

POLICY AND GENERAL COMMITTEE

May 6, 2024

ITEM 3BROKEN HILL CITY COUNCIL REPORT NO. 89/24SUBJECT: DRAFT CUSTOMER SERVICE FRAMEWORK D24/22331**Recommendation**

1. That Broken Hill City Council Report No. 89/24 dated May 6, 2024, be received.
2. That Council endorse the public exhibition of the draft Customer Experience Charter for a period of 28 days inviting public comment.
3. That a report be presented to Council at the conclusion of the public exhibition period, detailing submissions received and any recommended amendments arising, with a view to adopting the Charter for implementation.
4. That Council endorse the public exhibition of the draft revised Complaints Management Policy for a period of 28 days inviting public comment.
5. That a report be presented to Council at the conclusion of the public exhibition period, detailing submissions received and any recommended amendments arising, with a view to adopting the draft Complaints Management Policy.
6. That Council endorse the draft Customer Experience Framework for approval and implementation by the General Manager.
7. That the Complaints Handling Procedure be endorsed for approval and implementation by the General Manager.

Executive Summary:

The Customer Service Framework was last endorsed 16 March 2021 and has recently been reviewed to ensure effective guidance is provided in delivering a quality customer experience that is equitable for all Council's internal and external customers by striving to:

- Deliver standards of customer service at the highest level and in accordance with the Community Strategic Plan and Council's organisational Strategy Map and values;
- Understand customer expectations; and
- Ensure customers receive the best possible service that can be practically achieved.

The main objectives of the Framework are:

- Ensure Council delivers a service as outlined in its Charter;
- Provide customers with a choice as to how they can provide feedback;
- Provide a structure and key service standards around responding to, recording, reporting and using feedback and or complaints to improve service to customers;
- Outline customer rights and responsibilities; and
- Outline Council staff responsibilities under the Framework.

Report:

In accordance with Council's 2024 Operational Plan,

Action 1.3.8.1 Review Council's Customer Service Framework, the draft Framework was extensively reviewed.

In taking a whole of organisation approach the consultation process undertaken by Council's Corporate Services team facilitated six 'Think Like the Customer' Workshops.

With a duration of three hours each session, this comprehensive consultation had the active participation of 92 Council employees. Consultation feedback identified multiple key opportunities for improvement.

Following the staff consultation, the Framework was presented to the Executive Leadership Team for endorsement.

The updated Framework outlines the purpose of the following documents:

Customer Experience Strategy, Customer Experience Charter, Complaints Management Policy, Complaints Handling Procedure and Customer Feedback Form.

The key opportunities for improvement identified by staff were as follows:

Customer Service Excellence Guide

The original Guide was designed as a customer service standard and excellence guide for Council's frontline staff.

The Guide's content has now been incorporated into the Customer Service Strategy for the purpose of simplifying and condensing the framework.

Customer Service Strategy

This strategy is designed as the Customer Service standard and excellence guide for all Broken Hill City Council staff.

The Customer Service Strategy sets out service and excellence guidelines that all staff are required to meet when dealing with customers.

Key updates include:

- Minor updates to reflect Council's current position in relation to staff titles and technology
- Renaming of the document to Customer Experience Strategy in line with rebranding all the Customer Service Framework to be the Customer Experience Framework.
- Cover page updated;
- Quality Control table updated to reflect current actions;
- Council Officer position titles updated throughout document;
- Minor update of the Executive Summary inclusive of Message from the General Manager to depict the current status of the framework from future to present tense;
- Update Strategy Map to a current version;
- Cosmetic updates of the Key Services Standards table;
- Update of section 4.1 to include the standard use of MiCollab (Council's phone system)

Customer Service Charter

Council's Customer Service Charter sets out what customers can expect from Council and what Council expects from them.

The Charter was developed to build and enhance partnerships and relationships with customers.

Key Updates:

- Renaming of document to Customer Experience Strategy in line with rebranding all the Customer Service Framework to Customer Experience Framework.
- Cover page updated

Complaints Management Policy

The review of Council's Complaints Management Policy follows the guidelines of the NSW Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Model Policy, released in June 2015, whilst also taking into consideration Broken Hill City Council's Customer Experience Framework.

The NSW Ombudsman intends to use the Complaint Handling Model Policy as a benchmark when auditing complaint handling policies and procedures of organisations within its jurisdiction which includes NSW councils.

Council's complaint management system is intended to:

- handle all feedback and complaints in a consistent, fair and professional manner;
- ensure there is an appropriate level of accountability in the exercise of all Council functions;
- enhance public confidence in Council's administrative processes; and
- collect and utilise valuable data for the purpose of continuous improvement.

This policy provides guidance to Council staff and people who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of Council's complaint management system.

Key updates include:

- Quality control table updated;
- Council Officer position titles updated throughout the document;
- Minor updates of the wording used throughout the Policy that does not vary the context of the Policy;
- Updated section 5.3 Associated Documents to include Council's Complaint Handling Procedure, Customer Experience Strategy, Customer Experience Charter and NSW Ombudsman's Model Complaint Management Framework and Model Policy 2015.
- Removed the listed legislation references as they are reported in section 7. Legislative and Legal Framework; and
- Updated section 7. Legislative and Legal Framework to include the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022*

Complaints Handling Procedure

This procedure will represent Council's system for responding to, recording, reporting and using complaints to improve a service to the community.

It includes procedures for people to resolve complaints and provides information to managers and staff, that will enable a system of continuous improvement in customer service delivery.

Key updates:

- Quality control table updated;
- Council Officer position titles updated throughout the document;
- Section 4.2 updated to include statement “All complaints are to be recorded in Council’s Authority CRM Register”;
- Section 4.7 Analysis and Evaluation of Complaints created to identify Council’s procedure around the effective reporting and analysis of complaints for continuous improvement.

Customer Feedback Form

Quality customer experiences consists of providing an efficient, fair, and responsive service. It is also about delivering the most appropriate and complete service at the first point of contact. However, things can and do go wrong but can generally only be put right and a quality service delivered when Council becomes aware of the issue.

Customer feedback processes provide an opportunity for service recovery and encompasses complaints, compliments and suggestions.

The documents to be endorsed for approval and implementation by the General Manager and the documents to be endorsed for exhibition to the general public, prior to their adoption, are attached to this report.

Strategic Direction:

Key Direction:	1 Our Community
Objective:	1.3 Our community works together
Strategy:	1.3.8 Maintain and strive to continuously improve the Customer Contact and Call Centre

Relevant Legislation:

This Framework relates to:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *State Records Act 1998*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022*
- NSW Ombudsman Better Service and Communication – Guidelines for Local Government

Council Policy does not take precedence over statutory responsibilities assumed by Council in its role as a local government authority.

Council’s Code of Conduct provides guidance for recognising and disclosing any conflicts of interest.

Financial Implications:

There are no further additional financial implications or resources required to implement the draft Customer Experience Framework, Council Policy and associated Procedure.

Attachments

1. [↓](#) DRAFT Customer Experience Charter
2. [↓](#) DRAFT Complaints Management Policy
3. [↓](#) DRAFT Complaints Handling Procedure
4. [↓](#) DRAFT Customer Experience Framework
5. [↓](#) DRAFT Customer Experience Strategy

RAZIJA NU'MAN
DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY

JAY NANKIVELL
GENERAL MANAGER