



**Policy Subject/Title:** Administration Action Complaints Policy

**Policy Number:** C/018

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**Responsible Officer:** Director Corporate and Community Services

**Legislative or Regulatory Reference:** *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act)

**Related Policies / Procedures:** Procedure CSCO1 Level 1 Departmental Reviews

**Authorised by:** Somerset Regional Council

**Authorised on:** 25 May 2011 [Doc ID 565287]

**Review / Amendment Dates:**  
11 July 2013 [Doc ID 711676]  
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28 March 2018 [Doc Id 1024321]  
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## **1. TITLE AND AUTHORISATION**

This is the Administrative Action Complaints Process (the complaints process) of the Somerset Regional Council (the Council).

The complaints process is made under the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act) and includes the elements required by s268 of the Act and s306 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

## **2. EFFECTIVE DATE**

The complaints process applies from 1 July 2011. Before 1 July, 2011 Council may continue to follow the General Complaints Process under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

## **3. AMENDMENT OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

Any amendment of the complaints process must be approved by resolution of the Council.

## **4. SCOPE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

The complaints process has been established for resolving complaints by affected persons about administrative action of the Council. However, the complaints process does not apply to a complaint -

- that could be made under the Local Government Regulation 2012 about competitive neutrality issues;
- about official misconduct that should be directed to the Crime and Corruption Commission;
- made under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*; or
- about the conduct and performance of Councillors under Division 6, Part 2, Chapter 6 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

This policy excludes requests for service, enquiries, suggestions, actions and decisions taken under legislation which provide for separate avenues of appeal, such as decisions made under the *Planning Act 2016*, prosecutions made under Local Laws that are appealable to a Magistrates Court and decisions under the Building Act, unless the complaint relates to administrative actions associated with the action or decision.

## **5. OBJECTIVES**

The complaints process is established with the following objectives:

- The fair, efficient and consistent treatment of complaints about decisions and other administrative actions of the Council and complaints about minor breaches.
- A complaints process that is easy to understand and is readily accessible to all.
- Detection and rectification, where appropriate, of administrative errors.
- Identification of areas for improvement in the Council's administrative practices.
- Increase in awareness of the complaints process for the Council's staff and the community.
- Enhancement of the community's confidence in the complaints process and of the reputation of the Council as being accountable and transparent.

- Building the capacity of staff to effectively manage complaints in an environment of continuous improvement.

## 6. POLICY COMMITMENT

The Council intends to provide a level of customer service that does not attract complaints, but acknowledges the right of persons to provide feedback, both positive and negative, on its services and/or to lodge a complaint about a decision or other action it takes.

The complaints process has been instituted to ensure that, to the greatest practical extent, any complaint is dealt with fairly, promptly, professionally, in confidence (subject to any legal requirements) and in a manner respectful to the complainant.

The Council commits to providing adequate resources and trained officers to deal with complaints and to record and analyse complaints data.

To this end, the Council will endeavour to ensure that:

- Anyone who is dissatisfied about a decision or other action of the Council or a Council Officer can easily and simply lodge a complaint.
- Complainants are provided with information on the complaints process and, if necessary, assistance to make their complaint.
- Each complaint is initially assessed in terms of its seriousness, safety implications, complexity and degree of urgency.
- Council Officers will receive complaints in a professional manner and welcome valid feedback as an opportunity for improvement of the Council's administrative practices.
- Complaints are responded to as quickly as possible and in accordance with the timeframes set out in the complaints process.
- Complainants will not suffer any reprisal from Council or its officers for making a complaint.
- Complaints are properly monitored with a view to continuous improvement of the Council's business processes.
- If a complainant is not satisfied that a complaint has been satisfactorily resolved, he/she will be informed of any statutory right of review and, if they request, be provided with details of any further review mechanism that is available.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

Terms used in the complaints process have the following meanings:

**administrative action** – an administrative action of the Council, being an action about a matter of administration, including each of the following -

- (a) a decision, or failure to make a decision, including a failure to provide a written statement of reasons for a decision;
- (b) an act, or a failure to act;
- (c) the formulation of a proposal or intention;
- (d) the making of a recommendation.

