



Improvement

Customer led transformation programme

Case study – Lichfield

Business matters

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The Customer Led Transformation programme

Lichfield's work has been funded under the Customer Led Transformation programme. The fund aims to embed, at a strategic level, the use of customer insight and social media tools and techniques across the public sector to support place-based working.

The programme is overseen by the Local Government Delivery Council (supported by LG Improvement and Development).

The fund was established specifically to support collaborative working between councils and their partners, focussing on using customer insight and social media to improve service outcomes. These approaches should improve customer engagement by gathering insight into preferences and needs, the evidence and intelligence needed to redesign services to be more targeted, effective and efficient.

About the Business Matters project

Business Matters (BM) is a unique partnership based in the West Midlands that is working to help public sector providers deliver more focused services to businesses in this area in more efficient and effective ways.

Established in 2005, Business Matters originally set out to better understand the needs of local businesses and has developed standards for capturing data about businesses in a consistent way across the partners which makes it easier to exchange that information using simple low-cost technology solutions. This enables a much more rounded view of the way these partners interact with business customers. This is the sixth project in which the Business Matters Project Board has participated.

The Business Matters project grew out of the original e-Government 'Working with Business' National project and continues to be the leading project in the UK to progress data sharing between councils, businesses and related other agencies with the aim of improving services to businesses.

Partners include:

Lichfield District Council: the lead authority for the Business Matters project. The council covers a population of approx. 97,000 spread over both urban and rural environments in Staffordshire encompassing 3,500 businesses. Lichfield District Council has won a significant number of awards over the years reflecting its profile and status as an energetic, innovative and pace setting district council.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough: based in the heart of the Black Country, the Council serves 310,000 residents in the Dudley area. Dudley is home to 16,000 businesses many of which are small businesses and the economic prosperity of the borough is very important to the Council.

Birmingham City Council: a principal partner in the Business Matters project and the largest council in the United Kingdom. According to Birmingham City Council's segmentation, 43,000 businesses operate in the area covered by the authority.

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council: as an area is an integral part of the West Midlands economy and the most productive in the region. Solihull has over 7,100 businesses which collectively support around 103,000 jobs within the Borough. There are also approximately 12,600 people self employed. Solihull has several key assets in the West Midlands including the National Exhibition Centre and Birmingham International Airport, along with two strategic investment sites, Birmingham Business Park and Blythe Valley

Other organisations participating in the project include **Staffordshire County Council**, **Sandwell MBC**, **Shropshire Council** and **Business Link West Midlands**.



Background

The overarching rationale for the project is to help councils understand the needs of local businesses in order to support:

1. economic development and regeneration

re-design of services to be more effective and efficient through targeting resources and removing duplication.

“The project is all about how do we understand, identify and improve services to businesses as a customer group.”

**Rita Wilson, Strategic Director
Organisational Development**

Council resources available to support businesses are limited and an improved understanding of the needs of local businesses will help them decide how best to target the support they can provide.

Councils wishing to apply customer insight tools and techniques to help them understand citizens can purchase off the shelf segmentations. In contrast, there is no public sector business segmentation readily available. The challenge is that businesses can have multiple locations, multiple facets, and multiple contacts.

Furthermore, churn can be high – with up to 20 per cent of businesses coming and going each year. Therefore for a council to provide support and deliver appropriate services, they will need to capture this data and use it effectively.

So far very little work has been done by any council or agency to apply Customer Insight to business customers and understand how they want to access services, what different customer segmentation models could apply and what opportunities exist to better design and deliver services to them.

“The way we generally find out that a business has closed in Trading Standards is when we visit the premises to conduct some form of intervention like an inspection, and we arrive to find there’s no longer a business. For example, close to 10 per cent of high risk visits to premises end when we arrive and find the business has moved out.”

**Trish Caldwell, Trading Standards,
Staffordshire County Council**

Given the difficult economic climate, understanding how best to support the growth of new businesses as well as the needs of those facing decline, in order to target services and resources accordingly is crucial. This is an area that the West Midlands Business Matters project is seeking to address.

The project’s ambition is to set the foundation and provide a framework to enable councils to segment, identify and understand the needs of businesses. The long term object is to get a better understanding of the business sector’s customer needs and therefore how a council can serve them better.

The segmentation that the partnership has delivered will help to support a number of initiatives designed to improve services to businesses. These include:

- Supporting work of the Local Enterprise Partnerships, following the proposed ending of the regional development agencies and the regional Business Link organisations.
- Facilitating single-point of contact, communication and information for business and (local service providers – see ‘Think Local’ below)
- Improving the efficiency of Regulatory Services by enhancing data sharing and reducing unnecessary inspection visits.
 - For example, Staffordshire County Council Trading Standards report that 10 per cent of high risk, and 13 per cent of medium risk inspector visits arrive to discover that the business is no longer trading
- Mapping the segmentation to the Local Authority A-Z. Different types of business will require different types of services. For example, if a graphic designer starts working from a residential property Environmental Services and Business Rates do not need to be informed. However, if that home-based business was a mobile food seller, then Environmental Services would have a role. The Local Enterprise Partnership has an interest in supporting both.
- Enabling risk-based approach to service delivery (see ‘Outcomes’)
- Identifying fast-growing business, or those that have the potential for fast growth, to ensure they have the greatest chance of success potentially through facilitating mentoring and networking across the local business sector (see ‘Think Local’ under Outcomes)

“The only way we find out if we’ve lost a business is by phoning the property agent and finding out when the property’s available. I know that that business has either shut down or moved out.”



