Requests for Service Policy

Strategic Reference	Outcome 5 – Leadership Strategy 3.1 – Council is an organisational leader, reinforcing our position as a leading local government body.
File reference	AR19/5460
Responsibility	Community & Corporate Department
Revision Number	5
Effective date	July 2012
Last revised date	December 2025
Minutes reference	376/25, 114/19, 134/17, 167/14, 258/12
Next review date	Every three years, including within six months following Council election
Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 Freedom of Information Act 1991 Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012 Ombudsman Act 1972 State Records Act 1997
Related Policies	Customer Service Charter Complaints and Compliments Policy Records Management Policy Internal Review of Council Decision Procedure
Related Procedures	Request for Service Procedure Complaints Handling Procedure *Protocol – Ombudsman Enquiry Procedure*

1. Purpose

Council delivers an extensive range of services and infrastructure to communities, and discharges obligations under many pieces of legislation. Providing services to the community is a key component of Council's operations, and requests for work to be undertaken or a service provided are a daily occurrence.

Council is committed to the provision of quality service to customers and aims to provide services fairly and efficiently. It also monitors requests to identify ways in which it can proactively improve its services.

Section 270 of the *Local Government Act 1999* requires Council to develop and maintain a policy about "any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the Council or for the improvement of a service provided by the Council."

This Policy aims to:

- Provide guidance on what may constitute a reasonable request for a service or an improvement to a service;
- Distinguish between requests, complaints and feedback to Council and give direction on management of requests; and
- Establish a standardised process for assessing and processing requests including the collation of information which can be used to directly inform service improvements.

2. Principles Underlying the Policy

This Policy is based on five (5) principles, which are fundamental in the way Council approaches requests for service. They are:

1. Fairness: treating customers fairly requires impartiality, confidentiality and transparency at all stages of the process.
2. Accessibility: to be accessible there must be broad public awareness about Council's Policy and a range of contact options.
3. Responsiveness: this will be achieved by providing sufficient resources, well trained staff and periodic review and improvement of the systems.
4. Efficiency: customer requests will be dealt with as quickly as practical while adhering to this policy.
5. Integration of different areas of Council where the customer request overlaps functional responsibilities.

In processing requests for service, emphasis will be placed on:

- Public safety and emergencies
- Fulfilling Council's strategic and business plans
- Using Council resources effectively
- Guidelines and conditions of externally funded programs

3. Definitions

"Business Day": means a day when the Council is normally open for business, ie Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

"*Employee*": means any person who is employed by the Council, but also includes any contractors, volunteers, trainees, work experience students and consultants undertaking work for, or on behalf of the Council whether they are working in a full-time, part-time or casual capacity.

A **"*Request for Service"*** is an application to have Council, or its representative, take some form of action to provide or improve a Council service.

A ***"Complaint"*** is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service which has, or should have, been received. Council's Complaints Policy defines a complaint as:

> *"An expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service delivered by the Council or its representatives that has failed to reach the standard stated, implied or expected. This includes complaints about a service that has been, or should have been delivered."*

Where Council has failed to meet the normal standards for a service which has been, or should have been delivered, the *Complaints & Compliments Policy* and the associated procedures apply. Where ambiguity exists, Council will deal with a matter as a request for service, rather than a complaint, in the first instance.

"Feedback" can take the form of comments, both positive and negative, about services provided by Council without necessarily requiring a corrective action, change of services or formal review of a decision. Feedback may, however, influence future service reviews and delivery methods.

4. Policy Statement

Requests for service will be assessed in the context of the services and work provided for in the Council's Annual Business Plan and Budget, and according to the conditions of externally funded programs.

4.1 Reasonable Request for Service

In determining how to respond to a request for service Council will consider:

- An assessment of risk;
- Statutory responsibilities;
- The content of Council's Community Vision Plan, Annual Business Plans, annual works program and Annual Budget;
- Relevant Council policies and codes; and
- Established service standards and response times for regular Council activities.

4.2 Processing a Request for Service

In Council's experience, most requests fit within well established guidelines which are explained to the applicant at the outset. Council aims to manage requests efficiently and effectively. Employees are provided with a level of authority to advise applicants of the likely timeframe to complete the action required. Where further evaluation is necessary before committing Council to undertake the work, the applicant will be informed accordingly (*only* if the applicant has requested to be contacted with a response). If a request cannot be fulfilled in a reasonable timeframe, the applicant will be advised, including an explanation of why this decision was taken (*only* if the applicant has requested to be contacted with a response).

In all requests for service scenarios, Council will *only* follow up the request (either verbally or written) with the applicant if they have specifically requested for Council to contact them with a response (ie: confirmation the request has been completed, advice the request could not be completed etc.) at the time of making the request for service.

Where an applicant is not satisfied with the Council's decision, it is open to the applicant to lodge a complaint against the decision under Council's *Complaints & Compliments Policy.*

5. Timeframes for Response

The circumstances of individual requests for service will vary greatly. In the majority of cases, requests will be processed promptly and *if* the applicant has requested to be contacted regarding their request, they will be advised verbally or by return phone call/email (phone call or email are the preferred options when available to ensure a prompt response).

Routine requests are often subject to service response standards. The assessment of public safety concerns will occur, where practicable, on the same day as the request is received. Other requests may be best suited to scheduling to coincide with work in a particular location or season. Examples of this include tree pruning on Council streets and attention to minor drainage problems. Requests for major works or new services will be referred to Council for consideration as part of the next annual cycle of review and community engagement.

Council staff, where practicable or requested, will respond within ten (10) business days advising of Council's intentions in regard to the request.

If a request:

- cannot be fulfilled in a reasonable timeframe, or
- is a service Council is otherwise not able to deliver, or
- is not the responsibility of the Council to deliver

the applicant will be advised (only if they have requested to be contacted regarding their request), including an explanation of why this decision was taken.

6. Recording Requests for Service

A person can make a request for service in a number of ways:

- Completion of the appropriate form on Council's website: www.coorong.sa.gov.au
- Telephone: 1300 785 277
- Email: council@coorong.sa.gov.au
- Via Council's Facebook page (in the form of a private inbox message)
- Letter: PO Box 399, Tailem Bend SA 5260
- Petition to Council
- *My Local Services* smartphone app
- Visit any Council customer service centre

All requests will be recorded in Council's records management system and/or customer request management system in such a way that the information can also be analysed for service improvement opportunities.

Please note that requests for service made through Council's Facebook page must be made in the form of a private inbox message. General comments on Council's page posts will not be recognised as a formal request.

All rejected requests will be recorded and may be reconsidered at a future date, such as in conjunction with the preparation of the Annual Business Plan and associated budget. Council will receive a report on the number and nature of service requests, including the percentage of rejected service requests, at least twice a year.

7. Availability/Accessibility

This policy is available for inspection at Council's offices during normal business hours and Council's website, and will be emailed to interested parties on request (please lodge request in writing via email to council@coorong.sa.gov.au)

8. Document History

This policy will be reviewed at least every three (3) years (or more frequently if legislation or Council requires) and within six (6) months of a periodic Council election.

Version	Adopted	Minute No	Description of change(s)
1	17 July 2012	258/12	New policy
2	15 July 2014	167/14	Cyclical review
3	25 July 2017	134/17	Cyclical review
4	16 April 2019	114/19	Cyclical review
5	16 December 2025	376/25	Minor formatting and updating of corporate document references

			throughout Clauses 4.2 and 5 refined to align with internal procedures