

	CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER	Policy 1.6		
		<small>LAST REVIEW September 2010</small>	<small>NEXT REVIEW September 2012</small>	<small>MINUTE REF GF74/5-10</small>
POLICY STATEMENT:	<p>1.1 We are committed to the timely, efficient, and consistent delivery of a range of quality services which support the Kingborough Council Strategic Plan 2010-2020.</p> <p>1.2 We will ensure that all customer contact is fair, friendly, informative and efficient. We subscribe to continuous improvement in service delivery to meet the changing needs of our customers and the community.</p> <p>1.3 We strive to provide a level of service that does not attract complaints, however in the instances where customers are dissatisfied, we will take all possible steps to achieve a resolution.</p>			
OBJECTIVE:	<p>2.1 The Customer Service Charter provides a framework for defining service delivery standards, the rights of our customers, and how complaints from customers will be handled.</p>			
SCOPE:	<p>3.1 This policy applies to all service requests and complaints made by customers in relation to Council's operations.</p>			
PROCEDURE:	<p>4.1 <u>SERVICE STANDARDS</u></p> <p>4.1.1 When you, as a customer, visit or telephone Council, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treat you politely and with respect, • provide prompt, relevant, accurate and professional advice, • maintain your privacy, • keep you informed if the resolution to your enquiry is being delayed. <p>4.1.2 Where an enquiry is of a complex nature, or a meeting with a specific officer is required, customers are requested to make a prior appointment.</p> <p>4.1.3 Response Times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council undertakes a wide variety of activities which vary both in complexity and time taken to complete. • Council's schedule of processing/response times provides a guide to the most common service requests, with target times for completion or resolution. This schedule is included as Appendix A to this Policy. <p>4.1.4 Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will make our services accessible for our customers by supplementing personal contact options with a range of web and telephone-based payment, service request, and information services. 			

4.2 OUR EXPECTATIONS OF OUR CUSTOMERS

4.2.1 To help us to help you, we ask that you:

- Report any damage to, or failure of, Council's infrastructure or property.
- Treat our staff with mutual respect.
- Provide complete details of your service request or complaint.
- Respect the privacy and rights of other people.
- Phone to make an appointment for a complex enquiry or a need to see a specific Officer.
- When necessary, contact the Officer nominated on any correspondence.

4.3 CUSTOMER SERVICE PROCESS

4.3.1 If a customer dissatisfaction relates to a failure in Council's infrastructure or service, such as potholes in a road, or an uneven footpath, or the failure to collect a wheelie bin, this will be treated in the first instance as a service request.

4.3.2 A service request may be lodged by telephone or fax, at the Customer Service counter or via the internet.

4.3.3 A service request will be managed by the Customer Service Unit, which will allocate the task to the appropriate department or Officer. The unit will monitor that a response in accordance with the Service Standard (Appendix A), and this Charter, is provided.

4.3.4 A complaint is not:

- A service request (unless the response was outside the Service Standard).
- Verbal advice of unsatisfactory service or performance.
- Disagreement with a policy or the direction of the Council.
- A request for information or an explanation of a policy or procedure.
- A complaint for which statutory review processes exist, such as an appeal against a planning decision for which there are appeal provisions in the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993.
- An expression of dissatisfaction with the behaviour or performance of a Councillor (that mechanism is contained in the Code of Conduct for Councillors).
- A work-related grievance of an Officer or contractor.

4.3.5 If a customer is not satisfied with the outcome of a service request, or the matter relates to unsatisfactory conduct of an Officer(s), or a failure to comply with the Service Standard, the matter will be treated as a complaint and dealt with by the General Manager. Complaints are to be lodged in writing.

4.3.6 Complaints will be investigated and a response provided within 15 working days. Where a complaint involves complex issues, it may not be possible to meet this deadline. In these cases prior to the expiry of the timeframe we will inform the complainant of progress and when a response is likely to be given.

4.3.7 A disagreement with a policy or the direction of the Council may also be directed to the Mayor and/or individual Councillors.

4.3.8 We commit to a range of options for addressing unfair and incorrect decisions, or any unreasonable policy or procedure, or any inappropriate response, action or treatment by an Officer. Appropriate remedies may include:

- Admission of fault and apology
- Explanation
- Change of decision
- Change to policy or procedure
- Repair / rework / replacement
- Counselling or disciplining of staff

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

4.3.9 All complaints received by us will be treated with the utmost seriousness, however if a complaint is found to be malicious or vexatious, or it is a repeated complaint to which a response has previously been given, no further action may be taken on the complaint. The customer will be informed of this decision in writing by the General Manager.

