



CP 2.16 | Complaints Management

Objective

Complaints can expose shortcomings and faults in City systems and processes. An efficient handling of complaints can identify the root causes of complaints, remedy the shortcomings and faults, and therefore allow for the continuous improvement of the City. Accordingly, this policy seeks to:

- ensure the efficient handling of complaints;
- assist in the identification of root causes of complaints;
- identify opportunities for improvement in City services, systems and processes; and
- provide for continuous improvement of City services, systems and processes.

Scope

This policy applies across the City of Perth (the City) and to all Council members and employees in respect of complaints made to or about the City, related to its products, services, employees or the handling of a complaint.

This policy does not apply where a complaint is regarding a private person or business in the City which may require the City to take compliance or legal action. This is considered a request for service.

This policy also does not apply to behavioural complaints or other complaints regarding Elected Members, which are managed under a separate policy and procedure and as provided by the *Local Government Act 1995* and regulations.

Policy statement

Definitions

complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the City, related to its products, services, employees or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. However, the following are not complaints:

- a. Feedback on a service where there is not an issue to be resolved or does not necessitate action by the City; and
- b. Requests or suggestions for the City to perform an action or task.

These matters will be addressed outside of the Complaints Management Framework.

Complaints Management Framework refers to the policies, procedures, practices, staff and systems involved in the managing of complaints across the City.



Receiving and Recording Complaints

1. Complaints can be submitted to the City through the form established by the City setting out the nature of the complaint and where possible, the remedy sought.
2. Anonymous complaints will not normally be acted on by the City unless sufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate misconduct under the *Crime, Corruption and Misconduct Act 2003* or other criminal conduct. Anonymous complaints regarding misconduct about a Council member or employee can be made to the Crime and Corruption Commission or Public Sector Commission in accordance with their relevant processes.
3. Council members who receive a complaint, should promptly provide this to the City for action, through the established processes.
4. All complaints received by the City will be recorded in a complaints management system which will be used for reporting purposes and identifying trends and root causes of complaints. This system will include referrals from the Crime and Corruption Commission or Public Sector Commission as well as systemic, endemic or high-risk issues identified by investigations into complaints.

Resolving a Complaint

Principles of complaint management

5. The documentation that makes up the Complaints Management Framework must be accessible and ensure all complaints are managed fairly, efficiently, and equitably and for this purpose the following principles apply:
 - a. Accessible - The ability to make a complaint as well as information on how to make a complaint will be made accessible to all, and employees will be trained and made aware of these processes. The City will provide support to vulnerable persons who require assistance and allow complaints to be made by authorised representatives.
 - b. Fairly - Complaints will be handled and responded to in an objective and impartial manner and complainants will be afforded procedural fairness throughout all stages of the complaint.
 - c. Efficiently - The resolution of complaints will be managed in a timely and meaningful manner in a way that targets specific decisions, services, or other City units for adequate resolution. Nomenclature procedures for all complaints will be consistent and meaningful and avoid the use of generic subtypes such as "Other".
 - d. Equitably - Not all complaints are the same. Complaints must be managed and responded to according to the seriousness and detail of the complaint. Similar cases should be treated alike.
6. In managing complaints, the City must be:
 - a. People-focused - Complainants as far as practical will be actively involved in the complaints process and treated at all times with respect and courtesy. No complainant should be adversely affected by making a complaint, subject to the City's procedures for unreasonable complaints.
 - b. Transparent - The policies and procedures for managing complaints and a FAQ section will be published online and available in physical form. As far as practical, complainants will be kept informed of the status their complaint throughout all stages of the process.



- c. Responsive - Complaints will be acknowledged and responded to promptly with the aim of resolution at the earliest stage. If the complaint is not resolved at the earliest stage, complainants will be informed, where appropriate, of the reasons for the delay.

General resolution of complaints

7. The Complaints Management Framework must seek to resolve all complaints at the earliest stage but escalate according to the seriousness of the complaint and the nature of the complainant's contact with the City.
8. Complaints referring to inaction or a failure on behalf of the City will invariably require a prompt resolution by the City where there has been a service or responsibility unfulfilled.
9. Complaints regarding the conduct of individual Council members are managed through Council Policy 2.16 Behavioural Resolution Policy and the *Local Government Act 1995*. This may result in the City being unable to share information regarding the status or some actions taken to resolve the complaint with the complainant.
10. Complaints regarding employees will be considered in accordance with the applicable laws. This may result in the City being unable to share information regarding the status or some actions taken to resolve the complaint with the complainant in order to preserve confidentiality.

Timeline for response

11. Upon receipt of a complaint, the City will use its best endeavours to acknowledge a complaint within two business days but by no later than seven business days.
12. Complaints will be prioritised according to the urgency of the issues raised and actioned accordingly.
13. The City will aim for each complaint to be resolved within twenty working days but this may be delayed depending on the complexity or legal framework that may apply to that complaint.

Review of the Complaints Management Framework

14. The Complaints Management Framework will be reviewed as appropriate, but at least every two years.



Document control

Policy context

Legislation, standards & external guidelines	Local Government Act 1995
Policies and procedures	Council Policy 1.8 Behaviour Resolution
Strategies, plans and frameworks	

Document custodian

Alliance	Corporate Services	Service unit	Corporate Planning and Performance
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Review management

Next review due	August 2023	Document management ref.	Click here to enter text
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Document management

Version	Adopted by	Adoption date	Synopsis of changes
1.0	Ordinary Council Meeting	22 February 2022	Council Policy 2.16 adopted