

1 Purpose

To assist Councillors who are approached by customers with complaints or service requests to achieve the best outcome for the public, in the most efficient way.

2 Scope and applications

This policy applies to all Councillors and Council Officers.

3 Principles

Council is committed to the local government principles in the *Local Government Act 2009* which includes having good governance, transparent and effective processes and decision making in the public interest, and ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.

In addition to upholding the principles outlined above, Council is committed to upholding the obligations within the *Human Rights Act 2019* by considering the provisions of the Act when making decisions relevant to this policy.

4 Content

4.1 Council's customer service commitment

Toowoomba Regional Council is committed to excellence in service delivery, and to developing and maintaining a good relationship with its customers. This includes responding to customer enquiries and complaints in an efficient, effective and appropriate manner.

Services are delivered by Council Officers through their various Groups, Branches and work units. Council's Customer Experience Policy provides specific details of expected levels of service delivery. Where customers need answers or have requests or complaints about service that need a response from a work unit, a Pathway request will be generated (using the relevant request type) for actioning by the appropriate branch within a set timeframe.

The Pathway Customer Service Request System is used for initiating and tracking responses to complaints and requests. This ensures all requests are followed through and enables monitoring of Council's performance in addressing the requests.

When an issue is raised, it is registered in Pathway and a Customer Service Request (CSR) number is provided to the customer. This reference assists Council in managing customer requests and it provides a quick and easy way for the customer to reference their complaint when contacting Council.

Customers will not receive preferential treatment by submitting their request via a Councillor. Any requests raised will be treated in accordance with Council's 4.03 Customer Experience Policy.

4.2 How to handle service requests and customer complaints

Councillors should undertake the following steps:

1. It is preferable for the Councillor to encourage the customer (either verbally or by email) to contact Council's Call Centre via phone 131 872 or email info@tr.qld.gov.au to register their request as this will shortcut the process due to the Council Officers knowing what information is needed to action their request most efficiently. Councillors may wish to advise the customer to record the customer request number which will be provided by the Council Officer when lodging their request as they can follow up with them if this matter is not handled within a reasonable timeframe.

2.07 Guidelines for Councillors Receiving Customer Requests or Complaints

2. If the customer cannot or does not wish to contact Council directly, the Councillor should ask the customer to send an e-mail that provides all relevant details such as name, address, contact phone number, issue, etc. to the Councillor who will then forward that email to the Councillors Support Officers for entry into the Pathway Customer Service Request System (Pathway) for action. Councillors should refrain from providing an opinion on the customer request nor comment on staff conduct.
3. The Councillor Support Officers will register the customer request in Pathway which is used by Council to initiate, track and action complaints and requests. If the matter:
 - a. raises a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct or fraud, the matter will be referred to the Manager, Governance and Legal Services via Pathway (Pathway Governance Secure Request type) for assessment and referral to the appropriate monitoring entity (where necessary). The identity of the people involved in the matter must be kept confidential.
 - b. is seeking an internal review of a decision made, action taken, proposal formulated or recommendation (an Administrative Action complaint), the matter will be referred to the Manager, Governance and Legal Services for assessment and investigation.
4. Customer requests are to be acknowledged either by the Councillor or a Councillor Support Officer in accordance with Council's 4.03 Customer Experience Policy.
5. Councillors can keep track of progress on requests and complaints they initiated on behalf of customers, via monthly reports generated out of the Pathway system by a Councillor Support Officer.
6. If the monthly reports reveal that there is an unreasonable delay in resolution of the customer's request or complaint, Councillors may seek further information in accordance with Council's 2.09 Acceptable Request Guidelines for Councillors

5 Responsibilities/accountabilities

Councillors and **Councillor Support Officers** are responsible for ensuring their actions in the handling of a customer request or complaint is consistent with this guideline and the relevant Code of Conduct.

6 Relevant laws

Crime and Corruption Act 2001

Local Government Act 2009

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994

7 Related policies/documents

Members of the public can access Council policies on Council's website. If a policy listed below does not appear on the website, please contact 131 872 or email info@tr.qld.gov.au to request a copy. Staff may access policies via the [Policy Register and Review Schedule](#).

