised that weaknesses were still apparent in accuracy (disputed by us) and delays in dealing with claims received by post (agreed by us).

The report also criticised:

- limited opening times for the service
- lack of private space to discuss claims
- · weak management of complaints
- minimal consultation which had resulted in advice given by voluntary groups conflicting with the Council's preferred method of benefit claim management
- not tackling fraud effectively
- Political and managerial leadership as weak

Positive comments in the report included:

- Improvement in value for money for the service
- 100% subsidy through improvement in reducing overpayment and unnecessary delay
- Discretionary Housing Payments scheme helping vulnerable people
- Good quality of information provided to claimants

In comparison with other authorities, 17 other inspections had been conducted where 13 resulted in a "poor" score, and the Council being one of the remaining 4 classified by the Audit Commission as "fair". Only a few authorities had a rating of having promising prospects for improvement.

A number of recommendations were contained within the Audit Commission's report, which officers, working closely with the Portfolio Holder, were undertaking.

*24 Benefits Service Inspection (continued)

The Chief Executive highlighted to Members the difficulties in reaching the final report following an appeal against the earlier draft. The systems thinking approach of meeting customer needs and getting improvement by using the measures did not match the Audit Commission approach of setting arbitrary targets. This would be an issue for future inspections and it was not clear if the Audit Commission would adapt its approach accordingly.

Members discussed some points for consideration in reviewing opening hours and running of benefit surgeries, in light of demands for space and the success of home visits offered by the service.

RESOLVED:

that an update on progress on the Recommendations made by the Audit Commission on the Benefits Service be presented to the Committee at their next meeting.

*25 Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

Members considered the Service Delivery Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan 2009/10.

RESOLVED:

- 1. that Forward Plan be noted;
- 2. that the item on exploring local issues with towns and parishes be deferred to a future meeting, to permit more time to prepare the item.

Chairman	 Date

Agenda Item 7

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Service Delivery/Performance

13 January 2010

KH



Ward Member Involvement and Communication

Summary

This report sets out a detailed complaint from Exmouth Ward Members regarding the handling of a specific issue, namely, the erecting of signs to prevent kiting activities at the Imperial Recreation Ground. The correspondence between the members and officers is set out in a comprehensive manner. The purpose of presenting the issue is for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the wider issues raised by the ward members regarding communication and ward member involvement.

Recommendation

That members consider the issues raised by the ward members regarding the involvement of ward councillors in matters that are of concern to them specifically;

- the practice and convention of communicating by e-mail
- the length of time given for comments to be made
- the appropriateness of inviting ward members to meetings convened by third parties
- the appropriateness of relying on press statements to inform councillors

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The ward councillors maintain that the issues raised in this complaint raise concerns held cross party, that members are being over looked when meetings are arranged and decisions are being made. They have asked that a procedure be established regarding member involvement.

b) Alternative Options

Not applicable

c) Risk Considerations

A change to the practice of communicating and involvement of ward members could have resource implications as well as a potential impact on the timeliness of decisions. The purpose of the report is to allow members to explore these issues to assess the risks in the round.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

An Inspiring Council that is customer focused requires a clear focus on member engagement and communication.

e) Date for Review of Decision

N/A

Introduction

Members are asked to consider the content of a formal complaint that was made by Exmouth Town Ward Members regarding the handling of the erection of signs to prevent kiting activity at Imperial Recreation Ground. The issues are set out in some detail and no attempt has been made to edit the material. The complaint is being reported for the purpose of allowing members' to consider the appropriateness of the practice and convention surrounding ward member involvement.

The key questions raised by the complaints are:

- When should ward members be involved?
- Is it acceptable that ward councillors receive an e-mail giving them a maximum amount of time to respond and should the convention be two weeks, i.e. ten working days?
- Is a telephone call to a ward councillor a less than satisfactory means of communication?
- If members do not respond within a set time is the working assumption that silence is consent?
- When third parties request or set up a meeting to which an officer is invited, should the presumption be that ward members be notified; members are asked to reflect on the volume of meetings taking place on all manner of subjects that currently members are not informed about and the possible implications that could follow. It could be unworkable for officers to inform all ward members every time they hold a meeting with a third party that may affect a ward. However, members may wish to be informed on particular types of uses and where there is a genuine public interest dimension.
- Is a press statement an acceptable means of keeping members involved on issues?

Complaints Re. Imperial Recreation Ground, kiting activities

Background to complaints in the words of the complainants

The complaints relate to the procedures which were activated following the erection of signs which banned certain kiting activities at Imperial Recreation Ground, Exmouth, by EDDC.

Following the appearance of these signs, many hours were spent in addressing enquiries & concerns from kite-surfers by the Ward Members, who had previously not responded to 2 messages from the Beach Safety Officer at EDDC.

This [non response by Members] was as the result of time constraints & no notification in one instance.

Following a press statement, which stated that signs were put up after consultation with Exmouth Town Council (ETC) & the Ward Members, Members were asked why we had not objected. Clearly, from the statement, members of the public believed that we were in agreement with the signage, which is misleading & is certainly not the case.

There has not been an item agenda-ed at ETC & it has not been discussed there. We were unaware that the signs were being placed at the Ground.

0.

There was a meeting with a Ward Member & the kite-surfers on Sunday July 19 & Cllr. Eileen Wragg spoke with the Head of Service on July 21, when he informed her that he was arranging a meeting with the Chamber of Trade & Commerce (CTC).

Cllr. Wragg was also told by the Chamber of Trade & Commerce on July 24 that they had been unaware of the issue until just 3 days before & that there was to be a meeting that day with the kitesurfers & wind-surfers.

The Ward Members were not invited to this meeting, & despite being actively involved in trying to resolve the matter, were side-lined.

Although it will probably be said that the Chamber called the meeting, the fact that the Head of Service attended, & told 2 EDDC Members that he was arranging a meeting with CTC clearly shows that EDDC were involved.

It has also become clear that Edge Water Sports has a concession to operate on Imperial Recreation Ground. Again, at no time have any of the Ward Members been consulted.

It is now 11 days since the kite/wind-surfers/CTC/EDDC meeting was held & we still have not been informed of any outcomes, apart from what is in the press.

The issues raised by the Ward Members' are:

- 1. There was insufficient time to respond with our observations to the consultation (2 working weeks).
- 2. There were 2 columns on the attached form for consultation with S & L headings, with nothing to indicate what these letters meant.
- 3. There had been 2 alleged complaints, one of which was from a wind-surfing business operator. The Ward Members had had no complaints whatsoever.
- 4. No consultation had been sought with the Ward Members or Town Council prior to the granting of a concession to use Imperial Recreation Ground by Edge.
- 5. No consultation with the user groups, other than the complainant.
- 6. Involvement of EDDC in convening a meeting with the Chamber to the exclusion of Ward Members.
- 7. No outcomes of that meeting have been conveyed to inform Ward Members what progress/action has been or is to be made.
- 8. We are answerable to the public for decisions which are being taken by Officers. This, in our view, & those of others, is disturbing & undemocratic. There has been a lack of communication, culminating in an outside body agreeing to try to retrieve a situation which should never have arisen.
- 9. We understand the safety implications which can arise from most sporting activities, & that EDDC has to consider these when allowing its land to be used. However, the manner in which this situation was handled is regrettable, & the discourtesy shown to Members borders on contempt.
- 10. We seek an assurance that measures will be put in place to ensure that there will be no similar recurrence of these events.

The officers' comments on these complaints are as follows:

The signs did not constitute a new departure that required a formal consultation process. The Imperial Recreation Ground, among several others in the area, is governed by byelaws relating to Pleasure Grounds that have been in place since August 1996. The new signs were merely put up to remind people of the existing rules, which already prohibit this kind of activity.

It is clear from this statement that the complainants acknowledge that they did receive an invitation from the Beach Safety Officer to comment on the proposed signage. Unfortunately, the campaign raised by Edge Watersports resulted in the public being misinformed about the true situation and this was why Members were contacted by constituents.

An email audit trail shows that the Beach Safety Officer wrote to Members and to the Town Clerk at 10.10 a.m. on 6 May, informing them of his intentions and asking for comments. Two Members replied within 24 hours.

It is reasonable to expect Ward Members to respond when asked to comment on a proposal. It is common practice when consulting with interested parties to assume that no comment means the respondent accepts the proposal. The press statement was an accurate reflection of what had happened.

This is an issue that Members should take up with the Town Clerk, who was notified of the signage proposal in the same email as that to Members on 6 May, when the Beach Safety Officer's intentions were made perfectly clear.

The Head of Service did not say he was arranging a meeting with the Chamber; he said he was attending a meeting that had been arranged by the Chamber and to which he had been invited by them.

There is no reason why the Chamber of Commerce should have been involved in the initial stages of this signage. This is not an issue on which EDDC officers can comment. Since the meeting was arranged by the Chamber, this is clearly a matter for them. At no time did EDDC officers wish to, or try to, sideline Members.

The Head of Service did not arrange the meeting and he did not tell Members he was arranging it. It was no secret that EDDC was involved, as the Head of Service stated that he would be attending. It is common practice for officers to attend meetings arranged by third parties as necessary in the course of their duties.

Edge Watersports do not have any such concession. Indeed, it is because they have a concession for the Foreshore but were also straying onto the Recreation Ground when not authorised to do so that the issue arose in the first place.

The outcome of the meeting is not yet clear. There have been several proposals, which the Head of Service has agreed to progress if certain conditions are met. EDDC is waiting to see if these conditions are met. In the meantime, the Chamber has issued a press release summarising progress so far, as is their prerogative as hosts of the meeting. Members will be informed once EDDC has a firm outcome to report.

Comments on the specific complaints:

- 1. It is incorrect to say that consultation was limited to two weeks. The Beach Safety Officer said in his email that he wished to put up the proposed signs before the start of the summer holidays [in July] and preferably before the end of May. At the very least, this gave three weeks for a response the normal time given for many planning applications. In the event, the signs were not put up until 6 July a full 8 weeks after the email to Members and ample time for anyone wishing to comment to do so. In fact two Members did respond to the Beach Safety Officer's 6 May request one the same day and another the following day.
- 2. We believe Members are confusing two issues here. In addition to the email sent on 6 May with regard to kite-boarding on the Imperial Recreation Ground, an email on a different, though related, matter was sent on 10 June, followed up on 23 June. This was informing Members of a proposed area on the beach to be set aside for kite-boarding [and to which several Members have responded]. For the record, the letters S and L are standard risk-assessment terminology, referring to Severity and Likelihood, two values that are used to calculate risk. However, this proposal has not yet been implemented and the June correspondence should not be associated with the separate email about the proposed signage on the Recreation Ground.
- Within a 12-month period 2008-09, when the Beach Safety Officer considered putting up signs, there were 9 complaints specifically concerned with kite-boarders at the Imperial Recreation Ground. This was up from just 3 in the period 2004-07.
- 4. No concession was or has been granted for Edge to use the Imperial Recreation Ground. Their use of this site was unauthorised and, had there been an accident, their insurance cover might well have been invalid.
- 5. No such consultation was necessary, since EDDC was merely enforcing existing byelaws.
- 6. EDDC did not convene the meeting. An EDDC officer was invited to attend the meeting, which was convened by the Chamber of Commerce.

- 7. The issues are still ongoing and Members will be updated as soon as any firm outcome has been reached.
- 8. The problem is not a lack of communication on the part of EDDC officers with Members. Rather, it is a result of a (continuing) publicity campaign by Edge Watersports against a legitimate attempt to enforce existing byelaws and to protect the public from potential harm. Had this action not been taken and had there been an accident, officers and Members could have found themselves in an extremely embarrassing situation, not to mention the possible injury caused to an innocent member of the public lawfully using the recreation ground in good faith.
- 9. No discourtesy has been meant or shown to Members and this accusation is strongly refuted by officers, who feel they have acted properly at all times. EDDC did not allow its land to be used so any use that did take place was unauthorised. This is why the signs were necessary.
- 10. If any material change to the usage of the Imperial Recreation Ground is proposed, Members can rest assured that it will be subject to due process, including full consultation and a report to Executive Board, plus reference to all Council Members, before being adopted as policy in the usual way. So far, all that has been done is to enforce existing policy. Officers fully understand the need to keep Members informed or to consult on proposed changes which is why the email was sent on 6 May to inform Members and invite their comments. However, no material change has been made in this case and the issue seems to have been blown out of all proportion due to the publicity it has received as a result of a locally driven campaign.

Members' further comments on the officer's response

As a matter of information & courtesy, Ward Members have in the past, been consulted on matters related to their Wards. The erection of the signs was a significant move which confused the public leading to many representations from all sectors, not just those involved in sporting activities.

The fact that the signs were to be removed signifies that mistakes were made.

Two of the Ward Members received emails dated 10 June & 23 June which amounted to 2 working weeks. The other Ward Member says that she had not had any information. The closing date was June 26, giving insufficient time to investigate the issues raised, in our view.

We have no record of this letter/email. Cllr. Chamberlain received a message & he responded by telephone to what he says seemed a 'casual' enquiry. Cllr. Wragg has also accessed her EDDC email, which she does not normally do, preferring to use her DCC address, & there are no emails in the EDDC inbox for May. Usually these are automatically forwarded, however, it is possible that the password had expired & nothing was then forwarded.

Cllr. Graham had problems with the EDDC emails in May with messages not getting through. The Town Clerk has now forwarded the email from the Beach Safety Officer dated 6 May & our names are in the address bar, but none of us can recall receiving it. Cllr Hardy does not access email & hard copies of correspondence are sent by post & she does not remember having seen a copy.

This is a presumption on the part of officers. The press statement was misleading in saying that the signs were erected after consultation with Ward Members, giving the impression that they had approved, which is clearly not the case.

The Town Clerk has written to us today & said that he had already spoken with Andy Phillips prior to the email being sent on 6 May & told him that the signs would be controversial, but that if he (AP) thought that there were over-riding safety concerns, there was nothing that the Town Clerk could do, as it was an EDDC matter.

The Head of Service certainly said that a meeting was being arranged with the Chamber, although whether or not 'by' the Chamber was unclear. It is extraordinary that after so much time & effort had been made by the Ward Members on both ETC & EDDC that they were not invited to the meeting, particularly as it concerned EDDC owned land.

This unelected body assumed the responsibilities of elected Councillors, in our view. The Chairman asked Cllr. Wragg, immediately prior to the meeting, for background information on the problems which had arisen.

