



Corporate Complaints Policy and Protocol (2005)

Minute Number: 2024/05

That the under mentioned recommendation (Minute No. 1916/05) made at a meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 8 November 2005 be adopted:

Minute No. 1916/05 - Corporate Complaints Policy and Protocol

That the Complaints Policy and Protocol, as shown in Appendix "A", be endorsed and added to Council's Policy Register.

Complaints Policy and Protocol

1. Aim of this Complaints Policy and Protocol

Manukau City Council welcomes complaints because they are one of the ways that citizens, customers and communities provide feedback to their Council on their concerns, needs and expectations. Council aims to handle complaints transparently, quickly, fairly and effectively i.e. learn from them. Council aims to keep the complainant informed throughout the response and resolution process.

2. What are the key principles Covered by this Policy

- (i) Definition of a complaint.
- (ii) Who Can Make a Complaint.
- (iii) How a Complaint Can be Made.
- (iv) Complaints Process and Procedures.
- (v) Confidentiality.
- (vi) Vexatious Complaints.
- (vii) Complaints About Contractors.
- (viii) Equity Statement.
- (ix) Monitoring Satisfaction and Performance.
- (x) Matters that are Outside of the Policy and associated Policies.

2.1 Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is:

"An expression of dissatisfaction about the council's action or lack of action or about a service or the standard of a service, whether the action taken or the service was provided by the council itself or a body acting on behalf of the council".

A complaint is not:

An initial request for a service (includes request for fixing a pothole, requests for noise enforcement action, request for graffiti removal, etc).

2.2 Who Can Make a Complaint

Any member of the public or their representative, businesses, voluntary bodies and staff can make a complaint about the council.

2.3 How a Complaint Can be Made

A complaint can be made in the following ways:

- (i) In person.
- (ii) By telephone.
- (iii) By letter, By e-mail, By fax.
- (iv) Via HWM, Councillors and Community Board members.
- (v) At a Community Board, Committee or Council meeting.

2.4 Complaints Process and Procedures

All Complaints irrespective of the mechanism through which they are received by Council are logged into Council's CRM system via the Written Communication Team under the leadership of the Manager Customer Contact within the Customer Relationships Unit . Complaints are assigned to a manager or their delegate in the service area concerned. A response should be made within 10 working days or earlier. If the complaint takes longer than 10 days to resolve then the manager will continue to communicate with the complainant and update them on progress with the resolution whether 10 or 20 days or longer to resolve. If a dispute is identified then the case may be resolved via an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. However, throughout the whole process the Complaint Case will be tracked within the CRM system so that the status of the case may be ascertained at any time. The Written Communication Team will provide support and guidance with respect to the use of the CRM system by staff in other departments from time to time as the CRM System develops.

2.5 Confidentiality

All complaints are treated with confidentiality in mind. Only officers dealing with complaints in each service area will be aware that a complaint has been received and is being dealt with. Anonymous requests will be acted upon, however it is better to provide contact details so that the complainant can be informed of the outcome.

While the complainant will remain confidential any changes to policy, process or system as a result of the complaint will be widely notified internally and externally.

2.6 Vexatious Complaints

The Council wants to deal transparently, quickly, fairly and effectively with complainants ensuring the complaints system is trusted by all that use it. The Council has had experience of vexatious complainants from time to time. In order to manage Council's overall fair use of resources if a vexatious complainant is identified then they will be contacted personally and be given a full and final explanation as to why their complaint will not be taken any further by the Customer Relationships Manager on behalf of the Chief Executive. This correspondence will be copied to all relevant Councillors for their notice.

2.7 Complaints about Contractors, Trusts and Council Controlled Organisations

The Council recognises complaints regarding the Council's contractors or any associated Trust or Council Controlled Organisation and will seek to resolve such complaints. The Council will forward complaints received in respect of other organisations including utility companies to the appropriate bodies but may not take any other action.

These complaints are useful to guide learning in future service delivery and contractual arrangements and feedback on performance is given to contractors on a regular basis.

2.8 Equality Statement

The Council aims to handle all complaints fairly and transparently regardless of who makes a complaint. The Council treats all members of the community equitably and will not show bias to any particular individual or group. Where appropriate, information will be made available in other languages if required.

2.9 Matters that are Outside this Policy but associated with this Policy

- (i) Complaints/Disputes which are subject to separate legal processes, litigation, prosecutions etc.
- (ii) Requests for Information or Advice or Service.
- (iii) Citizen, Customer and Community Managed Relationships Policy/Strategy.
- (iv) Consultation Policy.

2.10 Monitoring Satisfaction and Performance

The effectiveness of the corporate complaints system in meeting the needs of citizens, customers and communities will be monitored by the Customer Relationships Manager in terms of complaints awareness by various communities as well as responsiveness to complaints (and their resolution by service areas) by Council.

Any specific issues which are identified will be referred to the appropriate standing committee responsible for the areas concerned.

3. Conclusion

This complaints policy is a practical means by which the Council can demonstrate its determination to handle complaints transparently, quickly, fairly and effectively i.e. learn from them.