**affected person** – a person who is apparently directly affected by an administrative action;

**CEO** – the Chief Executive Officer of the Council.

**complainant** – the affected person or organisation making a complaint.

**complaint** – an expression of dissatisfaction by an affected person regarding an administrative action of the Council.

**Council** – Somerset Regional Council.

**Council Officer** – includes a permanent, temporary, casual or contract member on the Council's staff.

**Director** - a Council director who is generally responsible for various functions of the Council and who reports directly to the CEO.

**Executive Management Team (EMT)**

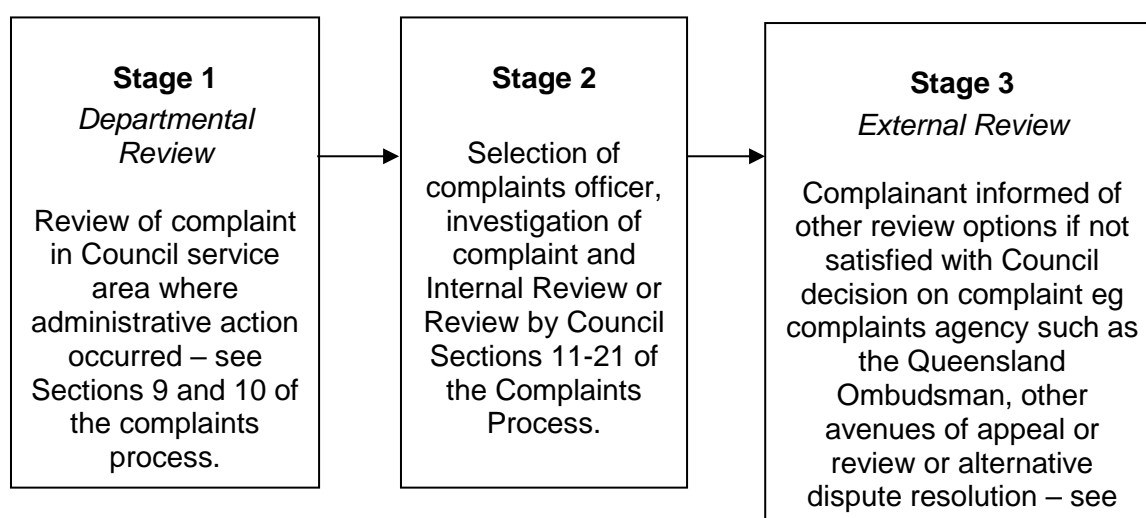
– the CEO and all directors (*to vary according to the arrangements the Council has in place for its management team*).

**request for service** – a request for the Council to take action to satisfy the needs of a customer or ratepayer. This may be of a physical nature, such as a request to fill a pothole or to collect a stray dog, or a request for information.

**the Act** – *Local Government Act 2009*.

## 8. COMPLAINT HANDLING FRAMEWORK

The following framework describes the model adopted by the Council for handling complaints:



## **STAGE 1 – Departmental Review**

### **9. PRELIMINARY PROCEDURES BEFORE A COMPLAINANT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT**

This section applies if a person makes a complaint about an administrative action of the Council.

When a person makes a complaint without having contacted the relevant service area of the Council to try to resolve the complaint, the person may be required to take this initial step before the complaint will be registered and dealt with under the complaints process.

If the complaint is not resolved by the relevant service area the complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the complaints process.

Compliance with this section is not a pre-requisite to the submission of a formal written complaint under the complaints process where it is clear on the face of the document that a complaint has been made. In those circumstances the complaint will be dealt with under the complaints process, unless it is earlier resolved to the complainant's satisfaction or is withdrawn by the complainant.

### **10. THE WAY A COMPLAINANT MAY MAKE A COMPLAINT**

A complainant may make a complaint in any of the following ways -

- orally, either by telephone or in person to a Council Officer
- by email to [mail@somerset.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@somerset.qld.gov.au)
- in writing, by letter or fax.