Officers should have ensured that Ward Members were present. Elected Members are the face of the Council, which is why they are contacted by the public in the first instance.

A recent letter to a Ward Member asked that residents should be advised to contact Streetscene directly regarding some problems. Elected Members must be aware of any issues which concern the public, in order to take decisions & to form future policy.

We understand that meetings take place between officers & third parties, & that is what they are, third parties.

Because of the substantial interest & concern surrounding the action which had been taken by officers, there should have been a Councillor presence.

Your statement is incorrect. The wording in the Licence states that the Licensee was authorised 'to use that part of Imperial Recreation Ground & foreshore at Exmouth & which for the purposes of identification only shown coloured green on the plan annexed hereto (hereinafter called "the land")'.

The Ward Members were not consulted prior to this agreement being signed & do not have the plan to refer to.

We repeat, there should have been Member involvement. Interestingly, you state that Members will be involved once EDDC has a firm outcome to report. We understood that elected Members form the Council & that all staff are employees.

We re-state, Ward Members received an email June 10, followed by another dated June 23 which notified them that the closing date for responses was June 26. This was 13 working days.

The signs referred to in the Beach Safety Officer's email related to those intended for Exmouth Beach not for the Imperial Recreation Ground. We were unaware that signs were to be erected there. Other references to signs were for existing signage.

Many Councillors were also involved in the European & County Council elections & in addition to responding to their constituents, the demands on their time were considerable. This factor should have been realised by officers.

We did not receive the email alleged to have been sent May 6, so only had the 2 later ones to refer to. We are not confused.

We were concerned that the complaint had been made by a windsurfing operator & that one with a reference to a complaint made on the River Exe by the Exeter City Council Harbourmaster were the only 2 referred to in the Beach Safety Officer's email. We repeat, Ward Members have received no complaints whatsoever & this has since been reinforced by dog walkers & other members of the public who say that they have always been treated with consideration & courtesy by kitesurfers.

This is incorrect & we refer you to a licence which was granted on 27 March 2009, as stated at the top of page 4 of this paper.

We disagree. This appears to have been based upon the acceptance, by officers, of the word of a water based business operator. As the complaint was against another water based business operator, there clearly should have been consultation with him & Ward Members. Proof & probity should have been initiated.

As the public invariably contact their elected representatives, as in this instance, Ward Members should have been invited, particularly as the meeting was held in an EDDC owned building. To hide behind the excuse that the Chamber had called the meeting is unacceptable. If we were to agree with this principle, perhaps when our constituents contact us with the various problems relating to housing, planning, waste collection etc., would the Chamber be expected to resolve these as well?

It is totally unacceptable, in our view, that we are informed only through the press statements which appear in the newspapers. There should be far better communication with elected representatives who should be involved in any decision making, instead of being notified of those being taken by officers & others. This is not how democracy should work.

It appears that after shifting the emphasis from the Chamber for calling the meeting, a campaign by Edge Watersports is now being blamed for all the publicity. We well understand the implications of an accident, & public safety is paramount. You refer to 'this action being taken', presumably meaning the signage, which EDDC latterly considered removing.

Embarrassment is not what concerns us. What does concern us is that apart from the 2 complainants named in the Beach Safety Officer's report, one of whom has a vested interest, the other responsible for activities on the Exe; we have been totally unaware of any other complainants. Yet if there had been allegedly 9 complaints in 2008-9, why were Ward Members not informed that there were problems before June 10 (or even May 6)?

It would have been entirely appropriate for the officers to have asked for Ward Members to have been invited. Why was this not done?

Again, we have not been consulted on the Licence Agreement, which you appear to be unaware of, & we do not know which part of the land Edge had permission to use.

What this whole issue has raised is one of communication & procedure.

We were informed on June 10 of two complainants & it was only from your response to our complaint that there appears to have been more. Earlier member involvement should have been sought, especially when public safety is presumed to be at risk.

There are growing concerns, cross-party, that Members are being overlooked when some decisions are made & meetings held. One recent example is of the decision by a Portfolio Holder not to grant a temporary permission for a refreshment facility in the Manor Gardens, Exmouth. There are others.

We were not told that signs were to be erected at Imperial Recreation Ground.

We receive our information via the Communications Officer at EDDC, who has refused to retract misleading press statements.

Where another body is given permission to hold a meeting with EDDC officers in a matter which has actively involved Ward Members, particularly in an EDDC owned building, those Members should be included, as they probably have other information which could well prove useful.

Our complaint has not been resolved, & we require that an established procedure regarding Member involvement be implemented.

Legal Implications

Extract from Protocol for relationship between East Devon members and officers (Constitution).

- 78. To enable them to carry out their ward role effectively, members need to be fully informed about matters affecting their ward. Senior officers must ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local members informed, thus allowing members to contribute to the decision-making process and develop their representative role.
- 79. This requirement is particularly important:
 - during the formative stages of policy development, where practicable,
 - in relation to significant or sensitive operational matters,
 - whenever any form of public consultation exercise is undertaken, and
 - during an overview and scrutiny investigation.
- 80. Issues may affect a single ward. Where they have a wider impact, a number of local members will need to be kept informed.

- 81. Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the members representing the wards affected should be invited to attend the meeting as a matter of course.
- 82. If a local member intends to arrange a public meeting on a matter concerning some aspect of the Council's work, he/she should inform the relevant officer. Provided the meeting has not been arranged on a party political basis:
 - an officer may attend but is not obliged to do so, and
 - the meeting may be held in Council-owned premises.
- 83. No such meetings should be arranged or held in the immediate run-up to Council elections.
- 84. Whilst support for members' ward work is legitimate, care should be taken if staff are asked to accompany members to ward surgeries. In such circumstances:
 - the surgeries must be open to the general public, and
 - officers should not be requested to accompany members to surgeries held in the offices or premises of political parties.
- 85. Officers must never be asked to attend ward or constituency political party meetings.
- 86. It is acknowledged that some Council staff (for example, those providing dedicated support to Executive members) may receive and handle messages for members on topics unrelated to the Council. Whilst these will often concern diary management, care should be taken to avoid Council resources being used for private or party political purposes.
- 87. In seeking to deal with constituents' queries or concerns, members should not seek to jump the queue but should respect the Council's procedures. Officers have many pressures on their time. They may not be able to carry out the work required by members in the requested timescale, and may need to seek instructions from their managers.

Financial Implications

There are no identified financial implications.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None

Background Papers

Karime Hassan – ext 2735 Corporate Director

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 8

Service Delivery/Performance Committee

130110

ParksResults09



Gardens User Satisfaction Survey Results

Summary

EDDC undertakes a bi-annual user satisfaction questionnaire of Manor Gardens in Exmouth and Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth. These surveys were completed in the Summer 2009. The results were very positive, with only a few areas of concern.

Recommendation

That the Service Delivery/Performance Committee:

- Take note of the results
- Highlight any issues arising in the results where they feel action should be taken
- Congratulate Streetscene on the success shown in the results

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The results are available and should be noted and used by members to improve or commend service delivery.

b) Alternative Options

None.

c) Risk Considerations

A failure to make satisfactory progress in addressing improving services may lead to the Council being criticised in a future inspection and could also compromise the Council's reputation and budgets.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

Policy and Budgetary Considerations could apply if Members feel action needs to be taken on any of the results.

e) Date for Review of Decision

The next user satisfaction surveys of Manor and Connaught Gardens will be carried out in Summer 2011.

Main Body of the Report

- 1. EDDC undertakes a bi-annual user satisfaction questionnaire of Manor Gardens in Exmouth and Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth. Similar surveys have also been undertaken in 2005 and 2007 and trend information is shown where possible.
- On several occasions, in August, September and October 2009, EDDC Officers went out into Manor Gardens and Connaught Gardens and asked a total of 100 people in each of the gardens to answer 20 set questions in a questionnaire that was completed by the Officers in a face to face interview.
- 3. The summary of each of the surveys is below, and the full results reports follows.

Summary of Connaught Gardens Surveys, Sidmouth, 2009

- Satisfaction with cleanliness has remained extremely high, with 98% of respondents saying that the cleanliness is good.
- 99% of users think the floral displays are good. This is an excellent result.
- The signage and interpretation remains the area with most room for improvement but a
 high percentage of people still felt this was good (67%). Several people suggested there
 should be more obvious directional signs pointing the way out, and where other attractions
 are.
- 97% of park users felt that the seating and benches were good which is very similar to previous years.
- All of the 3 respondents who had spoken to a gardener found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.
- All of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with their visit to Connaught Gardens.
- The things people liked most about the gardens were the floral displays, the views, the variety of areas and layout and the colours.
- 53% of visitors to the area felt that the gardens where they lived were worse than Connaught Gardens, and 5% felt that the gardens where they lived were better.
- There were alot of very positive comments about Connaught Gardens.
- The things people felt would most improve Connaught Gardens were to put more labels on unusual plants and to have more for children and young people to do.

Summary of Manor Gardens Surveys, Exmouth, 2009

- Satisfaction with cleanliness has remained extremely high, with 98% of respondents saying that the cleanliness is good.
- All the users think the floral displays are good, the same as in 2005 and 2007. This is an
 excellent result.
- The signage and interpretation remains the area with most room for improvement but a high percentage of people still felt this was good (71%).
- 99% of park users felt that the seating and benches were good which is very similar to previous years.
- All of the 5 respondents who had spoken to a gardener found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.
- All of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with their visit to Manor Gardens.
- The things people liked most about the gardens were the floral displays, squirrels and other wildlife, the peacefulness and the trees and greenery.
- 29% of visitors to the area felt that the gardens where they lived were worse than Manor Gardens, and 29% felt that the gardens where they lived were better.
- 52% of local people felt that Manor Gardens had got better over the last three years, mainly due to better flowers and a better standard of care for the gardens.
- There were alot of very positive comments about Manor Gardens.

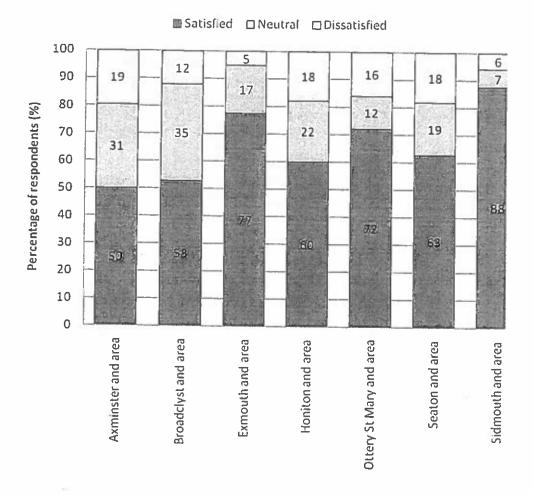
 The things people felt would most improve Manor Gardens were a small cafe or tea shop, more events and festivals, cleaner toilets and less anti-social behaviour around the bandstand.

4. Links to the Place Survey

The Place Survey was sent out by the Council on behalf of national Government to a random selection of 2,500 households in East Devon between September and December 2008. The purpose was to gain information that would improve outcomes for local people and places. The results produced 18 National Indicators and will be used to assess us in Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

One of the questions was about satisfaction with parks and open spaces. 69% of residents were satisfied with parks and open spaces, which is a drop of 6% from the previous survey. This result puts East Devon 99th out of all the 201 district councils.

However, as can be seen from the chart below, Exmouth and Sidmouth show the highest levels of satisfaction with their parks and open spaces.



Legal Implications

No legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications identified in the report. Current and future budget constraints may mean that any improvements would be difficult to deliver.

Background Papers

The full results for the Connaught and Manor Gardens Surveys are included as an Appendix to this report.

Jamie Buckley (Ext 2769) Engagement and Funding Officer Service Delivery/Performance Committee 13 January 2010

East Devon District Council Connaught Gardens Survey August- October 2009

Methodology

EDDC undertakes a bi-annual user satisfaction questionnaire of Connaught Gardens in Sidmouth. On several occasions in August, September and October EDDC Officers went out into Connaught Gardens and asked a total of 100 people using the gardens to answer 20 set questions, the questionnaire was completed by the Officers like a face to face interview. The completed questionnaires were scanned in using SNAP Survey software and analysed using the SPSS statistics package.

Summary

- Satisfaction with cleanliness has remained extremely high, with 98% of respondents saying that the cleanliness is good.
- 99% of users think the floral displays are good. This is an excellent result.
- The signage and interpretation remains the area with most room for improvement but a high percentage of people still felt this was good (67%). Several people suggested there should be more obvious directional signs pointing the way out, and where other attractions are.
- 97% of park users felt that the seating and benches were good which is very similar to previous years.
- All of the 3 respondents who had spoken to a gardener found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.
- All of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with their visit to Connaught Gardens.
- The things people liked most about the gardens were the floral displays, the views, the variety of areas and layout and the colours.
- 53% of visitors to the area felt that the gardens where they lived were worse than Connaught Gardens, and 5% felt that the gardens where they lived were better.
- There were alot of very positive comments about Connaught Gardens.
- The things people felt would most improve Connaught Gardens were to put more labels on unusual plants and to have more for children and young people to do.

Resuits

Q1. How long have you spent in Connaught Gardens today? 100 people spent an average of 56 minutes in Connaught Gardens.

Q2 Thinking about your visit to Connaught Gardens today, how would you rate the:

	Percentage of respondents (%)				Number of	
	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	respondents
Cleanliness	98	2	0	0	0	100
2007	89	1.1	0	0	0	99
2005	87	13	0	0	0	63
Floral displays	92	7	1	0	0	99
2007	95	5	0	0	0	99
2005	95	5	0	0	0	63
Signage and interpretation	67	10	17	7	0	93
2007	48	34	11	5	2	99
2005	23	50	21	6	0	62
Seating and benches	97	3	0	0	0	91
2007	90	10	0	0	0	99
2005	94	6	0	0	0	62

If you said Poor or Very Poor for any of the above, what could we do to improve it? 8 respondents commented:

- Have a few more signs. More obvious signs.
- Floral displays not as good as previous years are the weather conditions to blame?
- Would be useful to have directional signs to attractions.
- · Better signs pointing to the way out.
- More info on plant types.
- · Getting out is difficult- signpost exits better.
- More information on the plants.
- More directional signs

Q3. Have you spoken to a member of the gardening team during your visit to Connaught Gardens?

Q4. Was the member of the gardening team helpful/ knowledgable/ courteous and polite?

