

POLICY

Policy Name	Request for Service Policy
Policy Category	Statutory Policies
Department / Officer	Governance
Date Adopted	28 September 2015
Date/s Reviewed	27 April 2020
Review Frequency	Every Three Years
Strategic Plan Reference	Objective 5 – An Innovative Council Empowering the Community Approach 5.3 – Provide effective and efficient levels of service delivery Strategy 5.3.1 – Support continuous improvement, innovation and excellence in service delivery
Attachments	Nil

1. Purpose

The City of Victor Harbor delivers an extensive range of services and infrastructure to communities, and discharges obligations under a number of legislations. Providing a key component of Council's operations, is to respond to requests for work to be undertaken or a service provided.

The purpose of 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 including the collation of information which can be used to directly inform service improvements

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Council employees who may be involved in receiving or processing a Request for Service in the course of their work and Council Members who may receive a verbal or written Request for Service from a member of the community.

This Policy does not apply to complaints – refer Council's Complaint Handling Procedures.

3. Policy Statement (Summary)

The City of Victor Harbor is committed to providing a quality service to customers in a fair and efficient manner and to use information to identify ways in which we can proactively improve services.

4. Legislation and Compliance

Pursuant to Section 270 (a1) and (b) of the *Local Government Act 1999* requires Council to develop and maintain policies, practices and procedures for dealing with:

- (a) any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the Council or for the improvement of a service provided by the Council; and
- (b) Complaints about the actions of the Council, employees of the Council, or other persons acting on behalf of the Council.

Pursuant to Section 270 (a2) of the *Local Government Act 1999* requires the policies, practices and procedures required under Section 270(a1) of the *Local Government Act 1999* must be directed towards:

- (a) dealing with relevant requests or complaints in a timely, effective and fair way; and
- (b) using information gained from Council's community to improve its services and operations.

5. Definitions

Business Day means a day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or Public Holiday.

Council Employee means a person employed directly by the Council in a full time, part time or casual capacity (whether that position is permanent or contractual) and persons providing services to, or on behalf of, the Council even though they may be employed by another party.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by the Council or its representatives that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected. This includes complaints about a service that has been, or should have been delivered.

Customer means a resident, ratepayer or member of the public who request Council take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service.

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

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

6. Policy Content

6.1 Guiding Principles

The following five principles are fundamental to how Council approaches Requests for Service:

- **Fairness:** treating customers fairly requires impartiality, confidentiality and transparency at all stages of the process.
- **Accessibility:** to be accessible there must be broad public awareness about Council's policy and a range of contact options.
- **Responsiveness:** this will be achieved by providing sufficient resources, well trained staff and review and improvement of the systems.
- **Efficiency:** customer requests will be dealt with as quickly as practical while adhering to this policy.
- **Integration** of different areas of Council where the customer request overlaps functional responsibilities.

6.2 When should a Request for Service become a complaint?

Where Council has failed to meet the normal standards for a service which has been, or should have been delivered Council's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure will apply. Where ambiguity exists, Council will deal with a matter as a request for service, rather than a complaint, in the first instance.

6.3 Reasonable Request for Service

A person can make an application for a service either verbally or in writing (refer to clause 6.4). In determining how to respond to a Request for Service, Council will consider the following:

- An assessment of risk including public safety and emergencies
- Using Council resources effectively
- Relevant Council policies and procedures
- Established Service standards and response times for regular Council activities
- Guidelines and conditions of externally funded programs
- Statutory responsibilities

6.4 Request for Service process

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

- Completion of the appropriate form on Council's website www.victor.sa.gov.au or at the Council office
- Telephone - (08) 8551 0500
- Fax - (08) 8551 0501
- Email – localgov@victor.sa.gov.au
- Mail – PO Box 11 Victor Harbor SA 5011
- In person at the Council office – 1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor

Requests for major work or feedback for new services/improvements should be submitted electronically or in writing, where possible.

6.4 Service Improvements

Council will use information gained from the community to improve its services and operations from both an operational and strategic perspective.

6.5 Review and evaluation

In order to ensure Council continues to provide the best possible service responses to its customers, this policy will be subject to periodic evaluation and review.

7. Risk Management

This Policy assists Council to comply with Section 270 of the *Local Government Act 1999* and enhances Council's ability to respond to risks associated with community safety, environmental or asset management.

8. Implementation/Delegations

The Chief Executive Officer is delegated responsibility to implement this Policy.

9. Related Documents

- Request for Service Procedure
- Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- Internal Review of a Decision Procedure

10. Availability of Policy

This policy is available on Council's website at www.victor.sa.gov.au. It may also be inspected or purchased at the Principal Office of the Council at 1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor.