



KENTISH COUNCIL POLICY

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Policy Number - 02:23:2005

POLICY NUMBER	02:23:2005
OBJECTIVE	To advise the service that can be expected from Council, and the procedures that can be taken if you are not satisfied with Council decisions or actions.
STATUTORY AUTHORITY	Section 339F of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
POLICY	Adopted 13 December 2005 Minute 7.1.2 Revised 11 December 2007 Minute 7.3.2 Revised 15 December 2009 Minute 7.1.2 Revised 20 September 2011 Minute 11.1.2 Revised 15 October 2013 Minute 11.4.2 Revised 15 September 2015 Minute 11.4.3
REVIEW	September 2017

1. OUR VISION

“In 2014 Kentish is a safe and desirable area to live, work & play, with facilities and services to satisfy residents’ needs and opportunities for participation in a wide variety of activities. The community is dynamic, supporting a rich diversity of positive values and experiences in an ecologically sustainable environment.”

2. OUR VALUES

As a community and as a Council, we value our people by:

- providing opportunities for all to be involved and participate in community events and activities
- ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and dignity
- a willingness to consult, listen and respond to individual and group concerns



- effectively and consistently communicating information
- showing responsive leadership and representation of our community
- recognising and rewarding individuals, volunteers and Council staff for their skills and commitment to the Kentish Community
- ensuring social inclusion for all and equal access and amenity for the disabled

As a community and as a Council, we value our environment by:

- providing good and safe facilities and services
- maintaining our assets in good working order
- working with individuals and groups to protect and maintain the environment
- maintaining and protecting our cultural and built heritage
- protecting and managing our natural assets
- reducing Council's carbon footprint
- encouraging individuals and groups to become more carbon efficient

As a community and as a Council, we value our financial security by:

- encouraging sustainable development for our people and our environment
- prudent spending of public monies and ensuring rates are not increased beyond that required for service delivery, maintenance and creation of community infrastructure
- using effective thinking and learning which can lead to creative solutions
- having a good understanding of our assets and what it takes to maintain them
- managing our finances responsibly and carefully encouraging localised food production, transport and services

3. WHAT IS THE CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER AND WHY DO WE HAVE A CHARTER?

The Charter is a document that sets out the level of service that all our customers can expect from the Council. This charter outlines our service commitment to you and how we will respond to provide you with a quality service.

If you believe you have not been treated in accordance with the standards we promise, it tells you how to express your dissatisfaction. The Charter also tells you how we will deal with your complaint. The Charter contains certain promises Council makes to its customers, and provides a public means of ensuring we keep those promises.

4. OUR CUSTOMERS' RIGHTS

Council's customers include anyone who uses our services, or wishes to make enquiries about services, including, but not limited to, individuals, businesses, organisations, government agencies, schools, visitors to the area and volunteers.

As our customer it is your right to expect:

- Friendly, courteous and respectful service.
- Timely handling of issues in accordance with the reasonable timeframe relevant to that issue.
- Your needs will be listened to and acknowledged.



- Your privacy will be respected.
- Our telephone service will not place you in a queue and will be answered and responded to as quickly as is practicably possible.
- Our afterhours call handling services to be responsive to your needs and handle your enquiry in a professional manner with the information transferred to the relevant Council officer in a timely and accurate manner.
- If you ring or contact the office and the person you wish to speak to is unavailable, as far as reasonably possible, staff will give an indication of when a return call can be expected, and staff, upon returning to the office, will call or contact you before the close of business on that working day.
- Council's facilities and amenities will be maintained in a safe and proper manner to ensure your safety, health, convenience and comfort.
- A standard of staff personal presentation and performance, which at all times reflects the highest quality of service and the image expected of those staff employed by the Kentish Council.

You can help us by:

- Reporting damage to council infrastructure by calling 6491 0200.
- promptly giving us any information that we need to help you or process your application.
- telling us if your information changes, for example, if you change your address.
- meeting your commitments to us in a timely manner.
- telling us if you can't meet those commitments or undertakings.
- letting us know how we can continue to improve our service.
- treating our staff with courtesy and respect.

5. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

As the customer you have a right to expect that we will continually strive to improve our performance in all our activities and interactions.

We will:

Be proactive in addressing works programs and maintenance activities within the resources available to Council.

Be proactive in consulting with appropriate persons, groups and other stakeholders on issues of wider community interest.

Conduct our works and all other Council functions in a safe, professional and environmentally responsible manner.

Endeavour to provide you with enough relevant information to deal and respond effectively with your issue.



6. SERVICES AND CONTACTS

Our Services Include:

Service	Primary point of Contact
Roads, streets, bridges, footpaths, and drainage	Works Manager
Parks and gardens	Works Manager
Planning, Building, and other Regulatory Services.	Planning Services Manager
Records management	Community Development Support Officer
Visitor information, community support, community development, youth, and tourism	Economic & Community Development Manager with the Community and Youth Development Officer, Visitor Information Centre Coordinator
Animal control	Animal Control and Compliance Officer
Food testing and food handling, immunisation, environment matters	Environmental Health Officer
Weeds and vegetation concerns	Works Manager
Recreation facilities	Asset and Infrastructure Officer
Rates and other revenue matters	Finance Officer Revenue
Cemeteries	Community Development Support Officer
Economic development	Economic & Tourism Development Officer

Inquiries, service requests and complaints can be made to Council by:

Phone: **6491 0200**

Mail: **PO Box 63, SHEFFIELD TAS 7306**

E-mail: **council@kentish.tas.gov.au**



7. ISSUE PRIORITY AND TIMELINES

Council is committed to the timely handling of issues in accordance with statutory obligations or as detailed below:

Immediate response	Within 10 working days	Within 20 working days
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matters of serious public health and safety nature.• Urgent matters involving existing Council policy.• Urgent matters of a standard or administrative nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letters and other correspondence.• Non-urgent matters involving existing Council policy.• Non-urgent matters of a standard or administrative nature.• Follow up matters from Council meetings.• Advice of forward Works Programs.• Matters requiring an onsite inspection or investigatory work.• Complaint resolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly progress report regarding issues of an ongoing nature or complexity.

8. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

(a) WHAT IS A CUSTOMER COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a decision, level or quality of service, or behaviour of an employee or agent, which can be investigated and acted upon where no right of appeal or review is available under any other legislation.

This is distinct from a request for service, however a request for service may develop into a complaint where the provision or timeliness of the service is considered unsatisfactory.

Complaints, as referred to in the formal complaints management process, **do not** include:

- A request for service (unless there was no response to a first request for service)
- A request for information or an explanation of a policy or procedure
- Disagreement with a Council policy



- Reports of damaged or faulty infrastructure
- An expression of dissatisfaction with the behaviour of a Councillor
- Reports about neighbours, noise, dogs, nuisances or unauthorised building work

Many of the issues above are known as 'complaints' as a customer is unhappy about the situation and wants something done. The actions Council takes to resolve many 'complaints' are an everyday part of organisational life for a Council due to the nature of services provided, and are dealt with separately to the formal complaints management process.

(b) CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All complaints are to be thoroughly and expeditiously investigated with the aim of achieving a mutually acceptable resolution. Refer Attachment A: Complaints Management Process.

To facilitate the effective management of complaints, Council will:

- Provide adequate and reasonable resources to customer service and complaint processes.
- Develop and maintain Council policies and procedures and ensure adequate training of Council staff.
- Ensure the community are aware of the avenues available to them to make a complaint or request to Council.
- Provide a mechanism for continuous improvement through performance reporting and customer feedback.

(c) MANAGING COMPLAINTS - BENEFITS

By effectively analysing customer complaints, steps can be taken to

- Redesign works and services;
- Change procedures and policies as part of on-going business improvement.
- Reassess customer information needs such as newsletters, pamphlets, website content etc.

(d) CUSTOMER SERVICE

A customer is entitled to a prompt response to the complaint, be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the complaint, confidentiality in the handling of personal details, and a thorough and objective investigation of a complaint.

A complainant's details will not be given to a third party under any circumstances in order to protect the complaint process and the complainant.

