

COMPLAINTS AND UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Responsible Directorate	Office of the CEO
Responsible Section	Governance
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent, fair and transparent framework for the management of complaints received by the Town.

The Town recognises effective complaint management as a key mechanism for improving service delivery, strengthening accountability, and maintaining public trust.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to complaints regarding:

- The services, decisions, actions or inaction of the Town;
- The conduct of contractors or service providers engaged by the Town; and
- The standard or quality of services delivered.

This Policy does **not** apply to:

- Complaints relating to Elected Members, which are managed under the Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates;
- Allegations of breaches of the Employee Code of Conduct, which are managed under the Code of Conduct and associated procedures;
- Requests for service, information or clarification;
- Matters subject to statutory appeal processes;
- Freedom of Information applications; and
- Public Interest Disclosures, which are managed in accordance with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003*.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. General

The Town will manage complaints in a manner that is:

- Accessible – enabling all members of the community to lodge complaints easily and without cost;
- Responsive – acknowledging and addressing complaints in a timely manner;
- Fair and Objective – ensuring impartial assessment and equitable treatment of all parties;
- Transparent – providing clear reasons for decisions and outcomes;
- Confidential – protecting personal information in accordance with legislative requirements;
- Accountable – ensuring appropriate oversight and record-keeping; and

- Focused on Improvement – using complaint data to inform continuous improvement.

Complaints will be regarded as valuable feedback and an opportunity to improve the Town's services, systems and practices.

2. Commitment to Complainants

The Town will:

- Treat complainants with courtesy and respect;
- Actively listen and seek to understand the issues raised;
- Provide clear information about the complaints process;
- Keep complainants informed of progress and outcomes; and
- Ensure there is no detriment or disadvantage to a person for making a complaint in good faith.

3. Management of Complaints

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for establishing and maintaining a complaints management system that:

- Provides for the receipt, assessment, investigation and resolution of complaints;
- Ensures complaints are recorded in the Town's corporate recordkeeping system and subject to appropriate triage, including referral to other processes where required;
- Ensures complaints are managed at the appropriate level of authority and resolved in a timely manner;
- Provides for internal review, including independence from the original decision-maker where appropriate;
- Ensures complex, high-risk or systemic complaints are escalated for central oversight;
- Facilitates cooperation with external oversight bodies, including the Ombudsman Western Australia; and
- Ensures the systematic recording, reporting and analysis of complaints data to support governance and continuous improvement.

Detailed processes for managing complaints are set out in the Town's Complaints Management Guidelines.

4. Unreasonable Conduct

The Town recognises that, in a small number of cases, the conduct of a complainant may be unreasonable and may impact the safety, wellbeing or resources of the organisation.

The Town may take proportionate steps to manage such conduct, including placing reasonable limits on how a complainant interacts with the Town, while ensuring that legitimate complaints continue to be addressed.

Any restrictions will be proportionate, documented, subject to periodic review, and applied in accordance with procedural fairness and the Complaints Management Guidelines.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Council

- Provides strategic oversight of the complaints management framework; and
- Reviews trends and systemic issues where reported.

5.2 Chief Executive Officer

- Ensures the implementation and effectiveness of the complaints management system;
- Approves operational guidelines and procedures; and
- Determines appropriate action in complex or high-risk matters.

5.3 Employees

- Manage complaints in accordance with this Policy and supporting guidelines;
- Maintain professionalism and objectivity in all interactions; and
- Accurately record complaint information.

5.4 Complaints Officer

The Chief Executive Officer will designate a Complaints Officer (or function) responsible for oversight of the complaints management system, including coordination, monitoring, triage and reporting.

6. Continuous Improvement

The Town will:

- Collect and analyse complaints data;
- Identify trends, systemic issues and opportunities for improvement;
- Implement changes to policies, procedures and service delivery where appropriate;
- Report on complaints trends and systemic issues as part of governance and accountability processes.

7. Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier if required due to legislative or organisational changes.

Document Control				
Office Use Only:				
Previous Policy No	Policy No. 1.2.12			
Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i> <i>Industrial Relations Act 1979</i> <i>State Records Act 2000</i>			
Standards and Guidance	AS ISO 10002 – Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations Ombudsman Western Australia – Complaint Handling Guidelines			
Related Documents	Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates Code of Conduct for Employees Customer Charter			
Date of Adoption by Council	Complaints Management Guidelines 28 September 2004			
Date Reviewed/Amended	28 February 2006 27 May 2014 23 February 2021	25 March 2008 28 July 2020 17 September 2024	27 April 2010 22 September 2020 26 May 2026	22 May 2012
Next Review Date	May 2028			