Customer Service Strategy
2022 - 2026

City of
Kalamunda

Contents

1.0   Introduction

This strategy outlines the key principles, strategies, actions, and performance measures for improved customer service standards over the next four years at the City of Kalamunda.

It will align with the statements made in a revised Customer Service Charter and will support the improvement of the City's customer service outcomes across the whole organisation. It will also enable Council to align itself to deliver better community engagement and continuously improve and refine its whole service delivery.

Our aim is to implement transparent customer service, with a customer portal that allows for customer request submission and tracking, a knowledgebase that helps both the customer and staff understand the process for each type of request, accommodates a mobile based workforce in the field, with a fully configurable workflow for each type of customer request, along with offering all traditional customer service options.

Nearly every decision made by the City impacts community, consequently making them the centrepiece of every service transaction and interaction, and the critical driver behind developing, delivering and improving services and maintaining excellent customer service standards.

The Customer Service Strategy 2022-2026 builds upon the initiatives outlined in the Customer Service Strategy 2017-2021 and promotes a proactive, innovative and agile approach to service delivery which is crucial to meet increasing demands in the current and ever-changing climate.

2.0   The Strategy

Organisational Vision

"Connected Communities, Valuing Nature and Creating our Future Together"

Organisational Values

Core Values

Service
We demonstrate a 'can do' attitude, we listen, we understand, and we go above and beyond when we serve others.

Professionalism
We look, speak, act and do what it takes to show others we are reliable, respectful and competent.

Quality
We think clearly, plan mindfully, act decisively, measure carefully and review regularly everything we do.

Aspirational Values

Courage
We make brave decisions and take calculated risks to lead us to a bold and bright future. We show courage in our pursuit for the protection of the environment, for the well-being of our people and to support the economy.

Diversity
We challenge ourselves to keep our minds open and looking for all possibilities and opportunities.

Innovation
We believe in a workplace where you're safe to try new things - where we can push the boundaries of the norm and learn from things that don't always go according to plan. We strive for a just and blameless culture that respects people as individuals and paves the way to genuine learning and improvement.

Our simple guiding principle will be to ensure everything we do will make Kalamunda socially, environmentally and economically sustainable

Objectives

The key objectives of this strategy are to:

» Promote a holistic approach to customer service, encouraging a smooth, seamless "one-touch" customer experience
» To be responsive and agile in service delivery, recognising one size doesn't fit all and offering a range of service delivery options.
» Support and encourage staff through training and information sharing to be proactive and anticipate community needs, always striving to exceed expectations.

Customer Service Ethos

We will focus on a combination of concepts including cultural change, technological and process improvement, and a centralised service model - with increased self-service options and improvements based on customer feedback.

Our customers are the 'key influencers' in the development, improvement and delivering of our services.

Customer Service Promise

Supported by innovative technology solutions and regular best practice training, staff will be proactive, focus on future planning to meet business objectives and work collaboratively, with the customer experience always in mind.

All City interactions with customers will be timely and meaningful.

We will be transparent in all that we do and decisions we make

We will change and adapt for continuous improvement

Principles

1.	Customers will receive **timely** responses.	• We will always provide an estimation of timeframe for response at each interaction. • We will update customers on the status of their enquiry at regular intervals. • Customer referrals across business units will be as minimal as possible. • We monitor the timeliness of our correspondence.
2.	Customer interactions will be **meaningful.**	• We aim to handle enquiries at first point of contact. • All staff will have access to accurate and up-to-date information. • Staff will seek to understand enquiries to the deepest possible level before responding. • All responses to customers will be personalised and professional. • Even when we may need to say 'we can't' we will offer options for things we 'can do'
3.	Each customer will be made to feel like the **only** customer.	• We will ask our customers how they like to receive information and deliver it accordingly. • We recognise 'one-size does not fit all' and we will be flexible in our service offerings. • We will always do more to exceed expectations. • Complex requests and complaints will be handled with priority.
4.	We will help our customers to **help** themselves.	• We offer and promote integrated self-service options. • We explore and use innovative technology solutions that makes accessing information easy. • Online information will be available 24/7 and enabled for mobile devices. • As many transactions as possible will be automated. • Develop simple guides and instructions to help customers understand our processes.
5.	Our customers are informed and will help **inform** our services.	• We will consider the customer's perspective and actively seek feedback often, in different ways. • We will admit when we get it wrong, reviewing and improving our processes each time. • We will communicate on any new service (or fee) or expected change in levels of service as early as possible. • Our people and our customers will be our best advocates.