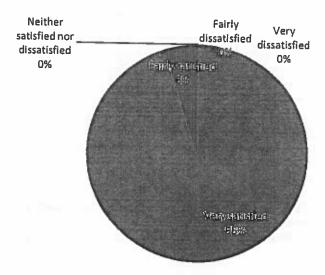
Q5. Any comments about the gardening team?

Three of the respondents had spoken to a gardener. All five found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.

In 2007 6 of the respondents had spoken to a gardener, and again all found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.

Q6. Thinking about your overall experience of visiting Connaught Gardens today, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your visit?

99 respondents answered this question. The results are displayed in the pie chart below:



All of the respondents were satisfied with their visit to the gardens, 95% of whom were very satisfied. This is similar to the result for 2007 when 89% were very satisfied and 11% were fairly satisfied.

Q7. if you said anything below Very Satisfied, what could we do to improve the gardens to make you Very Satisfied?

Two respondents commented:

- The slope down to the beach is too steep. The paving could be laid neater so there are less
 gaps. Have a classical greenhouse with ferns etc. Reduce the amount of steps- put in slopes.
 Have a lift to go down cliff.
- Signage to cafe and ladder.

Q8. is there anything about the gardens you particularly liked?

89 respondents commented. The most common comments have been categorised and are listed below with the numbers of respondents that gave those comments. To see the full list of all comments, including all the comments only given by one respondent, please see Appendix 1.

Comment	No. of	% of
	respondents	respondents
The floral displays	29	33
The views	27	30
The variety of areas/ layout	24	27
The colours	18	20
The cafe	13	14
Well kept and clean	12	13
Peaceful and quiet	11	12
Children's flower beds	9	10
The atmosphere	8	9
Plenty of benches	8	9

Comments Continued	No. of	% of
	respondents	respondents
Everything	6	_7
The location	5	6
Easy to get around	4	4
The statue	3	3
The shelteredness	3	3
The perfumes	3	3
Grass area	2	2
Nostalgia	2	2

Q9. Do you live In or around Sidmouth?

10% of the respondents lived in or around Sidmouth.

NON-LOCALS ONLY

Q10. If you are not local to Sidmouth, is the standard of the gardens better, worse or about the same as those where you live?

There were 88 respondents to this question. The results are displayed in the pie chart below:



LOCALS ONLY

Q11. How often, on average, do you visit Connaught Gardens?

10 respondents answered. 1 came once a week, 6 come once a month, 2 twice a year and 1 less frequently.

Q12. Have you been visiting Connaught Gardens for three years or more?
6 of the local respondents had been visiting Connaught Gardens for three years or longer.

Q13. Do you think Connaught Gardens has got better or worse over the last three years?

Of the 6 local respondents that had been visiting for three years or more 5 felt the gardens had got better over the three years and one felt it had stayed the same.

Q14. if you think it is better or worse, please tell us why:

4 respondents who felt it had got better commented:

- · The quality. The cleanliness.
- The floral displays.
- Alterations have improved it. Box hedges.
- The planting has improved- greater variety.

Q17. Any other comments about Connaught Gardens?

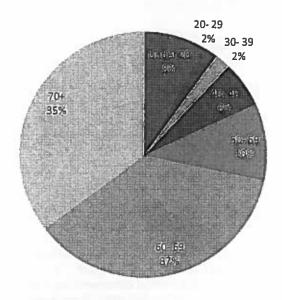
52 respondents commented. The most common comments have been categorised and are listed below with the numbers of respondents that gave those comments. To see the full list of all comments please see Appendix 2.

Comment	No. of respondents
Positive	25
Put more labels on unusual plants	4
Have more for children/ young people to do	4
Car parking is expensive	2
Needs a water feature	2

Q18. Are you male or female?

31% were male, 53% were female and 16% of questionnaires were answered jointly by a couple.

Q19. Which age group do you fall into?
99 respondents answered this question. The results are displayed in the pie chart below:



Q20. To which ethnic background do you consider you belong?
Of the 98 respondents that answered this question, 95 were White British, 2 were Irish and 1 Asian British.

Appendix 1

Q8. Is there anything about the gardens you particularly liked? 89 respondents commented:

- Floral displays
- The layout. Floral displays. It's fantastic.
- Walks. Views. Different areas.
- The colour scheme
- The food area. The views.
- The colours. The flowers.
- The selection of areas. The flowers. The colours. The sheltered seating area.
- It's free. Floral displays. Easy access. Different areas. The concerts. The children planting.
- The flowers and plants. There are plenty of benches and toilets.
- Floral displays
- It's very English and gentile. It's like going back 20 years.
- The colour schemes.
- The school designs. Tea room. Lovely atmosphere. Sheltered.
- All of it. Beautiful colours.
- The flowers.
- The different levels. The views.
- The gardeners do a very good job. The games on the grass area are good. The children's
 gardens are excellent.
- The childrens flower beds.
- It's well looked after. The cactus house is good. The children's planting is excellent.
- Relaxing and peaceful.
- The grass. The displays.
- Quietness
- Floral displays are fabulous. All colours are bright.
- Amount of benches. Long standaing shrubs. The children's gardens. The cafe. Nice mix of floral disaplays.
- Loads of benches. Laid out well. Plastic wondows are a good idea- act as windbreaks. The car park is handy.
- The nostalgia.
- Peacefulness
- Wonderful blaze of colour. Compactness. Archways into different gardens.
- The layout
- The way it's set out. Each garden is different. Something for everyone.
- Flower displays.
- The floral displays. The colour schemes are fabulous.
- The layout. It always looks pleasant in winter and summer.
- The views. The perfume of one bed. Easy to get around.
- Wonderful views. Easy to get around.
- The different colours. The upkeep.
- Views go without saying. Flowers just over and before bulbs but still good. You can usually find a sheltered spot. Plenty of seats.
- Wonderful flowers. Very good cafe.

7

- Fioral displays. Good cafe.
- We love it here.
- Flowers. Layout. Baskets. The cafe. Clean and tidy. Beautiful.
- · The variety. Presentation. Spacing.
- The colour schemes. Different. Designer obviously works hard.
- The views. General colours.
- Everything. Peace and quiet
- Relaxing atmosphere
- Atmosphere is lovely.
- Not too many seagulls.
- The wildlife. The different sections and styles. The signage on the seats.
- The location. The seating. The children's gardens.
- Cafe
- The peace, Stunning views. Each section is different.
- Grass area. Statue.
- · Everything.
- · Peaceful. Views.
- Walled garden.
- · Views, Location, Ambience, Cafe
- Views
- Atmosphere, Flowers, Peace.
- Views. Well kept. Cafe
- Views. Well kept. Peaceful. Cafe
- Colour schemes. Flowers. School floral displays.
- Flowers. Views. Schools floral displays.
- Tropical aspects. Seating. Well kept.
- Colours. Flowers. The setting. The views. Seating
- Colours, Flowers.
- · Positioning, Views, Colours, Scents, Volume of flowers, Restful
- · Views. Interesting layout.
- Interesting layout. Views. Sections are useful.
- Colours. Flowers. Views. Atmosphere
- Well though out displays and colours. Nice atmosphere. Smells and aromas.
- Well kept. Pleasing to the eye.
- · All of it. Views. Well situated. Cafe
- Plenty of benches. Very peaceful. No dog fouling/
- Trees. Views. All well kept and trimmed. hedges.
- Very safe for children. The plants. The greenhouse is well kept. The design is lovely.
- Cleanliness- no dog mess.
- Whole atmosphere. Clean. Well laid out.
- Like to bring visitors here.
- Well laid out. Wheelchair friendly. Well kept and presented throughout.
- The views.
- Good planting. Its very colourful- not all green. The views.
- There are several different gardens so you get different plants and views when you move from one to another.

- The views.
- Statue. Tea shop.
- Statue. Flowers.
- Views, Flowers.
- Stage/ bandstand. View. Cafe Lots of benches.
- Flowers. Different areas. The views. The atmosphere

Appendix 2

Q17. Any other comments about Connaught Gardens?

52 respondents commented:

- Needs a water feature
- Have childrens entertainment as well as bands during the daytime/ holidays.
- Don't change it at all.
- The selection of flowers and colours are excellent.
- Have had a nice time. Will come again.
- Keep it up!
- · Keep uo the good work. We will always return.
- Put more labels on the unusual plants.
- Very pleasant
- Improve the parking. Improve the access- too many yellow lines restricts visits.
- There is no vandalism or litter. Standards are excellent.
- The tobacco plant is not very impressive- there should be a better choice of flowers there.
- More plant signage.
- Generally lovely gardens.
- Taking lots of photos. Needs more roses.
- Could a local artist be involved in the floral displays? Have ginat games on the grass more
 often.
- Need more rubbish bins.
- Have more labels on the unusual plants.
- It is unusual to have such a high standard of municipal gardens.
- The town is a bit scruffier- the pedestrian area needs cleaning. There has been a big effort
 with the floral displays in the town centre- well done.
- Signage should only be what is necessary. Car parking is expensive.
- We'd come every day if we could.
- Always a joy to visit. Changes throughout the seasons.
- Enjoying all of it
- Years ago there was a bush shaped like a lion with a mane- sadly no longer there. Lovely to have tea rooms and toilets.
- A lovely experience. Can't think of a better place to take questionnaires!
- Nice to see no vandalism
- It would be nice to be able to get to the tables at the bottom park with a eheelchair near the
 cafe. Accessible tables tend to be in the shade.
- One of our favourite places- we drive from Plymouth.
- On some of the seats the dowels are raised- this could rip clothes. Car parking is expensive in all of Sidmouth.

- Have cushions on the benches.
- Love Sidmouth as a whole.
- A friend recommended it to me- I visit as often as possible.
- The views.
- Nice to see the flowers and the seasons.
- The cafe is lovely.
- Have more things for children to do and play with, have a water fountain.
- Very pleasant to sit in. Like the events.
- Very nice.
- Pleasurable to walk in the garden. Nice to bring visitors.
- Have more signage on plants.
- Everything you want is here.
- Beautiful restful place to visit.
- Very nice and clean,
- Lovely
- Could more be done to encourage visitors from ethnic minorities. Cheaper cream teas. More
 for families with children to do. Get someone dressed up to do tours of gardens. Have
 treasure hunts with a nautical theme for children.
- Everytime we come down to visit our daughter we make an effort to visit the gardens.
- Would like something like this in Exmouth. Lovely in the Summer with a band.
- Enjoyed the music in the past.
- We usually come earlier in the year when there is more colour but the gardens are still lovely.
- Not alot for young people.
- Nothing for young people.

East Devon District Council Manor Gardens Survey August- October 2009

Methodology

EDDC undertakes a bi-annual user satisfaction questionnaire of Manor Gardens in Exmouth. On several occasions in August, September and October EDDC Officers went out into Manor Gardens and asked a total of 100 people using the gardens to answer 20 set questions, the questionnaire was completed by the Officers like a face to face interview. The completed questionnaires were scanned in using SNAP Survey software and analysed using the SPSS statistics package.

Summary

- Satisfaction with cleanliness has remained extremely high, with 98% of respondents saying that the cleanliness is good.
- All the users think the floral displays are good, the same as in 2005 and 2007. This is an excellent result.
- The signage and interpretation remains the area with most room for improvement but a high percentage of people still felt this was good (71%).
- 99% of park users felt that the seating and benches were good which is very similar to previous years.
- All of the 5 respondents who had spoken to a gardener found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.
- All of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with their visit to Manor Gardens.
- The things people liked most about the gardens were the floral displays, squirrels
 and other wildlife, the peacefulness and the trees and greenery.
- 29% of visitors to the area felt that the gardens where they lived were worse than Manor Gardens, and 29% felt that the gardens where they lived were better.
- 52% of local people felt that Manor Gardens had got better over the last three years, mainly due to better flowers and a better standard of care for the gardens.
- There were alot of very positive comments about Manor Gardens.
- The things people felt would most improve Manor Gardens were a small cafe or tea shop, more events and festivals, cleaner toilets and less anti-social behaviour around the bandstand.

Results

Q1. How long have you spent in Manor Gardens today?

100 people spent an average of 25 minutes in Manor Gardens.

1

Q2 Thinking about your visit to Manor Gardens today, how would you rate the:

	Percentage of respondents (%)			Number of		
	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	respondents
Cieanliness	77	21	Ō	2	0	100
2007	85	14	17	0	0	99
2005	73	27	0	0	0	59
Floral displays	93	7	0	0	0	99
2007	91	9	.0	0	0	99
2005	93	7	0	0	0	59
Signage and interpretation	56	15	21	5	4	81
2007	48	43	8	a135 103	0	99
2005	16	71	10	3	0	58
Seating and benches	86	13	0	1	0	97
2007	65	32	2	142	0	99
2005	86	12	2	0	0	59

If you said Poor or Very Poor for any of the above, what could we do to improve it? 8 respondents commented:

- Don't need too many signs.
- Need signs to the seafront.
- The toilet signs aren't very visible-I nearly walked into the mens.
- Needs more seats and benches
- No signs for the toilets- had to ask in TIC. Cigarette stubs on the grass that the baby picks up and plays with.
- · Not enough signs or interpretation.
- The toilets are awful- especially at night.
- It is essential to have a prominent sign in the gardens i.e. town, seafront.

Q3. Have you spoken to a member of the gardening team during your visit to Manor Gardens?

Q4. Was the member of the gardening team helpful/knowledgable/courteous and polite?

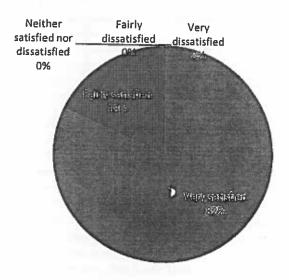
Q5. Any comments about the gardening team?

Five of the respondents had spoken to a gardener. All five found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.

In 2007 11 of the respondents had spoken to a gardener, and again all found the gardener helpful, knowledgeable, courteous and polite.

Q6. Thinking about your overall experience of visiting Manor Gardens today, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your visit?

98 respondents answered this question. The results are displayed in the pie chart below:



Ali of the respondents were satisfied with their visit to the gardens, 82% of whom were very satisfied. This is similar to the result for 2007 when 87% were very satisfied and 13% were fairly satisfied.

Q7. If you said anything below Very Satisfied, what could we do to improve the gardens to make you Very Satisfied?

Three respondents commented:

- Have a cafe. Have something for kids to play on like a park for all ages.
- More seats and benches. Improve the toilets- not very clean.
- Have a cafe- make it much more inviting to the younger generation.

Q8. Is there anything about the gardens you particularly liked?

96 respondents commented. The most common comments have been categorised and are listed below with the numbers of respondents that gave those comments. To see the full list of all comments, including all the comments only given by one respondent, please see Appendix 1.

Comment	No. of	% of
	respondents	respondents
The floral displays	35	36
Squirreis and other wildlife	19	18
Peaceful, relaxing, quiet	18	19
Trees and greenery	14	15
It's tidy/ well kept	10	10
Bandstand	8	8
The colours	8	8
The location (near town/ seafront)	8	8
Well laid out	7	7
Benches	7	7

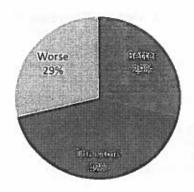
Comment (continued)	No. of respondents	% of respondents
	respondents	respondents
The grass	/	/
The flower beds designed by local schoolchildren	6	6
Shady and sheltered	5	5
Everything	5	5
Amount of space	5	5
The events	3	3
Not too much dog mess	3	3
Sub tropical display	3	3
The giant games	3	3
lt's safe	2	2
There are enough bins	2	2
The toilets	2	2
Not abused at night	2	2

Q9. Do you live In or around Exmouth? 56% of the respondents lived in or around Exmouth.

NON-LOCALS ONLY

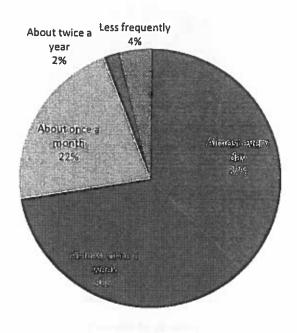
Q10. If you are not local to Exmouth, is the standard of the gardens better, worse or about the same as those where you live?

There were 42 respondents to this question. The results are displayed in the pie chart below:



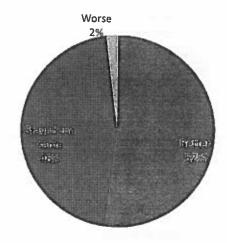
LOCALS ONLY

Q11. How often, on average, do you visit Manor Gardens? 55 respondents answered:



Q12. Have you been visiting manor Gardens for three years or more? 83% (45) of the local respondents had been visiting Manor Gardens for three years or longer.

Q13. Do you think Manor Gardens has got better or worse over the last three years? Of the 45 local respondents that had been visiting for three years or more:



Q14. If you think it is better or worse, please tell us why:

20 respondents who felt it had got better commented. The comments have been categorised and are listed below with the numbers of respondents that gave those comments:

Comment	No. of
	respondents
Better flowers	6
Gardens are better looked after and	5
_cared for	
It's cleaner and tidier	4
Brighter colours	3
The bandstand	2
Seating and benches	2
More flowers	1
School participation	1
Festivals	1
Not so many kids	1
No riff raff on the grass with cans of	1
beer	
Permanent beds have matured	1
Less noisy	1

One respondent who felt it had got worse commented:

· Drinking in the daytime with crates of beer takes away the family area.

Q15. Would you consider joining the 'Friends of Manor Gardens' group?

4 respondents were interested in joining, their contact details have been passed onto our Parks Team.

Q17. Any other comments about Manor Gardens?

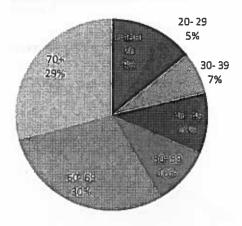
54 respondents commented. The most common comments have been categorised and are listed below with the numbers of respondents that gave those comments. To see the full list of all comments please see Appendix 2.

Comment	No. of respondents
Positive comments	22
Please put in a small cafe or tea shop	11
Have more events and festivals	6
The toilets are not clean, especially later in the day	4
Stop the anti-social behaviour and littering around	4
the bandstand	
Enforce the drinking ban better	3
Stop people cycling through on their bikes	3
Needs more comfy seating	3
Needs more benches facing the bandstand	3
Clean up the debris of fallen leaves don't just move	2
them around	
There is littering sometimes	2

Q18. Are you male or female?

27% were male, 47% were female and 26% of questionnaires were answered jointly by a couple.

Q19. Which age group do you fall into?
99 respondents answered this question. The results are displayed in the pie chart below:



Q20. To which ethnic background do you consider you belong?
Of the 97 respondents that answered this question, 95 were White British, 1 was Irish and 1 Australian.

Connaught Gardens and Peak Hill Slope, Sidmouth Management Improvement Plan.

Target Dates	Dates		
Start	Finish	Action	STATUS
Sep 03	Mar 06	Continue to undertake category 3 and 4 tree works focussing on a discrete area at any time to minimise disruption and visual impact. Works to be undertaken out of high season.	80% completed by Jan 05 Remainder Feb 06
Oct 03	Mar 06	Implement programme of new tree planting to mitigate the detrimental effect of the loss of major trees or trees which define the character of a given area. Species to be determined in consultation with user groups but ideally featuring some historical or horticultural Devon association. Investigate potential for involving local schools to increase sense of ownership.	PDO Investigating
Oct 03	Mar 06	Undertake felling of any dead Elm stems at top of Peak Hill slope and interplant with native hedgerow species where possible.	Completed Nov 06
Jan 04	April 05	Commission and install a feature showing bearings and distances to major landmarks and locations for eastern viewpoint.	Completed March 05
Feb 03	Mar 03	Investigate costs of installing new path linking pergola walk in Lime Kiln Garden to the Lime Kiln Tea Rooms. Path must comply with current legislation for disabled access.	Completed
Oct 03	Mar 04	Install new path	Completed March 04
Mar 03	Mar 04	Create links with at least one local primary school to increase schools involvement within the Gardens.	Links established Oct 04
Jan 04	Dec 04	Create viewpoints at top of Peak Hill Slope	Completed April 04
Dec04	Mar 05	Commission new questionnaire to ensure that the gardens meet the needs and expectations of visitors.	Completed August 05
Dec 04	Sep 05	Establish annual 'Bedding Design Competition' with local schools. In partnership with Sidmouth in Bloom.	Completed Sept 05
Jan 05	Mar 05	Obtain price quotes for replacement glasshouse from min of 3 suppliers	Completed June 05
Jan 05	April 05	Carry out repairs to garden brickwork and renew cliff shelter floor.	Completed March 05

Target Dates	Dates		
Start	Finish	Action	STATUS
July 05	Sep 05	Investigate public interest in formation of 'Friends of Connaught Gardens Group' (as part of bi-annual user survey)	Completed August 05
Sep 05	Oct 05	Replace glasshouse with new structure	Completed Jan 06
Oct 05	Dec 05	Investigate new design for 'Extension Garden' to replace current buxus knot garden and sunken patio. Obtain quotes for construction. Due to budget constraints, this scheme has been postponed and interim landscaping will be installed.	Ongoing Jan 06
Oct 05	Feb 06	Form 'Friends of Connaught Gardens Group' (if research shows sufficient demand).	On hold due to lack of public interest at current time.
Nov 05	May 06	Investigate cost of redesigning leaflets to include colour production. Implement new leaflets if costs not significantly higher than present arrangement.	Instigated Dec 05
Nov 05	Feb 06	Work with Junior Countryside Rangers to construct bird and bat boxes for use in gardens	Completed Dec 05
Jan 06	Oct 06	Liase with Arts development Officer to expand range of arts activities in the gardens	Instigated Jan 06
Jan 06	Sept 06	Continue Schools Bedding Design Project with Sidmouth in Bloom	Ongoing
Feb 06	Feb 06	Install bird and bat nesting boxes in gardens	Completed Feb 06
Feb 06	Apr 06	Install new design in 'Extension Garden'. Interim design.	Completed March 06
Mar 06	Apr 06	Design and introduce new colour leaflet	Completed March 06
April 06	April 07	Start biodiversity survey of Connaught Gardens and Peak Hill Slope with Countryside Dept.	Phase 1 completed July 06. Phase 2 April 07
May 06	Oct 06	Prepare and install pictorial display board to show historical development of the garden on glasshouse rear wall.	Delayed. Installed Jan 08
June 06	Sept 06	Introduce Monthly 'Walk and Talk' programme for public	Completed
Oct 06	Dec 07	Investigate improvements to garden access from Manor Road Car Park by way of a bridge or low level scheme.	Community group formed. Fundraising started Jan 07
Nov 06	Feb 07	Investigate new secure garden leaflet dispensers	Installed Jan 07

	Finish	Action	STATUS
	200		
	Feb 07	Undertake new survey of tree stock	Completed
	Feb 07	Replant hedge on Peak Hill Slope which has been reduced by elm removal	Gaps filled Feb 07
_	March 07	Undertake Category 1 and 2 tree works as recommended by survey	Completed
Mar 07 Ma	May 07	Redesign and replant herbaceous borders by main lawn.	Replanted sections April 07
April 07 Jur	June 07	Design children's activity leaflet for use in summer holidays	Not achieved
May 07 Se	Sept 07	Introduce FORTNIGHTLY 'Walk and Talk' garden tours	Completed Sept 07
July 07 Au	Aug 07	Trial 'Garden Games Days' on 5 occasions	Completed – very successful
April 07 Se	Sept 07	Commission new questionnaire to canvass views of garden visitors	Completed Sept 07
Sept 07 De	Dec 09	Remove dead elm trees from cliff top on Peak Hill Slope	Ongoing. Last batch felled Oct 07
Oct 07 De	Dec 07	Survey outer walls of gardens for structural integrity. Produce action plan for repairs.	Report to due to be received March 08
Oct 07 De	Dec 07	Investigate new design for 'Extension Garden' to replace interim planting and sunken patio. Obtain quotes for construction. Liaise with elected members and local interest ed groups.	Designs to be displayed Feb 08
Jan 08 Se	Sept 08		Achieved
Mar 08 Ma	Mar 10	Carry out wall repairs - scheduled to meet timescale recommendations of survey.	Completed Mar 09
Feb 08 Ma	May 08	Install new design in Extension garden	Postponed to Nov 08
Mar 08 Ap	April 08	Replant bare areas on seaward side of 'Jungle' section	Achieved
May 08 Ju	July 08	Monitor remaining elm trees on Peak Hill Slope for signs of disease	Ongoing.
June 08 Se	Sept 08	Extend 'Garden Games Days' to weekly event.	Achieved
Nov 08 Fe	Feb 09	Install new design in Extension Garden. Student designs received and displayed in glasshouse. Consulted interested parties. New features and design agreed Dec 2008.	Delayed - capital funding withdrawn

Target Dates	Dates		
Start	Finish	Action	STATUS
Jan 09	Feb 09	Remove gappy Euonymus hedge from Chine to improve narrow access and view. Re-seed bare area.	Completed Jan 09
Feb 09	Feb 10	Contact members of public interested in volunteering and starting 'Friends' group.	Letters sent Jan 09. Poor response.
Mar 09	Mar 09	Reduce height of regrowth to improve view at top of Peak Hill Slope	Completed Mar 09
Mar 09	Mar 09	Plant wild flower plugs on Chine to improve wildflower stock	Not completed. Decided to see what
Mar 09	Sept 09	Commission and implement new garden user survey.	Completed Aug 09- Oct 09
April 09	April 10	Design and print activity leaflet for children	Not completed
April 09	Oct 09	Reduce mowing on sections of Chine and Peak Hill to encourage wild flower establishment.	Part completed.
June 09	Oct 09	Commission seabird interpretation board.	Not completed. Budget used elsewhere.
Mar 10	Dec 10	Repair walls around archway to allow for removal of temporary support.	
Mar 10	May 10	Renovate and replant herbaceous border by main lawn	
April 10	June 10	Investigate renewing succulent and carnivorous plant displays with attendant interpretation information.	
April 10	Nov 10	Increase unmown/wildflower areas on Chine and Peak Hill Slope	
April 10	June 10	Investigate low cost source of plant labels for beds and borders around gardens.	

Unless otherwise stated, all items will be funded from within the ring-fenced revenue budget. Other items will be submitted for inclusion within the "Special Items" budget.

This improvement plan will be updated on an annual basis to reflect work carried out and work planned over a five year period.

Management Improvement Plan

Target	Target Dates		
Start	Finish	Action	STATUS
Jan 05	Mar 05	Commission survey of mature and mid-life trees in Manor Gardens	Completed March 05
Jan 05	Aug 05	Commission new questionnaire to ensure that facilities meet the needs and expectations of visitors. Questionnaire to survey interest in forming a Manor Gardens Friends Group.	Implemented August 05
Feb 05	Mar 05	Investigate cost to re-surface tarmac at Chapel Hill Steps.	Completed April 05
Feb 05	Apr 05	Hard surface small dry beds beside performance stage.	Completed April 05
Feb 05	Aug 05	Identify areas which would benefit from additional new signage within Manor Gardens and seek costings for new signs which comply with the current corporate	Completed May 05
10 HOL	30.20		
co gau	Apr 05	Urder and place botanical plaques for herbaceous, exotic and rose beds	Completed May 05
Mar 05	Apr05	Move large noticeboard from Chapel Hill into gardens to improve public awareness of events.	Completed May 05
Mar 05	Oct 05	Introduce 'Plants looking good this month' section in notice board.	To be repeated annually
Feb 05	May 05	Prepare leaflet for visitors to Manor Gardens and ensure that good supplies are available in Exmouth Tourist Information Centre. Investigate location for leaflets to be left for visitors to the Gardens when attendants are present.	Completed April 05
Mar 05	May 05	Undertake urgent tree works (marked as category 1 within Arboricultural Report written by Graham Joyce), contractor to be determined by quotations.	No Cat 1 Hazards identifed
Apr 05	Apr 06	Install improved on-site composting facilities for gardeners compound	Completed June 05
Apr 05	May 05	Repaint railings around toilet block and TIC	Completed May 05
Mar 05	Sep 05	Discuss with Tourism and Marketing Officer increased profile of Manor Gardens on the East Devon District Council internet homepage. Aim to make leaflet available to download as a PDF file for visitors.	PDF available April 05

