Response to Scrutiny Review Group Recommendations

SRG recommendation	Response	Next steps
1. The council, and especially its contact centre agents, needs to have a single view of customers that includes all the council's transactions with that person or business. .	Contact Centre agents in Access Harrow can view recent contacts via the SAP CRM system and can view a customer's MyHarrow account Further access to LOB systems is available through the CCP-H application when the advisor has permissions to view following the appropriate training.	To review options for further opportunities to exploit technologies as CRM and CCP-H upgrades take place. Ongoing training and multi-skilling will enable staff to view more systems.
2. Bringing together staff who deal with customer transactions and joining up the systems they use is essential to improving the quality, speed and reliability of customer service.	Access harrow is the 'front door' to most Council services ensuring that a one stop approach is taken where possible. Ongoing quality monitoring is in place to continually improve the customer experience	Ongoing training and multi-skilling will enable staff to handle a wider range of enquiries. Regular 1:1s with advisors ensure that feedback is given on a frequent basis to improve customer care.
3. Customer satisfaction should be a key test for all council services. Feedback should be obtained whenever possible when a case closes.	Customer feedback is collected at the following points: - The One Stop Shop - MyHarrow account - Web form completion	Discussions are in place with Cisco to activate a facility to collect customer satisfaction with the contact centre.

4. The council should continue to do all it can to exploit taxpayers' investment in My Harrow and expand the services it offers. The council should remind customers that it is quicker and more reliable to contact the council using My Harrow than other routes.	A programme of enhancements is in place for 2014 to expand the MyHarrow account: - Expanded Council Tax forms - Housing Benefit E-Claims - Links to the new library site - Integration with Towards Excellence project - Employee Account - Leaseholders portal	Opportunities are being discussed in the following areas: - Housing Repairs - School Admissions - Planning & Building Control
5. Customers should be able to find out easily what is happening to their enquiry or service request and should always be informed when their request has been completed. The My Harrow Account is the best route through the personalised alert system.	A series of update alerts are being tested within Public Realm Alerts are available for certain updates such as missed bins whereby the Council proactively contacts the resident in the event of an issue	If testing is successful, further update alerts will be made available
6. The council needs to do more to ensure all customer service requests are closed and to monitor those cases remaining open for a longer period than usual. All customer requests should be closed on the Customer Relationship Management system when the requested information or service has been completed. Requests that are still open after,	CRM tickets are predominantly closed either by the advisor once they have completed the transaction, or by the CCP-H integration once the work item has been closed in the back office or workflow system.	To review outstanding tickets to identify the most effective way to chase and/or close down tickets where applicable

	say, 30 days, should be referred to the senior manager and portfolio holder.		
7.	The council needs to manage customers' expectations better about whether a request will be met. The council should make it clear at the earliest possible stage whether a customer's request will be met, or whether it will be declined because it is not policy to do so. Those cases need to be clearly distinguished from those that are still open and awaiting completion. No case should remain open longer than, say, 60 days.	This recommendation is accepted	To confirm appropriate service levels for back office processes To update website where required
8.	The council should publish more information on its performance in meeting its customer service standards, distinguishing those requests submitted using My Harrow from those made via other channels.	Customer Service performance can be found on the website along with the Customer Service standards.	To review of other data available to be published
9.	The Council should continue to monitor changing customer preferences for contacting the Council and encourage customers to use the more cost-effective methods of communication and transaction. These could include 'self-service' kiosks/PCs as well as My Harrow Account.	The method by which residents contact the Council is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. The target for 2013/14 is that 70% of all contact will be via self service.	To share progress updates
10.	The council needs to strike the right balance in encouraging channel migration. It should avoid being too aggressive and provide re-	Over 90% of households in Harrow have access to broadband internet and there are now over	To continually monitor where further assistance is required for residents

assurance that it aims to take people with it. The council will need to ensure that no one is left behind, for example customers without ready access to IT systems. It is likely there will always be a need for phone calls or in-person visits for some types of transactions. Access Harrow offers residents a masterclass on the website and MyHarrow Account to improve user-confidence and increase channel shift.	50,000 MyHarrow accounts in operation. PC access is available at both the Civic Centre and the library network and basic internet training courses are available through the Adult & Community learning teams A face to face and telephony service is available for residents where appropriate	
11. Where possible the council should seek customers' active agreement to share their details between council departments to allow the council to achieve a single view of its transactions with customers.	Information is shared across Access Harrow and the Council where appropriate and enhances the customer experience	To work with the Council's Information Security manager to ensure compliance with existing and future legislation
12. The council should review the ways it seeks proof of identity with a view to agreeing a standard approach across all services. This review should include an option for residents to agree their electoral roll registration can be used for this purpose.	Information is shared across Access Harrow and the Council where appropriate and enhances the customer experience	To work with the Council's Information Security manager to ensure compliance with existing and future legislation
13. The council should explore other ways to widen customer access through new outlets/service points e.g. using Libraries to deliver more services & to encourage My Harrow take-up. This is carried out via tele-kiosks in libraries where residents have a	The telepresence kiosks are used 130 times each month at the three locations.	Customer interactions via the telepresence kiosks will be monitored with the possibility of increasing both the number of services and locations where appropriate.

