

THE CABINET

Tuesday, 8 June 2010

Agenda Item 7. Customer Access Strategy (Pages 1 - 44)

The Strategy document (Appendix 1) is attached

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London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Customer Access Strategy



Own it, fix it, learn from it

CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY 2010

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1.0	Katherine Maddock-Lyon	CMT	Review and discussion
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Distribution

	Name	Title/Organisation	Purpose
1.0	Corporate Management Team	CMT	Review and discussion
	Katherine Maddock-Lyon	Head of Customer Strategy & Transformation	Review and Input
2	Tim Pearce	Phase 2 Project Manager	Review and input
3	Phil Ruck Natasha Scott-Matthews Mitch Fussell Daniela Othienio Jeevan Sharma	CIP2 Project Managers	Review and input
4.0	Ashley Bryant	B&D Direct	Review and input
5.0	Vivienne Cooling	Marketing & Communications	Review and input
6.0	Zoinul Abidin Nick Lane Susanne Knoerr David Mannall	Adult & Community Services	Review and input
7.0	Rachel Browne	Resources	Review and input
8.0	Meena Kishinani	Children's Services	Review and input
9.0	One Barking and Dagenham Programme Board Members	One B&D Board	Review and discussion
10.0	Heather Wills; Mike Fisher, Anne Bristow	Post One B&D Board comments	Input

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Part 1 - Introduction

WHAT IS OUR CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY?

Our Customer Strategy, approved by the Executive in March 2010, requires that we deliver our Service Information and Access through an Access Strategy.

The five action plan areas in the Customer Strategy action plan are:

- Customer Insight – what we know about our customers;
- Leadership, Policy and Culture – how we behave;
- Service Information and Access – what services we provide and where;
- Delivery – meeting our promises to deliver on time;
- Timeliness and Quality of Service – how we respond to queries.

This Customer Access Strategy sets out our plan for the channels (or methods) we will use to interact with our customers to ensure the successful delivery of our services with the resources available. An access strategy is not simply a plan to move service provision to online channels, as this is neither practical or desirable. However, it is about making the most of all methods of contacting the Council, and recognising the increasing role the internet and mobile phones, whilst knowing that services are delivered by service areas in the ways that are most appropriate to those services. Face to face will be a very important part of customer service delivery, and phone access will continue to be a major contact method for chasing, reporting, enquiring and registering a complaint about services. The Council has a responsibility to provide excellent services to the public and value for money to the taxpayer. The channels through which our services are delivered and by which the public has contact with the authority, (be that via telephone, online, in person, or via other means), are a critical part of public service provision, and there is an ongoing impetus for them to be managed effectively and efficiently for everyone.

This strategy sets out the primary customer access channels we have a) B&D Direct – contact centre; b) the 2 face to face customer service centres at BLC and Dagenham Library (known as One Stop Shops) c) the Council's website. However, the strategy recognises that the role of the services in service provision and the regular contact services have with residents and businesses directly is a vital part of the end to end service we deliver to our residents and businesses – and so the Customer Strategy is a core strategy and an enabler to all services – and should be supporting service strategies and business planning. The implementation of the customer strategy is in 2 phases currently – with phase 1 – delivered new CRM, web capability for parking and processes for E&E, and improving services for Housing and Revenues & Benefits - and phase 2 will be dealing directly with the service issues for Adult and Children's services – as well as more complex issues for Revenues & Benefits and Housing. This will include how to maximise face to face service provision beyond the 2 main libraries.

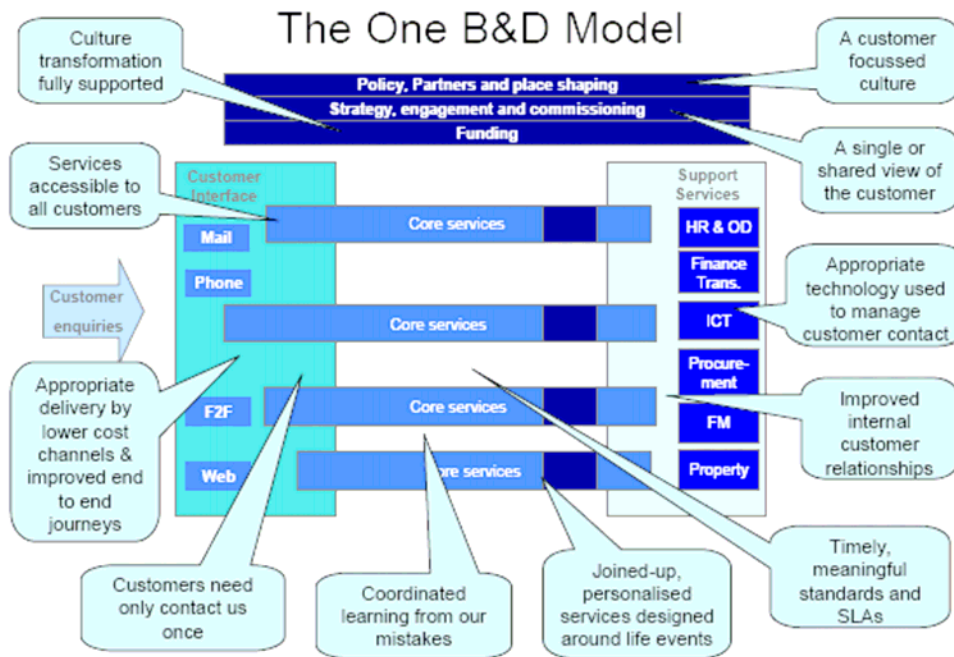
The strategy has a number of core principles:

1. Access to services must be efficient and effective.
2. We will use the Council's website and contact centre for high volume customer contacts, and face to face for customer contacts that are best delivered face to face.
3. The Council will promote the most effective contact methods where appropriate to customer and service.
4. The Council will invest in enabling services to be delivered securely via the internet.

5. The Council will continue to support face-to-face contacts at the OSS at BLC and Dagenham Library.
6. The Council will ensure that customers get the right professional and service support required.
7. At other service access points (libraries, leisure, children's centres) a standard level of customer service will be required for each of these points.
8. For particular customer groups that cannot easily access the One Stop Shops services will determine the most appropriate way to deliver services and provide access to information.
9. The Council will continue to develop the quality and effectiveness of services delivered via the telephone (B&D Direct) In all cases the aim of customer services is to:
 - provide a high level of customer service consistent with the customer service excellence standard;
 - handle the standard customer service transactions (payments, bookings, information, complaints etc) on behalf of the services;
 - reduce the number of service hand-offs (currently over 80% of all contact at B&D Direct contact centre is handed off to, or information is required from, another officer in the Council);
 - support customers who have not had a 'right first time' experience;
 - ensure that complex cases that cannot be handled in one contact get to the most appropriate officer and team to resolve;
 - provide services with information on service trends, problem areas and best practice on handling customer enquiries.
10. Customer services (B&D Direct including OSS) will continue to deliver services where appropriate and take payments: e.g. provide garage keys at OSS and Nationality Checking Service
11. The Council will not discriminate against any individual or group by unreasonably limiting the choice of contact methods available, and will work with services to ensure face-to-face, phone and web services are developed and delivered appropriately to the service and customers accessing the services.
12. Customer insight and service based management information will support the continuous improvement and development of customer services

The ONE B&D MODEL

We have an agreed 'target operating model' to deliver customer focused design known as the 'One B&D Model', shown below. We know that at present and in reality we have a 'shallow' service delivery by our front offices and inconsistent level of support by internal customer facing services – whilst traditionally aiming for a Done in One service. The transition from our current way of working to the One B&D Model will deliver a wider and deeper delivery by front offices and more consistent support for internal customers. The One B&D Model is enabled by the IT Strategy, the OD strategy, the VfM and the Accommodation strategy and for the Customer services the delivery of our Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) replacement which have also been agreed by the Executive.

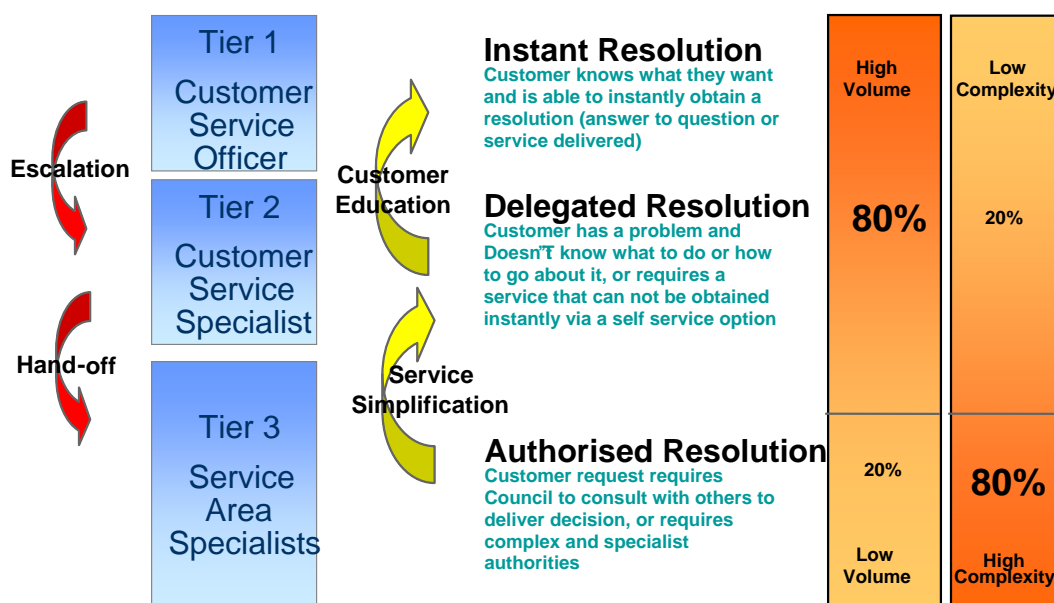


To deliver the One B&D Model, all services will be reviewed using design principles that identify the most efficient way for customers to contact the council. This will require integration into our CRM architecture and knowledge base and that supports and simplifies service delivery for both staff and customers. Our internal support services will also be linked more strongly to delivery for our customers.

The One B&D model uses three main levels of resolving customer contacts between the council and its customers:

- **Tier one** (e.g. signposting, simple information provision, reporting, booking, payments, requesting a service and tracking a service)
- **Tier two** (e.g. refunds, complaints handling, detailed information / advice, and simple case assessment)
- **Tier three** (e.g. complex case assessment)

Customer Contact – Resolution & Migration



The model is not a 'one sized fits all' model, and the tier 1-3 language will not in reality be used operationally and it does not indicate grade hierarchy. Tier 3 is service delivery and each service will have different operational and professional delivery models i.e. waste, housing advice, revenues & benefits and adult social care will all be delivered in different ways. The model does indicate the starting point for each service to consider how to make best use of customer access channels and the Council's customer access infrastructure – B&D Direct contact centre, and at BLC and Dagenham Library.