3.0   Focus Areas

Achieving outcomes under these principles has been broken down into three **Focus Areas** of strategic action:

- » **Service Standards**: Methods for setting standards and working together better
- » **Communication & Culture**: Staff engagement, motivation and skill development
- » **Technology**: Systems, tools and processes to support customer service delivery

Service Standards

Objectives	Actions	Measures
1. Improve Customer Experience	1.1 Track customer interactions and satisfaction	» Satisfaction rates with customer interactions.
2. Be responsive to enquiries, feedback and suggestions	2.1 Review Customer Service Charter & Standards every two years	» Charter reviewed every 2 years and standards being met
	2.2 Ensure clear internal staff Guidelines/Policy around keeping customers informed at each step of the referral for the duration of their enquiry/application.	» Reduction in follow-up enquiries/calls.
	2.3 Develop a Customer Service Complaints Review Panel comprised of staff from various business units and levels, to regularly review complaints and consider process and service delivery improvements to better improve service. Complaint's valuing will drive priority service areas for improvement	» Complaints Handling Reports – outlining process followed, and service area improvements » Number of complaints received

Objectives	Actions	Measures
	2.4 Extend formal Customer Service Standards to internal teams & introduce Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between Business Units. Provide template for development of SLAs between business units	» Business Unit cooperation and adherence to Service Level Agreements
3. Recognise 'one-size does not fit all' and offer options	3.1 In all forms of communication standardise asking customers how they prefer to receive information	» Biennial Community Perception Survey
	3.2 Offer flexible options for delivery of services to meet individual circumstances and needs	» Customer feedback / compliments on flexible approaches & customised responses and resolutions
	3.3 Create a customer service checklist to guide staff when reviewing, strategies, polices and processes	» Staff utilisation of the checklist
	3.4 Conduct yearly accessibility testing on all products for customers	» Accessibility testing compliance
4. Ensure organisational capability to deliver customer service	4.1 Investigate a Customer Service Call Centre (separate from front counter) incorporating subject matter experts to manage incoming calls and enquiries at first point of contact, to ensure Front Counter staff are able to devote necessary time and attention to customers visiting the counter and administrative tasks.	» Call Centre Implemented. » Reduction in phone wait times and referrals. » Customer feedback from Front Counter Smiley Surveys
	4.2 Implement a Customer Service Coverage Policy to ensure suitable coverage is arranged for all customer service roles as required.	» Reduction in unanswered phones » Reduction in call back requests

"Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first. Only when a critical mass of employees are inside the Circle of Safety, and feel that their leaders are working to defend them from dangers outside, can the company then invite customers into the circle too".
Simon Sinek, New York Times Best Selling Author of titles 'Start with Why' and 'Leaders Eat Last'.

Communication & Culture

Objectives	Actions	Measures
1. Ensure a customer focused organisation	1.1. Ensure customer service is suitably reflected in ALL staff PDs, to emphasise that customer service is everyone's responsibility.	» Staff survey – staff are committed to service delivery. » Customer feedback
	1.2. All new staff receive specific customer service induction including spending time 'shadowing' a Customer Relations Officer	» Training attended and customer service inductions completed
	1.3. Mandatory annual customer service training for all staff	» Customer Service Training delivered
2. Support and Empower staff through training and sharing information	2.1 Regular internal communication, sharing important changes occurring in each business unit, via Kalanet (KALA Scoop)	» Staff utilisation of shared Kalanet information.
	2.2 ECM training for all staff to ensure all correspondence is being captured correctly and is accessible when needed.	» Completion of Records Training by staff.
	2.3 Develop a knowledge base/address book outlining each Service Unit, the key roles and responsibilities of each officer.	» Accuracy of referrals across business
3. Build a 'one team' internal Culture	3.1 Opportunities for shared office spaces across the various outstations to encourage cross team collaboration and "break down silos"	» Staff survey – staff familiar with various City facilities and departments » Staff survey – staff feel supported and aptly skilled to service customers

Objectives	Actions	Measures
	3.2 Encourage regular cross-department job shares for all Customer Relations Officer roles	» Number of Customer Relations Officers experienced in various CRO roles across the organisation
	3.3 Encourage cross-team collaboration and process review for process changes	» Number of teams working together to review joint processes.
	3.4 Improve operational efficiency and improved employee experience	» Remove printing of Customer Requests » Allow staff to access information in the field » Staff can schedule work in the most time effective manner » Reduced intervention by the Customer Relationship Officers (CROs) » Reduced registration of Customer Requests by Records Staff » Make majority of processes electronic rather than manual » Reduce the number of letters sent by post. » Greater visibility through Dashboards and Reporting options » Reduce payments taken through Front Counter