greater propensity to transact face to face.		
14. The council should re-invest savings released by channel shift in further website and web form development.	Access Harrow has planned savings of £1.3million over five years from 2012/13	To discuss with Finance partners
15. The council's website should continue to adopt a 'transactions' focus with less emphasis on promoting good news stories about the Council	The website is regularly reviewed to ensure that it covers the key transactions requested by residents.	To continue reviewing the website To ensure that the processes of key transactions are customer friendly
16. The council should ensure there are as few pages as possible customers need to visit in order to obtain information, request a service or make a payment. The total number of web pages should also be kept to a minimum.	The website is regularly reviewed to ensure that key information is easily located	To continue reviewing the website to ensure that key information is easily located
17. The council should investigate the different approaches people use to access information to ensure those using a search engine and therefore skipping the 'home' pages can see key messages.	Web Trends and Site Improve software enables the web team to monitor how key pages are accessed	To continue monitoring Site Improve and Web Trends. To continually engage with residents to check how key pages are accessed
18. The council 's aim should be to make web forms the standard method for customers to make electronic contact and to close down those email accounts used for that purpose.	This recommendation is accepted	To ensure that relevant web forms are available To close down email addresses

19. While emails continue to be used, the council should investigate software to interrogate emails for faster routing. The management of group email accounts also needs to improve e.g. monitoring the inbox and closing down redundant accounts.	An email manager system is to be implemented as part of the telephony upgrade plan	To exploit the capabilities of the new technology available
20. The council should give residents the option to upload photos when making a request or reporting an incident (e.g. graffiti).	This recommendation is accepted	To be investigated with Firmstep (IT provider for webforms)
21. As a priority, the council needs to clarify ownership of calls that are handed over between Access Harrow & 'back office' departments and who is responsible for answering the customer's request and closing the case.	This recommendation is accepted	To work with back office teams to ensure clear lines of responsibility are in place for customer updates
22. The council needs to review its definition of 'avoidable contact' so that is more standardised and less open to variations in individual interpretation.	The current definition is a Government definition formulated as part of NI14 and staff are trained and monitored on consistency of interpretation	To ensure that staff interpretation is consistent through training and monitoring
23. The council needs to do more to examine patterns of repeat calls and to have a clearer	Reports identifying 'reasons for contact' and	Reports to be shared at monthly liaison meetings

view about how such cases should be escalated to senior management level.	'avoidable contact' are produced each month	
24. The council needs to confirm its Civic Centre estate strategy and take advantage of the reduced One-Stop-Shop footfall so that the in-person customer contact points for all services are located together. This needs to be a priority in any longer-term plan to rebuild the Civic Centre.	This recommendation is accepted	To be discussed with the accommodation team
25. The council should continue its programme of 'mystery shopping' and examine the option of using volunteer staff to expand it.	This recommendation is accepted	To be discussed at the Customer Services Working Group
26. The council should do more to exploit the knowledge and experience of frontline staff in improving and extending quality assurance techniques	This recommendation is accepted	To be discussed at the Customer Services Working Group
27. The council should encourage customers to comment on the service they receive wherever possible	Customer feedback is collected at the following points: - The One Stop Shop - MyHarrow account - Web form completion	Discussions are ongoing with Cisco to activate a facility to collect customer satisfaction with the contact centre.
28. When a complaint has been made or something has gone wrong, it is vital to regain customer trust as soon as possible	Stage I of the process is aimed at a speedy, local resolution of the complaint.	The is will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting

29. The aim should be for conversation about resolving a complaint and learning from it rather than contesting responsibility.	Stage I of the process is aimed at a speedy, local resolution of the complaint.	The is will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting
30. The council needs to have a clear timetable for responding to complaints. This should be common across for all council services, subject to any overriding national statutory requirements.	The Corporate Complaints policy sets at expected timescales for each stage of the process. Performance is measured against these standards	The is will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting
31. The council should give complaints a higher profile and improve learning from them. This should involve making complaints more visible within the council and on the website.	Complaints data is made available to directorates and forms part of the quarterly improvement process	The is will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting Feedback to be sought from directorate leads and members.
32. The council should re-examine the formal process it uses to deal with complaints and those used in other councils and look at the case for moving to a two-stage process rather than the current three stages.	The complaint coordinators are discussing the option to move to a two stage process	Aim to move to a new process in 2014
33. The council needs to ensure there is a consistent approach to logging and recording of all complaints and that it includes those submitted outside the standard routes e.g. via a councillor	All complaints and/or member's enquiries can be submitted via the on-line form which will automatically date-stamp the enquiry and standardise the format via the CRM system.	The is will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting

34. The council should review the following: The tone used in responses (avoid defensive) The completeness of response letters Oversight/investigation from outside the area that is the subject of the complaint.	This recommendation is accepted	This will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting. The Council's corporate complaints manager will work with service leads on improving the standard of responses.
35. The council needs to ensure all staff dealing with complaints are trained in the corporate procedure and on the use of the Customer Relationship Management system to ensure accurate reporting	All service complaint coordinators are fully trained on the process and on the CRM system	This will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting.
36. The council needs to clarify how complaints involving more than one service are coordinated.	The Council's corporate complaints manager takes the lead on a complaint which spans over a single service area and will dictate who will be responsible for collating the response.	Handling such complaints will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting.
37. The council needs to review how Access Harrow can monitor the progress of complaints involving an external contractor.	The Council's corporate complaints manager works with service leads on monitoring external contractor performance	Handling such complaints will be monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting.
38. Where calls and other cases have been transferred to the 'back office' the council needs to ensure there is clear responsibility for telling customers their request will or will not be met. Calls must be closed off so that customers are not left in the dark. Leaving customers to contact a councillor is the worst option: it shows the system has failed.	This recommendation is accepted	To work with back office teams to ensure clear lines of responsibility are in place for customer updates

39. The council should look to extend to all services the practice of asking a sample of customers for feedback six weeks after a repair has been completed.	This recommendation is accepted	To be reviewed at the Customer Services Working Group
40. The council should encourage frontline staff to ask customers whether anything else needs doing and report back.	Staff in Access Harrow ask customers "whether there is anything else that they can help with" where appropriate	This will continue to be monitored through the call quality process and staff 1:1s