Approach

The project has had three strands of work:

1. Undertaking research and producing best practice models in relation to business customer segmentation. There is a need to understand what are the key characteristics and attributes to form judgements about business needs and services. For instance if a business location is the head office for a company, the relevant council now has regulatory duties under the recent Primary Authority regulations that can be negotiated to extend across the whole business, not just that site.
2. Analysis of customer needs in relation to the business lifecycle, drawing out common needs. We would expect to understand the demographics of our citizens but do not look at businesses in the same way. Businesses may have similar characteristics but be at different stages in relation to growth/decline and the ways in which this can be assessed and responded to need to be identified. By understanding the business lifecycle councils can start to understand the services that a particular business may need and also importantly through early intervention may stop a more costly interaction with a business customer at a later stage when they may have not understood a requirement from the council.
3. Take a specific group of business customers and work with them to detail the issues and improvement opportunities they experience in accessing services and information from the council. The project looked at business start-ups, undertaking consultation with businesses and analysis of Business Link/Council

services to identify recommendations on how council services can be redesigned to meet customer needs.

Where possible the project has built on existing work and incorporated best practice from a wide range of sources from across the public sector. For example, the project drew on the segmentation work which has already been carried out at Birmingham City Council (Appendix E: Final Report). The project also incorporated some work being done at a localised level by the Tamworth and Lichfield Business and Economic Partnership.

Business Customer Segmentation

The project's segmentation work sought to identify and understand the key characteristics and attributes of businesses to form judgments about business needs and the services they need from the council.

The project sought to understand what business customer segments can be identified, how businesses want to access services and what opportunities exists to design and deliver services to them more effectively.

The purpose of any segmentation is to organise people/customers/organisations by similar characteristics or needs. Segmentations can range from simple to complex, depending on available data, number of segments and the objective of the segmentation.

Segmentation is the process of splitting customers, or potential customers (in this case businesses), in a market into different groups, or segments, within which customers share a similar level of interest in the same or comparable set of needs.

Two segmentation models were reviewed to inform the development of the model:

1. Birmingham City Council's segmentation of business customers in Birmingham.
2. BusinessLink.Gov segmentation of businesses across the UK.

Birmingham City Council Business Segmentation

When developing the segmentation, a key principle for Birmingham City Council (BCC) was a company's stake in Birmingham and the businesses relationship with BCC.

A council will have a different level of dialogue with a business depending on whether they have a head office in your area, or six premises.

A business's 'Stake in Birmingham' is gauged by the number of sites and employees a company has in Birmingham and whether the decision making is in the area or not. For example, McDonalds Food is a large company and has a stake in the Birmingham area. However they would be referenced as a site rather than company within this segmentation as a result of legal status and head office location. Head office will be responsible for business development, and may opt to work with another council as Primary Authority (as its source of specialist advice about compliance with trading standards, licensing and environmental health regulations). In contrast, a manufacturing company may have a head office in a locality, but all its operations may be elsewhere.

The business segmentation model is based on business data provided by pH Group (a subsidiary of Experian) and has been refined by applying Council internal data to the business segments. It classifies all companies (legal entities) and sites (no legal status) into distinct categories created hierarchically based on the company size, company structure and sectoral classification.

Business Link.Gov Segmentation

Business Link.gov (BL) developed their segmentation in order to classify all UK businesses from SME's to large businesses and employers. The model developed is based on 'complexity' (outlined below). Business Link.gov needs to understand the complexity of a business because their belief was that the more complex a business the less relevant advice from Business Link.gov website would be, essentially because a complex company would likely employ professionals dedicated to key roles and be less in need of Business Link's support.

Complexity in this segmentation is a score determined by the following variables:

- number of employees
- number of sites
- group status
- international trade
- legal status
- regulatory complexity (defined by BL).