4.3.10 While we will accept anonymous complaints, we will generally only act if the matter is considered to be serious and there is sufficient information provided to enable an investigation to be undertaken.

4.4 CUSTOMER RIGHTS

4.4.1 While we encourage customers to allow us to investigate complaints in the first instance, a customer who remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a review is entitled to seek external review from:

- The Ombudsman
- The Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner
- The Director, Local Government Division: A complaint made to the Director under section 339E of the Local Government Act 1993 is to 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.

REPORTING

4.4.2 We are committed to using requests and complaints data to improve decision-making, business processes and customer service. The General Manager will ensure that performance reports are considered by the Management Team and will provide a report each year of the number and nature of complaints received, which will be included in the Annual Report.

	<p>4.5 HOW TO CONTACT COUNCIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Civic Centre, 15 Channel Highway, Kingston Tasmania during the hours of 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday except public holidays. ○ Bruny Island Service Centre, Main Road, Alonnah during the hours of 8:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday except public holidays. • Mail: Kingborough Council, Locked Bag 1, Kingston, Tasmania 7050 • Telephone: (03) 6211 8200 during the hours of 8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday. Council provides an After-Hours Emergency Service on the same number. • email to kc@kingborough.tas.gov.au • Internet at www.kingborough.tas.gov.au
COMMUNICATION:	5.1 All staff, Councillors and Customers, members of the public. Available free of charge at the Civic Centre and on Councils Web Site www.kingborough.tas.gov.au .
LEGISLATION:	<p>6.1 <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> section 339 (F) – Customer Service Charter.</p> <p>6.2 <i>Local Government (General Regulations) 2005</i> – Regulation 30 - Customer Service Charter.</p>
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	<p>7.1 Policy 9.14: Code of conduct - Employees</p> <p>7.2 Policy 9.3: Anti-Discrimination</p>
AUDIENCE:	8.1 Public document

Appendix A – Service Delivery Time Frames

Service	Response/Processing Time (working days)*
Planning	
Development and Subdivision Application Assessment	30
Process amendments to approved permit conditions	20
Adhesion order application assessment	15
Process Sealed Plan amendments	15
(with hearing)	40
Council sealing of final plans (Subdivision and Strata)	15
Lodge a Part 5 agreement	10
Refunds	
Landscaping bond - (Includes inspection period 10 days)	20
Kerb & Gutter deposit (Includes inspection period 10 days)	20
Bank & bond guarantees – (Includes inspection 10 days)	20
Hall booking deposit – (includes inspection)	10
Building	
Building Permit Assessment (Privately certified)	10
(Council certified)	15
Amendments to approved building permit conditions (Council Certified)	15
(Privately Certified with plumbing)	10
(Privately Certified no plumbing)	5
Process Skip Bin in Road Reserve application	3
Plumbing	
Plumbing Inspection from time of request	2
Plumbing Permit	10
Development Engineering	
Subdivision inspection	5
Process Works in Road Reserve application	3
Health	
Process Special Plumbing Permit application	10
Process Temporary food licence application	10
Process Food licence application	10
Investigate a noise complaint	5
Investigate other environmental complaints	5
Urgent environmental health issues are dealt with immediately upon receipt of complaint.	1
Open air burning complaint	1
Natural Resource Management	
Tree removal applications	10
Illegal tree removal	3
Removal of declared weeds - inspection	5

Service	Response/Processing Time (working days)*
Information Services	
Process a Right to Information request	10
Respond to a Complaint	15
Answer your phone call	1 Minute
Return Phone Calls within	2
Respond to general correspondence	10
Process a 337 or 132 Certificate	10
Compliance	
Process Kennel licence application	30
Barking dog complaint (initial inspection)	3
(completion)	25
Fire hazard (initial inspection)	3
Dogs at large	2 hrs
Dog attack (when injury has occurred)	2 hrs
Dog attack (when no injury has occurred)	2
Works	
Potholes in sealed and gravel roads - Inspect, assess and respond to customer. Add to a prioritised repair program based on risk assessment	15
Replace/repair damaged Street Signs – .Regulatory e.g. Give-Way, Stop Signs, Keep Left etc	5
Replace/repair damaged Street Signs – .General e.g. street/place names	30
Missed Bin pickup if notified by 11.00am	Same day
Missed Bin pickup if notified after 11.00am	Next working day
<p>* Processing times may increase where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided by the customer or agent is incomplete and/or incorrect. • Inspections show non-compliance and/or the requirement of remedial works 	