Council will assess all types of complaints equitably and is committed to respond in accordance with the Issues Priority and timelines table below. Complainants will be kept informed of developments. In those instances where the complaint is received in writing, Council's response will be by way of letter or email.



In responding to complainants, Council will provide reasons for its decisions where they are contrary to the wishes of the complainant.

Complainants will also be advised where investigation of their complaint results in improvements to any Council Policy or Procedure.

(e) CUSTOMER OBLIGATIONS

A customer normally needs to provide full details of their name, address and telephone contact number before a complaint will be registered. Anonymous complaints may be accepted at the discretion of the relevant Manager or General Manager where there is a potential risk to persons or property.

It is expected that customers will engage with Council staff in a courteous and polite manner. If customers are personally abusive or use bad language, the Council may cease engaging with the customer. If staff feel threatened by inappropriate language or behaviour, the Police may be notified. The General Manager may decide to limit or cease responses to a customer if they continue to be abusive or use bad language in their dealings with Council. A decision of this nature will be communicated to the customer in writing.

(f) REMEDIES

Council commits to a range of options for addressing unfair or wrong decisions or any unreasonable policy or procedure. Responses deemed appropriate and reasonable include:

- admission of fault
- explanation
- apology
- change of decision
- change to policy or procedure
- technical assistance

More than one remedy may be applied in the particular case if the circumstances justify that course of action.

(g) REPORTING ON COMPLAINTS

Council is committed to using complaints data to improve decision-making and customer service. Reports will be generated from Council's Customer Request System that will provide the basis for analysis of the complaints received. A report on complaints received, their management and any emerging trends will be considered by the Senior Management Team on a regular basis, and by Council on an annual basis.

The General Manager is to provide Council with a report at least once a year of the number and nature of complaints received in accordance with section 339F(5) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.



9. WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may request the General Manager to review any customer request / complaint decision made by Council staff. Such a request to the General Manager should be in writing and provide the necessary information and background in support of the request.

If you remain dissatisfied following review of the matter by the General Manager, the matter will, on request, be directed to Council for determination.

If you feel the issue still remains unresolved, you can complain to the **Ombudsman**.

You can make your complaint by phone or in person at the office of Ombudsman Tasmania or you can use the complaint form available online at www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au

Explain your concerns simply and clearly and tell the Ombudsman what you hope to achieve by making the complaint and include as many relevant details as you can: the dates of key events, the names of people you've contacted and copies of letters and documents.

The Ombudsman will not accept a complaint if the issue goes back more than two years.

Ombudsman contact details:

Enquiries	Monday to Friday 8:45am-5:00pm (excluding public holidays)
Phone	1800 001 170 (free call in Tasmania) or 1300 766 725 (cost of a local call anywhere in Australia)
Email	ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au
Fax	(03) 6233 8966
Street	Ground Floor 99 Bathurst St, Hobart 7000 or 45 Cameron St, Launceston 7250
Postal	GPO Box 960 Hobart 7001

Complaints against legislative non-compliance or offence:

Under section 339E of the *Local Government Act 1993*, you can make a complaint to the Director of Local Government:

- that the Council, a Councillor or the General Manager has failed to comply with requirements under the Local Government Act or any other Act; or
- that a Councillor, the General Manager has failed to comply with requirements under the Local Government Act.

A complaint for non-compliance or an offence of this kind must:

- be in writing; and
- identify the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made; and
- give particulars of the grounds of the complaint; and
- be verified by statutory declaration; and
- be lodged with the Director of Local Government.



Director of Local Government Details:

Division Local Government Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet
Phone (03) 6233 2113
Email lgdiv@dpac.tas.gov.au
Fax (03) 6233 5602
Street Level 5, 15 Murray Street, Hobart Tas 7000
Postal GPO Box 123, Hobart Tas 7001

10. AVAILABILITY

This *Customer Service Charter* is available:

- at the Council Office during normal office hours
- On the Council's website

11. REVIEW

This *Customer Service Charter* is to be reviewed at least once every two years in accordance with section 339F(4) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

