



COUNCIL POLICY

Request for Service

Policy Number:	PO075		
Strategic Plan Objective	Efficient, Effective and Professional Organisation		
Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer	Record Number:	16/14054[v4]
Responsible Officer:	Governance Officer	Minute Reference:	255/2017 (11/10/2017)
Date Adopted:	11/10/2017	Next Review Date:	October 2019

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

Section 270 (a) of the Local Government Act requires Council to maintain policies, practices and procedures for dealing with “any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the Council or for an improvement of a service provided by the Council”.

This policy aims to:

- Provide guidance on what may constitute a reasonable request for a service or an improvement to a service
- Distinguish between requests, complaints and feedback to Council and give direction on management of requests
- Establish a standardised process for assessing and processing requests
- Using requests to directly inform service improvements.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Elected Members, Council employees or representatives who may be involved in receiving or processing a request for service in the course of their duties.

3. DEFINITIONS

Definitions are provided in Attachment 1.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Council 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 regular occurrence.

Council is committed to the provision of quality service to our community and aims to provide services fairly and efficiently. It also monitors requests to identify ways in which it can continually improve services.

4.1. The Principles

This policy is based on five principles which inform the way Council approaches requests for service. They are:-

- Fairness: treating customers impartially, maintaining confidentiality and ensuring transparency at all stages of the process.

- Accessibility: information about Council's services and contact options will be readily available.
- Responsiveness: providing sufficient resources and suitably trained staff.
- Efficiency: customer requests will be dealt with as quickly as practical while adhering to this policy.
- Liaison: between different areas of Council where the customer request overlaps functional responsibilities.

4.2. What is a Request for Service?

A Request for Service is an application to have Council or its representatives take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service.

Council also receives complaints and feedback across all areas of operations and clarification may be necessary to make the distinction for the purpose of this policy.

A Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service which has, or should have, been received. Refer to the "Definitions" table for a further explanation.

Where Council has failed to meet the normal standards for a service, the Council's Complaint Policy and the associated procedures apply. Where ambiguity exists, Council will deal with the matter as a request for service rather than a complaint in the first instance.

Feedback can take the form of comments, both positive and negative, about services provided without necessarily requiring corrective action or a formal review. Feedback may however influence future service reviews and delivery methods.

4.3. Reasonable Request for Service

In assessing requests for service consideration will be given to:

- Alignment with Council's Strategic Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and Annual Business Plans;
- Public safety and emergencies;
- Using Council resources efficiently including maintaining appropriate levels of staffing and Council's Enterprise Agreements;
- An assessment of risk;
- Relevant Council policies and statutory responsibilities;
- Guidelines and conditions of externally funded programs;
- Impact of service delivery approaches on local businesses.

4.4. How to Make a Request for Service

A person can make an application for a service in a number of ways:

- Completion of the appropriate form on Council's website, or
- In person at one of Council's offices, or
- Letter, or
- Email, or
- Fax, or
- Telephone, or
- Petition to Council.

All requests will be captured in Council's Records Management System in accordance with the State Records Act 1997 and Council's Records Management Policy.

Council records are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1991 and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed under provisions of that legislation.

4.5. Processing a Request for Service

Council welcomes requests for service as a way of continually improving its services and programs whilst meeting the needs of its customers.

The circumstances for individual requests will vary greatly.

Requests that fit within well established guidelines will be managed accordingly and the process will be explained to an applicant at the outset. In the majority of cases requests will be processed promptly and the applicant advised verbally or by return post or email.

Where further evaluation is required, the applicant will be informed accordingly. If a request cannot be fulfilled in a reasonable timeframe the applicant will be advised, including an explanation of why this decision was taken.

On some occasions, requests may be best suited to scheduling to coincide with work in a particular area or season.

Requests for major works or new services will be referred to Council for consideration as part of the next annual cycle of review and public consultation.

Where an applicant is not satisfied with the Council's decision, it is open to the applicant to lodge a complaint against the decision under Council's Complaints Policy.

4.6. Rejected Requests

All rejected requests that are within the bounds of Council's service provision will be recorded and may be reconsidered at a future date, such as in conjunction with the preparation of future plans (Strategic Plan, Long Term Financial Plan or Annual Business Plans).

5. COMPLAINTS

Complaints about this policy can be made in writing to Council's Governance Officer. Complaints will be managed in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy PO147.

6. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every four years and must be reviewed within twelve months of a general election, in consultation with employees and Elected Members.

This policy will also be reviewed as deemed necessary in consideration of any changes to legislation, guidelines, audit findings or stakeholder feedback.

7. TRAINING

Council is committed to supporting Elected Members and employees in complying with this policy

This policy will be provided to Elected Members and all employees who have responsibilities under this policy.

Training needs will be reviewed annually, during individual performance reviewed or when deemed necessary in consideration of any changes to legislation and relevant guidelines.

8. RELATED COUNCIL POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

PO037 Internal Review of a Council Decision Policy

PO057 Community Engagement Policy

PO147 Complaints Policy

Customer Service Charter

9. REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

- Section 270 of the Local Government Act 1999

- Council also provides services which are funded by the State and/or Commonwealth Governments and these are subject to the policies and procedures particular to those services.
- Local Government Association of SA (LGA) Model Policies.

10. COUNCIL DELEGATION

Details of Delegation:	Chief Executive Officer
Delegate:	

11. VERSION HISTORY

Archived Policy Name	Policy Number	Date Adopted	Last Reviewed
PO075 Service Provision Policy	PO075	07/04/2003	08/06/2010
PO075 Request for Service Policy	PO075	10/09/2014	11/10/2017
PO075 Request for Service Policy (Version 3 presented to Council Meeting in Infocouncil 11/10/2017)	PO075	Draft Only	Draft Only

Definitions

ATTACHMENT 1

Act	The Local Government Act 1999 (SA).
Community	The people who; live, work, conduct business activities or use the facilities in public places.
Complaint	Means an expression of dissatisfaction with a service delivered by the Council, or its representatives that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or documented. This includes complaints about a request for service that has been, or should have been delivered. Complaints may originate from the community, elected members, contractors or staff.
Council	The Yorke Peninsula Council
Employee	Means a person employed directly by the Council in a full time, part time or casual capacity.
Policy	Refers to this Request for Service Policy.
Representatives	Persons providing services to, or on behalf of, the Council.
Request for Service	Means an application to have Council or its representatives take some form of action to provide a Council service.