All written and electronic complaints should be addressed to the CEO. The complainant's contact details should be identified so the Council can contact the complainant as required. Where a complaint is made anonymously, Council may consider the substance of the complaint in terms of improving the business processes.

If an oral complaint is received the CEO, or a delegate of the CEO, may request that the complaint be put in writing if it is of a complex nature or contains complex material.

The Council Officer who receives an oral complaint will record details in the Complaint Register and, if the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, will refer the complaint for action under the complaints process.

All written complaints will be referred to the CEO, or the CEO's delegate, who will arrange for the complaint details to be recorded in the Complaint Register.

If necessary, assistance may be provided by a Council Officer to a complainant on how to make a complaint, including how it should be documented. The aim is to clarify the matter of concern to the complainant and the outcome/s sought.

If a complainant requires interpreter services, or has special needs, the complainant will be referred to the appropriate Council Officer who will provide advice or arrange for the giving of assistance, to the extent practicable.

### **Complaints by agents**

If a complaint is lodged on behalf of a person by a professional advisor *eg* a solicitor or accountant, the Council will respond direct to that advisor.

A complaint lodged by a person as agent for an affected person will be responded to direct to the affected person and not to the agent, unless a letter of authority is provided indicating the agent is acting on behalf of the affected person and the Council considers that the appointment as agent has been validly made.

## **STAGE 2 – COMPLAINT PROCESS**

### **11. PROCESS FOR SELECTING AND APPOINTING A COMPLAINTS OFFICER TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS**

The investigation of complaints received is to be undertaken by way of internal review, or review by Council. Relevant criteria to be applied in making the decision about the method of review are:

- An internal review of a complaint will be conducted where the administrative action in question was undertaken by a Council Officer, other than the CEO or a Director.
- A review by Council, of a complaint, will be conducted where:
  - (a) the administrative action in question was undertaken by:
    - (i) the CEO; or
    - (ii) a Director; or
  - (b) the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by:
    - (i) Council, and in particular, a Council meeting decision made by resolution of Council; or
    - (ii) a standing committee of Council, and in particular, a standing committee meeting decision made by the standing committee by resolution; or
  - (c) the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by the mayor or the chairperson of a standing committee acting under delegated or statutory authority, other than a complaint about councillor conduct under the *Local Government Act 2009*, chapter 5A (Councillor conduct).
- The CEO may decide that where the administrative action in question was undertaken by a Council officer, the administrative action may be reviewed by Council.

An internal review (for example, an internal review of a report prepared by a complaints officer), must be undertaken by the CEO, or a delegate of the CEO, but the internal review must not be undertaken by a Council officer who is less senior than the Council officer who took the administrative action which is the subject of the complaint.

A complaints officer must be appointed in respect of the investigation of each complaint.

The complaints officer for a complaint must be:

- (a) if the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by a Council officer (other than the CEO)—the CEO, or a delegate of the CEO, who was not involved in the

administrative action the subject of the complaint;

- (b) if the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by the CEO—a Director appointed by the CEO who was not involved in the administrative action the subject of the complaint;
- (c) if the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by a Director—the CEO or a delegate of the CEO who is a Director who was not involved in the administrative action the subject of the complaint;
- (d) if the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by Council, and in particular, a meeting decision made by Council by resolution - the CEO or a delegate of the CEO who is a Director who was not involved in the administrative action the subject of the complaint;
- (e) if the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by a standing committee of Council, and in particular, a meeting decision made by a standing committee of Council by resolution - the CEO or a delegate of the CEO who is a Director who was not involved in the administrative action the subject of the complaint;
- (f) if the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by the mayor or the chairperson of the standing committee (other than a complaint about councillor conduct under the *Local Government Act 2009*, chapter 5A (Councillor conduct) - the CEO or a delegate of the CEO who is a Director who was not involved in the administrative action the subject of the complaint.

The person appointed as a complaints officer for a complaint must have the appropriate knowledge, qualifications, skill and experience, including the relevant investigative, analytical and report-writing skills, to conduct an investigation into the complaint, make findings, formulate recommendations (where appropriate) and prepare a report on the outcome of the investigation for consideration by the Council or its delegate.

