

## 1. Introduction

This Complaints Management Framework (CMF) forms part of Council's customer services and governance arrangements. The CMF is underpinned by the *Local Government Act 2009* Principles, in particular:

- Transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest;
- Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services;
- Good governance of, and by, local government; and
- Ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.

Council will ensure the Framework is accessible on our external and internal websites and encourages customers and employees to come forward and raise a complaint. By doing so they provide the opportunity for a decision to be reviewed, wrongdoing to be stopped and persons responsible for wrongdoing to be held accountable.

Where Council is the proper authority, as defined in the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*, support and protection will be given to anyone who raises a matter of public interest or is the subject or witness of a complaint to ensure they do not suffer any reprisal action.

## 2. The Value of Complaints

Council recognises that effective complaint management offers many practical benefits as complaints provide information about program weaknesses, service delivery faults and the management and performance of Council employees. Good administration practices involve the regular review of Council's services, programs, policies, procedures and the lessons learnt from complaints can feed into that process. Council will utilise complaint information to:

- Provide a suitable remedy to a complainant;
- Develop and maintain good relations with our customers;
- Evaluate and improve services, programs, policies and procedures;
- Informed decision-making about future service and program delivery; and
- Evaluate and improve the management of our employees and the programs, policies; and procedures they work within.

## 3. Purpose

Complaints can be received from parties internal and external to Council about a diverse range of matters involving Council functions, activities and responsibilities.

The purpose of this CMF is to provide an overview of how complaints are managed within the Hinchinbrook Shire Council (Council). Council aims to encapsulate all the different components of complaints management into this one summary document.

The CMF is best used as a reference guide for how different types of complaints are managed within Council. The Framework has been written for persons who may wish to make a complaint, or who are responding to a complaint received, or who wish to gain an overview of how complaints are managed within Council.

Persons wishing to make a complaint or respond to a complaint can refer to the applicable complaint category and read the reference material associated with that type of complaint.

The CMF seeks to simplify and summarise the different elements of complaints management within Council including the fundamental principles underpinning how complaints are to be managed.

At its heart, receipt of a complaint provides Council with an opportunity to reflect on and review its practices with a view to making continuous improvement in its business processes, decision-making, and performance wherever possible and necessary.

This CMF provides the relevant policies, procedures, personnel and technology used by Council in receiving, recording, responding to and reporting complaints.

## 4. Scope

The CMF applies to all Councillors and employees, including volunteers and contractors, working for Council regardless of whether they are permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time or casual. For this Policy, the term contractor includes on-hired temporary labour services (agency staff) and sub-contractors.

The CMF seeks to cover a diverse range of complaints. A complaint refers to an expression of dissatisfaction by a person about an act or omission that is said to have either occurred, is occurring, or will occur, and that is the responsibility of Council to remediate. It is usually, but not always, made by a person who is directly affected by the act or omission.

To constitute a complaint, the expression of dissatisfaction is sufficiently severe for an official record to be made. A minor matter that is resolved as part of everyday problem-solving is not considered to be a complaint.

The CMF addresses the broad categories of complaints received by Council, describes the relevant authority, policy and/or procedure that relate to each complaint category, and sets out in broad terms the fundamental principles for complaint management that Council seeks to adhere to. The CMF is consistent with the requirements of legislation and industrial instruments.

## 5. Definitions

**Administrative Action Complaint** refers to the definition at s268 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

**Assigned Officer** refers to the Council officer assigned to conduct the initial assessment and investigation of a complaint.

**Authorised Officer** refers to the Council Officer assigned as the decision maker in a complaint.

**CEO** refers to the Chief Executive Officer of Council.

**CCC** refers to the Crime and Corruption Commission established under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.

**Competitive Neutrality Complaint** refers to the failure of a local government to conduct a business activity in accordance with the competitive neutrality principle.

**Complaint** refers to an expression of dissatisfaction, orally or in writing, about the service, decisions or actions of the Council or its staff. It is not an enquiry or service request unless the person specifies that they wish to make a complaint due to previous inaction or dissatisfaction with Council's response.