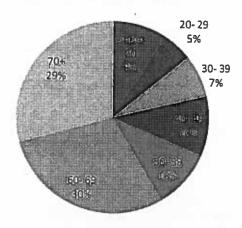
Target Dates	Dates		
Start	Finish	Action	STATUS
Jun 05	Aug 05	Introduce monthly guided garden walks during summer months	Not achieved. Reprogrammed to start June 06
Sep 05	Jan 06	Create links with at least one local primary school to increase schools involvement within the Gardens.	Completed Nov 05
Sep 05	Feb 06	Liase with Arts Development Officer to promote performances by West country theatre, music and arts groups on Manor Gardens performance stage.	Ongoing
Sep 05	Mar 06	Undertake felling works (marked as category 2 within Arboricultural Report written by Graham Joyce), contractor to be determined by quotations. Ward members to be consulted with additional further discussion with user groups and the press (if necessary).	Part completed Sept 05
Sep 05	Apr 09	Remove roses and replant beds with alternative design utilising locally grown plants. Remaining rose beds performed well in 2007. Replacement postponed until beds or sections start to fail.	Ongoing.
Jan 06	Sept 06	Implement Schools Bedding Design Project using group of four beds in lawn by gardeners office.	Completed Sept 06
Jan 06	April 06	Convert Manor Garden leaflet into colour format. Review system of leaflet dispensers.	Completed March 06
Feb 06	April 06	Upgrade Manor Gardens entry on EDDC website to include colour photographs.	Completed April 06
March 06	May 06	Install wash hand basin and suitable water heater in mess room.	Completed Feb 07
March 06	Jun 06	Investigate possibility of converting part of TIC building into Café. Discuss ideas with Property Dept and Exmouth Town Council. No further progress. Funding possibilities withdrawn for immediate future	Working group formed Design for café produced Dec 06
April 06	May 06	Renovate and replant herbaceous display bed.	Completed April 07
May 06	June 07	Carry out biodiversity survey of Manor gardens with Countryside section.	Phase 1 completed July 06. Phase 2 due June 07
June 06	Sept 06	Investigate toddler's play facility beside TIC. (Dependent on outcome of Café study)	Integral with café design

Target	Target Dates		44
Start	Finish	Action	SIAIUS
Sep 06	Mar 08	Undertake category 3 and 4 tree works focussing on a discrete area at any time to minimise disruption and visual impact. Works to be undertaken out of high season.	Completed Oct 07
Dec 06	Jan 07	Revise schools bedding project instructions and re-launch with local schools	Completed Jan 07
Jan 07	Oct 10	Renovate and replant boundary shrubberies. Work to be carried out on a section at a time and out of season to minimise disruption. Southern boundary to be renovated in 2008	Phase 1 completed Ongoing
Feb 07	April 07	Investigate and implement dropped kerbs for lawn by bandstand to aid wheelchair access.	Completed March 07
April 07	Oct 07	Commission new questionnaire to canvass views of garden visitors. Spread visits over longer period to increase diversity of respondents.	Completed summer 07
May 07	Sept 07	Introduce fortnightly 'Walk and Talk' garden tours.	Completed Sept 07
July 07	Sept 07	Trial 'Garden Games Days' on 4 occasions. Selection of giant garden games for public use without charge.	Completed Sept 07 - very successful
June 07	Sept 07	Implement schools bedding project	Completed Sept 07
Jan 08	Mar 10	Strip and repaint sections of outer railings as required	Completed April 08
Feb 08	Mar 08	Replant tropical bed	Completed April/May 08
Mar 08	Apr 08	Reintroduce plant labelling to Tropical and Rose beds	Not achieved
Mar 08	Oct 08	Liaise with volunteers to monitor nest boxes and wildlife in garden	Not very successful
July 08	Sept 08	Extend 'Garden Games Days' to weekly event	Completed

Target	Target Dates		
Start	Finish	Action	STATUS
Jan 08	Sept 08	Continue schools bedding project and Walk and Talk tours	Completed
Aug 08	Nov 08	Install storage shed for garden games in gardeners compound	Completed Nov 08
Dec 08	Feb 09	Move central dog waste bin to Bath Road entrance	Completed Feb 09
Feb 09	Apr 09	Renovate and replant southern boundary border.	Completed March 09.
Feb 09	Apr 09	Erect 'History of Manor gardens' display board	Ongoing
Feb 09	June 10	Renew plant labelling at Tropical and Rose Beds.	Delayed. Looking for reliable, cheap source
Mar 09	Sept 09	Commission and implement new garden user survey.	Completed July-Oct 09
Oct 09	Nov 09	Plant bulbs for naturalising in conjunction with Exmouth in Bloom and local secondary schools.	Not completed. Further liason with Exmouth in Bloom needed
Apr 10	Jun 10	Replace tender plants in Tropical bed lost during cold spell Dec 09-Jan 10	
May 10	May 10	28 day trial of catering franchise to determine commercial viability.	

Unless otherwise stated, all items will be funded from within the ring-fenced revenue budget. Other items will be submitted for inclusion within the "Special Items" budget.

Q19. Which age group do you fall into?
99 respondents answered this question. The results are displayed in the pie chart below:



Q20. To which ethnic background do you consider you belong?
Of the 97 respondents that answered this question, 95 were White British, 1 was Irish and 1 Australian.

- So many flowers for the end of season.
- Always well looked after- roses and shrubs pruned regularly. Relaxing. Sub-tropical bit.
- Trees. Children's floral beds.
- Everything.
- Benches are good and well maintained. Lots of shade. It's a quiet spot in the middle of town.
 Quite a bit of wildlife.
- Plenty of bins. Toilets are good. Squirrels and pigeons are amusing to watch.
- The positioning- it's sheltered.
- Floral displays. Purple flowers. The scents.
- Flower arrangements
- Squirrels. Not too big- can see it all. Flower beds. Trees.
- Flowers. Grass. Quiet and tranquil.
- Space. Tranquility. Family area.
- Variety and location of trees. Floral baskets. The mix of trees and bedding. The flowers are attractive.
- Floral displays. Squirrels. Always somewhere to sit. The bandstand.
- Arrangement, Layout, Bandstand, Grass, Squirrels.
- Green open space.
- The flowers. The amount of space.
- It closes at nightime. The flower beds designed by local children. Feel safe. It's a pleasure to walk through sit in and look at.
- Flower displays. Convenience. Near sea front.
- Trees.
- Watching the squirrels.
- Calm atmosphere
- The flowers
- The trees.
- Well kept
- The flowers
- Nicely laid out
- Plenty of seating. Good place to get away from the office. Peace and quiet.
- Beautiful. Like everything especially the plants.
- Flowers. Well set out.
- Geraniums
- Peace and quiet,
- Floral displays. Squirrels. Trees.
- Floral bits.
- Bandstand, Grass, The hedge.
- Squirrels.
- Sitting on the grass. The events.
- Bandstand and music
- Well laid out. Well kept. Well situated near town and the beach.
- Sitting on the grass.
- Sitting on the grass.
- The TIC building. Squirrels. Pigeons.
- Circular display.
- · Trees. Wildlife like squirrels. Floral arrangements.

- Giant games sessions.
- Location.
- Floral displays.
- Tidy and well kept.
- Safe. Well kept.
- Lack of noise.
- Flower beds.
- Bandstand. Flowers. Wildlife e.g. squirrels,
- · Flowers. Nice and quiet.
- Peaceful
- Flowers.
- Squirrels and wildlife
- Floral displays

Appendix 2

Q17. Any other comments about Manor Gardens?

54 respondents commented:

- People need to look after their own gardens too. Parking is too expensive around it to visit often. A parking permit for the whole County would be a good idea.
- · Have more events in the bandstand. Make it easier to find out when events are happening.
- Should have a little cafe with free tea for pensioners.
- Often people sitting on the bandstand that don't look very friendly.
- Please keep them the same.
- Roses could do with a feed.
- Could we have a part time dedicated park keeper. Too many squirrels and seagulls. Needs a small cafe for cups of tea. People speed past the Gardens- could there be traffic calming measures put it?
- Locked gates are good.
- Picnic tables would be a good idea.
- Could have more comfy seating. The festivals have a nice atmosphere- would like to see more.
- Keep it as it is.
- Happy with it. We come here once a year.
- Much better than gardens in Nice.
- Would love a cafe here.
- Too many dogs not on leads. Lots of alcohol is consumed in the gardens not just by youngsters. Keep drinking out of the gardens.
- A cafe would be good where you can get a cup of coffee. The mess left by students after the band playing in the concert on Tuesday was terrible. There are very few points where you can get invalid vehicles onto the gras- need more dropped kerbs.
- We like it very much here. Loos are good and very usfeul although the little step in needs to be highlighted so people don't fall down it.
- It is an asset to Exmouth.
- I think the Council make alot of effort with the gardens and seafront. Well used in all
 weathers. People do ride bikes through and don't slow down.
- Too many seagull and squirrel dropppings. Children and bikes cycling at speed should be stopped. For the amount it gets used it's in excellent condition.

10

- Could do with a few more benches facing the bandstand. Stop just moving the leaves around and pick them up. Stop people cycling through.
- Clean the seats a bit more often. Could we have red squirrels instead of grey ones? Could we have seating around the bandstand? Are the squirrels checked for diseases?
- The debris of fallen leaves is left. There is a coke can sitting on the bench. Make it clearer
 where dog bins are. Why were the benches removed along Madeira Walk. Why can't you
 drink in the gardens when concerts are on- it detracts from the enjoyment.
- Fine as they are
- More benches facing the bandstand. Smelly toilets floor is wet and slippy.
- No cafe. Keep it the way it is- peaceful and quiet.
- Nice to see a garden where you wouldn't expect it. Nightime is an issue with large groups hanging about.
- More benches on the sunny side. Look forward to coming here-love it! Excellent. Pleasant staff.
- · Stop the drinking.
- Nice place to hang out.
- Need to be allowed ball games. Cushions of benches would be good.
- Bandstand has worked out okay.
- It's one of the few good things about living in Exmouth. There is litter some days but not others.
- Enforce the alcohol bans.
- Would like a cafe where we can get an ice cream or nice cup of tea.
- Needs more benches. Too many people sitting under the bandstand leave litter.
- The toilets are not family toilets- we have to leave the doors open for pushchairs. More families would come if the toilets were for families. A small cafe would be excellent.
- Toilets need to be cleaner.
- Too many youths in the bandstand that seem on drugs.
- Better pruning of the roses to make them more bushy. More comfortable seating.
- Please give a tearoom a concession.
- Make it more appealing to younger people with more youth events.
- · Needs more youth functions.
- Always user friendly. Semms busy- others enjoy it.
- Toilets are awful- worse at night during youth events and at exfest.
- Needs a cafe to attract young people to the gardens to socialise.
- Needs some benches on the grass. Too many emos at the weekend. Exfest is good! Needs more music gigs.
- The toilets are not very clean or nice.
- Be nice to have a cafe or tea shop.
- Could we have an aviary?
- Very pleasant to walk through.
- Should have a small cafe/ kiosk to attract people.
- Should have a cafe with outside tables to go with events.
- Any change will spoil it.

Measures Report

Housing Service: 5th May 2009 – 30th September 2009

Purpose: to match the right people with the right home.

This report supplements the strategic and Service Plan performance indicators reported through the SPAR process. It aims to monitor the impact of the redesigned parts of the Service following the Systems Thinking review and provide Members sufficient information to understand and challenge what is happening within the Service.

We established that there are essentially three phases in a tenant's experience – moving in; living in; and moving out of council homes. The Housing and Social Inclusion Service redesign considers two aspects of the tenant's experience – ending a tenancy (moving out) and starting a tenancy (moving in). The main value demands identified during the Check phase of the Systems Thinking review were:

'I want to end my tenancy ...'

'I want/need a place to live ...'

"I want to transfer to another home ..."

'Set me up right ...' (in other words, enable me to start my tenancy with rent paid, an ongoing payment plan in place and knowing how to get what I need from you)

We established a purpose during Check which is to – match the right people with the right home. The Redesign went live with a new (redesigned) system and operating principles on 5th May, the key features being:

- Ensuring existing tenants leave 'clean';
- · Accompanied viewing incorporating tenant void standard choice;
- Extended 'sign up' interview and welcome process;
- Ensuring new tenants are 'set up' right;
- Resolving housing problems 'one stop'.

The measures we have created for the Service link to our adopted purpose and to 'what matters' to the customer. Our customers/applicants said that they wanted to be kept informed of progress with their housing applications and they wanted access to a good quality, affordable home. The housing service customers are not solely interested in speed of processing; they want good quality housing advice, a fair system of allocations and a well presented home to move into.

During Redesign we worked up a number of operating principles such that we do our best to:

- > Fully understand our customers housing needs.
- > Resolve the customers housing need at the earliest opportunity.
- > Receive complete and correct information at first contact with the customer.
- Make it clear to customers what we can and can't do.
- Have up to date and detailed information about our properties.
- Make sure that the tenant (current and new) understands and is fully informed about their rights and responsibilities.
- > Reduce the time from keys to keys:
 - Get the current tenant out quickly;
 - Get the new tenant in quickly;
 - o Get the void property prepared quickly;
 - o Minimise rent loss.

- > Do the work required to the property and those works agreed with the new tenant.
- > Be accountable and responsible for raising issues and finding solutions to things that affect our work.

There is greater overview now of all the work streams in the housing teams at any one time and the passage of the work through the system is regularly tested to ensure that no unnecessary delays are occurring. The performance for the End 2End times of our keys (leaving tenant) to keys (new tenant) is monitored closely.

The focus of the work is now principally on the value activities and 'what matters' to customers, with tasks that add no value (waste) for the applicant reduced as far as possible. The value steps in our redesigned system are essentially:

- gathering information on an applicant's housing needs and understanding the need;
- providing accurate, honest housing advice;
- resolving/preventing homelessness;
- · advising existing tenants how to leave 'clean' when they give Notice to Quit;
- joint visit with contractor and new tenant to agree the work required to a void property;
- informed customer bids for property;
- matching customer need with suitable homes;
- setting new tenants up right.

The test of a good measure is:

- Does it relate to purpose and our knowledge of 'what matters' to our customers?
- Does it help us understand our Service as a 'system'?
- Is it used by those in the work and managing the work to improve the work?

We have developed two types of measures - leading and lagging.

Leading measures are the 'real time' indicators which tell us what is happening **now** in the system and are the key measures that help us lead change and improvement. Examples are:

- Demand analysis the type (value or preventable) and frequency of customer demand.
- Our ability to deal with requests/demand first time (one stop).
- How long a process takes from start to finish (End to End times).

Lagging measures are the 'rear view' indicators which tell us what's happening in the system after the event. They tell us about the effectiveness of the service, but will not necessarily help us to lead change. Examples are:

- Budget monitoring.
- Customer satisfaction and staff morale.
- National and local performance indicators.