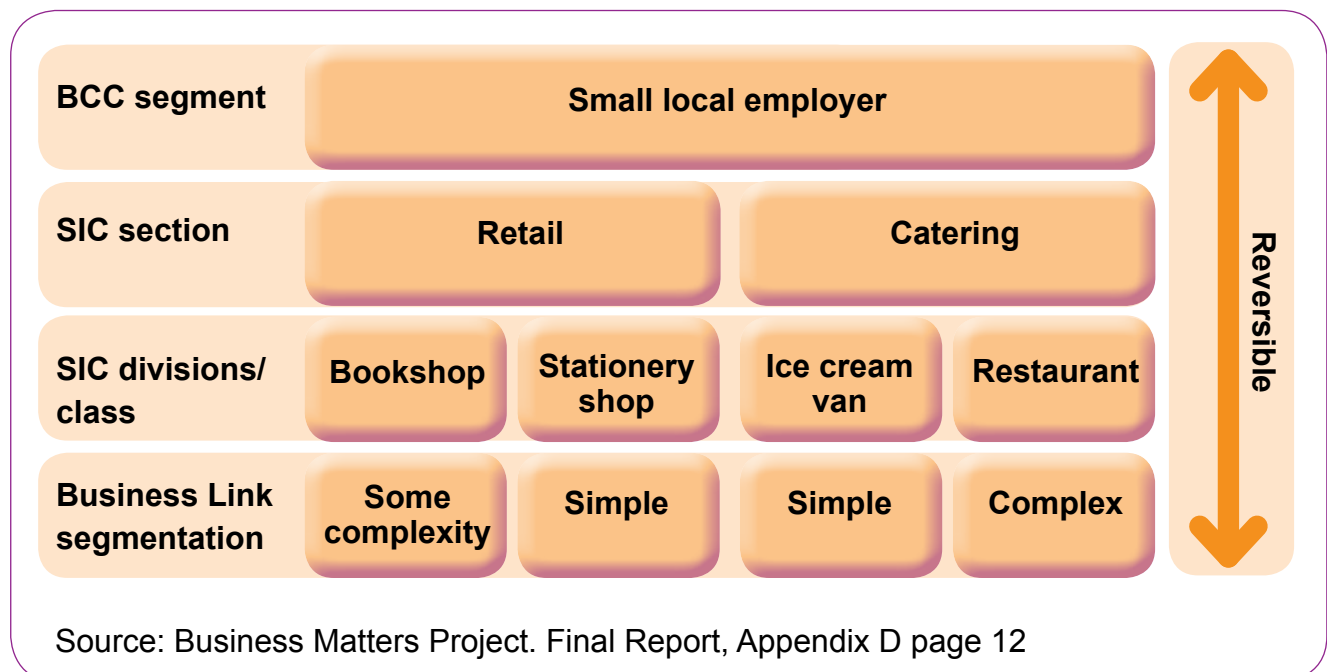
In summary a value has been applied to each of the above variables and the sum of the values determines a company's complexity and their segment as:

- very simple
- simple
- some complexity
- complex
- very complex
- dormant – a separate segment for a company not currently trading.

As with BCC's segmentation the source of data was from the pH group.

Having reviewed and discounted a number of other segmentation models, (see Final Report, Appendix D) the project concludes that the segmentation of the whole business universe is challenging, and proposes using a combination of the Birmingham City and Business Link segmentations according to purpose.

For example, based on the data analysed Small Local Employers make up 50 per cent of the Birmingham company segmentation. This segment can be further sub segmented using BL segmentation and SIC segments. Further value would be attained when overlaying a business life cycle stage and/ or a growth profile to the segmentation (see 'Business Life Cycle').



This model presents the user with a way of grouping businesses together using whichever factors are of particular interest. So, for example, if the user wanted to identify all those businesses regulated by the Licensing Act – such as a restaurant – then the user could search by SIC code, and then by the legal status of their location.

Business Customer Consultation

A major piece of work undertaken for the project was to go out to local businesses within the area to better understand their service needs. The project took data from the pH group and Business Link West Midlands (BLWM) in order to gauge the approximate size of population for the sample group.

The council partners were not in a position to produce a comprehensive list of their resident businesses, therefore the pH group was asked to provide an up to date list which the partners compared theirs against. A master list was then compiled.

This data collection in itself gave rise to an incredible statistic. When a master list of business-related data was drawn up and the Business Link West Midlands (BLWM) data was compared with the pH group data, from a file of 1864 records, BLWM had 909 of these on file (so 955 which came from pH were new to BLWM) in addition BLWM had an additional 2310 records of businesses which started up in the previous 12 months. This demonstrates the power of joining up data-sets and data-sharing; almost instantly the amount of “known” data doubled for each organisation involved in the sharing.

