

**Report for: Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	9 February 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Scrutiny Review on Customer Experience
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Shumaila Dar – Interim Assistant Director of Strategy & Partnerships
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member area:</b>	Resources – Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor Phillip O'Dell
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix 1: Customer Experience Scrutiny Scope

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation**

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This document sets out and defines the aims, objectives, and scope of the Customer Experience Scrutiny Review.

**Recommendation:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to approve the Customer Experience Scrutiny Scope document.

## Section 2 – Report

### Introductory paragraph

#### The following is taken from the Key Strategic Issues for Scrutiny Work Programme

On the 18 July Cabinet agreed the **following** set of principles to underpin the strategy to improve the Customer Experience:

- Reduce the need for contact – be upfront and proactive when there is a problem and eliminate avoidable contacts through reducing the need to make contact in the first place through well run services.
- When a resident interacts with the Council, it will be a positive customer experience
- Ensure customers have a seamless journey through the Council for all their needs through joined-up technology, processes, and information The IT infrastructure should be centrally controlled and effectively utilised by staff to the benefit of the residents.
- ensure self-service is engaging and simple to use so that digital is the channel that residents actively choose.
- Provide alternative channels where required to support people to self-serve or provide an alternative means of contact for more complex issues
- Follow up with the customer either for a progress update and to set expectations or to confirm that the request has been resolved
- Ensure that Council services are the best that they can be; focussed around the customer and built on efficient processes.

A significant amount of work is underway, across the council, to take forward this strategy and deliver the customer experience improvements that our residents deserve.

The Administration has agreed a new vision for the Council to restore the pride in Harrow along with three priorities and these reflect the status of putting residents at the heart of what we do. An action plan has been developed to improve these areas, with continuous improvement over the next 18 months:

To **create a positive experience**, we will be clear as to what our service standards are and publish them on our website and set expectations through our email acknowledgements. A training programme will be developed for our staff to ensure that they can deliver against these, and champions will be identified across the Council to support the organisation.

To be an efficient Council it is important to **reduce the need to contact** where unnecessary. This means understanding where the customer ‘pain points’ are

and the causes of failure demand. [Failure demand is defined as demand caused by a failure to do something or do something right for the customer]. Further work will be done to be more proactive with our communications alerting residents to potential problems in advance and by using more modern communication tools to help provide useful web links. There will be additional training provided to our staff to ensure that we can handle requests at the first point of contact reducing wait times for enquiries to be resolved.

The Council is reviewing how its computer infrastructure is managed and links to our website to ensure our **residents have a seamless customer journey** through integrated technology. Council staff will have a greater awareness of services provided so that residents see how we operate as 'One Council.

With over 95% of enquiries being handled through self-service, **digital is the channel of choice**. Our residents will be treated as valued customers through our website through the provision of a personalised website with a consistent look and feel across our digital estate and we will be clearer where services are only available online. We are looking for all Council services to be delivered through the website in a friction-free way to reduce the need to use the telephone where demand is high, such as Council Tax, and user feedback will be integral to this. We will investigate the use of 'app' technology to provide more intuitive access utilising technical abilities of smartphones.

We appreciate that digital access is not appropriate for everybody, and we will **provide alternative channels where required**. Work is underway to better understand digital exclusion and those affected by it. The Council will provide advice and guidance through supported self-service at Greenhill library, and we are reviewing how to best use the staff resources working in the Council's contact centre to provide telephone support alongside the functionality that the telephone system provides.

To ensure that our **Services are the best that they can be** we will review both how services are delivered as a whole (such as the front door to Adult Social care and Council Tax) along with key customer journeys (such as subscribing to Garden Waste, reporting bin issues and ordering a parking permit

Once a service has been delivered it is important that we follow up with our **after care**. Along with checking that the issue is resolved we will capture resident feedback across all our channels so that we can further develop our service delivery. We will also review our complaints process to ensure that we better improve what we do and look at how we best interact with our elected representatives – both Councillors and MPs.

Councillor Samir Sumaria has agreed to chair this review which will report back to Overview and Scrutiny in June/July 2023.

The details of the scope for the scrutiny report are in Appendix 1 of this report.

### **Ward Councillors' comments**

Not applicable as report relates to all wards.

### **Financial Implications**

None for Council

### **Performance Issues**

None for Council

### **Environmental Impact**

None for Council

### **Risk Management Implications**

None for Council

### **Equalities Implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

None for Council

### **Council Priorities**

#### Putting Residents First

The customer experience scrutiny review aims to make recommendations to improve the experience of Harrow residents accessing the various services provided by the Council.

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Shumaila Dar - Assistant Director of Strategy & Partnerships

Date: 1 February 2023

### **Mandatory Checks**

**Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards**

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

#### **Background Papers**

Improving the Customer Experience – Cabinet Report 18 July 2022

#### **Contact:**

Mira Chauhan, Policy Officer

[Mira.chauhan@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:Mira.chauhan@harrow.gov.uk)