To deliver good results, the focus of management and staff needs to be on the leading measures as the key drivers of improvement. If these levers for change are understood and used effectively then excellent results and customer satisfaction will follow.

Leading measures

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
Capability at first point of contact Housing advice and homeless prevention.	5%	Service redesign live from 5 th May 2009	We are spending longer with homeless applicants to deal with cases 'one stop'.
- measured by the %age of tenants with a clear rent account immediately after 'sign up'.	12%	30%	The improved new tenancy 'sign up' process has put more emphasis on rent payment and has resulted in a significant improvement.
End to End times (keys to keys)		See capability charts attached.	We have used a time line (see below) to break down elements of our system which can
Total End to End time	38 days mean Predictably	37 & 46 days mean Predictably 60	be represented by the travel of house keys through the value steps
Keys to Housing Needs	64 days	& 88 days annex 1	of our system. Our End to End times improved during the first
Keys to repairsKeys to contractor			Redesign experiment however when we moved to a Change of Tenancy Team experiment our End to
 Void repaired/prepared 	34 days mean Predictably	48 days mean Predictably 116 days	End times deteriorated. A number of steps have been designed out of our system since Check
 Keys to repairs 	66 days	annex 2	making direct comparisons difficult.
 Keys to Housing Needs 			
• 'Sign up' new tenant	5 days mean Predictably 10 days	7 days mean Predictably 22 days (keys to new tenant)	
Rent paid	23 days mean Predictably 55 days	annex 3 11 days mean Predictably 40 days annex 4	

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
		Service redesign live	The second second
Preventable demand		from 5 th May 2009	
Measured by sampling demand to assess what %age of demand is preventable through service design.	See table below	n/a	As part of the review the level of preventable demand was measured by sampling.
			Another exercise is currently underway to measure preventable demand now.
Our top five preventable demands	1. Can you tell me how my bid is getting on? 2. Have you received my application form? 3. What's happening with my application? 4. Can you tell me how to bid for a property? 5. What's my Housing Register number? 000	1. How is my application doing? 2. What is my housing application number? 3. Can you help me register online? 4. Why has my banding changed? 5. Can you complete a housing application for my client?	
Customer demand – new applicants during the quarter A key driver of service performance	53 homeless approaches 33 preventions	25 homeless approaches 73 preventions	We measure the number of homeless applications received and accepted.
Customer demand - caseload Number of households registered on our Housing Register.	4,500 households	4,200 households	We also measure the number of applicants on the housing register at any time. We can break this down by location and bedroom requirements.

Value & Preventable Demand Survey

The original survey took place during the Check process and the follow up survey in December 2009. We are undertaking these surveys quarterly.

	Check (January 2009) Value Demand	December 2009 Value Demand	Check (January 09) Preventable Demand	December 2009 Preventable Demand
Telephone	50%	Verbal update	50%	Verbal update
Post and email	85%	Verbal update	15%	Verbal update
Face to face	75%	Verbal update	25%	Verbal update

Lagging measures

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
Customer satisfaction: measured by monthly telephone survey carried out 4-6 weeks after tenancy commenced.			See comments below.
NI 156 Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation. This is a snapshot measure of the number of households in temporary accommodation on 31 st March each year.	91	78	A good reduction and part of a consistent downward trend.
NI 160 Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services. This is a measure of overall tenant satisfaction with the services provided by the council measured through the biannual STATUS survey.	87% Top quartile	87% Top quartile	We have this survey undertaken every two years in accordance with government advice.
BVPI 212, the time taken to relet local authority housing This is a measure of the number of the average number of days taken to relet a property from the day it becomes vacant to the date a new tenancy commences.	22 days 2008/09	27 days	This average measure legitimately excludes properties undergoing major repairs from the calculation.

Indicator	Check	2 nd Quarter	Comment
BVPI 66a proportion of rent collected This is a measure of the amount of rent collected as a proportion of rent collectable.	97.11%	98.16%	We are seeing a steady increase towards our 'stretch' target of 99% collection of rent due.
Percentage of new tenants who fall into rent arrears	51%	Verbal update	The new tenancy 'sign up' process emphasises the important of maintaining a clear rent account.
Percentage of new tenants irregular rent payers	27% habitually in arrears	Verbal update	Fewer tenants are poor or irregular payers.
Length of time in days it takes a new tenant falling into rent arrears to clear their rent account.	92 days	Verbal update	
Number of bids received per property advertised through Choice Based Lettings	Typically 20	Typically 20	We are still receiving an average of 20 bids for each property advertised.
Average length of time spent on the Housing Register before being housed (general needs & sheltered housing).	39 months average general needs housing and 27 months average sheltered housing	3 years and 27 weeks (approx. 42 months) for general needs and sheltered housing	This waiting time for housing is longer than we would like and is directly related to vacancies occurring in our housing stock.
Number of homeless applications where the Council accepts a homeless duty owards the applicant.	17		This is a radical reduction in homeless acceptances which can be attributed to a range of homeless prevention measures being implemented.

Project investment and benefits

The Systems Thinking review in housing cost approximately £4,625. This was a one-off cost for consultancy support to work on the project and was paid partly from the Housing Revenue Account. The project has delivered substantial benefits, including:

- Improved customer satisfaction with the allocations process and tenant choice.
- Significant reduction in new tenants going into rent arrears.
- A more thorough new tenancy 'sign up' and welcome process with greater clarity of roles and responsibilities.

We have undertaken a telephone survey of new tenants after the commencement of their tenancy. The results of this survey reveal that of the 27 new tenants contacted most rated the service received 8-10 out of a possible score of 10. The accompanied viewing was scored high and staff considered helpful and friendly. We had a few cases where the standard of the property did not meet expectations (poor quality painting and minor repairs not done). In each case we invited the tenant to say how we could improve performance and receive a top score.

Remaining Issues

Although the project has delivered a number of transformational improvements there remain a number of areas for further work.

We are maintaining an **Issues Log** and this is attached so that members can see how we are steadily working on all the issues we have which will improve the way we work from our customers' point of view, and remove waste from the system.

The top 5 issues on the Issues Log that need resolving are:

- > Ensuring that the appointment system for accompanied views works consistently well;
- Production of capability charts quickly and accurately:
- Notifying all new tenants of the need to come to the 'sign up' with an ability to pay their rent;
- > Rent triggers set up before 'sign up' to ensure that rental payments could be accepted;
- > Contractors should not be dictating void ready dates to suit them.

We need to ensure that the measures reports are used by staff and managers to be more aware of what is happening in our system and to allow early corrective action where performance can be improved.

Staff morale, sickness absence and turnover are all lagging measures too as well as budget information to show how investment impacts on performance. These have not been included in this report.

Staff culture

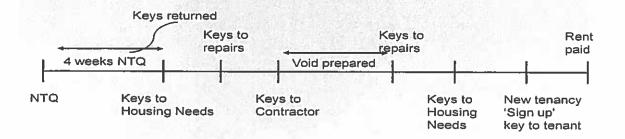
Staff have responded very well to the changes and readily adopted the new working methods. Most of the new methods were generated by staff themselves and the challenge is to maintain a culture where people are encouraged to contribute ideas and suggestions on an ongoing basis rather than as part of a set-piece exercise away from the workplace.

Staff focus groups have praised improved communication within the office and between managers and staff. The increased communication with customers has also improved morale as staff can see that housing is clearly a people-business.

The operational, change, leadership and management principles all need embedding to ensure that we are all working to 'new world' principles and not those that influenced behaviours prior to introducing Systems Thinking.

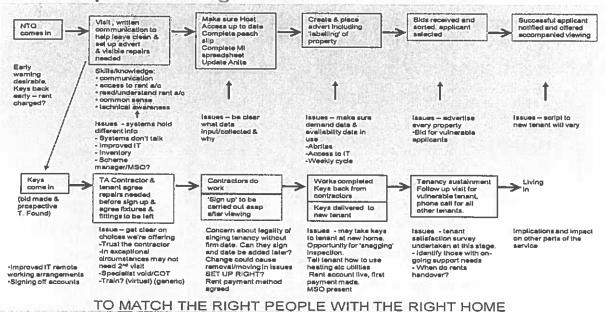
Timeline for capability charts

From NTQ to new tenant signed up and rent paid



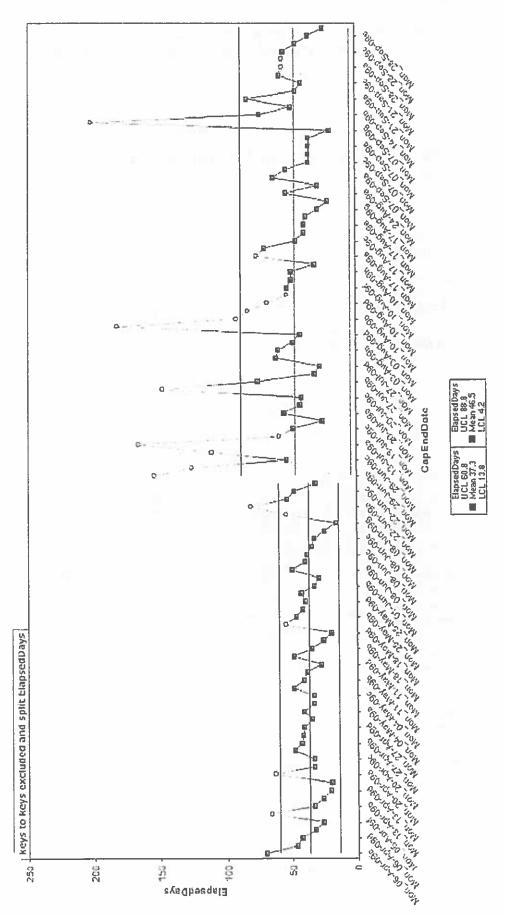
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Value steps for redesign

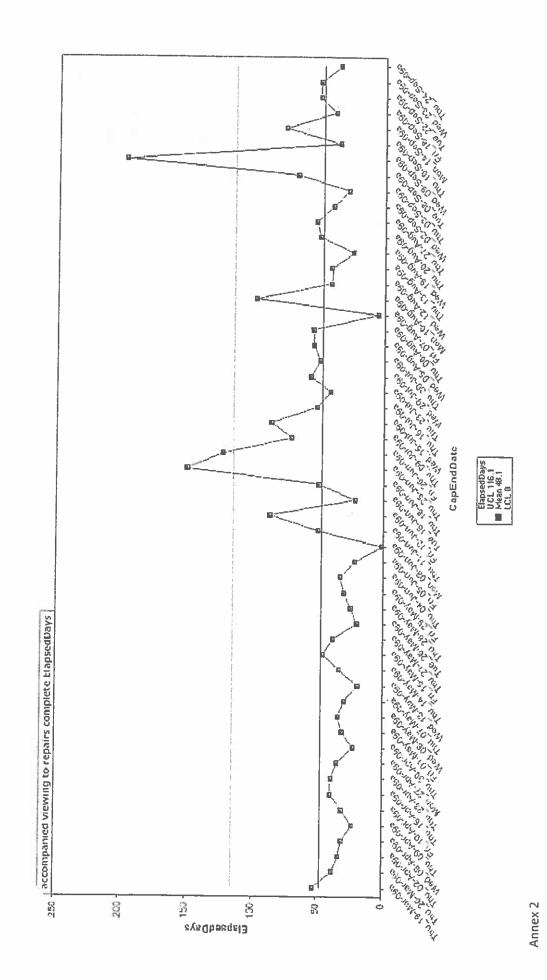


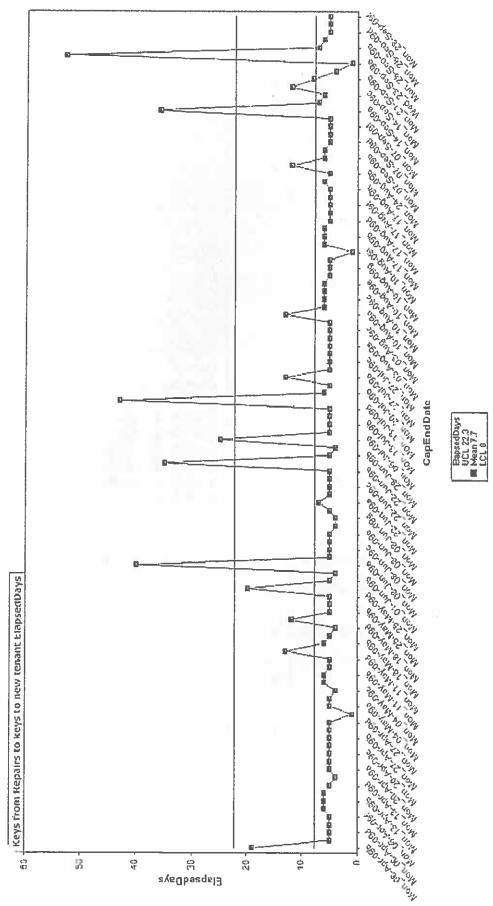
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Note: this report was produced in early December to meet the print deadline. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

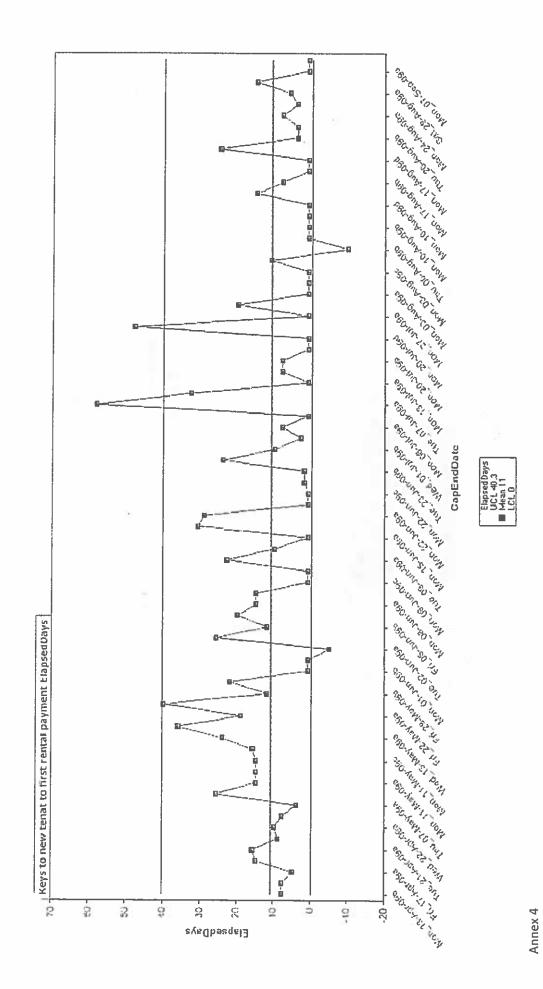


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Agenda Item 10

Performance Digest

Benefits service: April to December 2009/10

Purpose: pay the right person the right benefit at the right time

This digest supplements the strategic performance indicators reported through the SPAR process. It aims to monitor the impact of the redesigned service following the systems-thinking review and give Members information to understand and challenge what is happening within the service.