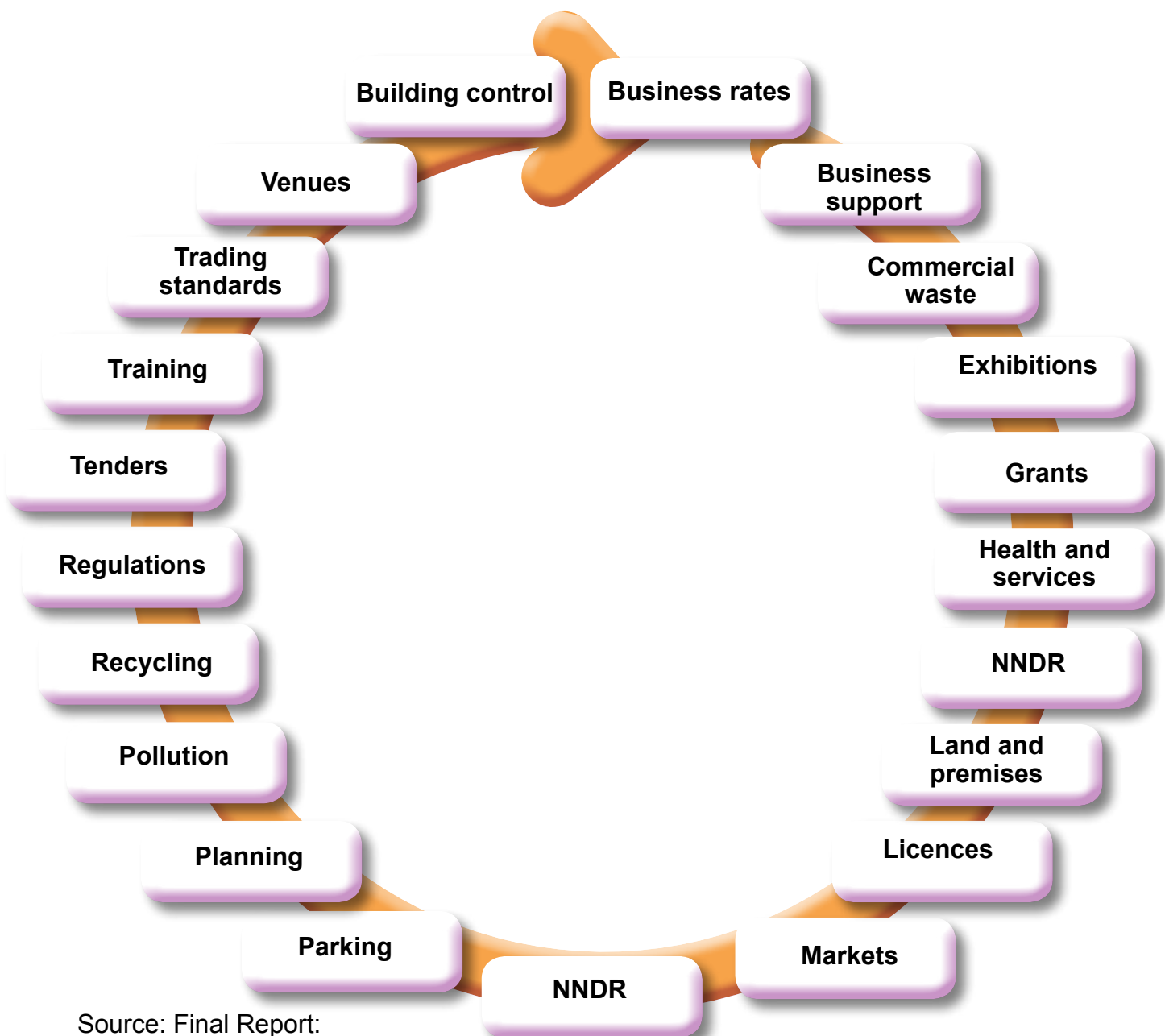
The project designed an online survey, asking businesses about their experience of the key stages in establishing a business (gaining finance, registering for VAT, finding premises) and where they turned to for advice. However, Business Matters found

the response rate to be negligible. Following this, the project contracted a firm of specialist telephone interviews who successfully gathered 300 responses.

Following these interviews, a series of focus groups were run with volunteer businesses. The focus groups gave the project detailed information about business experiences of using the council advice services when established. A report detailing the key steps in place and the experiences of the business at each key stage is included in Appendix H to the Final Report (accessible from the Local Government Improvement and Development Community of Practice website).

The diagram overleaf demonstrates all the possible touch points between the council and the business.

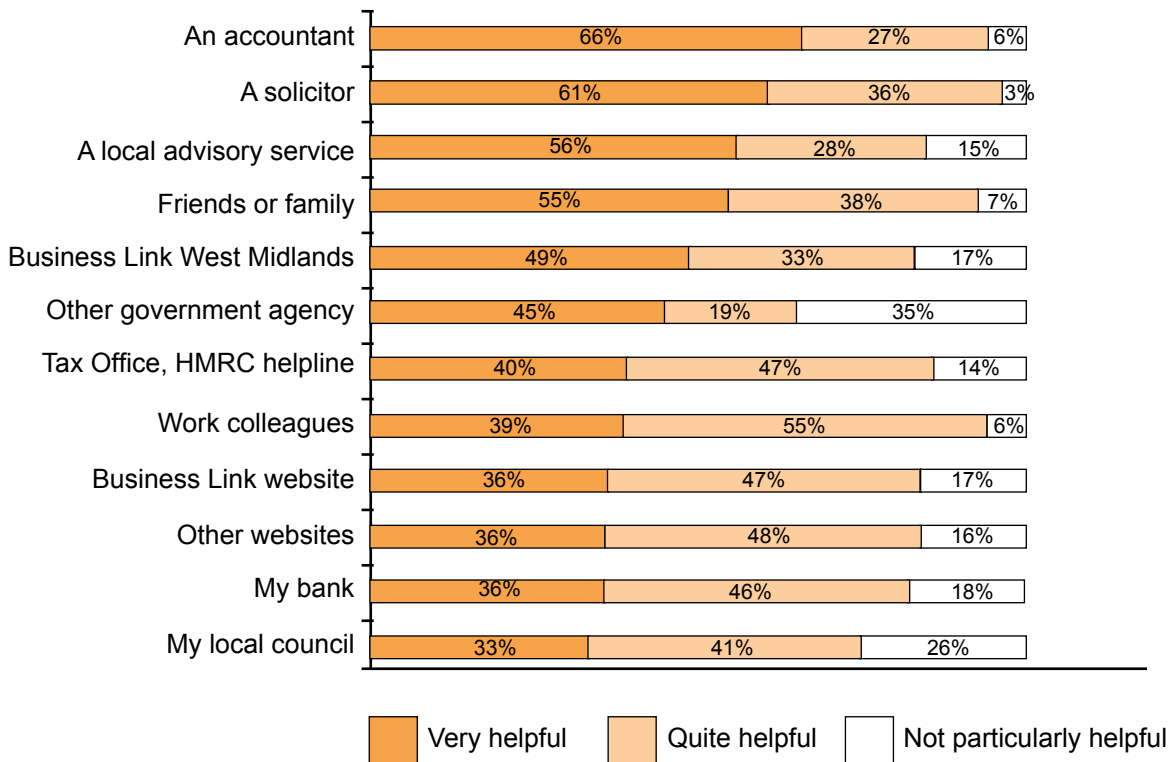
The project also utilised findings of a survey conducted by the Tamworth and Lichfield Business and Economic Partnership (BEP). Whilst being a smaller more focused study around business engagement, similar themes were found regarding the expectations of businesses to understand better what support is available, and a general lack of awareness regarding how councils can provide support and guidance. The results of this survey are captured both within the Guide to Journey Mapping and also the Lichfield Case Study (see Appendix G & J of the final report).