**Complainant** refers to the affected person or organisation making a complaint.

**Corporate Governance Advisor** refers to an experienced and appropriately qualified person who is responsible for coordinating and reporting in relation to Council's complaint management process.

**Corrupt Conduct** refers to the definition in section 15 of the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*. Without limiting the definition, corrupt conduct is conduct that involves any of the following:

- (a) Abuse of public office;
- (b) Bribery, including bribery relating to an election;
- (c) Extortion;
- (d) Obtaining or offering a secret commission;
- (e) Fraud;
- (f) Stealing;
- (g) Forgery;
- (h) Perverting the course of justice;
- (i) An offence relating to an electoral donation;
- (j) Loss of revenue of the State;
- (k) Sedition;
- (l) Homicide, serious assault or assault occasioning bodily harm or grievous bodily harm;
- (m) Obtaining a financial benefit from procuring prostitution or from unlawful prostitution engaged in by another person;
- (n) Illegal drug trafficking; and
- (o) Illegal gambling.

**Council Officer** refers to a Council staff member including permanent, temporary, casual or contract employees.

**Customer Request** refers to a request for Council to take action to satisfy the needs of a customer or ratepayer. This may be of a physical nature, such as a request to fill a pothole or to collect a stray dog, or a request for information.

**Director** refers to a Council Director who is generally responsible for various functions of Council and who reports directly to the CEO.

**Executive Management Team (EMT)** refers to the senior management body, consisting of the CEO and Directors.

**Human Rights** refers to the *Human Rights Act 2019* and available information at <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/humanrights> for the types of complaints that are applicable under this legislation.

**Inappropriate Conduct** refers to the definition by Section 150K of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

**Misconduct** refers to the definition by Section 150L of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

**Natural Justice** refers to a set of principles to ensure fair and just decision making, including a fair hearing, an absence of bias, decisions based on evidence, and the proper examination of all issues.

**Preliminary Assessment** refers to an assessment of a complaint to decide whether the complaint:

- Is about a frivolous matter or was made vexatiously;
- Is about inappropriate conduct, misconduct, official misconduct, corrupt conduct, or another matter including an administrative action against the local government; or
- Is lacking in substance.

**Service Request** or request for service means a request made by a customer for information, access to a service, change to a service, or to inform/make a report about something for which Council has responsibility.

**The Act** refers to the *Local Government Act 2009*.

## 6. Our Commitment to Good Complaints Management

Council's commitment to providing high-quality customer service is based on a program of continuous improvement. Council will review and analyse complaint information regularly and identify opportunities for improvement.

Council recognises that effective complaint management offers many practical benefits as complaints provide information about program weaknesses, service delivery faults and the management and performance of Council employees. Good administration practices involve the regular review of Council's services, programs, policies and procedures and the lessons learnt from complaints can feed into that process.



Council is committed to recognising the importance and value of listening and responding to complaints. The following table sets out the nature of the commitment expected from all Council employees and the way that commitment will be implemented.

There are six steps in the management of complaints:

1. Receive;
2. Record;
3. Assess;
4. Respond and Resolve;
5. Communicate with the Complainant; and
6. Report.

Details of how these steps are undertaken can be found in Council's Complaints Management Procedural Guideline.

The following table sets out the nature of the commitment expected from all Council employees and the way the commitment will be implemented.

Table 1

| Responsible Person      | Commitment                                                                       | Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chief Executive Officer | Make Complaint Management a priority for Council                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a positive culture that values complaint management;</li> <li>Reporting on Complaints Management activities in the Annual Report;</li> <li>Ensure a strong decision making ethos is embedded in the organisation, including ongoing awareness and training;</li> <li>Implement Complaints Management training for managers and supervisors identifying the expected standards of complaint management such as the quality and timeliness of complaint management; and</li> <li>Utilise complaint information to inform good decision-making when planning and reviewing Council services and programs.</li> </ul> |
| Directors               | Make complaint management a priority for Council                                 | <p>Responsible and accountable for capability and cultural change as a Director to ensure line management staff are aware of their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaint Management responsibilities;</li> <li>Responsibility for the protection of disclosers, subject officers and witnesses from reprisal;</li> <li>Obligation to refer possible corrupt conduct;</li> <li>Obligations and responsibilities under the <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act</i>; and</li> <li>Corporate responsibility for responding to systemic or serious concerns identified by complaints.</li> </ul>                                                        |
| Councillors             | Support Council's Complaint Management Framework, related policies and procedure | Encourage community members to bring complaints to the attention of the Council.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