In some cases there will be no tier 1; in some no tier 2. For example:

- services that are very low volume and high complexity may be best delivered in their entirety by specialists – the training overhead and systems development for B&D Direct would not be proportionate to the customer and business benefits – an example of this is adoption and fostering;
- some services may have a limited tier 1 and all information provision will be provided by a service based customer service specialist by appointment - an example of this is benefits, or housing advice;
- some services will have very little need for tier 2 – e.g. waste collection – as the requirement is to log missed bins and collect, with management information provided through CRM providing the service failure analysis. However, these high volume transactional services often have relatively high levels of dissatisfaction for work not completed on time or to quality, or where commitments have not been followed through to customer satisfaction. B&D Direct is developing resolution teams to handle low level resolution issues that have not escalated to complaints and are supported by a service specialist for authorising additional works or deciding on policy variations.

Process mapping, service simplification and improvement, and Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) techniques will be used to deliver the service approach and required efficiencies. Service migration into our front office and customer migration across channels will be driven by specific design criteria based on customer insight. This will be supported by better monitoring of customer satisfaction and delivery standards to ensure benefits are realised. This will enable 'trigger points' to be created to identify on going review and service improvement, i.e. high service failure, complaints or low satisfaction.

THE CUSTOMER STRATEGY

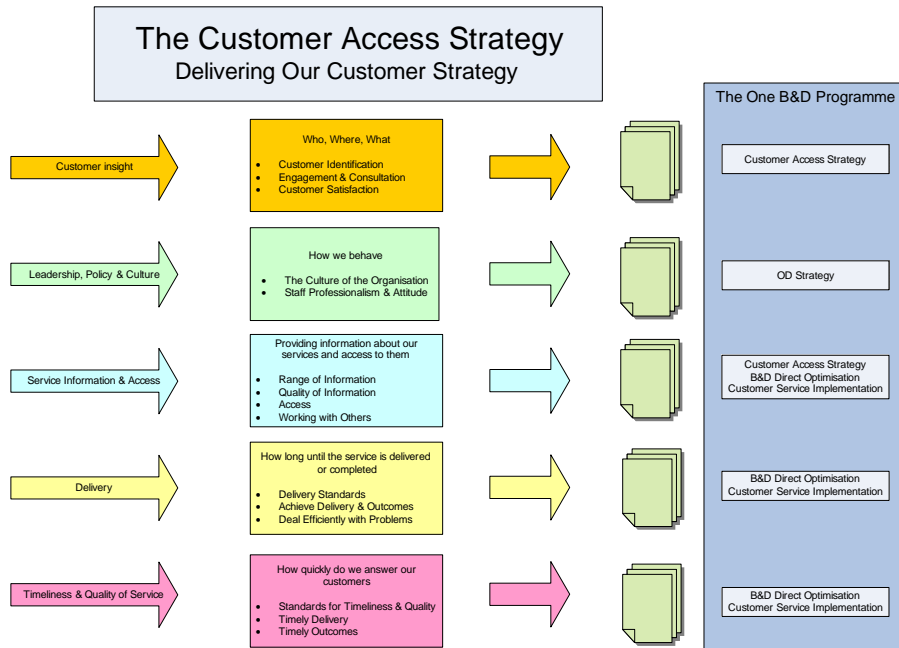
Our Customer Strategy vision is:

“Working as one team to deliver excellent services by putting our customers at the heart of what we do”

We are delivering our Customer Strategy through the One B&D Model and are applying design principles to all our services. The Customer Access Strategy delivers a key part of the Service Information and Access criteria of our Customer Strategy. We have selected the Customer Service Excellence standard as our framework for delivery. The Customer Service Excellence standard's criteria measure the improvement of our main activities and transformation for the customer. The criteria are:

- Customer Insight;
- Leadership, Policy & Culture;
- Service Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of Service

The links between the strategies and supporting strategies are shown below:



The outcomes and benefits of our Customer Strategy are as follows:

- services are accessible;
- responses to customers are timely and answer their needs;
- services are joined up for the customer;
- services are fair, credible and trusted;
- customers are kept informed, know what happens next and of progress;
- customers know what services and opportunities are available;
- customers are encouraged to give feedback;
- customers are treated as individuals and with empathy.

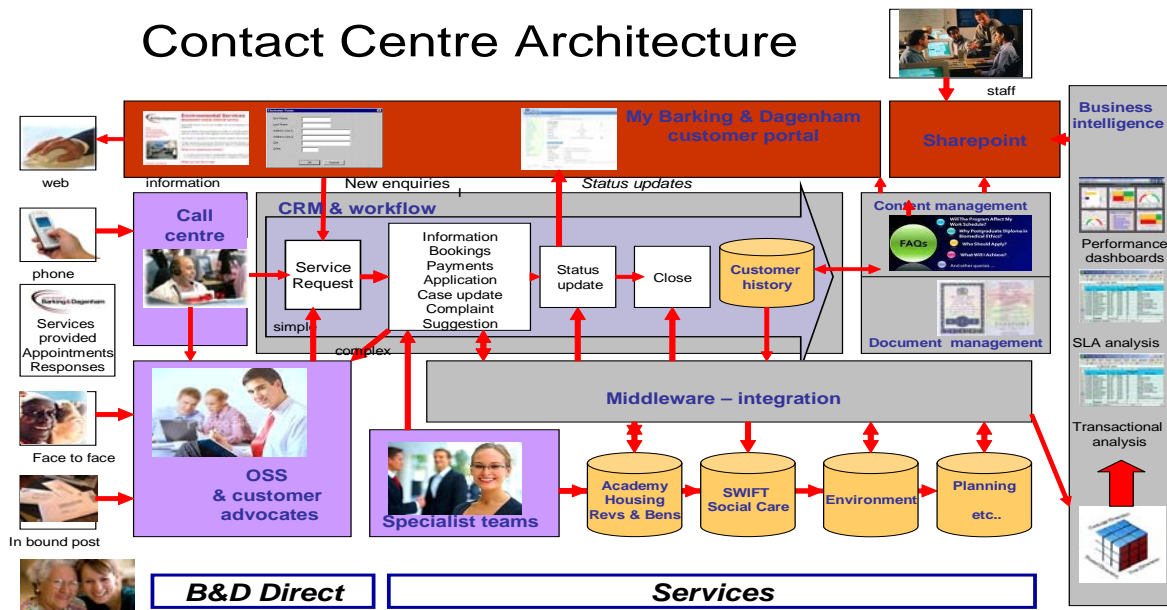
(These outcomes were highlighted by the staff and member workshop on Excellent Customer Service and Modern Ways of Working in March 2008.)

Benefits:

- increased customer satisfaction;
- improved operational performance;
- reduced operational cost.

The Customer Access Strategy combines and develops our approach to: Customer Insight, how we understand our customers and how we use this to design our services; Information, what we tell our customers about our services and answer their questions; and Access, how and where our customers request information and services. We deal with customer enquires through our Contact Centre, B&D Direct; in our One Stop Shops, the BLC and later this year in the Dagenham Library and One Stop Shop; and as part of every day customer contact in service areas across the council. The relationship between these and the systems that support them are show in the graphic below.

Contact Centre Architecture



WHY IS A CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY IMPORTANT NOW?

Customers receive a high standard of customer service from many public and private sector organisations. However, citizens sometimes have low expectations of services provided by local government, and it will be necessary to exceed rather than meet these expectations to achieve channel shift to cheaper and/or more effective channels. To achieve this, we must continue to raise our own standards of service across all the channels we use and offer.

In order to meet the needs of customers, we must provide services that are:

- Easily accessible
- Simple to use
- Streamlined
- Convenient
- Cost effective
- Robust

We also must bear in mind the target audience's access to technology, the type and complexity of the contact, their personal preferences as well their skill sets when selecting channels

Rising internet use and customer expectations of accessing public services online present an ongoing opportunity for the council. Competent online services are easy and quick to use, available whenever customers need them and have a relatively low administrative burden. Managed well, online access to services is a very effective channel with considerable benefits for customers and taxpayers.

This must be balanced however, to also meet the needs of people who do not (yet) have access to the internet. 'Digital Inclusion' therefore is a core element of the customer access strategy.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The need for insight

The process of developing and implementing the Customer Access Strategy has been guided by insight, and insight specifically relating to:

- *The customer* – the council recognised that it needed to increase its understanding of customer need.
- *The services* an organisation is providing and each service area in question
- *The current delivery channels* at the organisation's disposal as well as those that may be available /need to be used in the future
- *Other organisation-specific* micro/macro factors that may have an impact on service provision and delivery

It is also important to understand the wider online services market, as expectations of online services are driven by customer experiences of using similar services of other organisations.

Organisational challenge

A customer access strategy needs to become an integral part of the structure of the organisation and the way the objectives of the organisation are realised. It cannot be super-imposed or retro-fitted onto existing practices and as such is likely to require considerable organisational change.

We also need to recognise that people will use different channels not just for different types of interactions, but also to suit their own convenience. Particularly at local level, an integrated customer access strategy is required that takes into account the varied ways in which local people may want to interact with the council.

Part 2 – Basic Principles & Scope

PURPOSE OF STRATEGY

To outline the broad principles for the ways in which the Council will deliver its services through a range of contact channels that meet our customer's needs, provide better value for money, are more accessible and are designed with the citizen in mind.