Technology

Objectives	Actions	Measures
1. Improve access to information	1.1 Develop a knowledge base accessible for staff and community 1.2 Develop and implement a chat bot feature for customers. 1.3 Program regular intranet and website updates for staff and customers to access up to date information 1.4 Increase customer service engagement on social media	» Customer Portal allows for submission of Customer Requests 24 hours a day » Customers are able to find information on the website » Reduction in telephone calls » Chatbot allows for conversations that can branch out into different sub-topics, to make it logical for residents to use » Digital & social media reach & engagement measured monthly » Customer feedback on finding information online
2. Offer and promote integrated self-service options	2.1 Offer online capabilities for all City applications, requests and payments	» No of e-business capabilities enabled through the website
	2.2 Deliver an Online, real-time, Facilities Booking System	» Customer take up of online booking system.
	2.3 Implementation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) tool which will provide CRM functionality	» Implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning tool

Objectives	Actions	Measures
3. Improve on collection and analysis of customer enquiries data	3.1 Continue and expand Call recording to better capture phone call statistics including wait times and return calls.	» Call recording reflecting whole view of organisation
	3.2 Collaborative delivery of the ICT Strategy to deliver new ERP with reporting ability	» ERP delivered with reporting ability relating to Customer Service.

4.0   Review and Evaluation

It is proposed this strategy is reviewed by a cross-functional team which includes Customer Service Officers from all business units across the organisation and a reference group of customers. It is due for review in 2026.

The main evaluation mechanisms for the successful implementation of this strategy will include the following:

» Customer Service Metric benchmarks – Community Perception Scorecard
» Net Promoter Scores
» Customer Charter adopted and lived
» Customer Service Inductions and Training annually delivered
» Staff satisfaction survey scores – engaged internal culture
» Communication & Engagement policies and training delivered
» Accessibility testing compliance
» Customer Enquiry and Record Reports
» Customer phone statistics
» Complaints Handling Reports
» Customer Relationship Management tool implemented
» No of e-business service offerings available
» Change and improvement in services and workflow based on customer feedback

5.0   Appendices

Appendix A – Issues Analysis

Customers want more choice and flexibility in how they interact with us

The key to effective communication is a consistent, proactive and seamless service experience across all interactions. There is a need to offer a diverse service, for our different customer types, and identify the preferred communication channels for each customer. There is an expectation from customers their requests are resolved in a timely manner. The customers value knowledgeable employees who can answer questions directly or refer them onto the right person for a resolution. This will add greater value to each customer interaction.

Customers progressively value self-service technologies and mobility

While face-to-face contact will remain a vital part of our customer interaction, many customers want to find information themselves as they seek greater autonomy and control over their interactions, information, and service delivery use. Customers expect access to self-service communication tools that are efficient, easy to use and available 24/7, mobile devices such as Tablets, Smartphones and other emerging devices.
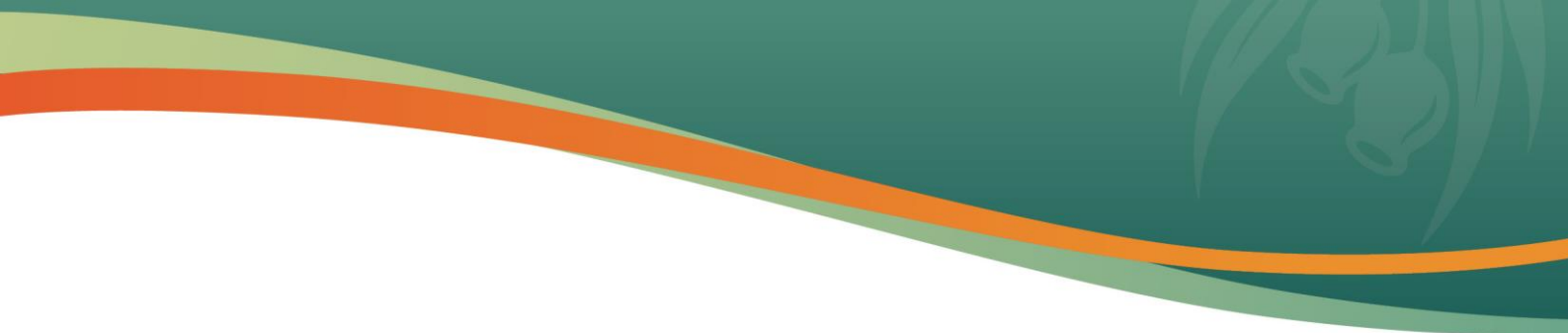
Integrating self-service products and optimising the website for mobile access will greatly improve the customer experience and reduce our cost to serve customers. We will engage customers in the design process to ensure the usability and value of our self-service products.

