



Council Strategy

Customer Service Charter

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Maintained By: Community Engagement Officer

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Executive Summary

In September 2009, Council adopted an integrated communications & customer service strategy. This strategy proposes a plan of action that will facilitate improved service delivery, the efficient allocation of resources and a greater integration in terms of community aspirations and the delivery of both operational and strategic projects. A key component in delivering this strategy was *Strategic Focus Area 4.16: the development of a customer service charter/policy outlining internal and external service standard*.

This Charter sets out Council's approach to managing customer enquiries, requests or complaints. The objectives of this Charter are:

- To provide a practical framework for customer service and to ensure that all staff respond in a courteous, consistent, timely and fair manner to all reasonable enquiries, requests or complaints from customers; and
- To ensure, as far as practicable, that Council resources are used efficiently and effectively when dealing with customer enquiries, requests or complaints.

Strategic Context

The Shire of Jerramungup Strategic Plan 2009-2014 has identified one of the factors required to ensure the successful execution of the Strategic Plan as being *"the implementation of the agreed level of services and service delivery"*.

Mission Statement

"A united workforce dedicated to providing quality services to our Community".

Shire of Jerramungup Strategic Plan - Key Focus Area 2

The Shire of Jerramungup will deliver a range of excellent community services whilst minimising our impact on the environment by:

- 2.3 Ensuring that the service delivery process is supported by appropriately skilled, qualified and enthusiastic staff members.*

Strategic Focus Areas

Service Provision

The provision of sound customer service has not generally been a priority for local governments in the past as there is no competition for the provision of these services and therefore nowhere else for the customer to go to obtain community amenities and services. Council's Mission Statement of *"providing quality services to our Community"* provides an instrument by which we can now measure the services we provide.

Customer Definition

In this Charter, a customer is any person or organisation who has any form of dealing with Council and includes ratepayers, residents, general public, Council staff, contractors and elected members.

For many employees in both the private and public sector there has been a conception that the needs of external customers (general public) should be given priority to ensure customer satisfaction, while internal customers (colleagues) are at best put to the back of the queue and often ignored or treated with contempt. However, a “*united workforce*” is one that will ensure the needs of internal customers are also considered and dealt with in the same courteous manner afforded to the general public. All employees are required to assist wherever possible to ensure that colleagues, either requiring assistance or seeking information, are given the required resources to deliver optimum service to the public.

Service Definition

This Charter applies to all enquiries, requests or complaints to Council, from both internal and external customers, which may be in the form of requests for specific information, requests for works to be carried out on Council facilities or amenities, or complaints regarding services or facilities.

Key Action Plan

General Customer Service

We will at all times:

- Use clear and concise language;
- Greet customers in a professional and friendly manner;
- Ensure we understand what the customer requires or wishes to convey;
- Find the right officer to assist the customer;
- Handle all issues with confidentiality and discretion.

Front Reception

We will ensure that:

- The customer’s presence is always acknowledged within 60 seconds;
- The customer is advised without delay if the officer they need to see is not available immediately;
- The customer is offered an enquiry form to fill out or an alternative method of contact if the officer they need to see is not available.

Telephone

We will ensure that:

- The telephone is answered within 10 rings during normal business hours;
- The customer is advised without delay if the officer they need to speak to is not available immediately;
- The customer is offered an alternative method of contact if the officer they need to speak to is not available;
- The customer is contacted within one working day when they have left a message on the telephone.

Email

We will ensure that:

- All emails requiring a response are responded to within ten working days;
- If the response to an email query is going to take longer than ten days to produce, the customer's email is acknowledged within ten working days and an approximate time for the full response is given;
- Where the time given is not able to be met, a further email is sent advising the customer of an updated time frame;
- All important incoming and outgoing emails are filed on Synergy.

Website

We will ensure that:

- Council's website is easy to navigate, can be searched effectively and provides an opportunity for customers to send queries and/or feedback to Council;
- All website contact forms are acknowledged by email or telephone except where they are determined to be not genuine.

Correspondence

We will ensure that:

- All incoming correspondence is distributed to the appropriate officer within two working days;
- All incoming correspondence is responded to within ten working days.

Applications

We will ensure that:

- All job applications are acknowledged within five working days.

- All planning and building applications are acknowledged within ten working days.

Requests and Complaints

We will ensure that:

- All requests and complaints not able to be resolved on contact are logged on Synergy and allocated to the correct officer on the day they are received as per the Council Procedure “*Synergy – Registering and Actioning a Service Request*”;
- If we are not sure who the correct officer is we will make it our business to find out before the request or complaint is logged on Synergy.

Anonymous Requests and Complaints

Customers may sometimes anonymously lodge complaints or request action from Council. Such requests can be difficult to investigate because sufficient information may not have been provided to enable a full investigation. In such circumstances it is normally impossible to respond to or communicate findings to the customer in question.

Therefore, Council will not normally investigate anonymous requests for action to be taken unless, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer or an Executive Officer:

- There is a potential risk to public safety; or
- The request for action raises a serious matter; and
- There is sufficient information in the complaint to warrant action or to carry out an investigation.

Information Availability

We will ensure that:

- A Customer Service Charter brochure is made readily available at the Council Offices and other relevant outlets;
- The Customer Service Charter brochure contains a summary of this policy and details of the street and postal addresses of the Council Office, telephone and facsimile numbers, general email and web site addresses and after hours emergency contact details;
- The Customer Service Charter brochure will be updated and reprinted as often as is reasonably practicable to ensure that only current information is being provided to customers;
- Council will publish a complete list of the contact details of all staff and councillors, including job titles, telephone numbers and email addresses (where applicable), on its web site on a readily accessible web page with a direct link to that page from the site home page;
- Council will distribute an Information Brochure with the annual Notice of Rates which will include, amongst other things, the basic Council contact details.

Performance Measurement

The performance of Council's customer service staff will be measured by:


- The number of complaints about customer service received from external customers;
- The number of complaints about customer service received from internal customers;
- The rating of customer service in the annual Community Survey.

Review Position and Date

Community Engagement Officer to review these procedures before 31 October 2011.

Associated Documents

- Strategic Plan 2009 - 2014
- Integrated Communications and Customer Service Strategy
- Council Procedure "*Synergy – Registering and Actioning a Service Request*"

CEO Authorisation: 

Date: 13 / 10 / 2010