The benefits service went live with new processes in January 2009, the key features being:-

- Use of telephone preferred over correspondence to collect missing information
- The offer of a home visit to customers making benefit claims
- The completion of claims by phone where possible, for signature and return by the customer
- More claim processing to be done at reception with customer present

Leading measures

Indicator	2008/09 to 1	2009/10 to 1	Comment
	December 2008	December 2009	
Capability at first point of contact			
			In practice, there is so much
- measured by the %age of benefit claims and			information needed to support a
changes processed with 48 hours. This is the most	19%	20%	benefit claim and evidence often
cost-effective way of handling customer demand –			needed from 3 rd parties that it is
and gives the best service to customers. We use 48			difficult to achieve a high
hours as a claim collected on a home visit is normally			percentage. Our challenge remains

Indicator	2008/09 to 1	2009/10 to 1	Comment
	December 2008	December 2009	
processed the next day. If a home visit take place in the afternoon and the claim is processed the next morning our system will record this as taking 2 days.			to increase this figure to see what is achievable. The payoff is increased customer satisfaction and more efficient administration.
Preventable demand			
	Pre-system thinking	May 2009: 37 phone	The level of preventable demand has
Measured by sampling demand to assess what %age of demand is preventable through comics desire	analysis ("Check"	calls per day in	fallen from 87 to 25 calls per day –
ל מנונים בל לה כל מנונים בל החומים לה לה כל החומים בל החומים בל החומים בל החומים בל החומים בל החומים בל החומים	day of preventable	of calls	despite a rarge increase in the workload of the benefits teams.
	demand representing		
	58% of demand.	October 2009: 25 calls	However there is still further scope
		per day in sampling period – 48% of calls	to reduce preventable demand.
			5 top preventable demands:
			"When will my claim be"
			processed?"
			"When are my payments "contain"
			• Understanding an
			overpayment
			Understanding the
			Information we need to
			process a claim
			 Understanding why a claim
			has been suspended
			Key to this is a drive to rewrite
			outgoing system letters to
			customers. This has been successful

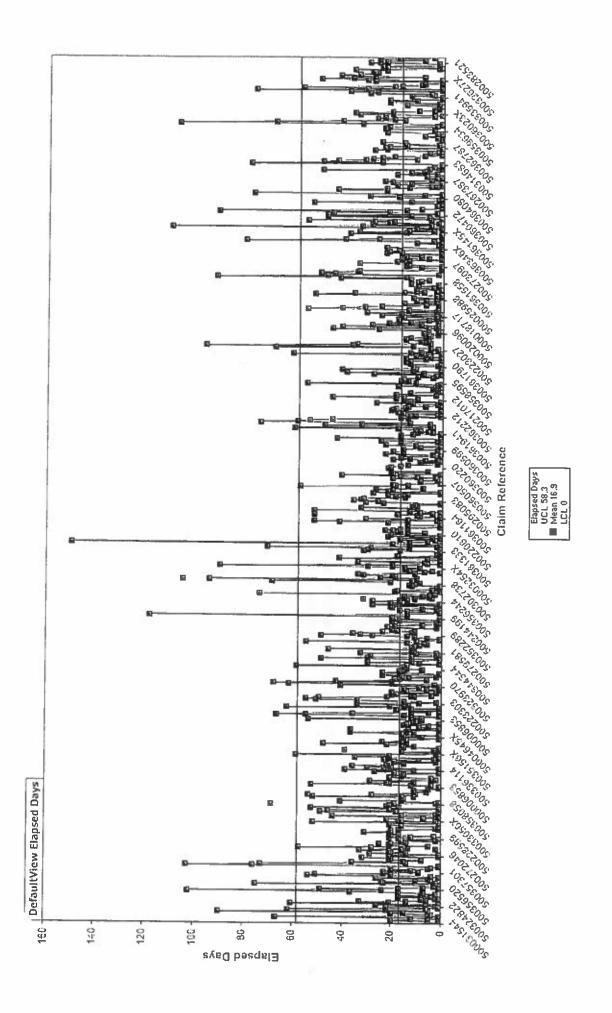
Indicator	2008/09 to 1 December 2008	2009/10 to 1 December 2009	Comment
			so far with bespoke letters written to tell customers about the council rent decrease, changes in how child benefit is treated for housing benefit and changes to how pensioners' capital is treated.
			We are also developing a customer service promise across revenues & benefits so we can be specific with customers about what we will do and when to reduce the level of "when will x happen?" calls.
Customer demand – new claims A key driver in service performance	4,273 claims in the year to 1 Dec	4, 668 claims in the year to 1 Dec	9.2% increase on 2008/09. 30% higher than pre-recession figure at same time in 2007/08.
Customer demand – changes of circumstance The complexity of the benefits system means that so many factors result in changes to benefit levels – who is in the household, changes to earnings, changes to other benefits and tax credits and short-time and temporary working.	12,913 changes in the year to 1 Dec	22,077 changes in the year to 1 Dec	5,045 extra "mass" changes this year due to rule changes (eg child benefit) and council rent decrease. But routine work still 32% higher than last year.

Indicator	2008/09 to 1 December 2008	2009/10 to 1	Comment
Customer demand - raceload		בכבבווומבו 2003	
	9,420 households	9,995 households	Pre-recession figure at same time in
Claims in payment at any one time			2007/08 is 8,681. 15% higher but
			new claims are the most complex –
			from private tenants and working
			age customers.

Capacity charts

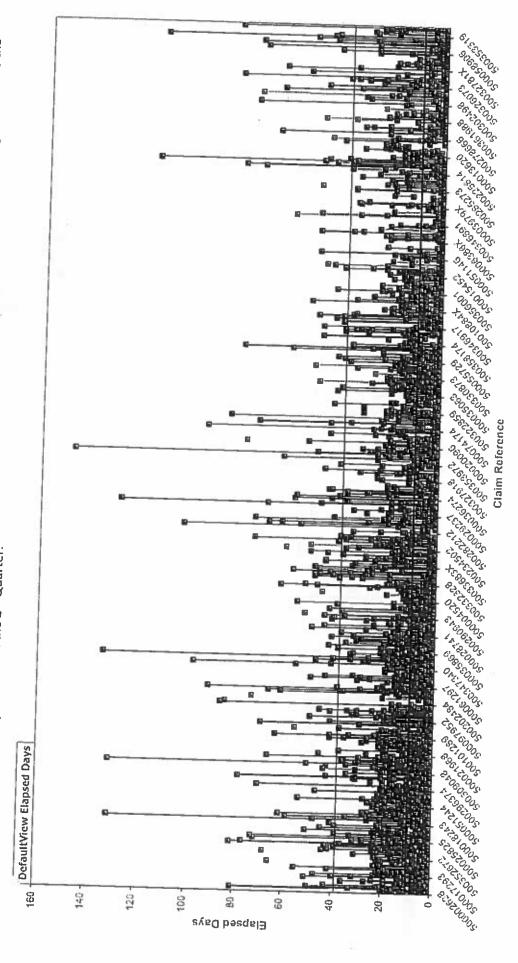
Prior to the systems thinking review the average new claim would take 50 days to process within a system that would predictably take up to 141 days. For the second quarter of 2009/10 the average new claim has taken 17 days (1st quarter 27 days) to process within a system that predictably takes up to 58 days (1st quarter 86 days).

The following chart shows each individual claim assessed in the quarter:-



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Similarly, for changes of circumstance, prior to the review these took an average of 21 days, now reduced to 9.8 days. The following chart shows the individual changes of circumstances processed in the 2nd Quarter.



Elapsed Days UCL 38.6 Mean 9.8 LCL 0 The average change of circumstances would take 14 days to process in the 1st quarter of 2009/10 which has improved to 10 days as at the end of quarter 2. Within a system that would predictably take up to 61 days in the first quarter to what took 39 days days in the 2nd quarter.

These charts are used as a management tool to identify exceptional cases and investigate what has happened and suggest process improvements.

Lagging measures

Customer satisfaction: measured by monthly Customer satisfaction: measured by monthly Customer satisfaction: measured by monthly Stage last year but:- Stage last year but:- Stage last year but:- B.9 out of 10 In Q4 after new processes live "Much quic expected" "Staff very processes live "Staff very impres" "Stage last year but:- "Much quic expected" "Staff very processes live "Staff very impres" "Thaving son fimes" "Thaving son over tile respective in the excellent" "Thaving son in the stage of the respective in the excellent" "Thaving son in the stage of the respective in the stage of the s	December 2008 tion: measured by monthly Not available at this stage last year but:- 8.9 out of 10 in Q4 after new processes live	9.05 out of 10	Customers like:- Initial calculation over the phone to see if worth claiming "best service she has ever had" Much quicker than
stage last year but:- 8.9 out of 10 in Q4 after new processes live	tion: measured by monthly	9.05 out of 10	Customers like:- Initial calculation over the phone to see if worth claiming "best service she has ever had" Much quicker than
8.9 out of 10 in Q4 after new processes live			 Initial calculation over the phone to see if worth claiming "best service she has ever had" "Much quicker than
	8.9 out of 10 in Q4 after new processes live		phone to see if worth claiming
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• "feit respec			excellent"
well"			 "felt respected and treated
			well"

Comment	Customers don't like: Long letters Would have liked a bit more help Confusion over information we needed Job Centre delays	A small improvement in 2009/10 so far as the measure is caseload related it represents an increase in workload.	The DWP have been unable to publish comparative data for other LAs. However, they have predicted an average performance of 15.7 days.
2009/10 to 1 December 2009		34.2 changes per 1,000 cases per week	11.1 days (on track for 10 day target for 2009/10) Above average/top quartile
2008/09 to 1 December 2008		32.4 changes per 1,000 cases per week (8 th out of 27 LAs in our DWP benchmarking group)	15 days (12 days achieved for 2008/09 overall)
Indicator		NI 180, the Right Benefit national indicator This is a measure of the number of adjustments to customers benefit entitlement we make during the year. Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) research suggests how many changes should be expected for different claim types and this indicator measures how well councils identify changes in circumstances that result in adjustments to benefit.	NI 181, the Right Time indicator This replaces the previous new claim and changes of circumstance processing times with one average figure including both types of transaction.

Indicator	2008/09 to 1 December 2008	2009/10 to 1 December 2009	Comment
Overpayments recovered as a %age of overpayments identified during the year	77% Above average	79% Above average	No comparative data available yet but represents an above average performance against 2007/08 data. A significant improvement on 60% achieved in 2007/08. Average LA achieved 73.6% in 2007/08 with the top quartile starting at 82.4%.
Overpayments recovered as a %age of total overpayment debt	48% Top quartile	54% Top quartile	No comparative data available from the DWP yet. Top quartile was 36.8% in last published figures in 2007/08.
Overpayment debt written off as a %age of total overpayment debt	10.7%	7.3%	No comparative data available from the DWP yet.
(C	8		Write-offs happen in the case of bankruptcies, debt relief orders, 6-year statute-barred debt, untraceable debtors and a small number of cases where the debtor's circumstances make debt irrecoverable.

to 1 2009/10 to 1 Comment r 2008 December 2009	7 per 1,000 caseload	nartile Above average performance is above the average of 6.2 in 2007/08.	
Indicator 2008/09 to 1 December 2008	Fraud: number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload 1,000 caseload	Bottom quartile performance	

Development Management Quarterly Measures Report 2nd Quarter July - September 09

Introduction:

The purpose of Development Management is to 'Say yes to good development' and doing so we meet the needs of our applicants. This quarter we improved on the satisfaction level of our customers scoring 97% (95% last quarter) and our refusal rate has gone down from 14.7 % to 6.7% which means in turn that we only received 28 free resubmission applications during the last year compared to 265 in the same period last year (1st Jan – 30th Nov). That is a significant reduction in preventable demand on our system and means that we do not carry the cost of the resubmitted applications.

The focus of the work is now principally on the value activity, with tasks that added no value for the applicant reduced as far as possible as exampled above. That does not mean to say that others who have an interest in the outcome of any planning application are now excluded from the process and this quarter we have been working with selected members of the public to test whether our website, which is the most used part of the Council's website, is accessible and user friendly. We are currently responding to the relatively few points of concern raised.

The test of a good measure is:

- 1. Does it relate to purpose and our knowledge of 'what matters' to our customers
- Does it help us understand our service as a 'system'
- 3. Is it used by those in the work and managing the work to improve the work?

We have developed two types of measures – leading and lagging.

Leading measures are the 'real time' indicators which tell us what is happening now in the system and are the key measures that help us lead change and improvement. Examples are:

- 1. Demand analysis (the type and frequency of customer demand)
- 2. Our ability to deal with requests/demand first time (one stop)
- 3. How long a process takes from start to finish (end to end times)
- 4. Understanding the split between preventable and value demand coming into the service

Lagging measures are the 'rear view' indicators which tell us what's happening in the system after the event. They tell us about the effectiveness of the service but will not necessarily help us to lead char (). Examples are:

- 1. Budget monitoring
- 2. Customer satisfaction.

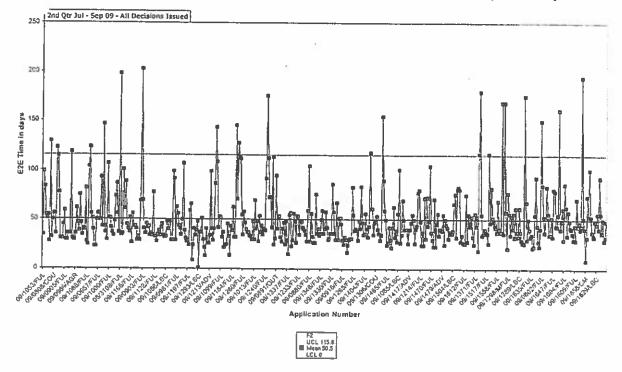
To deliver good results, the focus of management needs to be on the leading measures as the key drivers of improvement. If these levers for change are understood and used effectively then excellent results and customer satisfaction will follow.