SCOPE

1. In January 2010 a mandate for the customer access strategy project was produced to look at the way the council should organise itself to deliver the best possible customer service, by the most appropriate channel, evidenced by the use of customer insight tools and techniques.
2. The need to align to the way in which the council does its business with the One B&D model, the ICT, VFM and OD strategies, the Library Strategy, Children's locality work and Personalisation agenda is also in scope for this project.
3. This strategy document sets out the basic principles by which Barking and Dagenham Council will deliver its services to the public using the One Barking and Dagenham Model, through the contact channels available and channels that need to be developed to realise greatest efficiency and cost savings and benefits to both organisation and customer:

Contact channels in scope include:

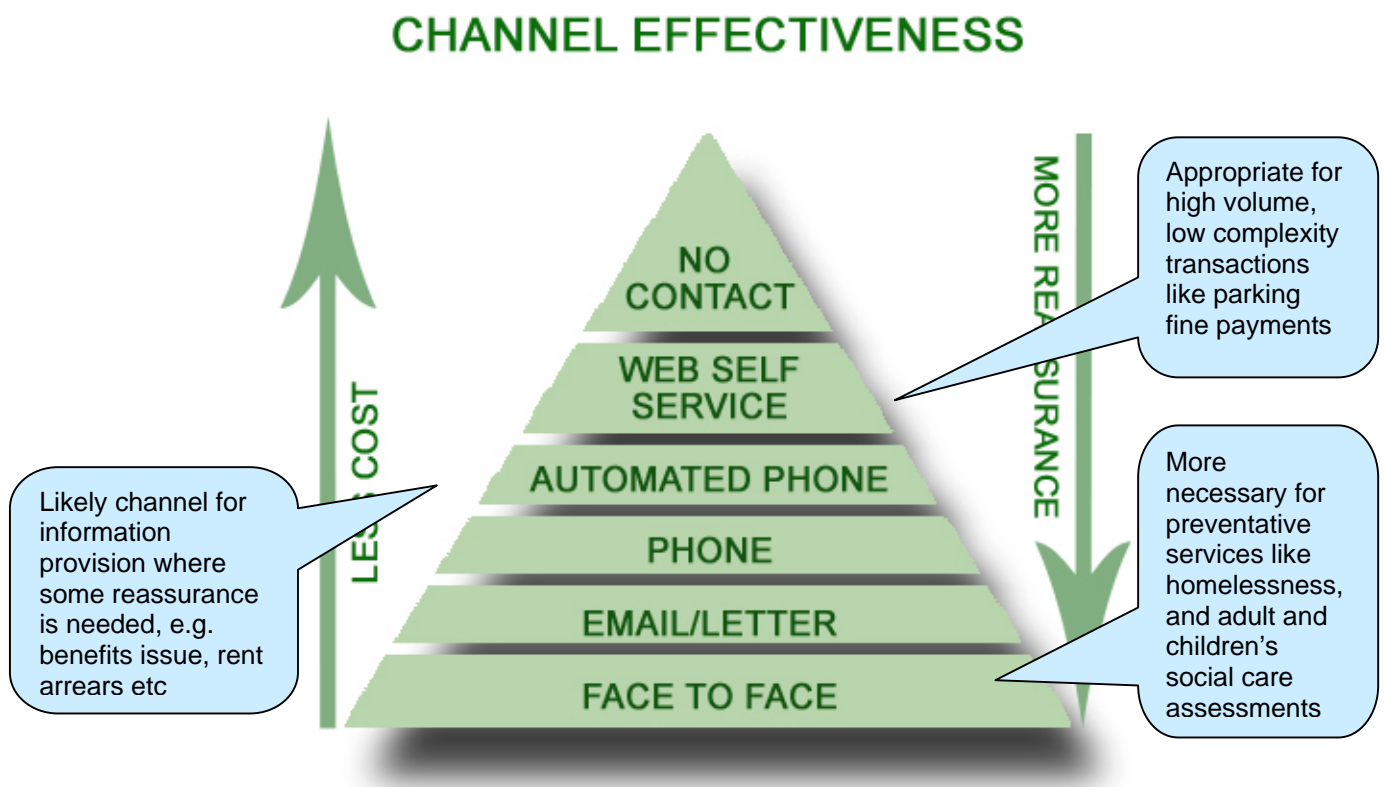
- Face to face
 - Email
 - Council website
 - Other Internet offerings (including internet kiosks, partner, other government and commercial websites)
 - Telephone
 - Mobile technology (including SMS text messaging, Bluetooth, apps and mobile web)
 - Automated telephone technology
 - Digital TV
 - Post
4. This strategy will be relevant to the nature of the services provided by the authority and ensure that its services are provided through a range of contact channels appropriate to the service and customer needs to deliver for optimum service delivery in a non-discriminatory way.

CHANNELS HIERARCHY

The choice of contact channels available to the public is growing all of the time as new technologies are developed and released. For example in the last 5 years we have seen the emergence and growth of channels such as digital social media (such as Facebook, and Twitter), mobile internet, interactive TV and more recently mobile phone applications (apps).

Without a channel strategy many organisations typically adopt one of two approaches to using these channels by either 1) launching all of their products and services on all new channels without much thought to the relevance and cost of doing so or 2) focusing on switching their customer contact to the cheapest channel (often assumed to be the internet) without much thought as to the relevance of this channel to their entire customer base.

The generally accepted model for the effectiveness of the major channels of contact available shown below, illustrates that the web and self service are the cheapest methods of contact, and face to face contact is more expensive, with an associated cost to providing reassurance. However, we recognise that for some services, the cheapest methods of contact will not be appropriate for the service or the customer. For example, it may be more cost effective to provide that service face to face for preventative services in our Adult's and Children's departments, or to deal with benefits administration in one go. We understand that in some instances, the organisation's preferred method of contact will not always be the same as the customer's preferred method of contact.



What this model shows is that as we move up the triangle the cost of delivery typically gets cheaper for the organisation. However for some types of contact a greater level of human contact is required, particularly for contacts that require some level of reassurance. It will be important to anticipate where the council will generate contact that requires reassurance, for example rent arrears letters, and to work with B&D Direct to plan for this in their service provision.

For example:

A customer receiving a final demand letter threatening court action is unlikely to log on to the Council's website, because they will require some reassurance that matters are in hand, and are therefore more likely to telephone the contact centre. In this example, there may be a case for having online frequently asked questions (FAQs) relating to debt

recovery in terms of best practice, but there is probably little chance of shifting this individual contact online even though it is the lowest cost option for the council. It is therefore vital to fully understand each type of contact and the level of reassurance that the customer is likely to require before focusing the organisation's efforts on the design of any contact channel for that service.

In Barking and Dagenham, we have a high youth population, an emerging elderly population, a significant proportion of middle aged, moderately skilled people, and a more recent second generation BME population which we know all have different preferred methods of interacting with the council. Consideration will need to be given to all groups, including hard to reach groups who will present a challenge for channel shift, if they simply do not access the channel that you want them to move to. For example, internet penetration is lower amongst the jobless, the financially excluded, the elderly and people who do not read or speak English – all traditionally high users of services supporting complex needs.

Another factor to consider is “channel hopping”, (an individual's propensity to use different channels for the same transaction depending on what is convenient to them at the time) and the public's increasing confidence in new channels that develops over years and sometimes months, creating a continually changing landscape.

The key factors to an effective channel strategy therefore would be

1. **Detail** - the deliberate design of the channel strategy for **each type of service**, bearing in mind the level of human interaction required and the needs of the targeted customer base
2. **Fluidity** – the constant reviewing of the effectiveness of the channel strategy for each type of contact bearing in mind changing technologies, channel hopping and changing customer habits
3. **Simplicity** – the optimum channels for the organisation should be the easiest to use for the customer to drive a shift in customer behaviour
4. **Inclusion** – no group should be denied access to a service because of disability, language or cost of the access channel (e.g. mobile phone costs, broadband access). Options should be made available other than the organisations preferred method of contact.
5. **Cost effectiveness** – particularly in the current economic climate, finding ways in which to deliver services effectively but at lower cost will be increasingly important.

Current Position

Barking and Dagenham Council has recently started on its transformation journey with the introduction of the One Barking and Dagenham Programme in 2009. The One B&D programme is a transformational programme to deliver specific benefits from three outcomes: value for money, customer service excellence and organisational culture change. Our Customer Strategy, approved by the Executive on in February 2010, and One B&D model is the blueprint or high level design for the project, of which the Access Strategy falls in to Phase 2.

Phase 1 of the Customer Strategy Implementation is encompassing:

- The CRM roll out to the contact centre and One Stop Shops only. Services across the rest of the wider authority will be considered as part of Phase 2, including a strategy for counter services and any other customer face to face channels.
- Knowledge/content as part of the CRM / Sharepoint strategy, including a view on the ability of CRM to deliver online, transactional services

In 2010 the project was expanded to include a 'Phase 2' Customer Strategy implementation project of which one of the workstreams is the Customer Access Strategy where activities around channel shift will be managed. Up until now, no formal access strategy document has been published.

BASELINE POSITION

The information below illustrates our current baseline position for telephone, face to face and email interactions with Barking and Dagenham Direct which is our primary customer contact interface with the public. When we come to refresh this document, we will be able to illustrate how this has changed with the application of the channel shift principles that are set out.

B&D Direct:

Our baseline position for average annual channel consumption and operational cost for our Contact Centre and One Stop Shops is as follows:

	Contact Centre	One Stop Shops (Barking Learning Centre & Stour Road combined) OSS
Telephone	600,000	
Face to face		204,000
Email	18,360	
Budget	£2,817,000	2,382,000

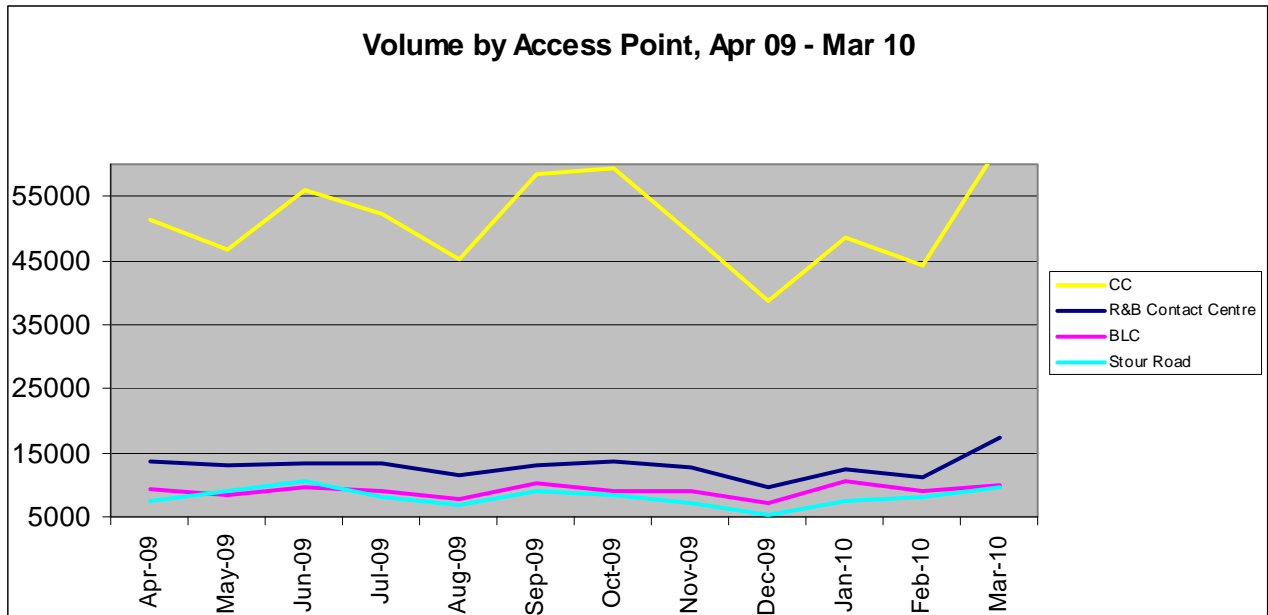
(based on 2009-2010 monthly averages grossed up to reflect the annual picture)

The graph below indicates that the main choice of channel for contacting the council is via the telephone with the contact centre receiving on average 50k calls per month. Our One Stop Shop in Barking sees on average 9000 customer per month, and at our Dagenham OSS at Stour Road sees approximately 8000 people.