Source: Final Report:
Appendix G Page 17 Year tbc

Figure 1. Who do new businesses find helpful sources of advice when starting-up?

Source: Appendix, Page 8



Business Lifecycle

The objective of this work stream was to design a model to capture business lifecycle characteristics, differentiating between different stages of maturity, to help better understand the needs of businesses and to then look at how better to design access to services and information to help them get the support they need more effectively either by self service or contacting the appropriate officer.

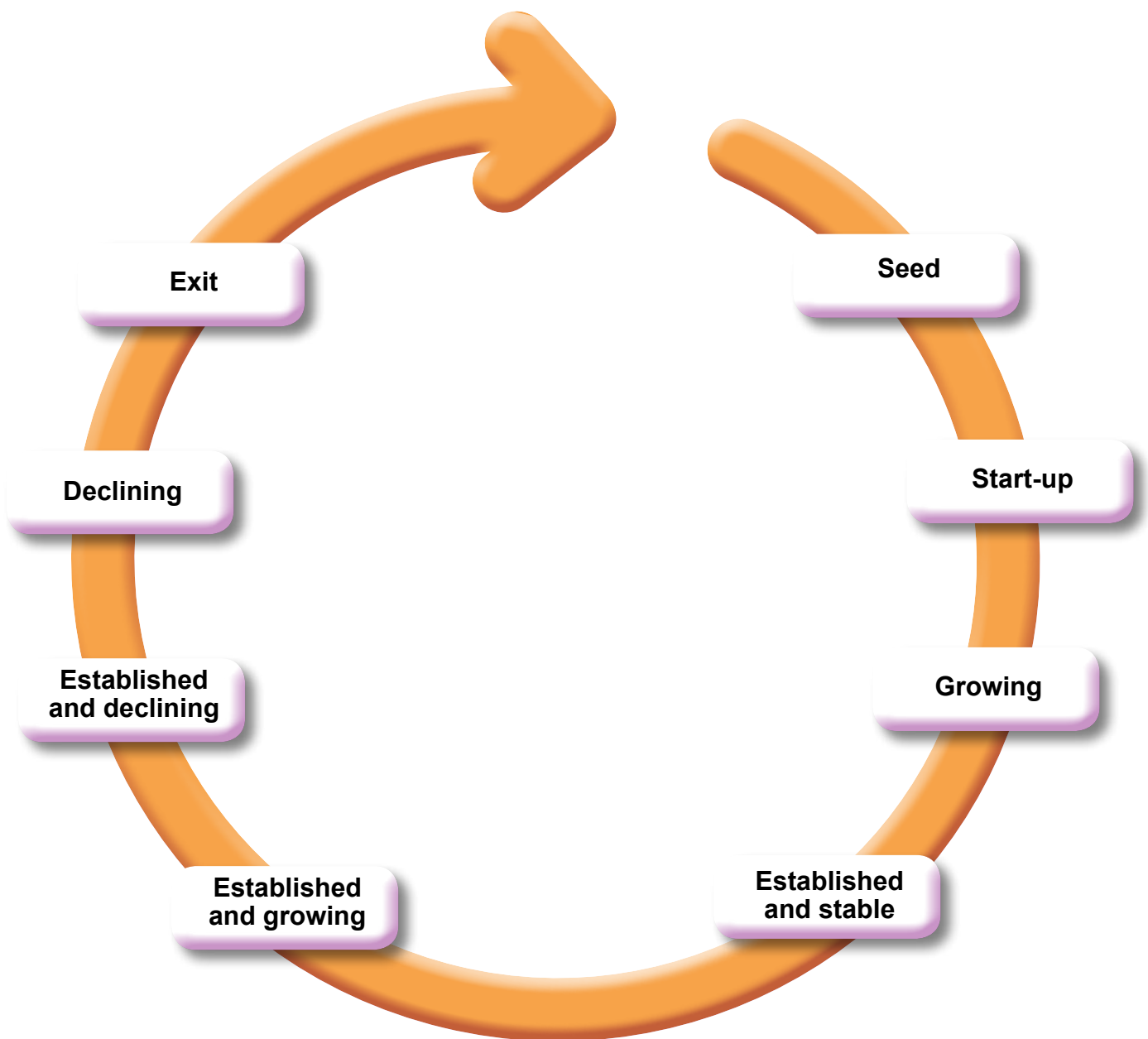
This work builds on the previous segmentation and business consultation work, and when used in conjunction with the segmentation model gives an excellent indication of what the business needs are dependent upon its life-cycle stage.