The leading measure, 'End-to-End times for all planning applications' has stayed steady at 50 days mean average (49 days last quarter). This figure encompasses not only those applications that travel through the system smoothly but also those that have to go to Development Management Committee (for whatever reason) and those which require a Section 106 agreement, both of which inevitably add time to the process.

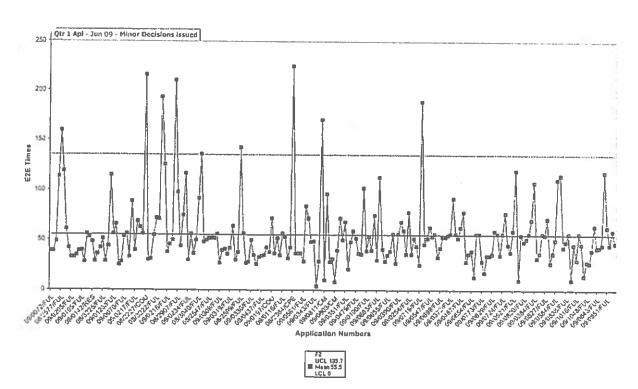
Leading Measures

E2E Times in the 5 Work streams

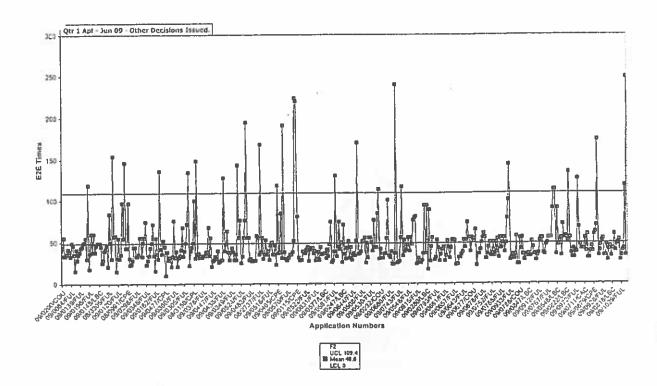
Planning applications - (i) All decisions (major, minor and other) Jul - Sep 09



(ii) Minor Applications Jul - Sep 09



(iii) Other Applications Jul - Sep 2009



Analysis

The mean average time taken for all categories of applications this quarter was 50 days which indicates a steady level of performance, with last quarter standing at 49 days. Whilst this is a clear improvement from where we were before the systems review we do seem to have plateaued in the time taken to process the applications and this is consistent across the three sub teams – East, West and Central. The system is now well embedded and regular team meetings are keeping the system 'live' and evolving.

Whilst there is a need to keep a constant watching brief on times taken in processing there are a very wide range of applications in the system and a notable number of major applications were determined during the quarter, including the three Seaton applications and major applications inevitably take longer to deal with given their complex nature. Indeed under the previous target based assessment major applications were permitted longer timescales than the minor and other categories

In E2E times the following is a summary of performance set against the previous quarters

All applications

A mean of 50.5 days compared to the previous quarters of 48.8 days (Apr-Jun 09) 57.2 (Jan-March 09)

Minor applications

A mean of 53.5 days compared to 55.5 (Apr-Jun 09) 69.3 (Jan-March 09)

Other applications

A mean of 45.3 days compared to

48.8 (Apr-Jun 09)

48.4 (Jan-March 09)

However the wide range of variation showing up in the Capability charts above, in the 'minors' and 'others' categories of applications, needs assessment - a recent quick check revealed that it is often amended plans (either being awaited or being readvertised) that delay applications. Sometimes these are unsolicited from the agent having tracked the consultee Reponses coming in and sometimes they are at our request. Where they are the latter, we need to ensure that they are being asked for early enough in the process.

Overall we have received the following numbers in the 5 work streams:

Work Streams Qtr 2 Jul - Sep 09

Work Stream	On hand	Received	Actions	Outstanding
Applications	331	504	498	337
Pre Apps	46	331	311	66
PD Enquiries	19	448	436	31
Minor Amend	17	66	60	23
Con Discharge	39	152	117	74

The number of refusals has reduced significantly to 6.7% of the total number of applications and the number of appeals has likewise reduced and those that have gone to appeal have been less successful in overturning the Council's decision - we are successful in over 80% of cases. The following statistics on the number of applications re-submitted (following a refusal) are noteworthy.

1 Jan - 30 Nov 08

Refused: 407 (14.7 % of decisions)

Withdrawn: 92

Re submitted: 265

1 Jan - 30 Nov 09

Refused: 146 (6.7 % of decisions)

Withdrawn: 42

Re submitted: 28

From the above figures, it clearly shows that we are working with our customers as the number of refused, withdrawn and resubmitted applications are greatly reduced. Preventable demand caused by the old ways of working look like a thing of the past. This new approach is greatly valued by agents and customers alike as evidenced from the recent agents' forum.

The added knock on effect, is that we are now only losing 19.6% of appeals down from 35%. The Government target on appeals is 33% of appeals upheld. East Devon is therefore performing extremely well on the appeal front.

Overall then whilst there has been a drop in applications performance when all applications are combined, this is balanced by the improvement in minor and other applications which is the bulk of the workload. The principal areas of delay tend to be when seeking amended plans, consultation responses (some internal and some external) and when applications have to be submitted to GOSW for final approval. In addition applications are delayed when a section 106 agreement is required. Some agreements are very complex and can take some months to resolve.

Improvements to the Delegation Scheme will be introduced in the New Year as agreed by Council in December 2009.

Pre Application Enquiries

The mean average time taken in Jul - Sep quarter was 15.7 days, the previous Quarter being 16.1 days. Again notwithstanding the improvement teams are being asked to ensure an even work flow rather than batching work. The recent agreement to charge for pre application advice will need to be supported by a customer charter which should be ready for inspection early in the New Year setting basic levels of service and our standards of what we expect to receive from applicants and what we will deliver in return.

Agents welcome such advice albeit there may be resistance from some agents when charging is introduced. This will need to be monitored and action taken as appropriate if agents start to refuse to e or into pre app and use the re-submission of applications (with no fee) as a route for achieving their approvals.

Permitted Development Enquiries

These took 2.5 days during this quarter, up slightly from 2 days on the previous quarter. Whilst the figures are up this is only a marginal drop in performance on a work stream which is of less importance that applications and pre application advice. The service being offered is still excellent compared to pre Systems Thinking when such applications took much longer.

Minor Amendments

The average E2E time for the quarter remains at 1 day. An excellent service has been sustained in this area. In addition the introduction of minor amendment approvals by central government allowing planning authorities for the first time to give such permissions is helpful, but this has lagged behind East Devon's long standing practice not to be bureaucratic and insist on new applications, as has been the case in neighbouring authority areas.

Conditions Discharge

The average E2E time for the quarter was 12.5 days, a reduction of 1 day on the previous quarter. Again an improvement which the teams will build on.

Value and Preventable Demand Survey

The survey took place during 2nd - 17th Jul 2009

	Qtr 1 Value Demand	Qtr 2 Value Demand	Qtr 1 Preventable Demand	Qtr 2 Preventable Demand
Telephone	63.3%	62.8%	36.7%	37.2%
Post	85.5%	90.3%	14.5%	9.6%
Email	75.1%	69.7%	24.9%	30.3%

Telephone: Top 3 preventable demands:

- 1. Can you give me an update on my/clients application 78 Calls (15.78%)
- 2. New general enquiry 73 calls (14.77%)
- 3. Do I need planning permission 60 calls (12.14%)

There is some issue here as to whether the second and third reasons are actually preventable or not. The assumption at the moment is that the information is generally available on the website and so there is no reason to ring in, but it is not unreasonable for a new potential applicant to seek direct information from an officer. If then these two categories were transferred from the preventable to the value category there would be an improvement on 26% in the value category and a corresponding decrease in the preventable category.

Post:

Preventable demand reduced by 4.9% - Volume of letters has reduced from 255 to 124. Principal reason for this reduction is the use of email.

Email:

Preventable demand increased by 5.4% - 191 emails were received during the survey, of that 107 were representations direct to the teams.

Analysis

Our highest preventable demand was from Agents and applicants asking how their application is progressing. In addition many of the calls requesting updates are made by agents following the end of the 21 day consultation period. At the recent agents' forum agents were asked to track their applications but not make unreasonable demands on the planning teams by phoning on day 22 asking where there permission was. Agents were also specifically asked not to submit unsolicited amended plans when officers had not asked for them because on occasion this has led to delays as officers feel obliged to reconsult potentially affected parties.

Actions Taken

New planning website went live in Oct 09, with vastly improved search and tracking facility. Agents can now get automatic emails for their applications. This has been highlighted at the Agents forum in November. Should see a reduction in the top preventable demand for both telephone and email.

Capability of Point of Transaction Survey

The survey took place between 13th - 17th July 2009

	Phone Calls %	Post %	Email %
One Stop	77.9%	99%	93.1%
Pass back	6.4%	0	1%
Pass on	10.3%	1%	5.7%
Pull down	4.25	0	0
Call back	1%	0	0

Analysis

On Capability at Point of Transaction, ie how well and quickly to we deal with incoming contacts, in the 'one stop' action (the officer receiving it deals with it) we have improved in all three categories with 3% for emails, 9% for post and 10% for phone calls.

Actions

None necessary

Lagging Measures:

Applicant Satisfaction Survey

The survey carried out for this quarter showed a return of 97% satisfaction, with 90% scoring the service 8 or above. This is a 1% increase on the previous quarter. The total number of applicants contacted was 70.

Some of the general information and comments from our survey.

Top priority to our customers when submitting application:

38% wanted an approval

31% wanted a speedy approval

Top priority whilst application is being processed:

28% Internet was very helpful

14% Speedy decision

14% Thought the feedback/communication from EDDC was good

Scores:

Overall satisfaction: 97%

90% scoring us over 8

1 person scored us '0' (given wrong advice from Councillor and Agent)

What would we have to do to get 10 out of 10

22% Scored us 10

31% didn't give a reason

12% Quicker decision

And a few negatives

Found the whole process very daunting just for a conservatory.

Had to change our design, told it was too big!

Couldn't believe we needed a design statement for a shed.

Staff Morale

Following the recent Happy Healthy Here audits it is pleasing to note that many of the issues put forward following the Systems Thinking review have been resolved. Staff are now settled and the messages coming out of the teams is that staff feel able to get involved in more complex applications than in the past.

Workloads at present are manageable but work is still needed on reducing the backlog of applications still further so that the teams are in a good position to move forward when the credit crunch comes to an end and applications start to rise to pre credit crunch levels. As at 12 December 2009 the number of outstanding applications stood at 320 which compares favourably with the number outstanding at the end of June which was 371.

The Systems Thinking review of Conservation needs to be concluded as does a review of the Appeals team. The enforcement team are coming to the end of their experimental period with their new ways of working.

In addition the enforcement team will lose two of its senior figures in the retirement of Ray Steer Kemp and Dave Collings in the January to March 2010 period. This will create challenges with the potential introduction of new staff

The Eastern team will also be losing one of its senior planning officers (Rod Harrington) on a 9 month sabbatical starting in February 2010. This will inevitably bring challenges to that team which will need to be managed.

Budgets

Whilst planning fees have still not returned to their pre credit crunch levels the budget generally is in a good position – the end of year budget predicted position is that the net position will be £50'000 of the estimated end of year figure, although the budget estimate was reduced to take account of the expected downturn in income. The fees are therefore no longer covering the salary budget as was the case previously.

Any increase in budgets brought about by the pre app charging system will allow the enhancement of the service by the introduction of a major project officer to deal with the large scale applications, currently in the pipeline as pre application work.

National Indicator Returns

N157 a, b, c:

Type	DCLG	Quarter 1	This Quarter
	Target	Apl - Jun	Jul - Sep
Major applications	60% in 13 weeks	50%	52.17%
Minor applications	65% in 8 weeks	72.46%	71.32%
Other applications	80% in 8 weeks	82.68%	81.97%

Whilst these figure show that the minor and major applications are meeting the Government targets (the major category is better suited to an annual return) they are a very crude representation of performance and do not accurately reflect the notable improvement in all the work stream activity. They focus only on certain categories of planning application and give a retrospective three month average.

BVPI 204 Appeals:

Target	This quarter Jul - Sep	Last Quarter Apl - Jun
Local/national 35%	27.3%	22.2%

These figures show the percentage of appeals allowed in the appellants favour.

Appeals are a very volatile measure and the percentage can vary enormously in proportion to the number of appeal decisions received in the quarter. However we are now performing significantly above the National Average. All refusals now have to be passed by the appeals officer to ensure the reasons for refusal are robust. In addition officers regularly discuss important appeal decisions at their monthly meetings and adjust future decisions accordingly. As the figures above show the number of successful appeals over a longer period is moving in the right direction.

The appeal statistics have been the subject of separate annual reports which dealt with the changes in process that have led to the improvement in performance. In addition a monthly digest of appeal decisions is given to the Development Management Committee with an analysis given of those noteworthy appeal decisions which may have implications for future decisions of the Council.

Future Projects

- Complete and implement any necessary changes following the Systems Thinking review of the Conservation Team.
- Complete and implement any necessary changes following the Systems Thinking review of the Enforcement Team.
- Consider the results of a capacity exercise undertaken to provide evidence of how long typical work stream elements are taking and what resources may be needed
- Undertake an evaluation of added value on planning applications to try and identify where planners have added value to the outcome.
- Undertake a review of Section 106 agreements which are outstanding
- Review the variation in times taken in processing applications particularly in relation to date of site visit and receipt of amended plans.
- Undertake a review of standard planning conditions
- Undertake a further review of standard letters particularly in the light of the council's decisions to change to a standard font size of Arial 12 pt. This will have implications for many of the 80 standard letters employed by the planning service.
- Improvements to planning web site to provide a simplified and more intuitive tool for customers

Agenda Item 12

Service Delivery/Performance Committee

13 January 2010



Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan 2009/10

Month	Topic	Lead
13 January 2009	Housing Service Review Performance Measures Report	John Golding
	Housing Benefits Performance Measures Report	Simon Davey
	Kite Surfers in Exmouth	Mark Reilly
17 February 2009	Explore local issues in Towns and Parishes relationships between tiers of government; excellence of service across the District and meeting local need	Denise Lyon
	 Review of the remit of the Committee and progress achieved. 	
	 Quarterly Monitoring of Service Plans and Performance Indicators – 3rd Quarter 	