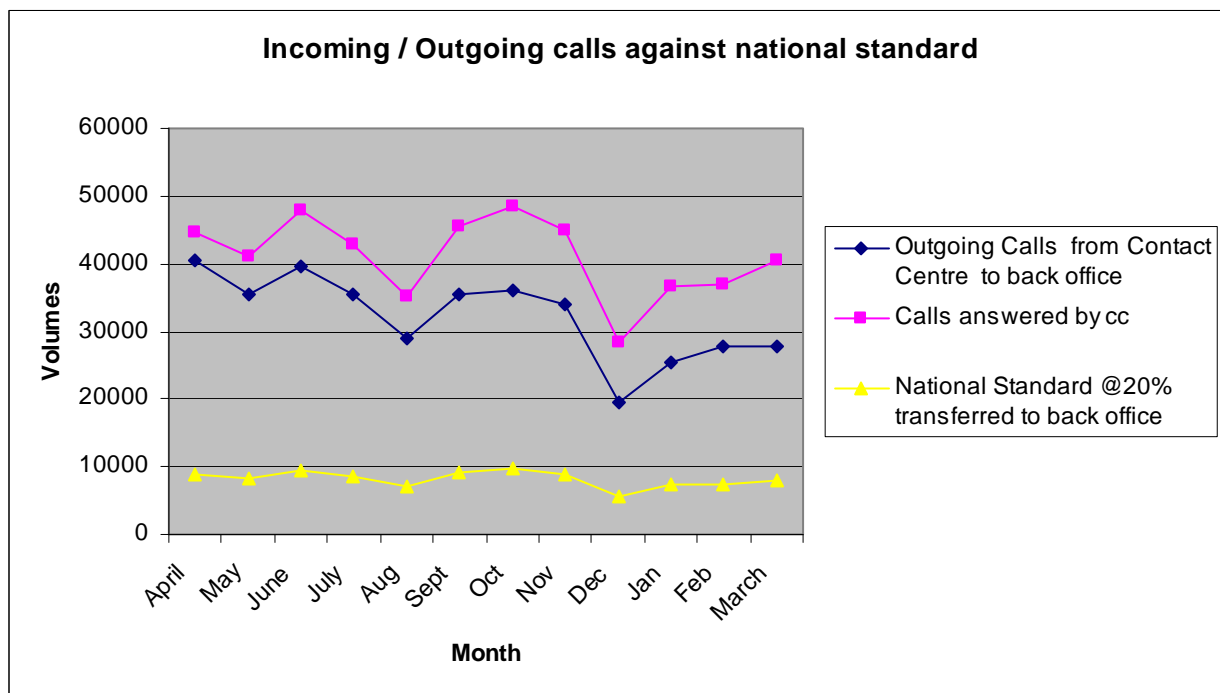
Our performance monitoring data shows that:

- The contact centre receives 50000 per month
- 60-80% of these are transferred to the back office depending on service
- Only 17% of all calls that are received by the contact centre use our CRM system for resolution management.
- A large proportion of calls do not go via B&D Direct and go straight to the services – estimated at between 40-50% of all calls

This clearly illustrates that the contact centre is not working effectively, and that with 70% of calls transferred to the back office, is currently not a cost effective delivery method due to the double cost of handling of calls twice. However, the implementation of the new CRM and the One B&D model will address this.



The graph below illustrates the amount of calls that are answered by the contact centre and the amount of those calls that are then transferred by the contact centre to the back office compared to the national average of calls transferred.



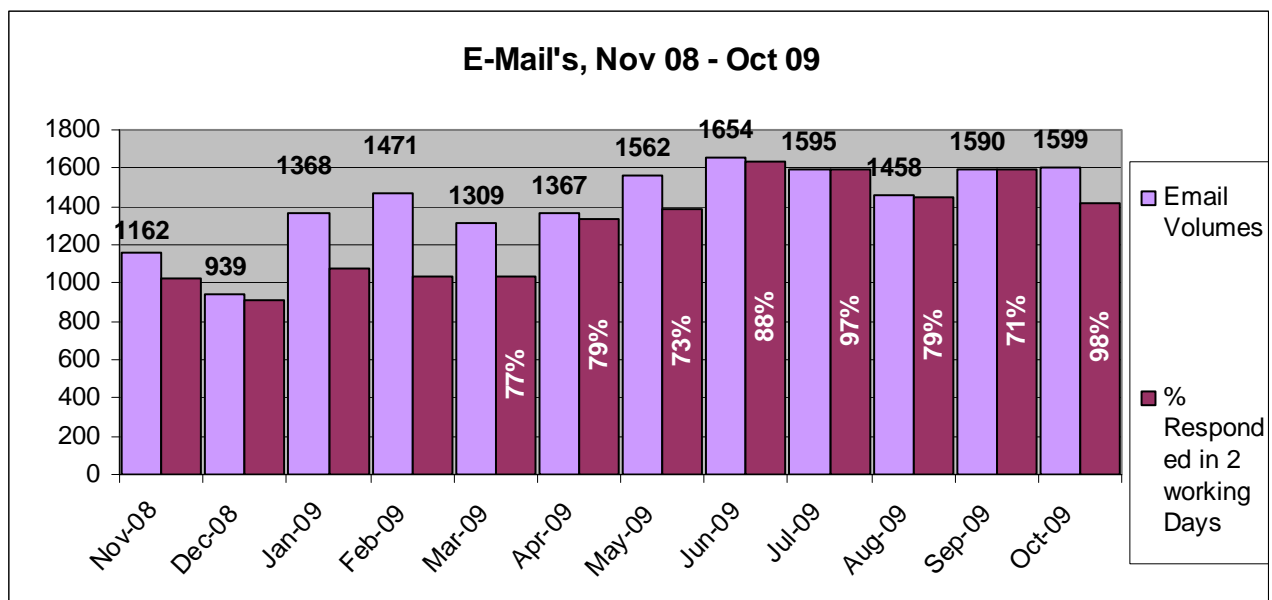
The borough is just starting to roll-out a new telephony system (known as VPIO or Voice Over IP) which will replace an old and failing infrastructure with a telephone system that is flexible, economical and fit for purpose for a modern contact centre environment. The introduction of VOIP will enable flexible working and better reporting on call levels and associated costs. VOIP is a telephony term for a set of facilities used to manage the delivery of voice information over the Internet, which put simply means that our phone system will get better and have more resilience. This will start to be rolled out from April 2010. Whilst the contact centre has been on a VOIP system for a number of years – none of the services have been – and so this has fundamentally limited the ability to make use

of the full range of functions required to transfer calls and record calls and abandoned calls in service areas.

Intelligent Voice Recognition (IVR) technology, which enables automated call routing by customers choosing numbered options to get them through to the right area will be rolled out to the contact centre in May 2010. This will:

- provide one number that customers can use to contact the council
- allow quicker resolution by routing customers through to staff with the right skills grouping
- reduce internal transfers within the contact centre
- provide better customer intelligence for performance monitoring

This graph overleaf illustrates that email interaction with B&D Direct is increasing, and the response rate of 2 working days has improved significantly between March and October 2009 by 21%.



Our email performance monitoring data shows that:

- The contact centre receives approximately 1500 emails per month
- No email management system in place to monitor precisely how many emails are transferred to the back office email addresses for resolution, though it is thought to be a substantial amount.

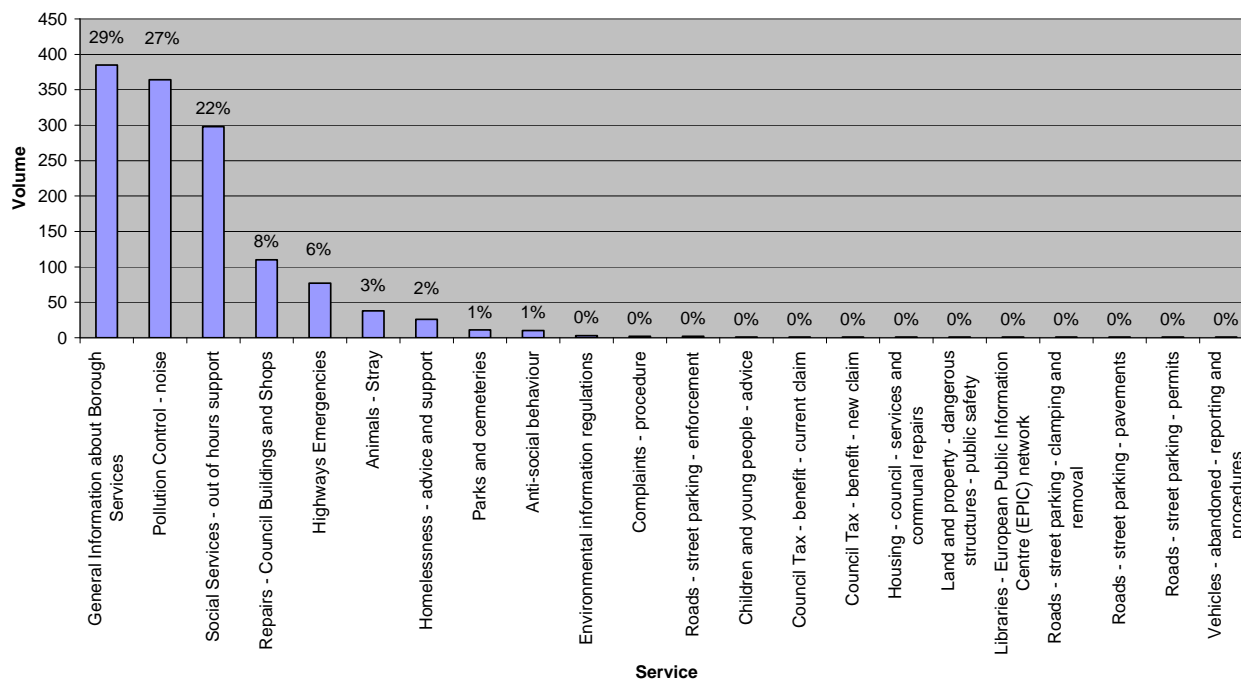
This reinforces the point that the contact centre is currently not a cost effective delivery method, due to the double handling of emails. However, the implementation of the new CRM in September 2010 will allow for emails to be integrated in to the system to be dealt with by the appropriate service area, reducing the amount of inappropriate emails delivered to the back office for resolution.

