SRG recommendation	Update
1. The council should include customer care standards and staff responsibilities in relation to these standards in induction training for new staff	An agenda item to be discussed at the Customer Services Working Group
2. 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. Ongoing training and multi-skilling will enable staff to view more systems. Further access to LOB systems is available through the CCP-H application when the advisor has permissions to view following the appropriate training. The SAP CRM system is due an upgrade and the specification will review how the CRM system and Myharrow account can be integrated to provide a single view of interactions with the Council
3. 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, training and multi-skilling is in place to continually improve the customer experience Regular 1:1s with advisors ensure that feedback is given on a frequent basis to improve customer care and how to represent the brand of Harrow Council.

4.	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 - Complaints - Through social media The Call Centre telephone platform will undergo an upgrade towards the end of the year at which point we can activate a facility to collect customer satisfaction with the contact centre.
5.	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 integrated into the back office - Housing Benefit E-Claims integrated into the back office - Links to the new library site - Integration with Towards Excellence project - Employee Account - Community Champions portal re-brand - A new Housing portal - School Admissions waiting lists - Increased automated alerts to 'close the loop'

6. 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 and have launched on the Community Champions portal Alerts are available for certain updates such as missed bins whereby the Council proactively contacts the resident in the event of an issue Investigations are underway as how to blend the CRM, website and MyHarrow account to provide a personalised online service
7. 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, say, 30 days, should be referred to the senior manager and portfolio holder.	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. Work is ongoing as how to best review outstanding tickets and to identify the most effective way to chase and/or close down tickets where applicable
8. 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.	The web team are working with service areas to ensure the website is updated where required

9.	All accepted recommendations should be fully notified and discussed with all council service providers	Ongoing changes to the delivery of frontline services are discussed with directorate leads.
10.	The council should standardise its customer service responses between services	To be discussed at the Customer Services Working Group
11.	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. Access Harrow is undertaking a review of performance data available to ensure the appropriate information is shared
12.	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. As at 30th June 2014, 75.8% of the 1,084,674 customer interactions with the Council were through self service (website, IVR, MyHarrow account, etc)
13.	The council needs to strike the right balance in encouraging channel migration. It should avoid being too aggressive and provide re-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	External pressures will result in £850k reduction in funding for Access Harrow over the next four years – the equivalent of 25 customer service advisors. With over 90% of households in Harrow with access to broadband internet and more than 70,000 active MyHarrow accounts, the primary channel to access council services is self service through the website and secure online portal.

will always be a need for phone calls or in-person visits for some types of transactions.	Supported self-service is available in the Civic Centre where Access Harrow offer help navigating on-line services. The telephone service is to be for more complex matters where interaction and advice is necessary Face to Face activity is to be limited to complex enquiries and for vulnerable people
14. 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 in accordance with current legislation
15. 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 in accordance with current legislation
16. 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 greater propensity to transact face to face.	The telepresence kiosks based at Kenton, Bob Lawrence and South Harrow libraries are used 250 times each month at the three locations. Customer interactions via the telepresence kiosks are continually monitored with the number of services being made available increasing.

17. The council should re-invest savings released by channel shift in further website and web form development.	To discuss with Finance partners
18. 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. The homepage will undergo a redesign in 2015 based upon resident feedback and beta testing in a live environment. Web forms are reviewed on a cyclical basis to ensure ease of use
19. 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 The centralised web editors are responsible for ensuring web pages meet the required standards before publication. All web pages were reviewed as part of the website upgrade in 2013 resulting in a reduction of 6,500 pages.
20. 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. Focus groups are held on a quarterly basis to assess how residents navigate the website The homepage will undergo a redesign in 2015 based upon resident feedback and beta testing in a live environment.

21. 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.	A review of web forms is underway to ensure that all key services and work flows are available in an easy to use format Once complete, email boxes will be closed down
22. The Council should ensure web forms are as user friendly as possible, avoiding asking for unnecessary information and entering information more than once.	A review of web forms is underway to ensure that all key services and work flows are available in an easy to use format When logged into the MyHarrow account, the customer's details are automatically transposed to the web forms to reduce customer effort. Existing web forms are being transferred to a mobile platform thus improving the customer experience on mobile devices (smart phones/tablets)
23. 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 which is due to be completed by December 2014.
24. The council should give residents the option to upload photos when making a request or reporting an incident (e.g. graffiti).	The option to upload photographs is being investigated as part of the MyHarrow 'app'
25. 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.	Work is underway with back office teams to ensure clear lines of responsibility are in place for customer updates. Future updates for reported works will be available through the MyHarrow account

26. The council should monitor whether managers and staff are logged into their telephone account. Failure to do so can mean it is not possible to contact the person concerned and should be reported to a senior manager in Access Harrow.	Access Harrow monitor service areas with insufficient staff logged into their telephones and escalate where appropriate
27. 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 Training and monitoring are ongoing o ensure that staff interpretation is consistent.
28. The council needs to do more to examine patterns of repeat calls and to have a clearer view about how such cases should be escalated to senior management level.	Reports identifying 'reasons for contact' and 'avoidable contact' are produced each month and are shared with the relevant service leads. These reports are also produced on a quarterly basis for Improvement Boards.
29. 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 will be taken forward at the appropriate juncture
30. The council should continue its programme of 'mystery shopping' and examine the option of using volunteer staff to expand it.	Options to be considered at the Customer Services Working Group

31. The council should do more to exploit the knowledge and experience of frontline staff in improving and extending quality assurance techniques	Access Harrow have undertaken a review of Performance & Quality and are assessing customer data available to improve services.
32. The council needs to revisit the way it commissions services with the aim that those who commission services ensure robust quality assurance is included	To be taken forward with the Procurement team
33. 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 Feedback will be collected via the Call Centre telephony platform following an upgrade later in the year.
34. 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. This is monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting and through Improvement Boards
35. 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 and lessons learnt are shared at Improvement Board.

36. 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 and is monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting
37. 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
38. 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 in 2014/15
39. 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.
40. 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.	The Council's corporate complaints manager will continue to work with service leads on improving the standard of responses.

41. 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
42. 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 is monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting.
43. 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 is monitored at the monthly complaint-coordinators meeting.
44. 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.	Work is continuing to assess the most appropriate methods to close the loop with the customer
45. 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.	To be reviewed at the Customer Services Working Group in November

| 46. 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

New web forms are in development to incorporate multiple service requests within one transaction such as changing address linking to Council Tax, Electoral Registration, Parking Permits, School Admissions. |