“The issue of demographics... We wouldn’t dream of looking at citizen data without having some idea of who’s old, who’s young, so we wouldn’t suggest that we were providing services equally for the elderly and for children, but we do for businesses. We don’t actually have any real understanding of the demographics of businesses.”

**Rita Wilson, Strategic Director
Organisational Development**

Businesses may have similar characteristics in terms of size, turnover, number of sites or employees but be at different stages in relation to growth/decline. Differentiating between different stages of maturity will help councils to better understand the needs of businesses. For example, a fast growing start-up may require mentoring or assistance with taking on employees, whereas a large company experiencing difficulties may be looking for financial support business rates.

Having reviewed a range of life cycle models, the project developed the following model:



The lifecycle model is the final piece in the jigsaw – providing the basis for a holistic view of the business landscape. This life-cycle model attempts to classify as much of the business population as possible by using data items that are available on the majority of businesses (employment size, age, premise type and legal status).

The model gives the user a good indication of the ages and stages of the business population, much as say a population pyramid would give you this data for citizens in a given geographical area. Having collected all this information it is now possible to start thinking about the way in which services are funded, allocated and delivered to the business community.

Findings

Segmentation analysis

The analysis of the segmentation in Birmingham City revealed that a large proportion of the lower performing businesses have 50 plus employees – being large does not exempt a business from low performance. The project also compared the city to eight other major cities and found for example that Manchester has got double the number of head offices and half the number proportionally of small businesses. As a result, local businesses may be more likely to seek out networking and mentoring opportunities in Birmingham, or employer's advice, than in Manchester – while Manchester needs to ensure its business districts are attractive places to locate a Head Office.

Surveying

The telephone survey produced the following findings:

- most of the council services provided to businesses are premises based or about business growth, but 96 per cent of those surveyed are micro business and 28 per cent are home based and these services are not deemed relevant by respondents
- the services that are provided by councils are not visible to local businesses
- the 'front-end' of the council is not inviting for business, there is currently a bias towards regulation and compliance
- there are many other organisations such as BusinessLink, HMRC and Banks that provide this information already however, the different offers are not clear.

One of the unexpected insights that arose regarded the difficulty businesses have comprehending business rates. Whereas the councils were specifically seeking to

understand the different touch points these business customers had and therefore had expected to hear views on regulatory services and business support, the main theme of the interviews, invariably was about the complexity and uncertainty of business rates.

After having mapped the key stages that business go through when starting out, it was possible to deduce some important facts for the council partners:

- local authorities are not usually considered at the initial 'idea' stage of a business
- other sources of information including BusinessLink, HMRC and Banks are more widely used
- when seeking advice on grants and funding, businesses are usually redirected to business link by the council and no real engagement is made with the business at that time
- an accountant or solicitor is often the first or key point of contact for a new business
- telephone surveying is a much more effective way of soliciting the views of businesses than online surveying.

Outputs

The Final Report includes the following outputs

How to guides

There are three "How to Guides." The "How to Guides" describe the work behind developing the three models, their testing and the outcomes? They are designed to be easily replicated by others. These "How to Guides" can be found in the following appendices of the report:

- Appendix D – How to Approach a Business Customer Segmentation
- Appendix F – How to Conduct a Business Lifecycle Analysis
- Appendix G – How to Conduct a Journey Mapping Exercise

Case studies

The project has included a review of some of the work undertaken in relation to business customer knowledge, which is contained in Appendix I of the Final Report.

There is also a series of mini case studies summarising each of the partners' work in relation to this project, setting out why they have been involved and some lessons learned. This covers looking at some of the challenges around having accurate data on who the businesses are, as well as different aspects of customer insight. The case studies on this project are in the Final Report as follows:

- Lichfield DC Appendix J
- Birmingham MBC Appendix K
- Dudley MBC Appendix L
- Solihull MBC Appendix M
- Staffordshire CC Appendix N

Project governance

The Business Matters Project has been governed by a formal Project Board with representatives from all of the partners. The governance structure is well-established with the team having won the NLPG/NSG Best Partnership Between Organisations 2009 Award. A dedicated project manager was appointed who provided progress reports to monthly meetings of the Project Board and was supported by specialist resources with expertise in customer insight. The original timescale for completing the work was slightly extended as a result on the online survey having a poor take-up and the need to undertake a telephone survey with over 300 businesses.