Out of Hours

The council offers an out of hours service operated by Vangent, which operates during the hours of 6pm to 8am and typically receives around 1700 calls per month. The out of hours

graph illustrates that the highest amount of calls received out of hours relate to general information about the borough, closely followed by noise complaints, and social services out of hours support.

Vangent 'Out Of Hours' Service Call Volumes Data March 2010



Clearly, general information provision and council housing repairs by the out of hours service is an area where, with further research, improvements can be made and call volumes can be reduced. A deeper level of detail is currently being produced on this to highlight where the specific improvement areas for costs savings are and if the categorisation of calls is accurate.

Web Transactions

The council website has a 'Do it Online' portal that enables citizen's to plan, do, report, find and pay for council services online, including Council Tax and invoices. The data reinforces that access to web is not a huge issue but the quality of the website and the complexity of the processes and the back office transactions needs improving. For example in March 1,965 people visited the 'planning application online' page but on average only 5 people per month submit a planning application online. In addition to this, we know that when a customer reports something on the web an email is sent to the B&D Direct email address '3000direct' who then send to the back office for resolution.

The data also illustrates that reporting online is a substantial area of web transactional activity, followed by making payments online including parking fines, completing online planning applications and challenging penalty charge notices.

Customer Satisfaction:

Customer satisfaction of our telephone channel in the contact centre was being measured up until November 2009. Due to an unreliable methodology, the measuring of customer satisfaction was halted in order to review the situation and focus resources elsewhere. A new methodology is in the process of being developed, and as soon as it is agreed the measuring of customer satisfaction will recommence.

Part 3 – Barking and Dagenham’s Access Plans

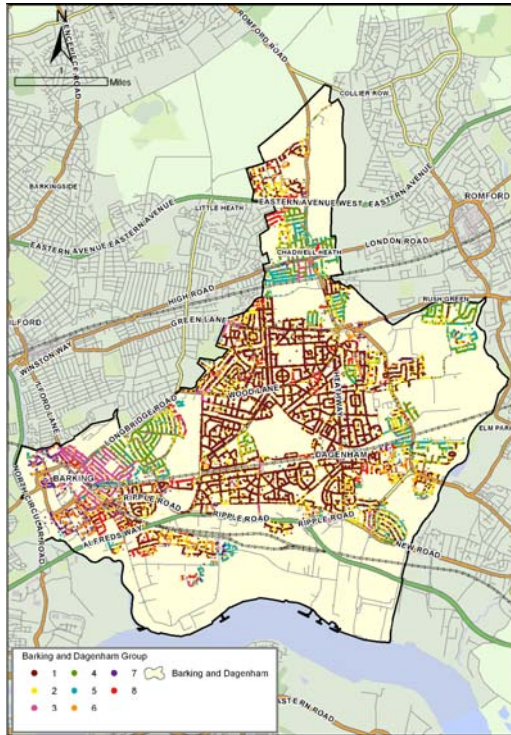
CUSTOMER INSIGHT AND THE ONE BARKING AND DAGENHAM MODEL

Barking and Dagenham has a total population is made up of 168,900 individuals¹, each with specific needs and preferences as to how they would like to contact the authority. This customer access strategy seeks to provide a full range of choices of access designed to ensure that no individual, group or community is disadvantaged through lack of access to the services the authority offers.

A substantial amount of customer insight work has been undertaken in Barking and Dagenham to better understand the behaviours, characteristics, service and access needs of the citizen’s in the borough. This has primarily been done through profiling the borough with our NHS partners using our own local information merged with Mosaic datasets. The result of which has produced eight customer types within the borough which are illustrated below:

Group	Description	% of Group in Borough 2009	% of Group in Borough 2010
Group1	Younger married couples, former Council housing	23.6%	21.6%
Group2	Older working ages, former Council housing	20.8%	21.2%
Group3	Young singles and families, some ethnic minorities	12.3%	13.5%
Group4	Middle aged couples, middle incomes	11.1%	10.3%
Group5	Young couples, prosperous lifestyles	9.6%	11.1%
Group6	Disadvantaged families, low education attainment	8.7%	7.3%
Group7	Young ethnic minorities, social housing tenants	8.4%	9.6%
Group 8	Low income pensioners, reliant on benefits	5.5%	5.3%

¹ Nomis data -ONS mid year population estimates 2008



This map shows the distribution of our eight Mosaic Groups throughout the borough. The data available within the customer profiling exercise, combined with business intelligence from services has enabled us to understand where there are specific channel preferences for each group, and has allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

- **The Web** is the channel that we need to invest in and utilise for high volume low complexity service transactions
- **Face to Face** is the channel that we need to get more out of to support residents that need face to face support and complex cases
- **The Telephone** is the channel that we need to reduce in volume and improve customer resolution

Internet Access

Emerging evidence in to internet access and broadband penetration in Barking and Dagenham suggests that Internet access in the borough is substantially higher than our customer segmentation data suggests. We believe Internet access currently stands at approximately 60% to 70%, just below the national average and a robust piece of quantitative research in to this is planned for the summer of 2010.

- **‘Youth Access and Connect Card’** – launched in 2010, this card enables the provision of cashless catering in our schools. This card can be topped up with funds by children / parents / guardians via a number of channels of which the web is one. The latest figures indicate that 70% of cards were being topped up online.
- **Wheelie bin consultation** - In November 2009, over 2,800 residents were surveyed as part of a wheelie bin consultation which also asked a question about internet access. Over 64% of those surveyed said that they accessed the internet at home, and 31% said that they didn’t have access at all. The rest used libraries, work and internet cafes to access the internet. Of the 64% that said they had a home connection, over 99% had a broadband connection. (Hyder Doorstepping Project November 2009)
- **Home Access Programme** – there have been over 1200 approved applications for the Home Access programme in Barking and Dagenham which enables eligible households to acquire a home computer and free internet access for one year.
- **Online School Admissions** - The council offers an online school admissions process and in 2010, Barking and Dagenham saw the highest online school admissions applications in London, with (1196) 42% of admissions completed online this year.

- **Community Communicators Intelligence Report** - In March 2010 a resident's survey on internet and website use, conducted for the Web team, showed that 29% of residents did not use the internet.
- **More Choice in Lettings** – Over 90% of all bids for council properties via the More Choice in Lettings system are made online.

Face to face Contact

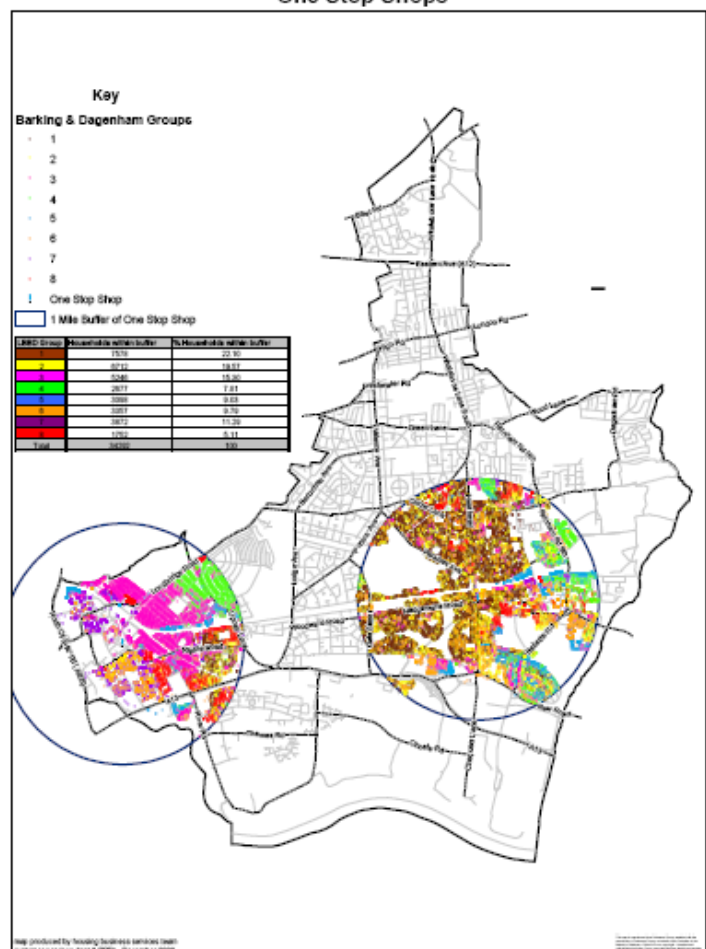
The map below illustrates the location of our two primary customer service contact points - our One Stop Shops; the Barking Learning Centre and soon to open Dagenham Library One Stop Shop which will operate as our customer service centres of excellence.

However, It is recognised that some areas in the borough may be relatively geographically disadvantaged, and/or some may have higher numbers of the population who at present have need of face to face tier one support. The One Barking and Dagenham Customer Services Phase 2 project will review in detail the needs of these communities, to identify how to maximise the role of existing face-to-face services, and/or to identify strategies for targeted channel shift (eg telephone hotlines), as appropriate. This will include consideration of use of partners' facilities (eg health centres) and new technologies (eg videoconferencing).

Working with the Operational Assets Review, which will set out the strategy for accommodation retention and disposal, the council will make use of its existing council accommodation (and investigate the opportunity to use partner facilities) to provide 'Super Information Points' which will provide a standard level of 'tier one' level of service to the community where appropriate for frequently asked questions based on the type of questions typically asked at a given facility for the community served by that facility. E.g. super information points could be Libraries, Children's Centres, leisure centres etc. and can be supplemented by web and phone access

Based on a needs assessment of the local community, the need for assisted self service, home visits or outreach work if required by particular services on an appointment basis will be identified.