The complaints officer appointed to investigate a complaint must not have been involved in the administrative action the subject of the complaint.

## **12. SENDING COMPLAINTS TO, AND THEIR INVESTIGATION BY, THE COMPLAINTS OFFICER**

After the oral or written complaint has been recorded, the CEO, or a delegate of the CEO, must arrange for the complaint and other materials, including relevant documents from the Council's records, to be forwarded to the complaints officer for assessment of the complaint as soon as practicable after the appointment of the complaints officer.

The timeframe for dealing with a complaint will depend on an assessment of the following factors by the complaints officer:

- the urgency of the situation in terms of loss or damage likely to be suffered if the complaint is not quickly resolved;
- the likelihood that the complaint can be quickly resolved;
- the complexity of the complaint issue/s.

In general terms, the Council will endeavour to meet to the following timeframes for dealing with a complaint -

- for urgent matters - within (10) business days;
- for non-urgent complaints that are not considered to be complex or where the complaint is to be investigated under the internal review mechanism — within (30) business days;
- for complex matters, or where the complaints officer has decided that the complexity or nature of the complaint is such that it would be prudent for the complaints officer to seek external advice, and matters which are subject to review by Council—within (45) business days.

The complaints officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and any other material, indicating the date of receipt.

If a complaint is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction before it is sent to a complaints officer for investigation, notice that the complaint has been resolved may be given to the complainant in the same medium by which the complaint was initially made *eg* an oral response may be given to a complaint that was made orally.

However, the Council may give a formal written response to a complaint irrespective of the medium by which the complaint was made. The Council will make a record of any oral advice given to a complainant that the complaint has been resolved.

The timeframe for dealing with a complaint is measured from the date of receipt of the complaint to the date the complainant is informed of the outcome of the complaint.

### **13. OPPORTUNITY FOR COMPLAINANT TO PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLAINT**

The complaints officer will invite the complainant to provide further information after the initial assessment of the complaint material to assist in fully understanding the complainant's concerns, the issue/s to be investigated (if an investigation is to be undertaken) and the outcome or remedy sought by the complainant.

Seeking further information from the complainant at this stage of the complaints process may be undertaken by informal means such as telephone, e-mail or face-to-face discussion. The complaints officer will record a fair summary of any oral information received and will confirm with the complainant in an appropriate manner that the summary accurately reflects the information provided by the complainant.

The complaints officer will attempt to resolve the complaint informally, for example, by providing an explanation for the administrative action being the subject of the complaint. A complaint may be resolved or withdrawn by the complainant at any time during the complaints process. A complaint is taken to be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, or is taken to be withdrawn, if the complainant gives a clear indication to that effect to the complaints officer. Written notice that the complaint has been resolved, and the general manner in which it was resolved, will be given by the complaints officer to both the Council and the complainant.

If in the opinion of the complaints officer, resolution of a complaint about an administrative action merely involves rectification of an obvious error or a remedy of a similar nature, the complaints officer will discuss the issue with the relevant Council Officer with a view to resolving the complaint.



#### 14. GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINT

At any time whilst the complaints officer for a complaint is assessing, or investigating, the complaint, and regardless of whether the complaint is being investigated under the internal review mechanism or a complaint which is subject to review by Council, the complaints officer may decide to refuse to investigate the complaint or, having started to investigate the complaint, refuse to continue the investigation if the complaints officer reasonably considers that:

- (a) the complaint is trivial; or
- (b) the complaint concerns a frivolous matter or was made vexatiously; or
- (c) the complainant does not have a sufficient direct interest in the administrative action the subject of the complaint; or
- (d) both of the following apply -
  - (i) the complainant has a right of appeal, reference or review, or another remedy, that the person has not exhausted;
  - (ii) it would be reasonable in the circumstances to require the complainant to exhaust the right or remedy before the officer investigates, or continues to investigate, the complaint;
- (e) in the circumstances, investigating the complaint is unnecessary or unjustifiable.