| Responsible Person           | Commitment                                                                           | Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Managers/<br>Coordinators    | Promote and respond to ensure an effective, professional complaint management system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a positive culture that values complaint management;</li> <li>Develop and embed service standards for their area, including a positive customer service culture;</li> <li>Embed the CMF and a positive outcome focused culture within their business unit;</li> <li>Maintain responsibility for and report on complaint handling;</li> <li>Manage and support Investigating Officers in their role and responsibilities;</li> <li>Promote internal networks to enable Investigating Officers to work with and be supported by other employees, as required;</li> <li>Co-ordinate appropriate action, including preventative action, taken to address sources of complaints, adverse issues and trends identified and to foster continuous improvement; and</li> <li>Act as a coordination point for the business group to ensure all complaints are appropriately managed and recorded.</li> </ul> |
| Corporate Governance Advisor | Display exemplary practice in managing complaints                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behave professionally when dealing with complainants;</li> <li>Lead and co-ordinate centralised initiatives to develop and maintain professional and effective complaint management practices across the Council including appropriate recording keeping and statistical returns;</li> <li>Support staff and business areas with particular matters as required to support best practice complaint management processes;</li> <li>Develop and maintain policies and procedures related to Complaints Management;</li> <li>Assist decision-makers in the handling of complaints; and</li> <li>Manage the mandatory reporting requirements.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Assigned Officers            |                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake the necessary actions to fully investigate the complaint including identifying facts, gathering relevant information, consideration of relevant procedures/legislation and preparing a report with findings and recommendations for the delegated Director, as required; and</li> <li>Have the requisite skills/experience or are appropriately trained in complaints management.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |



| Responsible Person | Commitment | Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Employees          |            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform their work duties in accordance with the Code of Conduct to minimise the risk of a complaint being made;</li> <li>• Approach a best practice decision making methodology while undertaking duties;</li> <li>• Comply with all legislation, directives and policy in relation to complaints;</li> <li>• Co-operatively participate in complaint management and resolution processes as required;</li> <li>• Make reasonable endeavours to resolve complaints at the local level and record complaints as per local level requirements that meet the business group's CMF arrangements;</li> <li>• Assist Assigned Officers to understand Council's business and assist in resolving complaints where required;</li> <li>• Respond to systemic issues that arise as a result of data gathered through complaint handling; and</li> <li>• Escalate observations to management that can improve customer service and business processes.</li> </ul> |
| Complainant        |            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Council's complaint management process to provide information as requested;</li> <li>• Update your details if they change;</li> <li>• Make your need known;</li> <li>• If you are not sure, ask;</li> <li>• Take ownership of your complaint;</li> <li>• Act in good faith – including providing truthful information and documents that have not been tampered with;</li> <li>• Engage with the processes at all stages; and</li> <li>• Make all reasonable attempts to meet deadlines.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



## 7. Complaint Management

Council has implemented a centralised model for the co-ordination of complaint management and resolution through the functions of Corporate Governance which will utilise the support of various business areas to complete the complaints management process. This model aims to advance the development of knowledge and expertise in professional complaint management practice.