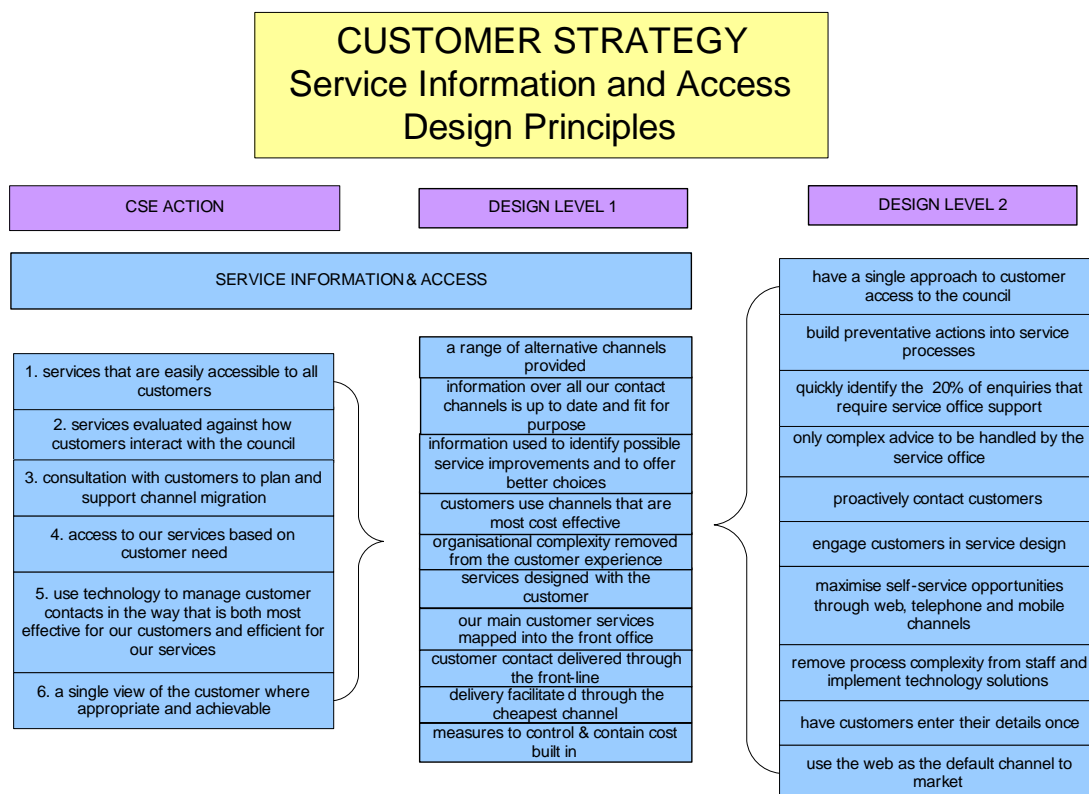
Experian Groups within a mile buffer of One Stop Shops



OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES & CUSTOMER STRATEGY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. *Barking and Dagenham Council will make access to its services available through appropriate and cost effective contact channels designed with the needs of its individual customers in mind. Active encouragement to use the most effective contact methods where it appropriate to customer and service, will be applied by creating a series of deliberate and targeted channel shifts.*
2. *Barking and Dagenham Council will invest in the web, increase the quality of the service in its face to face channel, continue to offer the telephone as a support channel but to reduce the volume of customer's using this method and improve customer resolution.*
3. *Barking and Dagenham Council will not discriminate against any individual or group by limiting the choice of contact methods available.*

Our Customer Strategy and its overarching principles will drive our Customer Access Strategy. The diagram below illustrates how the design of the Customer Strategy informs the Customer Access Strategy to deliver 'service information and access'.



OWNERSHIP OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM'S CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

Barking and Dagenham Council's Customer Access Strategy and its implementation will be owned by the Customer Insight Manager and Head of Customer Strategy and Transformation. The delivery of the activity generated by this document will be the responsibility of senior manager's within Adult & Community Services, Children's Services, Customer Services and Resources to make happen.

The mechanisms to manage the relationship between the council and any future partners will have to be established to ensure that any changes in demography will be reflected in service and channel provision.

Overall, the Customer Access Strategy will report in to the One Barking and Dagenham’s Board governance structure, which is comprised of key strategic service manager’s within the organisation. This will guarantee buy in from all departments and commitment to change in the way we do our business, ensuring that there is consistency of service delivery standards across all of the contact channels and the associated services that the council offers.

Each contact channel will be:

- Easily accessible
- Simple to use
- Streamlined
- Convenient
- Cost effective
- Robust

REVIEW PERIOD OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM’S CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

Barking and Dagenham Council will treat this strategy as “business as usual” with a view to regularly evolving the strategy. A formal review and re-publishing of this document will be subsequent to its initial publication.

GOVERNANCE OF CONTACT CHANNELS AT BARKING AND DAGENHAM COUNCIL

The ownership of the various contact channels at the Council is structured as follows

Channel	Owner
Telephone/Contact Centre	Customer Strategy
Website	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation
Email – Generic	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation
Letters – Generic	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation
SMS	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation
Face to Face	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation
New Media	Marketing and Communications
Digital TV	Customer Strategy /Marketing and Communications
Mobile Telephone	Customer Strategy

Specific issues regarding contact are allocated as follows

Issue	Owner
Digital Inclusion	Policy Research and Engagement
Accessibility	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of

	Customer Strategy Implementation
Avoidable Contact	Customer Strategy
Channel Shift	Customer / Customer Insight / Service Managers

THE AVOIDABLE CONTACT PLAN

“To reduce the need for our customers to contact us through CRM improvements, by utilising the One B&D Model, automating processes and working with partner authorities to provide “joined up services”

What is an “Avoidable Contact” Plan?

The council is a fundamental point of contact for the citizen when seeking access to public services. We provide key services for the local communities that greatly affect the quality of life for individual citizens and the overall community.

In accord with the vision of the Local Government Delivery Council and the principles of the Service Transformation Agreement (www.hmtreasury.gov.uk/media/B/9/pbr_csr07_service.pdf), the customer experience for both citizens and businesses when contacting their local council should be one which is responsive, timely and efficient.

The council faces a tough economic future and over the following years resources will be tighter meaning that we have to be slicker and more efficient in the way we do business. We also have to recognise that our customers will also have limited resources and they too will want to interact as efficiently as possible. By identifying customer contact that is ‘avoidable’, the council and its partners are better placed to redesign the way services and information are made more accessible for our customers, so they do not have to make unnecessary, valueless contacts which are both frustrating for the customer and inefficient for us the provider.

Barking and Dagenham Council will work with its partners and internal departments to design processes that reduce the need for customers to make contact with the public sector multiple times to complete one transaction. For example changing address once, rather than contacting multiple agencies, paying for school meals by direct debit instead of by cheque each term or chasing up progress on a reported incident or fault.

The 4 key actions that we will take to reduce unnecessary contact

1. *The One B&D model will improve the number of customer queries that we are able to resolve first time on the telephone and face to face by routing customers through to the most appropriate person who can resolve their issue, and by improving our back office processes.*
2. *The implementation of our new CRM system will allow us to track volumes and hold customer information in a central hub which will eventually allow us to develop, as appropriate a single view of the customer.*
3. *We will improve the content and amount of information that is available online, so customers can get the information they need without having to telephone for simple enquiries.*

4. The Quality and Service Development Team will analyse data from our main customer access channels to look for opportunities to make service improvements to reduce the need for citizens to make multiple contact with the authority. The Customer Strategy Team will embed the principles of the strategy that will allow the Quality and Service Development Team to do this.

“AVOIDABLE CONTACT” plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
AC1	We will implement the ‘Tell Us Once’ Project to eliminate multiple customer contacts with various organisations when registering a birth or death by promoting the national telephone number on our website.	Customer Strategy	Ongoing	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
AC2 & T5	To constantly improve the number of customer queries that we are able to resolve first time on the telephone	Contact Centre	Underway and Ongoing	<i>In scope and funded</i>
AC3	To use customer insight, like telephone call data, mystery shopping and customer feedback to identify areas of improvement within the council and work to eliminate process failure and unnecessary cost to the public	Quality and Service Development Team	Underway and Ongoing	<i>In scope and funded</i>
AC4	To participate in sub regional, regional and national efficiency projects that aim to reduce the need for unnecessary contact with public sector organisations. Eg. NI14 sub regional and regional project with like ‘Connected London / Fortune Cookie.	Head of Customer Strategy and Transformation	As and when required	<i>In scope and funded</i>
AC5	Broaden scope outside the organisation to actively look at improving end-end process opportunities with partner organisations	tbc	tbc	<i>Not in scope or funded</i>

Performance management and governance

- The Customer Insight Manager will have the day to day responsibility for Barking and Dagenham Access Strategy. Implementation will be the responsibility of Service Managers, supported by the Customer Insight Team and key stakeholders within the One B&D Programme.

- The Customer Service Improvement Team will have day to day responsibility for the “Avoidable Contact” strategy
- “Avoidable Contact” will be measured as a local performance indicator, subsequent to its removal from the national indicator list in March 2010 and will be used to identify service transitioning priorities where they are high cost and low performance.
- Contact data across our main contact channels will be measured and analysed by Service Managers within B&D Direct and the Customer Service Performance, Policy and Partnership Team on a monthly basis.

CHANNEL MIGRATION PLAN

“To design appropriate, cost effective, efficient and user friendly means of contacting the council and then encourage our customers to use the channels that work best for them”

What is Channel Migration?

Channel Migration is the process by which we will seek to encourage customers to access, or interact with, services via channels other than those to which they normally choose.

Deliberate channel shift is the design and marketing of effective and efficient channels because they are the most appropriate channels for the type of contact, customer and service in question. Channel shift forms one part of an overall channel strategy, and implemented well it can lower costs, build reputation, empower the citizen and improve the overall service proposition. Shifting customers to particular channels involves behaviour change on the citizen’s part, but once they are aware of the channels available, they will use the one that works best for them.

We will encourage residents to shift to new and more effective channels by a number of means, including the following actions:

The 4 key actions that we will take to create channel migration

1. *Implement the One B&D model. It should be noted that BPR activity required for each service area is still to be detailed, and will be subject to a more detailed business case for each service area.*
2. *Phase the prioritisation of the key electronic access channels, telephone and face to face and ensure that senior stakeholders drive the implementation recommendations outlined in this document.*
3. *Apply the set of principles for face to face contact to all customer access points outside of One Stop Shops, and according to the One B&D model indicate the level of service that should be provided, i.e. sign-posting, simple information etc.*
4. *Where it is appropriate for the service and customer, transactional and information services will be designed around the user for 24/7 web access first wherever possible, ensuring all channels have access to the same information to accommodate ‘channel hopping’*

Channel migration plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
CM1	Wherever possible, our staff will promote and signpost our customers to the web and self service.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
CM2	More engaging content will be placed on the website to increase public confidence, usage and interaction with the site.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
CM3	Explore the possibility of incentivising channel shift where appropriate. For example offering a reduced rate if a customer pays by direct debit or online.	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
CM4 & D7	Using customer insight intelligence, widely advertise our choice of contact channels, particularly to hard to reach groups, for example young people or vision impaired customers. Think about appropriate methods / forums to build the public's confidence in using new channels.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
CM5	All new services including information services will be designed around the user for 24/7 web access first wherever possible, ensuring all channels have access to the same information to accommodate 'channel hopping'	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
CM6	We will keep the customer informed by providing status updates for any transactions that are started on the web but cannot be completed online – for example reporting a fault – to ensure that if a customer chooses to use the web they can continue to do so without having to ring us.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
CM7	Transactions across all	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but</i>

	channels will be reviewed and may be withdrawn or users signposted to more effective channels where appropriate, and in conjunction with individual services and the Service Improvement Team			<i>investment and BPR required</i>
CM8	All channels should have exactly the same information available to them (i.e. if a text was sent, this same content should be visible if the same user logs in to the website, or rings the contact centre)	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
CM9	Develop an interactive area called 'My Barking and Dagenham' which will take learning from other successful private sector examples like Amazon.	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>

Performance management and governance

- The Head of Customer Strategy and Transformation will be accountable for the implementation of the Customer Access Strategy and through with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation Project, Service Managers will make sure implementation of the principles happens on a day to basis.
- The Service Managers will ensure that, through constant customer feedback and task based monitoring content is always relevant, up to date and user friendly
- The “exit pages” and where transaction are abandoned without being completed will be analysed each month by the Web Team to see where transactions are failing and corrections made accordingly
- We will compare the effectiveness and use of different channels for each service and seek to shift contacts to the most appropriate channels
- Business cases will be prepared to move more transactions (including information transactions) online that take in to account the needs of customers and the business.

