

Complaints Management - Statutory Policy

Effective Date	3 December 2008
Policy Owner	Customer Support & Governance Manager
Link to Corporate Plan	Strong Diverse Economy Active Vibrant Community Quality Lifestyle Sustainable Organisation
Review Date	July 2028
Related Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 2009</i> <i>Local Government Regulation 2012</i> <i>Crime and Corruption Act 2001</i> <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>
Related Documents	Administrative Action Complaints Management Process Complaints about the Chief Executive Officer (Section 48A of the Crime & Corruption Act 2001) - Council Policy Code of Conduct Customer Service Charter Guide: Handling Human Rights Complaints (Version 1 October 2019)

Policy Version	Approval Date	Adopted/Approved
1	03/12/2008	Ordinary Meeting of Council
2	06/04/2011	Ordinary Meeting of Council
3	04/04/2012	Ordinary Meeting of Council
4	03/04/2013	Ordinary Meeting of Council
5	03/12/2014	Ordinary Meeting of Council
6	15/03/2017	Ordinary Meeting of Council
7	19/08/2020	Ordinary Meeting of Council
8	18/07/2024	Ordinary Meeting of Council

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints are managed in a fair, objective, effective, transparent, consistent, and accountable manner and that information obtained from the complaints management process can be used to improve Council's overall service delivery.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all administrative action complaints made to Western Downs Regional Council.

3. POLICY

3.1 Complaints Management Principles

Council will manage complaints in accordance with the following principles.

3.1.1 Visibility and Access

- (1) complaints about Council's administrative actions can only be lodged by a person directly affected (that is, an affected person);
- (2) information about where and how to lodge a complaint is available on Council's website and at Council's customer service centres;
- (3) complaints are accepted verbally and in writing through a variety of channels, such as in person, telephone, hardcopy correspondence, electronic correspondence, facsimile, or online;
- (4) persons who are culturally and linguistically diverse or are with a disability are offered every opportunity and assistance in accessing Council's complaints processes. Reasonable assistance is also provided to any complainant upon request; and
- (5) Council's complaints management process and complaints information is available to the public, customers, and staff.

3.1.2 Responsiveness

Council will:

- (1) inform staff of the existence and operation of its complaints management process;
- (2) respond to complaints in a timely manner;
- (3) monitor timeframes for resolution of complaints; and
- (4) communicate with the relevant parties about the progress of the investigation and resolution of complaint matters.

3.1.3 Assessment and Action

Council will:

- (1) ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly and objectively;
- (2) assess the nature of complaints, how complaints should be dealt with, and by whom;
- (3) refer complaints to external agencies, where required; and
- (4) fully co-operate with external agency investigations.

3.1.4 Feedback

Council will:

- (1) provide complainants with timely feedback;
- (2) provide complainants with available review options; and
- (3) provide feedback to relevant areas of the organisation where potential system improvements are identified.



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3.1.5 Monitoring and Review

Council will:

- (1) meet any statutory, policy, or procedural reporting requirement;
- (2) identify complaint trends and seek improvement to address these trends; and
- (3) monitor the time taken to resolve complaints.

3.2 Assessing Complaints and Managing Human Rights

Council recognises that an individual has the right to provide feedback, both positive and negative, on its services and to lodge a complaint about an administrative decision made by Council. However, if a complaint is determined to be frivolous and vexatious or lacking in substance or detail, Council may elect to take no further action in relation to the matter and provide the complainant with written advice of the decision and the reasons for it.

The *Human Rights Act 2019* places requirements on Council to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights. When responding to complaints, unreasonable requests, or unreasonable customer conduct, Council will ensure that the matter considers and is compatible with human rights. Any decision will include a statement about the consideration of human rights and the extent to which the decision is compatible with human rights. Complaints received by Council in relation to the *Human Rights Act 2019* will be addressed within Council's formal complaints management process.

3.3 Administrative Action Complaints Management Process

This policy will be supported by the *Administrative Action Complaints Management Process*.

3.4 Timeliness of Complaint Notification

A complaint about a decision or action of Council must be made no later than six months after the affected person was notified or made aware of the decision or action.

An Internal Review request must be received within twenty (20) business days of receipt by the complainant of the investigation outcome.

Complaints or applications for Internal Review received outside these timeframes will only be accepted where the Customer Support and Governance Manager decides that exceptional circumstances warrant consideration.