Project information and data is also available on the www.workingwithbusiness.org.uk website.



Outcomes

The main recommendation from the Project Board's final report was to review the way in which council services are currently delivered to business start-ups. There is often no direct contact with the council until regulatory services become involved. However, there is value in the council making closer links with local accountants, business formation agents, banks and others in the private sector to enable them to highlight the services that the council can provide. Lichfield District Council's 'Think Local' website facilitates relationships between local public and private service providers and local businesses (See text box 'Think Local').

The other major achievement of the project is in making central government departments understand that location has to be a key identifier as it can provide a common thread or anchor point for other data relating to a business. Furthermore, many services (such as premise inspections) are delivered at location level – therefore being able to identify geographic concentrations of businesses with similar requirements could potentially help both regulatory service planning and economic development. With the demise of the regional development agencies and the regional Business Link organisations, and the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities have a central role in delivering services to business. Understanding local need will be critical, a number of the partners are working on a website 'Think Local', designed to be a single point of contact and channel for communication between businesses and the public sector agencies serving them.

There is also the potential for risk-based service delivery, where services are targeted based on an evaluation of the risks. For example, an area might have two factories with identical characteristics but one of them manufactures fireworks, while the other produces plastic buckets. A risk-based segmentation would help regulatory services target their resources efficiently.

Think Local

“The Think Local website is informed by the conclusions from the Business Matters work on Segmentation and Lifecycle. Think Local has been set up to encourage businesses to register their services and their needs not just for the benefit of the authorities, but to encourage business to business trading in the area and to co-ordinate the various offers of support from the public sector overall.

A key aspect of Think Local is businesses ‘self serving’ in terms of keeping their details current. Businesses are encouraged to amend or supplement their details on Think Local, since by ‘self-serving’ in this way, rather than relying on a point in time when they need to access council services, we are able to capture a richer and more extensive amount of useful information and intelligence about a business, such as sectors of activity and business specialisms. In addition, this means we are able to become aware of a greater number of business changes in circumstances, making the business dataset much more current than otherwise would be the case.

This additional Think Local data will also feed into the Council’s internal data verification and sharing processes as an additional source, which will further strengthen and supplement cross departmental working and data sharing, ultimately improving service delivery through greater business intelligence.

Think Local is not just about capturing business data. Through the current redevelopment of its website, it is to become an interactive portal where businesses will be encouraged to share good news stories, innovations, product developments, business problems and issues and to generally network with each other in a virtual environment.

This business networking activity will capture a vast array of qualitative information about businesses, which will allow us to better identify businesses in terms of where they are within the Lifecycle spectrum. It will also help identify potential high growth or potential high growth businesses that require targeted support, in addition to businesses who may have specific issues holding back their development, enabling appropriate local support interventions to be developed.”

**James Roberts, Economic Development and Enterprise Manager,
Tamworth Borough Council and Lichfield District Council Shared Service**



Location is a way of bringing together different views of the same role or objective. So in our case we may find that different business systems will register it as F Smith or Fred Smith but by using location, we can actually synergise and collate that. Then HMRC, who was quite dismissive initially of location at best, recognised that location is actually a way of reengineering some of their business processes to bring them together in a more cohesive way.

**Brian Higgs, GMIS Unit Manager,
Dudley MBC**

Lessons learnt

Segmentation

Segmentation requires a high level of data integrity, and a large amount of specific data such as business name, address, parent company, turnover, number of employees, and type of business. Most councils do not hold data in a way it could be readily analysed. The Business Matters partnership produced the Business Description Schema to provide a common standard for the capture of data around businesses (available from www.workingwithbusiness.org.uk/schema/).

Councils need to be encouraged to consolidate their data sources and begin to build up a 'one version of the truth' for their business customers before any real value could be gained from integration.

Surveying

The initial approach to the survey was to write to just over 2,200 business start-ups with the link for the online survey questionnaire and ask them to respond. There were under 40 responses using this method. The group then employed a specialist tele-survey company who were able to elicit just over 300 responses to the survey. From the 300 respondents, 40 volunteered to take part in further focused work by attending one of three planned focus groups. These focus groups would be used as an opportunity to look more in depth at some of the issues facing small businesses.

However, despite a large number of volunteers, few actually attended on the given days. There were no financial or other incentives used. A total of seven businesses responded to the focus group questions. Four of those responded by email and three attended a focus group.

Life cycle

An understanding of the life-cycle of business will help the authorities to identify the fastest growing businesses and those most likely to produce employment opportunities for local residents. The life-cycle model could also indicate where businesses are in decline, which would provide councils with the opportunity to provide support (or at least incorporate the information into their planning assumptions).

