

<b>Report to:</b> Essex Flood Partnership Board	<b>Report Number</b> AGENDA ITEM 4 (EFPB/02/19)
<b>Date of report:</b> 08/01/19	<b>County Divisions affected by the decision:</b> All
<b>Title of report:</b> SuDS Lean Review	
<b>Report by:</b> Lucy Shepherd, Lead Local Flood Authority Manager	
<b>Head of Service:</b> John Meehan Head of Planning and Environment	
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Lucy Shepherd 03330 136742	

## 1. Background

- 1.1. In June last year select staff volunteered from across Waste and Environment to start on a new learning project. This was sponsored by Mark Ash (Director) and supported by the ECC Organisational Development & People Team.
- 1.2. Our only brief for this first project was to complete a total review of our waste management inbox, working with the team to find out what the real problems and potential solutions were within this area.
- 1.3. The Organisational Development & People Team gave us some training and new ideas, so that we could be confident we were making the right choices on how to improve and change things for the better. Then, we just went about getting those things changed.
- 1.4. This new way of thinking has now moved onto a review of our SUDS consultation process. The focus is making sure we achieve the most efficient service we can, without compromising quality for our customers.

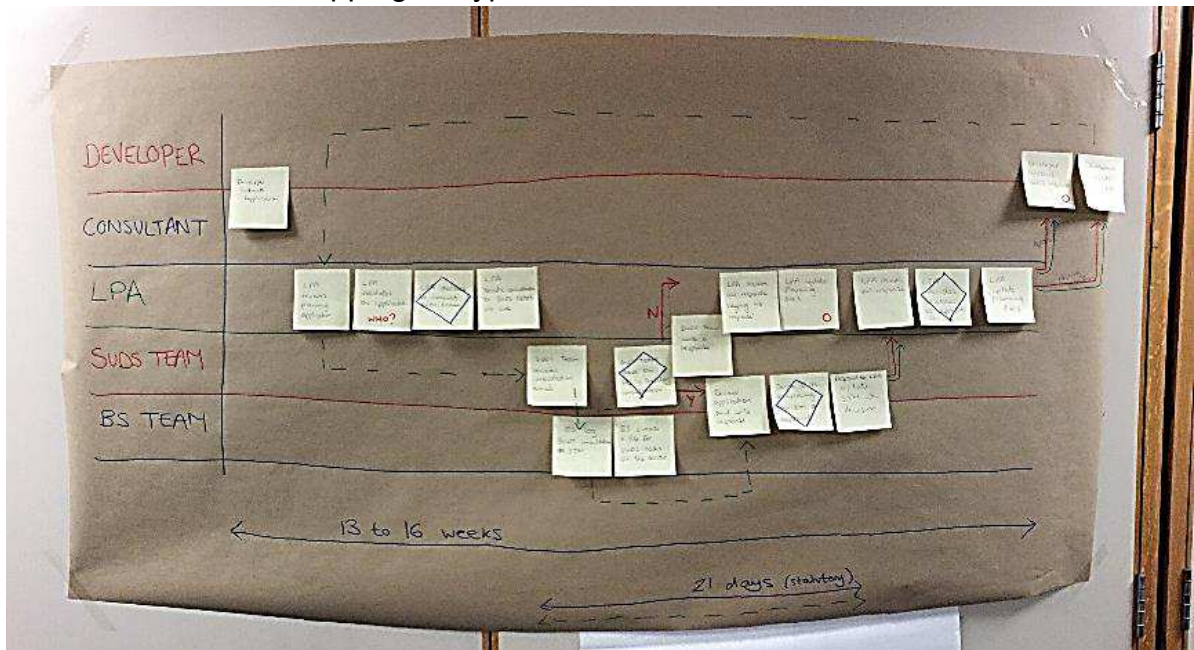
## 2. Purpose of report

- 2.1. To highlight findings of the SuDS Consultation Review project to date and share prioritised solutions activity.
- 2.2. Seeking feedback and ideas from The Essex Flood Board to support this work over the coming months.

### 3. Define and measure the problem

- 3.1. During the summer of 2018 the SuDS Team at ECC experienced a difficult period due to recruitment issues. All 4 FTE positions became vacant, and we made the choice to employ specialist external consultant support.
- 3.2. Over this period we dealt with a considerable backlog of applications, and therefore did not meet our 21 day statutory deadline in all cases (an anxious period for us given a consistent 100% record in previous times).
- 3.3. We also received feedback from LPAs highlighting that our responses were overly technical, not always clear and seemingly inflexible.
- 3.4. Our first exercise was to 'map the process' of SuDS consultations, to get some perspective on where time could be being lost, or inefficiencies occurring (Picture 1).