DIGITAL INCLUSION PLAN

What is Digital Inclusion?

“To ensure that citizens who do not have access to digital channels at home or work are not disadvantaged when communicating with the council”

The 3 key actions that we will take to achieve digital inclusion

- 1) *Enhance and simplify the use of hard technology i.e. things you can touch, as well as offering support to people to help them to understand and use electronic services on computer screens and mobiles.*
- 2) *Enhance basic literacy and understanding of technology to improve life chances, build confidence and understanding, support lifelong learning and to give residents better access council services.*
- 3) *Simplify the lives of residents and improve the efficiency of our services by making the best use of digital technology and making administration simpler.*

Digital inclusion plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
D1	To provide mediated access to our website for the public via the one stops shops and contact centre	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation	Underway and Ongoing	<i>In scope and funded</i>
D2	More engaging content will be placed on the website to encourage more people to use it.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
D3	To continue to provide public internet access at our key locations, e.g. Libraries, Children’s Centres, and other identified Council locations. Extend Silver Surfer / Computer taster offerings across libraries.	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
D4	Create local Digital E-Champions programme as part of a one year pilot to develop and promote access to the web.	Service Managers Skills and Learning	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
D5	Enable web access via Digital Interactive TV via the <i>Looking Local</i> service and roll out to residents with Sky & Virgin services.	One B&D Board	One B&D Board to prioritise	<i>In scope but investment required</i>

D6	Develop strategy for use of social networking element of LBBB website; YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter etc.	One B&D Board	One B&D Board to prioritise	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
D7 & CM 4	Using customer insight intelligence, widely advertise our choice of contact channels, particularly to hard to reach groups, for example young people or vision impaired customers. Think about appropriate methods / forums to build the public's confidence in using new channels.	One B&D Board	One B&D Board to prioritise	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
D8	Investigate use of mobile technology to engage groups who would not use standard computers, e.g. libraries text alerts, Dial-a Ride etc. Link to Customer Access Strategy	One B&D Board & M&C	One B&D Board to prioritise	<i>Not in scope or funded</i>

Performance management and governance

- The Policy Research and Engagement Manager will have the day to day responsibility for the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy

THE 'BEST WAY TO CONTACT US' PLAN

“To provide a full range of contact channels for each of our services, with some channels providing enhanced access for customers with special requirements”

What is The “Best Way to Contact Us” Plan?

The 'Best Way to Contact Us' Plan refers to the ease or difficulty that a citizen may experience whilst using face to face, telephone, or electronic access channels to obtain services from the council. For example, someone with hearing difficulties may find the telephone unusable, and may prefer to communicate through email. Equally a customer who does not have English as their first language may not be able to access any contact channel without appropriate translation services.

The 3 key actions that we will take to provide access for all

1. *Continually engage with groups representing those with specific requirements for the way they contact us and ensure that an appropriate choice of channels is available to those individuals*
2. *Ensure that we widely advertise our choice of contact channels, particularly to hard to reach groups, for example young people or vision impaired customers*
3. *To provide a comprehensive translation service, including British sign language and audio recording to allow easy access to the authority for all through the face to face and telephone channels*

'The best way to contact us' plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
A1 & W19	To provide access to a range of language and easy read options where practical, and if not to clearly indicate how a customer can obtain translation services or obtain information in a format suitable for them (e.g. Large text, MP3 etc.)	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
A2	Develop the capability to receive inbound and outbound text messaging to communicate with hearing impaired customers and hard to reach groups	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
A3 & D1	To provide mediated access to our website via the council's Contact Centre	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
A4 & D1	To provide mediated access to our website via the council's one stop shops and other face to face contact locations	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
A5 & D7	Using customer insight intelligence, widely advertise our choice of contact	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment</i>

	channels, particularly to hard to reach groups, for example young people or vision impaired customers. Think about appropriate methods / forums to build the public's confidence in using new channels.			<i>required</i>
A6	Engage with groups representing those with specific requirements for the way they contact us	tbc	tbc	<i>Not in scope or funded</i>
A7 & W26	To explore the capability of providing live web chat facilities and video conferencing as an alternative to the telephone, post and email channels to improve access for those with hearing impairments	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
A8, N11, & W27	To develop the capacity to provide live web chat / video conferencing facilities as an alternative to the telephone, post and email channels if appropriate	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>

Performance management and governance

- The Quality and Service Development Team will have overall responsibility for fair access to electronic contact channels
- To obtain and maintain the "WCAG 2.0 level AA" rating for accessibility by all to our website
- Carry out an Equality Impact Assessment of the channel mix and regularly consult with disability advocacy groups and make reasonable adjustments to the channels as needed.

Part 4 – Plan For Specific Channels

FACE TO FACE PLAN

“To maintain our Face to Face services, but to transition them so they provide consistent, appropriate and cost effective support in our one stop shops and additional locations identified through insight and other council strategies”

The 3 key actions to develop our face to face provisions

1. *To provide mediated access to the Barking and Dagenham Council website and other self serve mechanisms through our face to face staff*
2. *To undertake process reviews to identify potential channel shift and quality improvements to our face to face service*
3. *To explore opportunities to share face to face provision with other organisations and design our property portfolio accordingly.*

Face to face plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
F1	Ensure that all customer facing buildings which are supplementary face to face locations to the two One Stop Shops identified through insight, have sufficient technology and staff training to provide the following level of service: -signposting, simple information provision, reporting, requesting a service, tracking a service, making a booking, making an internet payment	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
F2	Develop the face to face channel, so it becomes the channel for more complex customer processes / cases like interviews, assessments, mediation etc which can be made on an appointment basis, and identify where processes need to change to do this	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
F3	Create a standard for the look and feel of buildings that is integrated with the customer access strategy.	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
F4	To undertake process reviews to identify potential channel shift and quality improvements to our	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>

	face to face service and back office functions; i.e. join up across teams within the council. Work with the services to identify their requirements for service delivery.			
F5	To provide mediated access to the Barking and Dagenham website and other self service mechanisms through our face to face staff	Service Managers with co-ordination via Phase 2 of Customer Strategy Implementation	Underway and Ongoing	<i>In scope and funded</i>
F6	Use an appointment based system to provide outreach services identified through insight where appropriate for customer and service.	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
F7	To explore opportunities to share face to face provision with other organisations	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
F8	Ensure all customer facing staff (including Library staff, social workers, highways staff etc) are inducted through the Institute of Customer Services training programme.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
F9	Provide face-to-face staff with the same level and quality of information via the CRM system that the contact centre has access to.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
F10	Where appropriate equip front line staff with mobile technology, so they can feed information, service requests, general communication in to the contact centre and CRM system	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>

Performance management and governance

- Managers within B&DD and other face to face locations will be responsible for ensuring the One B&D model is implemented and the process flows are adhered to.
- All customer facing staff should have visibility of customer service standards, One B&D values and the Customer Charter which should all be visible to the customer.
- Customers will be seen at the appointed time or, if delayed, will receive an explanation and kept informed
- Customers will be seen within 15 minutes if they have no appointment, or be offered an alternative time
- We will provide a clean, tidy and comfortable waiting area and, wherever necessary, a space to be seen in private, and facilities for young children
- We will develop service specific SLA's around appointment bookings

WEB AND MOBILE WEB PLAN

“To provide a comprehensive, easy to access and up to date website and intranet that allows anyone to find out about, transact and interact with the council 24/7”

The 3 key actions to develop web access

1. *To provide a website that allows simple and easy access for customers and residents and for staff accessing the intranet.*
2. *Promote the website as the main access point for the council’s services for up to date, simple information provision, signposting to relevant services and conducting transactions online. Promote these online systems as the channel of choice (channel shift).*
3. *Develop and promote the use of knowledge based articles on the web that will assist staff in dealing with the customer.*

Web plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
W1	To promote the website as the main access point for the council’s services for simple information and transactional services	Head of Customer Strategy / Head of Communications / Service Managers	October 2010	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W2	To provide a single website for the organisation to make contacting the council straightforward for everyone.	Web Portal Project Manager	Underway and ongoing	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W3	To improve the content of the website in terms of style and quality of information	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W4	To provide new an improved platforms to engage – forums / blogs / RSS feeds and information tools for example weather reports, tickers for countdowns or news information	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
W5	To develop a top 10 section (automated on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis)	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W6	Improve the categorisation (taxonomy) and the website structure	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W7	Developing the site into a transactional website making it a	tbc	Summer 2011	<i>In scope but investment</i>

	self-service tool		onwards	<i>required</i>
W8	Website improvements must reflect public requirements and good user experience whilst reducing contact centre effort in providing mediated access	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W9	Develop a website that allows our customers to interact with the council using social media features like Twitter, Facebook, forums, audio and video.	tbc	July 2010- Jan 2011	<i>Aspirational</i>
W10	To integrate the website with the CRM (scripts), transactional and information systems	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
W11	To integrate all online transactions directly into back office systems to prevent duplication of information entry	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W12	Ensure that business cases for improvements reflect both increased public satisfaction, but also reduced contact centre effort in providing mediated access.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W13	To improve our online systems to make them the channel of choice for simple transactions to promote channel shift	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W14	To improve on transaction status updates that are started online but cannot be completed online – for example reporting a fault.	tbc	tbc	
W15	Make council literature available on the website and intranet including forms, leaflets to reduce production costs and environmental impact	Marketing & Communications / Service Areas	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
W16	Design new functions and features that coincides with the council service requirements and user experience (residents, staff and visitors to the sites)	Website & Intranet PM	December 2010	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W17	Designing a My Barking and Dagenham customisation website – signal login to access tailored information, resident's accounts and to make transactions.	tbc	2011	<i>Aspirational</i>
W18	To provide simple transactions for mobile devices using applications and downsizing the website so that it is visible on a smaller screen (maybe concentrating on specific services and simple	tbc	2011/2012	<i>In scope but investment required</i>

	transactions).			
W19	To provide access to a range of language and easy read options where practical, and if not to clearly indicate how a customer can obtain translation services or obtain information in a format suitable for them (e.g. Large text, MP3 etc.)	Website & Intranet PM	December 2010	<i>Aspirational</i>
W20	Align with the 'Power of Information' agenda by placing datasets online in order for interested parties to create their own interfaces and combinations increasing transparency.	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
W21	To have a sufficient website search function, with an effective search optimisation from search engines. Generating related topics and top searched topics. This needs to also search linked external websites.	Website and Intranet Project Manager	2010	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W22	Share and use web content across other partnership sites, e.g. Directgov, Business link and NHS Choices	tbc	2011	<i>Aspirational</i>
W23	Developing an automated (workflow-led) content management system which has remote access for urgent updates.	Website and Intranet Project Manager ECM	December 2010	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W24	Introducing SMS and Email alerts and information by utilising the CRM and Website database of customers.	tbc	2011	<i>Aspirational</i>
W25	To maximise the potential of advertising on the website.	tbc	2011	<i>Aspirational</i>
W26	To have a sufficient website search function, with an effective search optimisation from search engines. Generating related topics and top searched topics. This needs to also search linked external websites.	Website and Intranet Project Manager	2010	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
W27, N11 & A8	To develop the capacity to provide live web chat / video conferencing facilities as an alternative to the telephone, post and email channels if appropriate	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>