A right or remedy mentioned in paragraph (d) does not include a right to make an application to the Supreme Court under the *Judicial Review Act 1991*.

When making a decision to refuse to investigate a complaint or, having started to investigate the complaint, refuse to continue the investigation because 1 or more of the criteria specified (above) in section 14(a) to (e) apply, the complaints officer may have regard to 1 or more or all of the following considerations:

- (a) unreasonable persistence, for example, the complainant persists with the complaint even though the complaint has been dealt with to finality, the complainant refuses to accept the final decision about the complaint or the complainant sends excessive amounts of correspondence about the complaint;
- (b) unreasonable demands, for example, the complainant insists on outcomes that are untenable, moves the goalposts or demands to have the complaint of the complainant dealt with in a particular way;
- (c) unreasonable lack of cooperation, for example, the complainant provides disorganised, excessive or irrelevant information, is unwilling to consider other valid viewpoints, or refuses to define or clarify the issues the subject of the complaint when the complainant is capable of doing so;
- (d) unreasonable arguments, for example, the complainant raises cause and effect arguments in circumstances where there are clearly none, holds conspiracy theories unsupported by evidence or irrationally interprets facts or laws and refuses to accept other more reasonable interpretations;
- (e) unreasonable behaviour, for example, extreme anger, aggression, threats or other threatening or violent conduct;

- (f) complainant history, for example, the complainant has:
  - (i) made a number of previous complaints and review requests to Council about a particular issue, or related issues; or
  - (ii) made contact with various other government agencies or oversight bodies about a particular issue;
  - (iii) made a number of access to information requests about a particular issue;
  - (iv) complained about a particular officer's integrity or competence largely or solely because the complainant was dissatisfied with the outcome or level of attention that the complainant was given;
- (g) interaction with Council, for example, the complainant:
  - (i) makes excessive phone calls, sends excessive amounts of information and correspondence or regularly makes appointments to discuss their complaint when this is not needed;
  - (ii) has an unreasonable or unusual sense of entitlement;
  - (iii) expresses a general dissatisfaction with a person at the outset and without clear reasons for doing so;
  - (iv) is resistant to explanation if the explanation runs counter to the views of the complainant;
  - (v) provides information in dribs and drabs, even though the complainant has been asked to provide all relevant information relating to their complaint;
  - (vi) makes excessive demands on resources;
- (h) outcomes sought, for example, the complainant wants:
  - (i) a manifestly unreasonable amount of organisational time and resources to be spent dealing with the complaint of the complainant;
  - (ii) an outcome that is not logical or rational;
  - (iii) their issue pursued based on a matter of "principle" or the public interest, when their interests are clearly personal.

The complaints officer will give both the Council and the complainant written notice of a decision made by the officer to refuse to investigate the complaint, or to discontinue the investigation, and the reasons for the decision. The complainant will be advised of their review rights (Refer section 22).

## **15. INVESTIGATING A COMPLAINT**

The investigation of a complaint will be undertaken by the complaints officer in an independent, impartial and objective manner. A complaints officer may, if the officer considers appropriate in the circumstances, undertake mediation between the parties with a view to resolving a

complaint, but will not act as an advocate for either the complainant or the Council or for any Council Officer or Councillor the subject of the complaint.

The investigation of a complaint will typically involve the following stages-

- preparation of an action plan for conducting the investigation;
- information gathering, including discussions and interviews with the complainant, Council personnel and third parties (where relevant) and examining relevant laws and Council policies and procedures;
- analysis of all relevant information obtained;
- formulation of findings and any recommendations for the Council's consideration;
- preparation of a report on the results of the investigation or the outcome of the complaint if it was resolved during the complaints process or was withdrawn by the complainant.