Council policies

2.08 Councillor Portfolio System and Protocols

2.09 Acceptable Request Guidelines for Councillors

2.52 Complaint Management Policy

4.03 Customer Experience Policy

5.20 Making and Receiving Complaints Procedure

5.21 Assessing and Investigating Complaints Procedure

5.30 Customer Experience Procedure

Other documents

Code of Conduct for Employees

Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland

[Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029](#)

8 Related forms

Nil

9 Definitions

Term	Definition
Administrative Action complaint	<p>It is defined in s268 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> as a complaint that is made by an affected person about an administrative action of a local government, including the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a decision, or a failure to make a decision, including a failure to provide a written statement of reasons for a decision; • an act, or a failure to do an act; • the formulation of a proposal or intention; • the making of a recommendation. <p>An affected person for Administrative Action complaints is a person who is apparently directly affected by an administrative action of a local government.</p>
Council Officer(s)	A person employed by Council and includes contractors or a person prescribed by regulation.
Corrupt Conduct	<p>Is defined in s15 of the <i>Crime and Corruption Act 2001</i> as conduct of a person, regardless of whether the person holds or held an appointment, that –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. adversely affects, or could adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a unit of public administration; or b. a person holding an appointment; and 2. results, or could result, directly or indirectly, in the performance of functions or the exercise of powers) in a way that – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. is not honest or is not impartial; or

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Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. involves a breach of the trust placed in a person holding an appointment either knowingly or recklessly; or c. involves a misuse of information or material acquired in or in connection with the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of a person holding an appointment.; and <p>3. is engaged in for the purpose of providing a benefit to the person or another person or causing a detriment to another person; and</p> <p>4. would, if proved, be –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a criminal offence; or b. a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person’s services, if the person is or were the holder of an appointment. <p>Corrupt conduct also means conduct of a person, regardless of whether the person holds or held an appointment, that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. impairs, or could impair, public confidence in public administration; and 2. involves, or could involve, any of the following— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. collusive tendering; b. fraud relating to an application for a licence, permit or other authority under an Act with a purpose or object of any of the following (however described)— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. protecting health or safety of persons; ii. protecting the environment; iii. protecting or managing the use of the State’s natural, cultural, mining or energy resources; c. dishonestly obtaining, or helping someone to dishonestly obtain, a benefit from the payment or application of public funds or the disposition of State assets; d. evading a State tax, levy or duty or otherwise fraudulently causing a loss of State revenue; e. fraudulently obtaining or retaining an appointment; and 3. would, if proved, be— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a criminal offence; or b. a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person’s services,

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Term	Definition
	if the person is or were the holder of an appointment.
Council	Toowoomba Regional Council
Councillor(s)	The elected Councillor(s) for Council including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
Councillor Support Officers	Means Council Officers facilitating access to the resources that Councillors require and use to enable them to effectively perform their day to day responsibilities. This includes the Mayor's Executive Assistant and the Councillor Administration Officers
Customer	Is anyone who interacts with or depends on the services of Council. This includes residents, ratepayers, local businesses, governments, government organisations, community groups, and visitors.
Customer Requests	Requests or complaints from customers received by Councillors.
Deputy Mayor	The appointed Deputy Mayor for Council.
Fraud	A dishonest activity causing actual or potential financial loss to a person or entity, including theft of money or other property by Employees or other persons, whether or not deception is used at the time, immediately before or immediately following the activity. This includes the deliberate falsification, concealment, destruction or use of falsified documentation used, or intended for use, for a normal business purpose or the improper use of information or position.
Mayor	The elected Mayor for Council.

10 Policy details

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Contact officer:	Manager Governance and Legal Services		
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11 Revision history

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¹ Printed copies are uncontrolled. It is the user's responsibility to ensure that any copies of policy documents are the current issue. Any delegations should be verified via the relevant Delegation Register as it takes precedence if there is a conflict. The Chief Executive Officer will, if necessary, be the sole arbiter in resolving any issues of conflict