

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER POLICY

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Banana Shire Council (Council) employees, contractors, volunteers, and elected members when dealing with customers (including residents, ratepayers, businesses, visitors, contractors, other government agencies, or community members) through any channel (in-person, phone, email, mail, social media, etc.).

LEGISLATION

Human Rights Act 2019
Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012
Information Privacy Act 2009
Right to Information Act 2009

OBJECTIVE

This Policy seeks to define Council's commitment to delivering high-quality, accessible, and respectful customer service and set clear standards for staff and customers. It aims to ensure that all community members experience timely, accurate, and equitable service, fostering trust and confidence in Council. By outlining roles, responsibilities, and performance measures, this Policy provides a framework for accountability and continuous improvement in meeting customer needs.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint/Feedback	Dissatisfaction or concern about Council's services, decisions or conduct, or suggestions for improvement.
Customer	Any person, group or organisation seeking or receiving services from Council, including residents, ratepayers, businesses, visitors, contractors, other levels of government and community organisations.
Enquiry/Service Request	A request for information, assistance, approval, service delivery or other Council function.
Unreasonable Customer Conduct	Any behaviour by a customer that is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or otherwise unacceptable towards Council staff or other customers, or that imposes unreasonable demands on Council resources. (refer also to Council's Complaints Management Policy).

POLICY

Council commits to the following when dealing with customers:

1. Respect and courtesy

- Staff will greet customers in a polite and professional manner and clearly identify themselves during all in-person interactions and telephone communications.

2. Accessibility and inclusivity

- Provide services through multiple channels (counter, phone, email, online) to meet customer needs.
- Offer reasonable assistance to customers with additional needs (disability, disability aids, language or cultural requirements) to ensure equitable access.
- Use clear plain language in communication, ensure transparency about processes, requirements and timeframes.

3. Timely, efficient and accurate service

- Aim to resolve simple enquiries at first point of contact.
- Provide accurate and up-to-date information.
- Set realistic, clear expectations for next steps and timeframes, especially for more complex requests.

4. Transparency, integrity and accountability

- Be open and transparent about Council policies, procedures and protocols.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect customers' privacy when personal information is involved.

5. Feedback and complaints handling

- Encourage customer feedback, compliments and complaints as opportunities to improve service.
- Acknowledge complaints and feedback promptly, investigate fairly and impartially, and communicate outcomes clearly, in accordance with Council Complaints Management Policy.
- Have protocols to manage unreasonable customer conduct to ensure safety and fairness for staff and the community.

6. Continuous improvement

- Monitor and review customer service performance against defined standards.
- Regularly review and update this Policy and the Customer Service Charter to reflect changing community needs, legislative requirements and best practice.

Customer expectations and responsibilities

To assist Council in delivering good service, customers are asked to:

- Treat Council staff, contractors, and other customers with respect and courtesy.
- Provide accurate and complete information, including current contact details.
- Use appropriate communication channels and make appointments if necessary (particularly for complex matters or to meet specific officers).
- Understand that some requests or approvals may require time to resolve due to legislation, planning, compliance requirements or resource limitations.

Roles and responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer and Directors

- Provide strategic leadership to ensure customer service is embedded as a core organisational value.
- Allocate appropriate resources and systems to enable consistent service delivery across all departments.
- Monitor overall organisational performance and ensure corrective actions are implemented when needed.
- Promote a culture of professionalism, transparency and respectful engagement with customers within the organisation.

Managers, Coordinators and Supervisors

- Ensure staff understand, implement and comply with this Policy and the Customer Service Charter in their daily work.
- Provide coaching, guidance and training to staff.
- Monitor service delivery within their teams, including response times, accuracy of information and quality of interactions.
- Foster a positive customer service culture within their work area.

Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

- Comply with this Policy and the Customer Service Charter in all dealings with customers.
- Contribute to ongoing improvement by identifying service gaps, suggesting enhancements and participating in training or development.

Managing unreasonable customer conduct

Council is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for staff and customers. Unreasonable conduct includes, but is not limited to, abusive language, threats, harassment, discriminatory remarks, or excessive and persistent demands that impact service delivery.

In such cases:

- Staff may limit or cease contact after consultation with their Manager and Director, and approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- Customers will be informed in writing of any restrictions placed on communication, including the reasons and alternative contact arrangements.
- Council will maintain records of incidents and actions taken to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Serious threats or unlawful behaviour will be referred to law enforcement or other appropriate authorities.

This Council Policy acknowledges the importance of fundamental human rights.

Council is committed to recognising and protecting these rights when creating policies and procedures that shape the frameworks, standards, behaviors, and actions of the Banana Shire Council.

An assessment of this Policy determined that it does not limit or affect any human rights.

PROCEDURE

Procedures as approved and issued by the Chief Executive Officer, and subject to further revision, amendment and issue under the authority of the Chief Executive Officer.

CERTIFICATION



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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
BANANA SHIRE COUNCIL

7 April 2026

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DATE