The complaints officer will adhere to the following principles when conducting an investigation of a complaint:

- Procedural fairness/natural justice;
- Establishment and maintenance of a complete document trail (to facilitate any subsequent review that may be undertaken of the investigation conducted by the complaints officer);
- Council and other policies are designed for administrative guidance only, and should not be rigidly applied irrespective of the merits of a particular case. An administrative policy may be departed from if the merits of a particular case warrant that course of action.
- Lawfulness of a particular action is not necessarily decisive of the issue in dispute. The complaints officer will also assess whether the action was unfair, unreasonable or wrong.
- The civil standard of proof applies for administrative investigations. This means that allegations have to be established on the balance of probabilities – that is, it must be more probable than not that the allegation is made out.
- Confidentiality about the investigation must be maintained to the extent that it can reasonably be achieved, subject to other legal requirements about the disclosure of information.

## **16. OBLIGATION OF COMPLAINTS OFFICER ON COMPLETION OF INVESTIGATION**

If a complaint is not resolved during the investigation process to the satisfaction of the complainant or is not withdrawn by the complainant, the complaints officer will give the Council and the complainant a written report on the results of the investigation and any recommendations.

The report will typically address the following matters to the extent each matter is relevant in the particular case-

- the complaint issue/s;
- a concise summary of the material facts and circumstances of the matter;
- any relevant legislation;
- any relevant Council or other policy;
- persons interviewed and/or consulted and relevant information obtained during any interviews and consultations;
- results of any relevant research;

- analysis of complaint issues to the extent necessary;
- findings on material questions of fact and law;
- whether the complaint is sustained and reasons for that finding;
- if the complaint is sustained, any recommendation/s to the Council to redress the complainant's grievance, whether by way of benefit to the complainant and other affected persons (if any) and/or systemic improvements to the Council's administrative practice with a view to preventing a recurrence of similar complaints.

The report will contain any recommendations that the complaints officer considers to be appropriate in the circumstances. In some cases, it will be appropriate to make a recommendation for procedural improvement even where the complaint has not been sustained. A recommendation may relate to-

- a specific remedy or remedies that is/are available under section 17 to redress the complainant's grievance; and/or
- the proposed amendment of a relevant Council policy, procedure or practice to address any systemic issue raised by the complaint with a view to preventing similar complaints in the future.

## **17. REMEDIES**

The Council has adopted a range of remedies for addressing administrative actions that it considers to be unfair or wrong. Remedies include, but are not limited to -

- an explanation for the action in question
- an admission of fault
- an apology
- revocation or amendment of the decision
- rectification, including repairing or replacing the matter in dispute
- revision of relevant policy, procedure or practice
- provision of technical assistance
- reimbursement of costs incurred as a result of the action in question
- financial compensation, including an *ex-gratia* payment
- waiver of debt.

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

## **18. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT**

A complaints officer report prepared under section 16 of the complaints process, including any recommendation(s), for a complaint about administrative action will, in accordance with section 11, be –

- (a) if the administrative action in question was undertaken by a Council officer other than the CEO or a Director—subject to internal review by the CEO, or a delegate of the CEO, but the internal review must not be undertaken by a Council officer who is less senior than the Council officer;
- (b) subject to review by Council if:
  - (i) the administrative action in question was undertaken by:

- (A) the CEO; or
  - (B) a Director; or
- (ii) the complaint is about administrative action undertaken by:
- (A) Council, and in particular, a Council meeting decision made by resolution of Council; or
  - (B) a standing committee of Council, and in particular, a standing committee meeting decision made by the standing committee by resolution; or
- (iii) the complaint is about administration action undertaken by the mayor or the chairperson of a standing committee acting under delegated or statutory authority, other than a complaint about councillor conduct under the *Local Government Act 2009*, chapter 5A (Councillor conduct).

A Council Officer, including the CEO, exercising delegated authority to deal with the complaint, by accepting or rejecting the findings of the complaints officer, has authority to provide any lawful remedy for the complainant that is available under section 17 of the complaints process, irrespective of whether the remedy has been recommended by the complaints officer.

Where the complaints officer's report includes a recommendation that a suitable policy be made to address the complaint issue, or an existing policy be appropriately amended, the recommendation will be referred to the Council for consideration by resolution.