Performance management and governance

- To ensure that the website is available and operational 24/7

- Where it is appropriate and there is a business case, place as many of our transactional services online and to encourage customer usage to reduce costs and provide 24/7 access to the authority's services.
- Increase web activity to contribute to the assumed 20-30% savings target as part of channel migration
- To maintain overall service excellence as evidenced by customer feedback, industry awards and SOCITM usability ratings
- To obtain and maintain the “WCAG 2.0 level AA” rating for accessibility by all.

TELEPHONE PLAN

“To minimise the number of calls to the contact centre and reduce the amount of contact numbers published, to provide fast access to an expert officer, to resolve as much at first point of contact as possible and to reduce the amount of the low value calls that our residents have to make”

The 3 key actions to provide easy telephone access

1. *To provide one main phone number for the organisation which can be easily found in order to make contacting the council straightforward and support this with IVR call routing to get customer’s to officers with the right skills grouping quickly.*
2. *To use local telephone numbers wherever possible to make contacting the authority cheaper on “pay as you go” mobile phones*
3. *To constantly improve the number of customer queries that we are able to resolve first time on the telephone and to sign post to the web wherever possible.*

Telephone plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
T1	To provide one main local telephone number for the organisation which can be easily found in order to make contacting the council straightforward for our residents	Customer Strategy	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
T2	To provide IVR (automated call routing) support to route customers through to the person with the right skills who can deal with them efficiently	tbc	June 2010	<i>In scope and funded</i>
T3	To make a limited number of specialist phone numbers ('golden numbers') available to our residents to allow “menu-less” access to our contact centre	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
T4	To use local telephone numbers wherever possible to make	Customer Strategy	Implemented	<i>In scope and funded</i>

	contacting the authority cheaper on “pay as you go” mobile phones			
T5	To improve the number of customer queries that we are able to resolve first time on the telephone	Contact Centre Manager	Underway and Ongoing	<i>In scope but requires investment and BPR activity</i>
T6	To gain / maintain industry accreditation of the council’s contact centre	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
T7	To maintain overall service excellence as evidenced by customer feedback, industry awards and accreditations	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
T8	To provide a comprehensive translation service to allow easy access to the authority for all	tbc	Implemented	<i>In scope but requires review</i>

Performance management and governance

- To answer the phone within 20 seconds
- To use telephone call data and customer feedback to identify areas of improvement within the council and work to eliminate red tape, process failure and unnecessary cost to the public
- To seek opportunities to work with other public sector contact centres to improve overall service, accessibility and improve value for money
- Wherever possible, promote the public website to transact

MOBILE PHONE PLAN

“To use the emerging mobile phone technology in a tactical manner to provide better access to information for targeted user groups, to reduce costs, increase speed of communication or reduce direct contact”

The 3 key actions to develop mobile telephone access

1. *To provide access to council telephone based services using local telephone prefixes to ensure the minimum costs to mobile phone users, particularly on “pay as you go” tariffs*
2. *To explore the development of outbound text messaging and 'Bluetooth' capability to update, remind, provide simple information to customers*
3. *To explore the development of inbound text messaging capability to communicate with harder to reach groups, mobile groups, and hearing impaired customers*

Mobile telephone plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
M1	To provide access to council	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and</i>

	telephone based services using local prefixes to ensure the minimum costs to mobile phone users, particularly on “pay as you go” tariffs			<i>funded</i>
M2	Explore the development of blue-tooth technology to communicate with customers about issues, events, important messages etc	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
M3, N8 & A2	To explore the development of outbound text capability to update the customer, e.g. library book due, or appointment booking, confirm to the customer, e.g. reference numbers, appointment bookings etc, to provide simple information, e.g. about services, local events etc.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
M4, N9 & A2	To develop the inbound SMS text messaging capability to communicate with hard to reach groups, mobile customers, particularly hearing impaired customers	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
M5	To develop appropriate applications for web enabled mobile phones including fault reporting and simple information provision	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>

Performance management and governance

- The Customer Service Improvement Team will have responsibility for the mobile phone strategy
- To monitor opportunities and take up rates of mobile technologies
- Performance and usage of this channel will be monitored as services are developed

EMAIL PLAN

“To reduce the amount of email communication by better use of electronic forms and other electronic channels, but to encourage email correspondence over paper based letter writing”

The 3 key actions to develop our email provisions

1. *To develop other channels in the ways detailed in this document to provide more attractive options to the email channel*
2. *To provide a complete range of online forms to minimise the amount of emails handled and make email addresses more explicit than postal addresses in communication material*
3. *To collect email addresses for customers and integrate email and postal distribution lists in order to give people the choice to opt for email only (possibility of SMS option in the future).*

Email plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
E1	To develop other channels in the ways detailed in this document so customers to minimise the need for emailing the council overall by promoting self service, web access etc	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
E2	Promote email correspondence over paper based letter writing by making email addresses more explicit on communication material than postal addresses	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
E3	To provide a complete range of online forms to minimise the amount of emails handled, and to increase the amount of automated email responses to reduce the need for human interaction	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
E4	Where it is appropriate and there is a business case, place as many of our transactional services online and to encourage customer usage to reduce costs and provide 24/7 access to the authority's services.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment and BPR required</i>
E5 & W14	To provide status updates for any transactions that are started on the web but cannot be completed online –	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>

	for example reporting a fault			
E6	Utilise the CRM to collect email addresses and mobile phone numbers for customers to use to correspond with customers instead of writing letters – provide case management of emails	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
E7 & P6	Integrate email, SMS and postal distribution lists in order to give people the choice to opt for email only.	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
E8	Use encrypted email when corresponding with residents regarding personal identifiable / confidential data.	IT	Voltage system to be implemented	<i>In scope and funded</i>

Performance management and governance

- To acknowledge all emails within 24 hours and respond within 10 working days.
- Work with services and partners where appropriate to create templates that ensure inbound emails contain all the information needed, ideally in a format that can be semi-automated

POST/PAPER COMMUNICATION PLAN

“To reduce the amount of post and paper communication by better use of electronic channels”

The 3 key actions to develop our post/paper communication plan

1. *To provide a complete range of online e-forms to minimise the amount of post handled and encourage email correspondence over conventional letter writing*
2. *To place more of (with the aspiration to move all) of our leaflets and information online in order to minimise printing and reduce our environmental impact*
3. *To collect email addresses and mobile phone numbers for customers and integrate email and postal distribution lists in order to give people the choice to opt for email only.*

Post/paper plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
P1& E3	To provide a complete range of online forms to minimise the amount of post handled, and to increase the amount of automated email	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>

	responses to reduce the need for human interaction			
P2	Explore the possibility of streamlining the council's postal addresses	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
P3	Ensure that all post received is scanned and indexed to minimise the opportunity for misplacing documents, thus minimising the amount of customer contact needed	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
P4	To place more of (with the aspiration to move all) of our leaflets and information online in order to minimise printing and reduce our environmental impact	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
P5	To use second class post as our main postal tariff to minimise cost to the council tax payer	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
P6	Integrate email, SMS and postal distribution lists in order to give people the choice to opt for email only.	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
P7& E6	Utilise the CRM to collect email addresses and mobile phone numbers for customers to use to correspond with customers instead of writing letters – provide case management of emails	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>

Performance management

- To reply to all letters within 10 working days

NEW MEDIA PLAN (INCLUDING EMERGING SOCIAL MEDIA)

“To avoid being an early adopter of new and emerging media, rather to learn from the pioneers of such products and implement cost effective and tested new channels”

The 3 key actions to develop our new media provisions

1. *Develop the capability to launch electronic petitions, consultations and campaigns*
2. *Regularly review emerging and maturing new media and social networking channels*
3. *Develop our mobile phone provisions, particularly SMS and blue-tooth messaging*

New media plan actions in detail

REF	Action	Owner	Delivery Date	RAG Assessment
N1	Develop the capability to launch electronic petitions, consultations and campaigns	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
N2	Review the use of Digital TV	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
N3	Review the use of on-line forums	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
N4	Review the use of social networking sites – e.g. Facebook, Twitter and social media sites – e.g. YouTube	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope but investment required</i>
N5	Launch on-line photo galleries of public events etc	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
N6 & W4	To provide new and improved platforms to engage – forums, blogs, RSS feeds and information tools for example weather reports tickers for countdowns or news information	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
N7 & M2	Explore the development of blue-tooth technology to communicate with customers about issues, events, important messages etc	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
N8, A2 & M3	To explore the development of outbound text capability to update the customer, e.g. library book due, or appointment booking, confirm to the customer, e.g. reference numbers, appointment bookings etc, to provide simple information, e.g. about services, local events etc.	tbc	tbc	<i>In scope and funded</i>
N9, A2 & M4	To develop the inbound SMS text messaging capability to communicate with hard to reach groups, mobile customers, particularly hearing impaired customers	Contact Centre Manager	Sept 2010	<i>In scope and funded</i>
N10 & M5	To develop appropriate applications for mobile phones including fault reporting and simple information provision	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>
N11, A8 & W27	To develop the capacity to provide live web chat / video conferencing facilities as an alternative to the telephone, post and email channels if appropriate	tbc	tbc	<i>Aspirational</i>

Performance Management and Governance

- Marketing and Communication and ICT Teams to monitor and develop new media opportunities
- All new product launches should be subject to a full business case
- Overall governance of new media should be the responsibility of the council's Marketing and Communications Team.