

Policy Section:	1. Corporate Governance
Procedure Name:	Requests for Services
Classification:	Mandatory
Adopted:	July 2015
Frequency of Review:	Biennial including within 6 months following Council election
Last Review:	September 2017
Next Review Due:	September 2019
Responsible Officer(s):	Governance Officer & Chief Executive Officer
Procedure Manual File Ref:	CC14/407
Council File Reference:	CR17/44291
Legislation Authority:	Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), S270
Related Policies:	Complaints Internal Review of a Council Decision Fraud & Corruption Prevention Requests for Services Whistleblowers Protection Code of Conduct for Council Members Code of Conduct for Council Employees Ombudsman Enquiry and Investigation Management
Related Procedures:	Complaints Internal Review of a Council Decision

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 Local Government delivers an extensive range of services and infrastructure to communities, and discharges obligations under many pieces of legislation. Providing services to the community is a key component of Council's operations and requests for work to be undertaken or a service provided are a daily occurrence.
- 1.2 Council is committed to the provision of quality service to customers and aims to provide services fairly and efficiently. It also monitors requests to identify ways in which it can proactively improve its services.

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- 1.3 Section 270 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires Council to maintain a procedure about “any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the Council or for the improvement of a service provided by the Council.”
- 1.4 This Standard Operating Procedure commences at the point that a request for service is received and covers processes for
 - 1.4.1 distinguishing between requests, complaints and feedback to Council
 - 1.4.2 deciding how to respond to the request
 - 1.4.3 using requests to directly inform service improvements
- 1.5 The aim of this procedure, which is available on Council's website, is to ensure requests for service are addressed in a fair, consistent and structured process which is transparent to all customers. This procedure does not apply to matters that do not fall within Council's jurisdiction. These types of issues will be referred to appropriate external processes.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all Council staff who may be involved in receiving or processing a request for service in the course of their work.
- 2.2 Officers will act reasonably and transparently, demonstrate good customer service, undertake their responsibilities in a proficient manner and use their judgement to ensure an outcome in line with Council's Request for Service Policy.

3. GENERAL NOTES

- 3.1 Complaints about the activities of third parties [e.g. barking dogs or food premises] are to be treated as Requests for Service in the first instance where this is a reasonable interpretation. However if the complaint is about the way in which Council has dealt with a matter concerning the activities of a third party, this will be dealt with as a complaint. (See Complaints Policy)
- 3.2 Communication with the customer is an important ongoing process while undertaking the actions necessary to resolve the request. When immediate resolution is not possible, the customer must be regularly kept informed of progress, either by email, letter or personal contact.

4. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 All documents, notes, telephone calls, photographs and correspondence must be retained and stored in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy as required by Section 125 of the Local Government Act.

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- 4.2 All requests for service must be recorded in Council's Customer Request Management system in such a way that the information can also be analysed for service improvement opportunities.
- 4.3 All requests for service received via email or mail are to be recorded in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy and must also be recorded and actioned in Council's Customer Request Management system.

5. RECORDING REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

- 5.1 Record details of the request in Council's Customer Request Management System, including.
 - 5.1.1 Date and time of call
 - 5.1.2 Taken by
 - 5.1.3 Customer's Name
 - 5.1.4 Customer's address
 - 5.1.5 Customer's contact phone numbers and email address
 - 5.1.6 Comprehensive information about the nature of the request
 - 5.1.7 Who it is assigned to

6. DECIDING HOW TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

- 6.1 Each request must be assessed to determine its nature, how it should be dealt with, when it should be dealt with, and who should be involved.
- 6.2 Experience suggests that the majority of requests can be scheduled and actioned promptly. Some will require direction from a Manager or, occasionally, a decision of Council.
- 6.3 Council's policy provides guidance on how to respond to requests by considering:
 - 6.3.1 The content of Council's Strategic Management Plans, Annual Business Plans, annual works program and Annual Budget. Does the request fit within the directions and programs which Council has agreed to, and budgeted for?
 - 6.3.2 Relevant Council policies and codes. Does the request fit within other agreed positions documented by Council?
 - 6.3.3 Established service standards and response times for regular Council activities. Can the request be accommodated within Council's agreed operating standards?
 - 6.3.4 An assessment of risk. Does the request relate to a matter which may impact on a public risk or Council risk?
 - 6.3.5 Statutory responsibilities. Is the request about a matter which Council has a statutory obligation to act upon?

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- 6.4 Before determining Council's response it is also important to consider:
 - 6.4.1 Public safety and emergencies (the need and requirement of immediate action)
 - 6.4.2 Using Council resources efficiently and effectively
 - 6.4.3 The guidelines and conditions which apply to certain externally funded programs (eg. Home and Community Care)
 - 6.4.4 The complexity of the response by Council (does it require an integrated approach from more than one department?)
- 6.5 Where possible, Council should advise customers what action will be taken in response to requests at the time of lodging. For routine requests refer to Council's service standards and intended work programs. Lodge the request using Council's preferred customer request system and advise the customer of the next steps.
- 6.6 More complex requests should be forwarded to the relevant Manager for determination of how to respond. Ensure that the referral occurs promptly and the customer understands the process and timeline for the next action.
- 6.7 Where requests are for major work or new services they will be considered by Council in the preparation of the next Annual Business Plan.

7. REJECTED REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

- 7.1 Where a request cannot be accommodated it is to be identified in the database as a rejected request.

8. ACKNOWLEDGING REQUESTS FOR SERVICE AND PROGRESS

- 8.1 Under the policy, Council aims to respond to customer requests as soon as possible, and at least within 10 business days, advising of Council's intentions in regard to the request.
- 8.2 If a request is rejected Council should explain the decision clearly and offer any possible alternative actions available to the customer, including reference to Council's Complaints Policy.
- 8.3 Where work is delayed customers should be informed of progress and the reasons for any delays.
- 8.4 If the customer has asked to be advised when the work is completed, this task is the responsibility of the employee who finalises the request.

9. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- 9.1 Learning from requests for service is a way of helping to improve Council's processes and procedures. Council therefore has systems to:
 - 9.1.1 record, analyse and report on the types of requests for service it receives

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- 9.1.2 apply the information to improve customer service.
- 9.2 Understanding the number and type of requests initiated by customers may suggest changes to policies, procedures or systems to improve service delivery. It is important to ensure that lessons learnt are put into practice.
- 9.3 All requests for service, including those which are rejected, must be recorded in Council's Customer Request Management system in such a way that the information can also be analysed for service improvement opportunities.
 - 9.3.1 At intervals determined by the number of requests received, the data on requests for service is reported to Executive Management in order to ensure that systemic issues are identified and addressed.
 - 9.3.2 Council is provided with reports containing data about requests for service, actions taken to address to them and changes made as a result at least twice a year.

10. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this Procedure will be reviewed on a biennial basis to ensure that its commitment to the principles of good conduct and standards is being achieved.