## **19. NOTICE TO COMPLAINANT ABOUT OUTCOME OF COMPLAINT**

Written notice of the outcome of a complaint will be given to the complainant following the Council's consideration of, and decision on, the complaints officer's report and recommendations (if any).

The notice to the complainant will generally include the following advice -

- whether the complaint is sustained;
- if the complaint is not sustained, the reasons for the decision;
- if the complaint is sustained-
  - o any remedy to be made available to the complainant;
  - o if applicable, the circumstances and timeframe in which the remedy will be made available; and/or
  - o whether the investigation identified the need to revise Council policy, procedure or practice to prevent similar complaints arising, details of the proposed revision and the timeframe for implementation.

For the purpose of completeness, such a written notice should be prepared for an anonymous complaint.

## **20. IMPLEMENTATION OF REMEDY, ETC**

The Council, through the CEO or a delegate of the CEO, will take action in a timely manner to implement any remedy to be made available to a complainant and/or any revision of its policy,

practice or procedure.

## **21. COUNCIL REVIEW IF COMPLAINANT DISSATISFIED WITH OUTCOME OF COMPLAINT**

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the consideration of the complaints officer's report and any recommendation, the complainant may request a review of the decision on the complaint. The complainant may submit new information with the request for review and seek reconsideration of the complaint on the basis of the new information or on any other basis.

The Council may:

- undertake the review as requested and advise the complainant accordingly; or
- decline the review on the basis that the complainant has not provided any reasonable basis for the review.

Any review undertaken will generally be in accordance with the complaints process. The reviewer will be independent of the original decision maker and the complaints officer.

## **STAGE 3 – REVIEW BY OMBUDSMAN OR OTHER COMPLAINTS ENTITIES**

### **22. REVIEW BY OTHER COMPLAINTS ENTITIES**

If the Council decides not to undertake a review, it will inform the complainant that a complaint may be lodged with the Queensland Ombudsman or other relevant complaint entity (giving contact details).

## **COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

### **23. REPORTING**

Details about complaints concerning administrative actions will be provided in the Council's annual report, as required by s187 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

Details of the resolution of Level 1 complaints (number time to resolve and trends) are to be reported to the Executive Management Team on a quarterly basis.

### **24. RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICERS**

#### ***Executive Management Team***

The Executive Management Team will-

- (a) encourage excellence in customer service by Council Officers;
- (b) ensure that all Council Officers are aware of and implement the complaints process in the manner intended by the Council;
- (c) foster an environment where complaints management is the responsibility of all Council Officers; and

- (d) ensure any necessary staff training is provided eg on the complaints process, conducting an investigation of a complaint, conflict management, customer service skills.
- (e) Consider on a quarterly basis a report on the resolution of Level 1 Complaints (CSR's)

### **Directors**

Each manager will ensure that -

- (a) all Council Officers under the manager's management and control are aware of their role in customer service and responsibility for complaint management; and
- (b) service standards are met.

### **Council Officers**

All Council Officers -

- (a) are required to observe the complaints process; and
- (b) wherever appropriate, attempt to resolve a complaint before it is referred for attention under the complaints process.

## **25. RELATED POLICIES OR PROCEDURES**

All Council policies and procedures must be taken into consideration when considering or investigating a complaint under the complaints process.

## **26. EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

In addition to the quarterly reports provided to the Executive Management Team and the yearly assessment required for the annual report a review of this process will be conducted every two (2) years.

The review audit will evaluate the performance of the complaints process and will consider the following aspects, where necessary:

- Accessibility – whether the complaint process is readily available to members of the community and is user-friendly.
- Timeliness – whether timelines for responding to complaints have been met and, if not, remedial action proposed.
- Satisfaction – as evidenced by any complaint about the complaints process.
- Compliance – by considering reports on the operation of the complaints process.

The complaints process will be amended in terms of any adopted recommendation arising from the review.

## **27. COMMUNICATION**

The Council will take appropriate steps to publicise the complaints process. For example, the

Council will place this document on its website and include training on the complaints process in the induction process for new employees and in other appropriate staff training forums.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'S' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Dated:

12 August 2020