

## **Visit to Harlow's One-Stop-Shop "Contact Harlow" – 14 October 2008**

Councillors present: B Rolfe, J Philip, Mrs Lea, Mrs Hedges, Mrs R Brookes, Mrs Whitehouse, Jon Whitehouse, R Morgan, M Cohen and Mrs P Brooks.

1. The Customer Transformation Panel and some appropriate officers went to Harlow Civic Centre to view their one-stop-shop.
2. Simon Pipe, their Customer Contact manager gave the Panel a talk on the background of the facility.
3. Before the one-stop-shop (Contact Harlow) was opened they had numerous neighbourhood officers that handled the various enquiries from the public.
4. They opened a one-stop-shop in September 2001, which had cashiers and a call centre. Initially it was housed in a small outbuilding.
5. They had to buy a bespoke CRM system, as at that time there were no commercially available ones, and they are still using and developing it.
6. They moved into the Civic Centre in January 2004. Contact Harlow occupies all of the ground floor. They deliberately designed it to be high and spacious. There are 7 interviewing booths that can be pre-booked, each with CCTV and a Panic Button. People can come in and carry out land and electoral searches on the PCs provided. There also have cashier stations there and operate a ticketing system. They have an LCD information screen and a video user guide.
7. Contact Harlow consists of a reception area, a call centre, a switchboard, cashiers, face to face advisors on benefits, Council Tax and Homelessness. The main Switchboard is separate from the Contact Centre. Their aim is to resolve 80% of queries at this first point of contact. They deal in about 11,000 transactions a week and seek feedback from about 10% of the clients. They average about 478 calls a day, and have a 4.83% abandon call rate. The average waiting time to speak to an advisor on the phone is 28 seconds, with an average call processing time of 2 minutes 24 seconds. They handle about 94 face to face visits a day, with an average waiting time of 7 minutes 24 seconds, and an average transaction time of 10 minutes 16 seconds.
8. Reception has about 250 visitors a day; the Cashiers handle about 676 transactions a day and receive about 90 emails a day.
9. Staff are vigorously assessed over a day of tests before they are offered a job in Contact Harlow and they organised by various Duty Managers and each service had a 'champion' as a contact point. Staff operate a two shift system. All staff are generic and are interchangeable and take turns at manning all the desks.
10. Their CRM system was now coming to the end of its life, and they are now looking for a new, more flexible system. They are also trying to develop their website to make it more interactive, they would like to replicate the contact centre on line.