### 7.1 Guiding Principles of Complaints Management

Council has adopted a proactive approach to managing complaints. This includes:

- Respect for human rights – Everyone has a right to lodge an honest complaint and receive a fair hearing;
- Customer focussed – Professional complaint handling is a customer service provided by Council;
- Accessibility and transparency - Information on the complaints process is readily available and accessible to internal and external complainants. Appeal avenues are notified to complainants in Council decisions;
- Responsiveness and confidentiality - Complaints are resolved promptly at the lowest appropriate level. All employees are empowered to fulfil their relevant role in any part of the process for the receiving, reporting, processing, responding and reporting on complaints and maintaining appropriate confidentiality;
- Objectivity, fairness and natural justice – A complaint is managed in accordance with the policies and procedures assigned to the relevant complaint category. Underpinning all action on complaints is objectivity, fairness, and application of principles of natural justice in decision-making;
- Accountability, continuous improvement, and prevention – Investigators, reviewers, and decision-makers are accountable for their recommendations and decisions in the complaint management process. The complaint process provides an opportunity to determine if further improvements can be made to systems and practices and prevent the need for similar complaints to be made in the future; and
- Feedback and reporting – Keeping the parties to the complaint informed of the status of the complaint at the appropriate time and in reasonable intervals. Maintain accurate public records to fulfil obligations to report complaint statistics to the Executive Management Team and government as required.

### 7.2 Four Levels of Complaints Management

An effective complaint management system contains three internal levels and one external level of review. The aim is to resolve the majority of complaints at the frontline level but to have systems in place for matters to be escalated where necessary.

#### *Level 1: Frontline Complaint Handling – Early Resolution*

At this level, the complaint is received by Council Officers who have dealt with and resolved the complaint.

To achieve early resolution at the first point of contact, Council officers must be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including having the appropriate authority, training and supervision. Frontline staff also need clear guidance around the type of complaints that they should escalate and complaints that they can deal with directly, including the resolution options available to them.

### *Level 2: Frontline Complaint Internal Review*

Although frontline staff should be able to resolve many complaints, the seriousness of some complaints or the level of a complainant's dissatisfaction with how their matter has been handled may warrant the complaint being handled at a more senior level.

In this case, the complaint is reviewed by the Manager or Director of the appropriate Department and the outcome of the review is provided to the complainant.

### *Level 3: Internal Assessment, Investigation, Facilitated Resolution or Review*

Most complaints will have been resolved through the Level 1 and Level 2 Frontline Complaint handling processes. Where there is still dissatisfaction with the outcome of the complaint or the handling of the complaint, the matter should then be brought to the attention of the Corporate Governance Advisor or Director of Corporate and Community Services and placed on the appropriate Complaints Register.

An initial assessment is made as to the type or category of complaint as outlined in Section 7.3 to confirm the proper process for dealing with the complaint.

The third level includes an internal assessment that considers issues such as the nature of the matters alleged, the complainant's desired outcome, and the options available for redress. This would be followed by an internal investigation and facilitated resolution.

### *Level 4 External Review*

A Level 4 external assessment, investigation, or review is undertaken when internal avenues have not resulted in matters being addressed satisfactorily.

The following agencies have specific roles as Level 4 external avenues:

- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman;
- Office of the Information Commissioner;
- Crime and Corruption Commission;
- Office of the Independent Assessor; and
- Queensland Human Rights Commission.



### 7.3 Different Categories for Complaints

Whilst this Policy is intended to capture all complaints, certain processes in complaint management are regulated by legislation and therefore separate policies or systems may apply in the handling of the various complaint types, for example:

*Table 2 Complaints dealt with under this Framework*

| Complaint Type                                                          | Suggested Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Resolution Timeframe                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Administrative Action Complaint                                         | Refer to the Corporate Governance Advisor in the first instance. It will then be referred on to the appropriate person within Council for investigation prior to review by the Manager of the appropriate Department. Record in ECM.                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Acknowledgement within three business days and a determination provided within 40 business days. This timeframe may be extended for a further 30 days for complex matters. |
| Appeal or request for review of penalty infringement notices (PIN)      | Complaints referred to the immediate Supervisor of the person who raised the PIN (e.g. Coordinator/Manager), who is then required to prepare a recommendation for the Director of the Department.<br><br>Dispense with the other normal internal review processes where possible, given that the complainant may elect to have the matter heard by the Magistrates Court if they are dissatisfied with the decision of the local government. | Complaints are to be responded to before the matter is lodged with the State Penalties Enforcement Registry (SPER) (normally 30 days after PIN is issued).                 |
| Competitive neutrality                                                  | Dealt with under Competitive Neutrality and Related Complaints Procedure. Complaints will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for review in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Acknowledgement within two business days and a determination provided within a reasonable timeframe.                                                                       |
| Corrupt Conduct alleging the involvement of the Chief Executive Officer | Dealt with under Council's Complaints against a Public Official Policy. Section 48A of the <i>Crime and Corruption Act 2001</i> deals with corrupt conduct complaints that involve or may involve the CEO. The nominated person in accordance with the relevant policy is the Director of Corporate and Community Services.                                                                                                                  | Resolution time will be determined by the complexity of the matter referred                                                                                                |



| Complaint Type             | Suggested Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Resolution Timeframe                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillor Misconduct      | Matters are referred to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Complaints about the conduct (misconduct or conduct breach) or performance of the Mayor or Councillors are dealt with in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> . Such complaints will be referred to the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA). Records kept in ECM.        | Follow due process, no time limit applied however matter should be resolved as soon as possible.                                   |
| Development Decisions      | Matters referred to the Development and Regulatory Services Manager and a copy to the Director of Corporate and Community Services. Complaints related to development decisions are assessed against the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> , by the dispute resolution committee and/or the Planning and Environment Court.                                       | Resolution time will be determined by the complexity of the matter referred.                                                       |
| Human Rights Complaints    | Complaints related to Human Rights are to be referred to the CEO and assessed against the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 45 business days, after which time the complainant can make a formal complaint to the Queensland Human Rights Commission directly. |
| Information Privacy        | Breach of privacy can be referred directly to the Office of the Information Commissioner or Council's Corporate Governance Advisor with a copy to the CEO.                                                                                                                                                                                               | Resolution time will be determined by the complexity of the matter referred.                                                       |
| Official Misconduct        | Complaints directed to the CEO in the first instance who, following determination that the matter is one of official misconduct will then refer the matter to the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) for review. The CCC will determine if Council is to investigate or the CCC. Records are kept in ECM.                                             | Resolution time will be determined by the complexity of the matter referred.                                                       |
| Right to information (RTI) | Request for Internal Review of RTI Application access decisions are to be directed to the Corporate Governance Advisor to process in accordance with the <i>Right to Information Act 2009</i> or directly to the Office of the Information Commissioner. Interference imposed on the RTI delegate in making a determination is an offence under the Act. | 25 business days.                                                                                                                  |

| Complaint Type                                                                                                                   | Suggested Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Resolution Timeframe                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Officer Conduct (not Official Misconduct) – including Code of Conduct and grievance type matters                                 | Dealt with under the relevant Council Directives and Policies (including Code of Conduct and Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure). Recorded in employee records where applicable and ECM.                                                                                                                                                                                            | Unlimited but as soon as possible.                                           |
| CEO Conduct (not Official Misconduct) – including Code of Conduct and grievance type matters                                     | Dealt with under the Complaints against a Public Official Statutory Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                              |
| Matters covered by a separate statutory prescribed review process                                                                | Dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation. For example, reviewable matters under a Local Law will be dealt with under the Local Law, rates and charges disputes are to be dealt with in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> , prescribed processes for animal management are to be dealt with under the <i>Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008</i> . |                                                                              |
| Public Interest Disclosures (Public interest information about wrongdoing in the public sector that serves the public interest). | Dealt with under Council's Public Interest Disclosures Policy and Procedure, the <i>Crime and Corruption Act 2001</i> and the <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Resolution time will be determined by the complexity of the matter referred. |

## 8. Policy Provisions

We value receiving complaints and positive feedback from our customers and employees. Feedback provides us with an opportunity to improve our services. Therefore, Council will ensure that making a complaint is a simple process for our customers and employees to follow. Our communications will give clear information about our process and about how to access us in several ways.