However, using the life-cycle model requires a high level of data integrity. But, most councils do not hold information in a way it can be readily analysed. The life-cycle model should not be used in isolation, as it is of little value without segmenting the data initially. It would currently be difficult to apply this model successfully in many councils due to the high level of data integrity required.

In the project's view, the most useful part of the work has been 'How to understand Business Lifecycle' and this is the work that should if possible be taken forward above all others. The reason for this is simple, at the moment within a council there is no way of determining if a business is succeeding or failing and what help could be provided if it were. Given that the local economy is one of the most important drivers for employment and prosperity councils need to nurture businesses where possible and be able to identify and help those businesses that are going to be the stars of the future.

“We have the opportunity to grow the Think Local 4 Business infrastructure – currently covering East Staffordshire, Tamworth and Lichfield – as a local delivery vehicle for all business support across the wider LEP area, and thus help to make our LEP area the easiest in which to set up and grow a business. This will be underpinned by the further development of the Business Matters Project to share business data and intelligence across the LEP area.”

Opportunities for service transformation

After completing the work on customer segmentation, life-cycle and business consultation it has become apparent that there are several opportunities for service transformation.

- The most immediate and obvious area for change discovered during the research, was that councils, were in effect, “competing” with other agencies when trying to provide advice to business start-ups. However, the removal of the Regional Development Agencies and regional Business Link will alter the landscape significantly, resulting in a change in roles for councils. The lesson to be taken into the creation of the Local Enterprise Partnerships is that the co-ordination and signposting of services between agencies needs to be clear if we are going to provide the support and advice these business customers will need.
- There was a high degree of overlap between regional business link and the council, as well as other agencies, for example, local chambers of commerce, the Prince’s Trust and the banking/ accountancy sectors. The majority of businesses interviewed were not aware that a council was in a position to offer advice to business start-ups; therefore, the services available are not currently accessed in a meaningful way. If the council were to focus on awareness raising with other agencies, businesses could be effectively sign-posted to the council when required.
- Compliance with the European Services Directive; there should be a single point of contact by electronic means which enables interested parties to obtain information in order to engage with relevant organisations for effective trade. This depends on having an understanding of the services

that would be linked to particular types of businesses and characteristics, for instance being able to tie up to the esd toolkit business services categorisation list.

- Knowing your business demographics helps determine where the council's resources should be allocated. For example, the council may achieve a better "return of investment" for their locality by focusing their resources on fast growing businesses, or developing a risk-based approach to regulatory services.
- Clearly technology is an enabler in this situation, going forward councils must maximise the use of the technology available to them so that support is given to multiple organisations from one source (and meets the needs of the local businesses – see 'Think Local' on page 17). This approach ties in with the larger Business Matters vision of having a single trusted source of data. Currently there are too many repeat contacts and multiple data collection and storage which are inefficient both for the council and the customer. If efficiency gains are to be made in this area then the total number of data transactions that happen manually must be reduced.

Other recommendations include:

- Work in partnership across local government and service boundaries to develop responsive services meeting the needs of the local business community.
- Identify the service gaps using the tools and begin to plug the gaps.
- Remove overlaps, not only within the organisation but also from outside.
- Consider whether the council should provide certain services which are available elsewhere. Use this information to inform service planning and delivery.

Benefits

The segmentation model provides a foundation and framework – where quality data is available – that would enable a council to:

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by understanding the key characteristics of a business and how that would link to service needs.
- Develop a needs matrix, so for example, where there are emerging industries; economic development teams could target inward investment strategies.
- Collect evidence of the economic base (business start ups/rationalisation etc) to feed into our Local Economic Assessment that is passed to our partners and council members to inform/influence the strategy and delivery of services.
- Identify all the businesses which have a head office in their area. This links in with the Primary Authority 2 principle promoted by the Local Better Regulation Office. Map business demographics, to enable a targeted approach to business support.
- Attract inward investment. Having a sound knowledge base of emerging and established businesses demographics will allow better promotion and influence for business investment.
- Measure business birth rates by population and geography in a consistent and robust method, influencing the business start up packages to achieve Local Targets.
- Join-up working – allow information to be passed freely within council departments, aiding joined up working to ensure better efficiency and the resolution of enquiries.

Next steps

- Make the necessary improvement to how business customers access services and information so more effective and efficient.
- Use the insight to inform the work being undertaken to develop Local Enterprise Partnerships. Since this work started a key development has been that of the Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Local Enterprise Partnership submission for Birmingham & Solihull with East Staffordshire, Lichfield & Tamworth contains the following reference.
- Engage with the business community to involve them in the design and delivery of services.
- Build on the relationship with businesslink.gov to work towards a unified approach, particularly in terms of the front end web services available to business.
- Promote the work of the Business Matters project at every opportunity with national and local government to encourage as many councils and national government agencies as possible to take up the opportunity of data sharing as described on the website www.workingwithbusiness.org.uk

More specifically, Dudley MBC is undertaking some work to map the segmentation to an A to Z of services. Hence, the segmentation becomes an information management trigger. A business of a particular type will have need for specific services, and the model can be used to proactively inform those services.

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Local Government Group

The Local Government Group is made up of six organisations which support, promote and improve local government.



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