**Picture 1:** Process Mapping for typical SUDS consultation



- 3.5. The stand out theme was the delay and duplication of time that a 'not right first time' application causes for all parties involved.
- 3.6. Bearing the feedback and findings in mind, and in consultation with the newly recruited SUDS staff, we concluded the following three problems should be our initial focus:

**Problem 1:** During the past 12 months there have been a number of cases where our 21 day deadline has been missed. It is perceived that knowledge and capacity

of staff, along with fluctuating workload has contributed to this problem. Missing deadlines leads to increase in workload and complaints. This is a problem for ourselves and our customers (LPA and Developers).

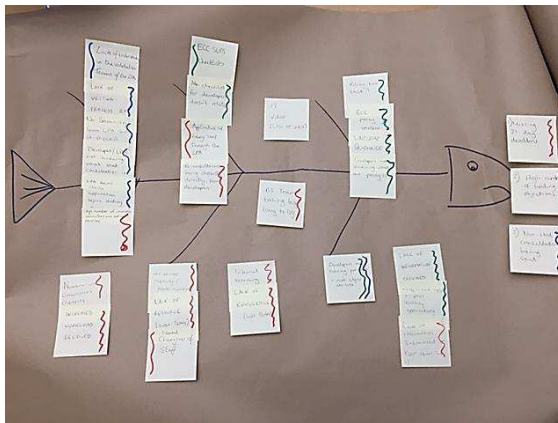
**Problem 2:** Since Sept 2018 68% of consultations have been responded to with a 'holding objection'. This results in customers having to resubmit another 21 day consultation with their corrections. Both the SUDS Team and LPA have to also take time processing the re-consultation.

**Problem 3:** Since Sept 2018 we have received 24% incorrect consultations (non-statutory, or no Flood Risk Assessment/Drainage Strategy). This has resulted in wasted time/resource for the SUDS Team and LPA.

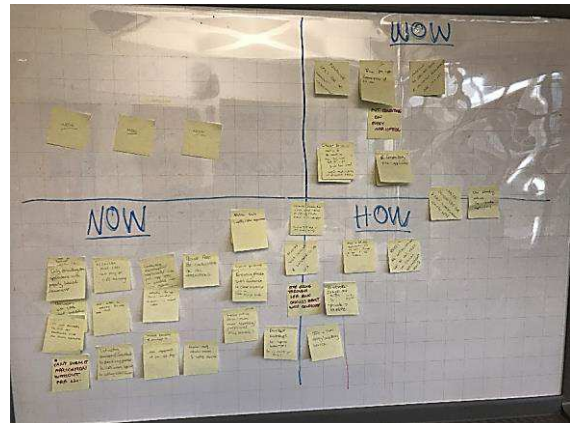
#### 4. Root Causes and Solutions

- 4.1. Our next step towards finding meaningful solutions was to think about the root cause of each of these problems.
- 4.2. Group exercises such as a 'fishbone diagram' analysis (Picture 2) helped us to work back from the problems, adopting 'why' questioning tactics to explore all possible causes.

**Picture 2:** Fishbone Diagram



**Picture 3:** How/Now/Wow Solutions



#### 5. Prioritising Solutions

- 5.1. Keeping our 3 problems at the forefront of our minds, we conducted a solutions workshop.
- 5.2. In total we identified thirty actions which it was agreed could help towards solving the issues, these were grouped into 3 areas (Picture 3):

- **Now** – quick fix solutions
- **How** – things that would be achievable but require a bit more planning/thinking.
- **Wow** – radical or innovative solutions that would need senior approval or a change in budget or policy for example.

5.3. Given that this review is being undertaken in parallel with business as usual, we have prioritised 3 activities to take forward in the short-term:

1. Conduct 1:1 meetings with all our LPAs, offering further education and training around our consultation role and requirements.
2. Increase marketing of the SuDS pre-app service, highlighting the value for money upfront investment.
3. Develop a 'corrections table' summary for all consultation responses so that it is completely clear which elements of the submitted drainage strategy are missing or unclear.

## 6. Monitoring the outcomes

- 6.1. Evidencing the change that we hope these improvements will make is key. We now have a baseline to work from, and will be closely monitoring against this as the improvements take place.
- 6.2. We have already been able to show through data analysis that our new SuDS Team are again meeting the 21 day deadline for consultation. This is purely through the change in capacity and training. Therefore our 'Problem 1' work is now more about creating resilience within the team.
- 6.3. In the coming months we will be looking for an increase in the percentage of 'right first time' consultations. Also looking to reduce the amount of consultations we incorrectly receive, and hearing more positive responses from our customers about their experience.