
IoE / S+CC in Local Government

Category: Internet of
Everything (IoE) and
Smart+Connected
Communities (S+CC)

Harrow Council



Connecting citizens to Government Services – 24/7 x 365

Like many local authorities, over the next few years Harrow Council faces steep financial challenges. By 2019/20 they need to reduce net expenditure by £83 million. The potential impact of this is the very real threat of needing to reduce the number of front-line services provided by the council for its local residents.

Harrow has adopted an IoE / S+CC strategy to stay connected with local residents by providing access to over 760 public services on-line and to enable them to deliver better, more efficient services while facing ever reducing budgets.

Recognising the growing flexibility and 24/7 access citizens want when talking to and interacting with their local public services provider, Harrow Council have adopted a new approach to delivering services and in

doing so have also managed to address the mounting financial constraints placed on them. The council made the bold decision to migrate many services on-line enabling local residents to serve themselves, at a time and location convenient to them.

Two complimentary strategies encourage people to use online services and to change their future behaviour when choosing which channel to use for future interactions with the council.

With the introduction of the 'MyHarrow' account residents have 'always-on' access to council services without the need to wait or queue. MyHarrow enables residents to start new conversations and track progress on outstanding matters as well as access mainstream services.



Each account is personalised, interactive and secure (amazingly over 100 people logged in on Christmas Day!). Many residents have also opted to receive SMS alerts and email updates to help keep them informed. To incentivise the use of an online account the Council launched the “Harrow Deals” programme whereby local businesses can offer exclusive deals to account holders through email alerts. These deals are updated on a monthly basis and help to stimulate the local economy.

At the same time they started to reduce access to their contact centre and drop-in clinics and to redirect people towards the online services.

Numerous local public services are now available online – e.g. Council Tax payments, Electoral Register enrolment, reporting graffiti, missed bin collections, abandoned cars, searching for dentists, doctors and libraries, renewing residents parking permits and more – over 80 services are available (see annex).

One example of the new approach is the bin/refuse collection solution:

- If a resident contacts the council to report a missed bin collection the council can check that the bin was outside their house at the appropriate time
- When the refuse team pass a house where there is no bin they record this and the information is then synchronised with the central database; information uploaded includes a photo of the missing bin and the time at which they passed the property
- If a resident then complains about a missed collection, the council can check the record to either verify the missed collection or to show the resident that the bin was not present and offer to make an additional collection for a fee

74,000 residents now have MyHarrow accounts (covering 70% of households). They log into the

MyHarrow account over 15,000 times each month saving the equivalent of 16 full time equivalent (FTE) staff or £450,000 per annum.

For those residents with complex needs requiring face-to-face contact, Harrow has also added video contact centre portals to three libraries to enable face-to-face communication with council representatives. This has already resulted in a 56% reduction in drop-in visits to council offices and they have plans to implement several more ‘video kiosks’ across the region.

The council have made lots of small changes that have significantly improved the way they stay connected with local residents. They have a concentrated drive towards self-service and have set themselves the target of moving every service on-line within five years.

The online strategy has enabled them to not only adapt services to meet customer expectations when utilising their channel of choice but also allowed the Council to preserve traditional channels for those who need them most.

The MyHarrow message is: “Never phone again, never queue again, never forget again” and Harrow Council are making great progress towards enabling this vision for everyone that lives, works, learns and plays in their borough.

Technical details of the solutions Harrow Council have implemented:

- Cisco end-to-end network including – 6500s, 3750s, 3560s & 2950s
- Call Manager voice solution
- Contact Center Enterprise – including flexible agent licenses
- First connection customer access terminals (Video Pods) x 3
- Cisco wireless access points
- Their Data Centre solutions are managed by a Cisco ecosystem partner

Annex 1 – Services available through the Harrow website and the MyHarrow portal:

Harrow.gov.uk services:

Residents Services

- **Benefits and council tax**
 - Benefits
 - Council tax
 - Change in circumstances
 - Moving in or out
- **Business and property**
 - Planning
 - Conservation and biodiversity
 - Housing
- **Community and living**
 - Births
 - Crime and nuisance
 - Funerals and cremations
 - Marriages and civil partnerships
 - Leisure and culture
- **Council and democracy**
 - Consultations
 - Council spending
 - Elections
 - Access to Council information
 - Jobs
- **Education and learning**
 - Libraries
 - Nursery
 - Schools and colleges
 - Admissions
 - Term dates

▪ **Environment**

- Abandoned vehicles
- Parks and open spaces
- Recycling, rubbish and waste
- Street care and cleaning
- Severe weather

▪ **Health and social care**

- Adults
- Children

▪ **Transport and streets**

- Concessionary travel
- Controlled parking zones
- Parking

Business Services:

▪ **Setting up a business**

- Business start-up guide
- Commercial property
- Business support programmes

▪ **Support**

- Business advice
- Business directory
- Business funding
- Employment

▪ **Services for business**

- Business rates
- Commercial waste
- Building control
- Planning
- Harrow profile

▪ **Licensing**

- Alcohol and entertainment
- Special treatments
- Street trading

▪ **Selling to the council**

- Current opportunities
- Business and property
- Building control
- Licences and street trading
- Planning

▪ **Business and property**

- Building control
- Licences and street trading
- Planning

Local Democracy:

- Electoral Register Services
- Council Representatives
- Election results
- Meeting Calendar
- Leader's Blog
- Job Vacancies

What's On

- Updates, events etc

Local News

MyHarrow Services:

My Property

- Services for property owners and tenants

My Nearest

- Find various local services including:

• Education & Learning

- Children Centres
- Nursery Schools
- Primary Schools with nurseries
- Primary Schools
- High Schools
- Special Schools
- Colleges
- Alternative Provision

• Environment & Planning

- Allotments
- Parks
- Planning Applications

• Health & Social Care

- Dentists
- Doctors
- Hospitals
- Neighbourhood Resource Centres
- Opticians
- Pharmacies
- NHS Trusts
- Other NHS Services

• Leisure and Culture

- Arts Centres
- Libraries
- Leisure Centres

• Transport & Streets

- Bus Routes
- Car Parks
- Police Stations
- Stations
- Bus Stops
- Road Works

My Account

- Manage account settings
- Add services e.g. Register / Update entries on the Electoral Register
- Set-up alerts preferences
- View accounts on-line (e.g. Council Tax)

Report It

- Abandoned Cone or Barrier
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Drainage report form
- Faulty Road Sign or Street Furniture
- Fly Posting
- Fly Tipping
- Graffiti
- Grass Cutting Problems
- Litter & Dog Bins
- Nuisance & Threatening Behaviour
- Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries
- Road, Pavement, Verge or Manhole
- Shrub and Hedge Trimming
- Street Cleaning
- Street Lighting Problem
- Tree Enquiry
- Weed Problems

Note:

More services are being added all the time.