

FRAMEWORK – COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

Reference Number	851180
Responsible Business Unit	Office of the Chief Executive
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 Aged Care Act 1997 Development Act 1993 Freedom of Information Act 1991 ICAC Act 2012 Ombudsman Act 1972 Planning Development & Infrastructure Act 2016
Relevant Delegations	Chief Executive Officer
Related Policies Management Guidelines Frameworks	Behaviour Management Framework Suite of Documents Communication Framework Customer Service Charter Fraud & Corruption Prevention Policy/Guideline Good Public Administration Framework Internal Review of Council Decision Public Interest Disclosure Guideline Risk Management Framework
Link to Strategic Plan	Objective 5.3 Responsive
Date Adopted	11 April 2023, item 103.5
Review Date	at least once during a Council term
Previous revisions	9 May 2022, item 80.3 14 October 2019, item 162.2 10 December 2018, item 217.8 10 April 2017, item 67.2
Availability	Council's website and at the Local Government Centre

INTRODUCTION

The Rural City of Murray Bridge's Strategic Governance Framework and associated Complaint Framework, policies and procedures have been developed based on Legislation and the following components;

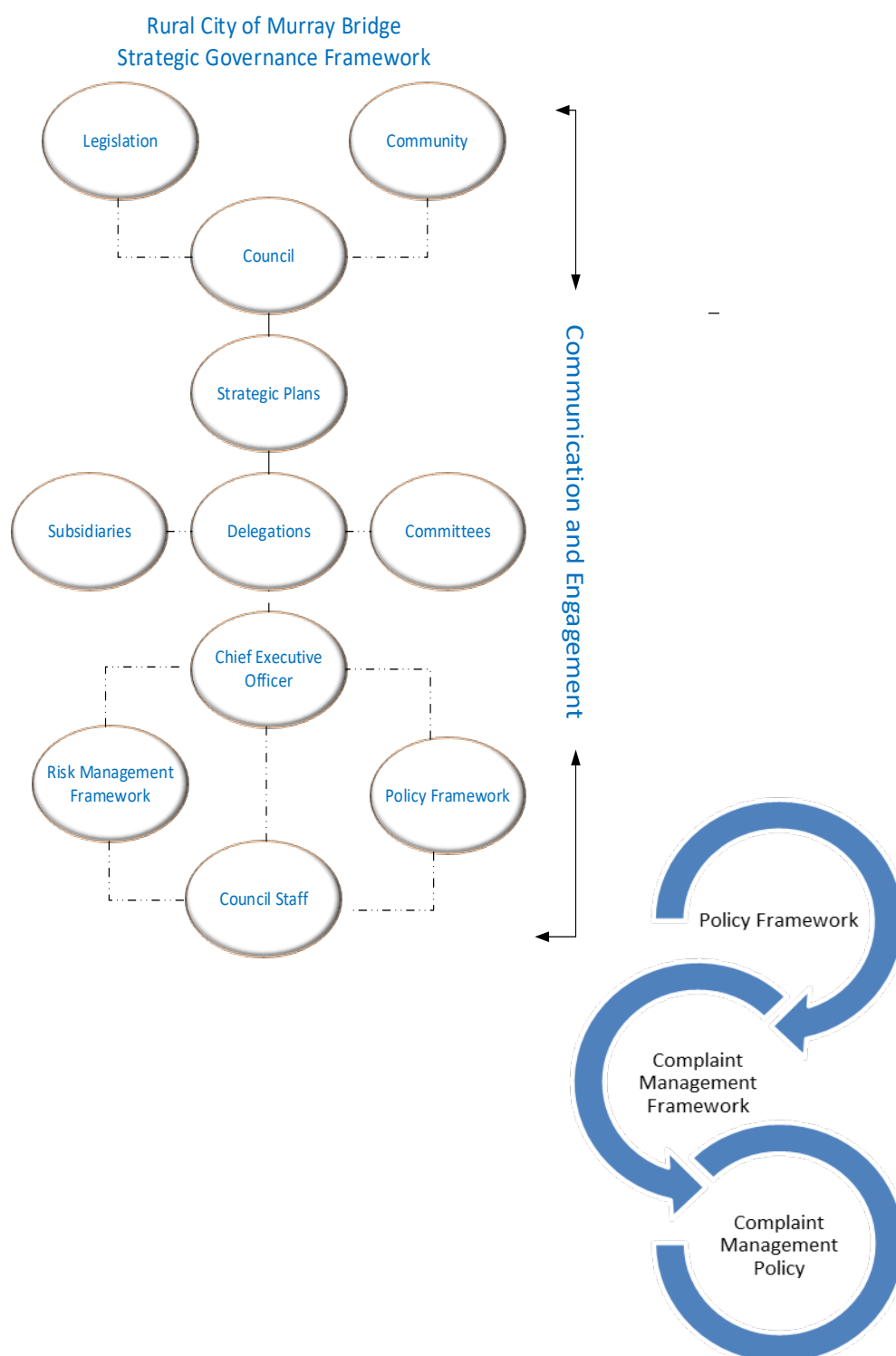
- Commitment
- Facilitation
- Resourcing
- Learning
- Guidance