Value for money retains its importance

Customers would like to know how we compare against other local governments in terms of reliability and cost-efficiencies. They expect to pay a reasonable price for an excellent service and need to have confidence we invest responsibly to meet current and emerging needs. Customers also want to know more about our planning to better understand and appreciate the value we provide through asset management. By engaging our customers both individually and collectively, we can offer better value. Consultation in the early stages of new infrastructure or services, avoids unnecessary costs and the potential for complaints.

Customers require clarity about our role, our brand and our processes

Customers are looking for a single trusted advisor to provide accurate information to assist them in making informed decisions. Many customers claim they have been confused as to who we are and what we do. Local Government, being a highly regulated organisation operates under a highly complex compliance framework, comprising of many codes and practices within Australia. This

makes the task of being able to keep customers informed, updated and educated about our functions and processes a key challenge. Gaining a greater understanding of the methods our customers use to communicate will allow us to release targeted messages and campaigns to boost brand awareness. Online communication channels such as the website and social media present an opportunity to improve our brand perception. The use of rich media content engages and educates our customers.

Highly valued Customer Service attributes

Research indicates there is a set of service attributes all customer segments highly value. These insights help us to determine where we should place emphasis in our service delivery and changes we may need to make to serve our customers in a way they most value.

Not all customers are the same

While there are common needs and service attributes across all customer segments, there are also specific needs that will improve the customer experience. For example, commercial and business customers will have complex development applications that may see their preference for face-to-face guidance throughout the planning processes. Whereas a customer wanting to use a recreation centre will want to be motivated to come back, so they will want a friendly, supportive and encouraging service experience. It is important the City identifies all its relevant customer segments and have targeted conversations, to identify evolving needs, wants and issues. This will enable delivery against changing expectations. Above all, our customers seek transparency in our operations.

Appendix B - Customer Segments

Our Key Customer Segments

Across the City there are five broad customer segments. The following provides a summarised profile of each customer segment, their characteristics, service attributes that are most important to them, their communication channel preferences and their priority needs. These insights help us determine where we should prioritise our resources to serve our customers in a way they most value.

Residential

The City's residential population characteristics include a mix of different genders, ages, locations and life's stages. It includes:

» People where English is a second language
» People with disability or carers of others
» Tenants
» Property owners
» Mortgagees
» People experiencing hardship
» People living in medium and low-density urban environments
» People living in large rural and agricultural properties

The diversity that exists in the City means our customers will have a wide range of demands and will expect the City to respond effectively to this diversity. This customer segment will have the greatest demand upon service delivery across all functions of the City, particularly around amenity of street scape, infrastructure, parks and community facilities. They will demand high quality services, as ratepayers they have an expectation of ownership of the City. These customers may require communication through various channels predominantly focused on information about access to services.

Business

The City has a number of commercial activity centres and industrial areas that include varying enterprises that operate largely independently of most City services. These customers rely on the City for highly effective and streamlined planning and building services, as well as amenities that will enable their workforce to live locally and utilise their businesses. Whilst the demand from this segment is not as regular as others, when they do require access to a service they will need it done quickly and accurately. Any delays will impact on the growth and profitability of their business.

Sporting and Community Organisations

The City has a significant number of community organisations who all have a wide range of service requirements, ranging from:

» Facility supply and management

» Maintenance

» Supporting events

» Partnering

» Assisting with establishment or growth plans

» Advocating on their behalf for funding and support from external funding sources

This customer segment demands effective and efficient delivery of services, as they operate with groups of people who themselves are reliant on the services and facilities provided by the City. The City's services and facilities enable their activities in the delivery of their community or recreation services. They will expect to receive priority service, as they see themselves as serving the community. These customers will expect communication to be regular and face-to-face whenever possible, particularly when solving problems or setting goals.

Government

Includes government at all levels particularly where community projects are affected by the various departments and employees across the three tiers of government (Federal, State and Local). Level of contact is prioritised according to whether the interaction is operational, for key projects or political.

Visitors

Visitors to the region include day trip Perth and Western Australian residents, interstate and international guests who generally travel for a round trip commute from Perth and surrounding areas and are away from a home base for at least 4 hours at a time. They may or may not spend the night away as part of their travel.

These visitors typically come to the region for shopping, sightseeing, restaurants, to visit friends and relatives and to explore national parks. As a destination Local Government Tourism is a key pillar of economic development for the region and so customer service offerings in this space need to be high to attract and engage visitors to recommend and frequently return to the region. The appropriateness of employing and training casual and volunteer staff to assist in the Visitor Centre and with delivery of cultural events and activities, needs to be a key consideration in ensuring we deliver on expectations and service standards in this space.