The complaints process is to be readily accessible to and able to be understood by all people including those with special needs. Information about the complaints process is to be available on Council's website, intranet and highlighted within the Annual Report. A hard copy may be obtained from Council's Administration Centre if required.



Effective complaints management is fundamental to the provision of quality services that Council aims to provide and enables a mechanism for obtaining feedback from customers and resolving disputes. To this end, Council acknowledges that errors and mistakes may be made and all reasonable attempts will be made to rectify failures to ensure community confidence is maintained.

Council is committed to effectively handling complaints promptly and professionally and takes seriously all complaints via all methods of delivery, including verbal and anonymous complaints.

All complainants will be afforded natural justice through the provision of procedural fairness, the implementation of fair and proper procedure used when making a decision.

Complaints will be managed in accordance with the type of complaint received by Council in accordance with the substance of the complaint.

Council will support the management of complaints through the development of tools to assist with determining the type of complaint to ensure the correct treatment and reporting of complaints.

Where possible, a complainant and a Council officer should attempt to have the matter resolved by open, frank and evidence-based discussion with a view to achieving an outcome that is satisfactory to both parties and therefore avoiding the need to enter into a formal complaint process.

Receipt of each complaint will be acknowledged in accordance with the Complaints Management Procedural Guideline).

Complainants will be treated courteously; and will be kept informed of the progress of the handling of their complaint, the timing of its handling and the outcome of their complaint.

When a complaint is made regarding a pending action or decision, by lodging a complaint, the matter will not automatically be suspended or put on hold.

All complaints will be treated with appropriate respect for the confidentiality and privacy of the complainant and officers involved. Publication of information relating to complaints about Council officers will be limited to that prescribed by legislation.

Council will cooperate fully with the investigating authority charged with dealing with a complaint, e.g. the Crime and Corruption Commission, Queensland Ombudsman or other legislative body.

Council staff who undertake roles in resolving or investigating complaints will receive training, the effectiveness of which will be reviewed at least as frequently as this Policy Framework or part of the onboarding process for new employees.

A Council officer will generally be excluded from the investigation process if the officer has had prior involvement in the matter or has a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

Council's systems, this Policy, associated guidelines and procedures will be reviewed periodically to maintain best practice.

If there is any conflict between this Policy or associated Procedural Guideline, and the requirements of the Act or any other relevant legislation, the legislative requirements will take precedence.

## 9. Legal Parameters

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991;*
- *Crime and Corruption Act 2001;*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009;*
- *Human Rights Act 2019;*
- *Judicial Review Act 1991;*
- *Local Government Act 2009;*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010;*
- *Public Service Ethics Act 1994;* and
- *Right to Information Act 2009.*

## 10. Associated Documents

- Administrative Action Complaints Management Policy;
- Administrative Action Complaints Management Procedure;
- Competitive Neutrality and related Complaints Procedures;
- Complaints against a Public Official Policy;
- HSC Local Government Officers (Stream A) Certified Agreement
- HSC Local Government Officers (Stream B and C) Certified Agreement;
- Grievance Policy;
- Grievance Procedure;
- Right to Information Policy;
- Right to Information Procedure;
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy;
- Public Interest Disclosure Procedure;
- Privacy and Confidential Information Management Policy; and
- Privacy and Confidential Information Management Procedure.

| DOCUMENT HISTORY AND STATUS |                                                            |                         |            |                         |        |            |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------|------------|
| Action                      | Name                                                       |                         |            | Position                | Signed | Date       |
| Approved by Council         | Mary-Anne Uren                                             |                         |            | CEO                     |        | 23/05/2024 |
| Policy Version              | 1                                                          | Initial Version Adopted | 23/04/2024 | Current Version Adopted |        | 23/04/2024 |
| Maintained By               | Corporate and Community Services                           |                         |            | Next Review Date        |        | 1/04/2027  |
| File Location               | <a href="#">841 CCS Complaints Management Framework V1</a> |                         |            |                         |        |            |

