

Policy Section:	6. Finance & Corporate Services
Policy Name:	Service Level Policy – Rates Administration
Classification:	Public – Council Policy
Adopted:	23 September 2014
Frequency of Review:	Biennial
Last Review:	August 2017
Next Review Due:	August 2019
Responsible Officer(s):	Manager Finance & Corporate Services
Policy and Code of Practice Manual File Ref:	CC10/2601
Council File Reference:	CR17/29400
Legislation Authority:	N/A
Related Policies and Codes:	Section 6 Policy - Service Range Section 6 Policy - Strategic Rating
Related Procedures:	N/A

1. BACKGROUND / POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Numerous internal administrative processes are required for the Council to provide an effective and efficient Rating system.
- 1.2 The *Local Government Act 1999* provides the legislative framework within which a Council must determine its rating methodology and framework.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Policy is to identify the various levels at which the various Rates Administration activities are provided. In some instances, the service level is mandated by the *Local Government Act 1999* or the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2013*.
- 1.4 The methodology applied for the purpose of Rating is determined by separate: Strategic Rating Policy.

2. SERVICE LEVELS

- 2.1 The level of service for the various Rates Administration activities is disclosed in **Appendix 1**.

SERVICE LEVEL POLICY – RATES ADMINISTRATION

2.2 Where not mandated by legislation, the service level needs to set at a level such that there is an appropriate resource allocation to:

2.2.1 maintain Council's rating and property database in an accurate and timely manner;

2.2.2 to ensure timely responses to customer queries relative to Rating matters; and

2.2.3 to ensure that outstanding rate debtors can be effectively monitored in accordance with Council's Debtor Management Policy.

3. REPORTING OF SERVICE LEVEL ACHIEVEMENTS

Council's performance in meeting the specified service levels will be reported on an annual basis.

4. MEANS OF DELIVERY OF THE SERVICE

4.1 Council will deliver the internal Rates Administration activities disclosed in **Appendix 1** by employing suitably qualified and experienced staff.

4.2 The level of staff required to deliver the activities will be reviewed on an annual basis, as part of Council's annual budget / business plan deliberations.

4.3 The review will take into consideration performance against the various Service levels, legislative changes, and relevant benchmarking.

5. HOW THE SERVICE IS FUNDED

Operating expenses associated with the delivery of Rates Administration activities are funded by General Rate revenue and Federal Government Financial Assistance Grants received.

6. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this Policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis.

The Chief Executive Officer will report to Council on the outcome of the evaluation and if relevant make recommendations for amendments, alteration or substitution of a new Policy.

The Policy will not be altered or substituted so as to affect a process already commenced.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about this Policy can be obtained by:-

Telephone: 8522 9211

Fax: 8522 9212

Email: council@gawler.sa.gov.au

Appointment: Town of Gawler Administration Centre, 43 High Street, Gawler East.

Letter: PO Box 130, Gawler SA 5118

7. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

The Policy is available for inspection during ordinary business hours at the Council principal office, Town of Gawler Administration Centre 43 High Street, Gawler East or is available on the Council website at www.gawler.sa.gov.au.

A copy of this Policy will be provided to interested parties upon request, for a fee as contained in the Register of Fees and Charges.

SERVICE LEVEL POLICY – RATES ADMINISTRATION

	Activity	Legislative Reference	Council Reference	Level of Service
1	Undertake Rate modelling as directed by the Manager – Finance & Corporate Services		Strategic Rating Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modelling based on revenue target identified in draft budget and rating methodology outlined in Policy 6.8: Strategic Rating Policy
2	Preparation of Quarterly Rate Notices	Sec 180-181 of LG Act 1999		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate notices are distributed on a quarterly basis in accordance with LG Act 1999
3	Distribution of Quarterly Reminder Notices		Debtor Management Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder notices sent on a quarterly basis
4	Processing of property ownership transfers			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 825 processed 2016/17
5	Processing of valuation objections received	Sec 169 of LG Act 1999		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined by quantity of objections received
6	Update Property database in accordance with creation of new land parcels			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 350 new assessments created in 2016/17
7	Processing of annual / weekly valuation updates			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined by volume of valuation updates received from Valuer
8	Debt Collection		Debtor Management Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined by volume of defaulting ratepayers Level of outstanding rate debtors maintained within target outlined in Policy 6.11
9	Manage Payment Arrangement requests		Debtor Management Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined by volume of requests received
10	Attend / respond to customer queries relating to Rates and Property database			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses provided in a timely manner in accordance with Customer Service Charter
11	Generate monthly Fines and Interest	Sec 181 of LG Act 1999		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied monthly (interest) and quarterly (fines)

	Activity	Legislative Reference	Council Reference	Level of Service
12	Process rates journals as required			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determined by level of adjustments and / or corrections required
13	Facilitate updating of Rating information on Council's website			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed on a monthly basis
14	Review Council's Strategic Rating Policy		Strategic Rating Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed on an annual basis
15	Complete Rates surveys as required (e.g. LGA, Local Government Grants Commission)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys completed on an annual basis
16	Process Rates section of Property Searches	Sec 7 Land and Business (Sale and Conveyancing) Act 1994		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx 1,000 searches processed p.a.
17	Maintain Street and Name & Address Register			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates processed in a timely manner
18	Undertake periodic integrity checks of Rates & Property database			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic reviews as required
19	Advertise declaration of Rates	Sec 170 of LG Act 1999		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual advert included in Government Gazette and local newspaper within 21 days of adoption
20	Benchmarking			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of Rateable properties per Rates staff (1.0 FTE) – 2016/17 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gawler – 7,266 2) Prospect – 9,839 3) Alexandrina – 7,345 4) Mt Barker – 4,265 5) Yorke Peninsula – 7,701 6) Whyalla – 11,508 7) Barossa – 5,258
21	Reconcile Rates Debtors / Rates revenue to General Ledger Control accounts	Sec 125 of LG Act 1999	Internal Control Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly
22	Attendance at Revenue Professionals South Australia conference and/or Civica/Authority			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual

	User Group			
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Staff allocation to Service: 1.6 FTE (as at August 2017)