Council's Chief Executive Officer has been delegated authority by Council to manage the delivery of Council's services to the Communities by:

- strengthening relationships
- identifying potential issues
- improving service delivery and systems
- improving customer service

The Guiding principles for facilitating complaints:

- **Visibility and transparency** – widely publicise information about how and where complaints may be made to Council
- **Accessibility** – implement a system to manage complaints that is easy to understand and accessible to people who may require assistance.
- **Supporting** – support and assist people who need help to make a complaint, without charge
- **Flexibility** – be flexible in how complaints may be made to about Council.
- **Acceptance** – accept anonymous complaints where they raise significant issues and there is sufficient information to be enable investigation of the issues raised.



LEVELS

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Council's commitment towards Customer Service

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

Requests for approval
Requests for action
Routine inquiries about Council's business
Requests for the provision of services and assistance
Reports of failure to comply with laws regulated by the organisation
Requests for explanation of policies, procedures and decisions

FEEDBACK

Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

COMPLAINT (Level 1)

Frontline Complaint Handling and early resolution of complaints
Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services (request for service/feedback), staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly expected or legally required.
Reviewed by Manager of Business Unit

DISPUTE (Level 2)

*Internal review of complaints and/or complaint handling
may include Alternative Dispute Resolution*
An unresolved complaint escalated within our organisation to the General Manager.

DISPUTE (Level 3)

*Internal review of complaints and/or complaint handling
or internal review of decision by Council or delegate
may include Alternative Dispute Resolution*
An unresolved complaint escalated within our organisation to the Chief Executive Officer

DISPUTE (Level 4)

External review of complaints and/or complaint handling
An unresolved complaint escalated outside our organisation.

Behavioural Management Framework Complaints

Elected Members – Behavioural Management Policy – Elected Members

Staff – Code of Conduct/Behavioural Management Policy

S41 Independent Members – Behavioural Management S41 Independent Members Policy

PROCESS

Acknowledgement of Complaint

- within 5 working days of receipt either by email or letter
- include reference number for use by parties
- include name of customer contact officer
- Include process to be followed in managing complaint

Address and Investigate Complaint

- Customer contact officer to conduct initial assessment
- Provide initial feedback and next steps within 10 working days of acknowledgement
- Alternative Dispute Resolutions options may be explored

Provide Reasons for Decision

- Our aim is to provide results of the complaint investigation within 30 days however depending on the complexity of the complaint advice may be forwarded regarding an extended timeline
- Customer contact officer will inform the complainant of the progress of the complaint (every 15 working days)

Options for Redress or Closure of Complaint

- Customer contact officer will inform the complainant of the processes involved in seeking an escalation of the complaint

Unreasonable Complainants

- Unreasonable and Vexatious complaints will not be tolerated by Council and the Chief Executive Officer is delegated authority to establish a process to manage unreasonable and vexatious complainants

Review of Complaints

- Chief Executive Officer review complaints to implement Continuous Improvement processes and report via Council's Annual Report

REPORTING

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis. Reporting will be provided to the Council and Community through Council's Annual Report.

Alternative statutory processes are available to the applicant including:

Objections to rating and valuations made by a Council
(Rating Policy – Valuer-General / SACAT)

Appeals against orders made pursuant to Section 254 of the Local Government Act,
(refer order making Policy – SACAT)

Appeals under the Development Act 1993
Appeals under the Planning Development & Infrastructure Act 2016
[Decisions and appeals | PlanSA](#)

Complaints under the Electoral Act and/or Local Government (Elections) Act
(Council Elections – Electoral Commissioner)

Reviews under the Freedom of Information Act 1991. (FOI / Access to Information
Policy – Ombudsman SA / SACAT)

Appeals of Control orders under the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 – (SACAT)

Appeals under the SA Public Health Act 2011 - (SACAT)

Appeals under the Food Act 2011 – (SACAT)

Appeals under the Environment Protection Act 1993 – (SACAT)

Appeals under the Safe Drinking Water Act 2011 – (SACAT)

Appeals under the Supported Residential Facilities Act 1992 – (SACAT)

Appeals under the Expiation of Offences Act 1996 – (SACAT)

Office of Public Integrity - <https://icac.sa.gov.au/>

SA Ombudsman - <http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au/complaints/>

SA Civil and Administrative Tribunal - <http://www.sacat.sa.gov.au/about-sacat>