



# Customer Service Strategy

---

*Delivering a high standard of customer  
service, consistently*

---

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose and Scope.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Our District .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Our Customers .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our Commitment.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our Service Standards.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Waitomo District Council Community Outcomes (LTP 2012 – 2022) .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Priorities / Strategic Goals .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Goal 1 - Understand our customers and their needs.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Goal 2 - Effectively communicate with our customers and the community.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Goal 3 - Empower all staff to serve our customers .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Goal 4 - Value customer satisfaction and simplify the customer experience</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Goal 5 - Embrace technology to benefit our customers .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Goal 6 - Investigate the provision of joint services facility.....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Background

---

Waitomo District Council engages with people and communities in many ways through its consultation, communication, community development and customer services. Waitomo District Council also engages and interacts with customers through the provision of a range of everyday services, such as water, roading, parks and playgrounds, libraries, environmental health services, building control services and animal control as examples.

All of these interactions are important in building a high level of trust and connectivity between customers and the Waitomo District Council.

During development of the Waitomo District Council Long Term Plan 2012-2022, the need to develop a Customer Service Strategy was identified and the project included within the Community Development Activity Management Plan 2012.

Due to an internal re-organisation, Council agreed to defer the project until the 2013/2014 year.

## Introduction

---

Waitomo District Council recognises the importance of a proud and capable community, being involved in Community Development, and the significant contribution organisations like community groups, voluntary groups, commercial operators and business owners make to the well-being of the District.

Groups such as these contribute in different ways, and they help to build a strong District identity. Through a partnership approach both Community and Council can achieve more together than they can alone.

In addition to fostering community pride, there is also a need for Council to work with community organisations and local businesses to foster, and assist in, growing capacity and the economy for the District. Within Waitomo, this can be achieved through supporting economic development initiatives, and by making strategic tourism decisions.

Community Development is a group of activities where Council, in a number of diverse roles, is actively involved in “helping the community to help itself”. Community Development activities represent a group of collaborative and partnership approaches and initiatives involving many agencies and organisations. These activities involve a common theme of promoting a better quality of life and a better living environment in the District.

Waitomo District Council’s Community Development Activity involves Customer Services, Community Support, District and Regional Promotion and Economic Development. These activities form the foundation for engagement and the focus of work.

## Purpose and Scope

---

The more complex our world becomes; the more value there is in providing authentic and transparent customer connections. In simple terms, customer satisfaction equates to simplifying the customer experience.

Customers are our business. Every day, we all deliver customer service to our external customers, and our internal customers (each other). At Waitomo District Council we engage with a diverse range of customers, community groups, organisations and business partners. This may include ratepayers, local residents, visitors, those affected by decisions we make or those who work with us to implement decisions we make.

Optimum service delivery in any organisation recognises the importance of the internal customer as well as the external. If service breaks down internally it becomes more difficult for staff to deliver external services to a high standard.

At the heart of the Waitomo District Council Customer Services Strategy are the needs and expectations of the customer. To deliver a high standard of customer services, consistently, we must continue to understand our customer's needs, communicate effectively and efficiently, empower our employees to serve our customers, value customer satisfaction and continue to embrace technological solutions to simplify the customer experience.

Characteristics that will lead to the provision of high standard customer service are:

- Attitude and integrity
- Empathy and a drive for excellence

The purpose of this strategy is to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen service delivery, ensure staff and key stakeholders are working towards common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organisations customer service direction, in response to an ever-changing environment.

## Our District

---

- 9,441 people live in the Waitomo District
- Total Rateable Properties 5,753 (as at 30 June 2013)
- 40.5% of the populations are Maori (compared to 14.6% throughout the rest of New Zealand)
- The median age of people is 35 years
- 26.1% of people are aged under 15 years
- 11.4% of people are aged 65 years and over
- 7.1% of people were born overseas
- 3,471 occupied households in our District
- 729 unoccupied households in our District
- 43.4% of households have access to the internet (compared with 60.5% of households throughout New Zealand)
- 61.9% of households have access to a cell phone
- 4.6% of the population are unemployed (aged 15 years and over)
- The median income of people in the District was \$23,000

*(as defined by Statistics New Zealand 2013 Census and WDC Rating Database)*

## Our Customers

---

Waitomo District Council services a diverse range of customers, both internal and external. The following list outlines an example of the WDC customer base:

- Business Groups/Sector
- Business Partners
- Children and Youth
- Community Groups
- Contractors
- Developers
- Education Providers
- Emergency Services
- Environmental Groups
- Extra Ordinary Water Users
- Future Residents/Ratepayers
- General Public
- Insurance Providers
- Interest Groups
- Iwi
- Lending Institutions
- Library Users
- Media
- Other Government Agencies
- Other Local Authorities
- Pedestrians
- Pensioners
- Professional Groups/Consultants
- Public Health Providers
- Ratepayers
- Real Estate Agencies
- Residents
- Retailers
- Road Users
- Service Providers
- Solid Waste Users
- Sports Clubs
- Stakeholders
- Tangata Whenua
- Tourists
- Trade Waste Users
- Virtual Customers (website customers)
- Visitors
- Voters

***Anybody whom we have contact with/interact with, asks us a question, seeks information***

## Our Commitment

---

We are committed to:

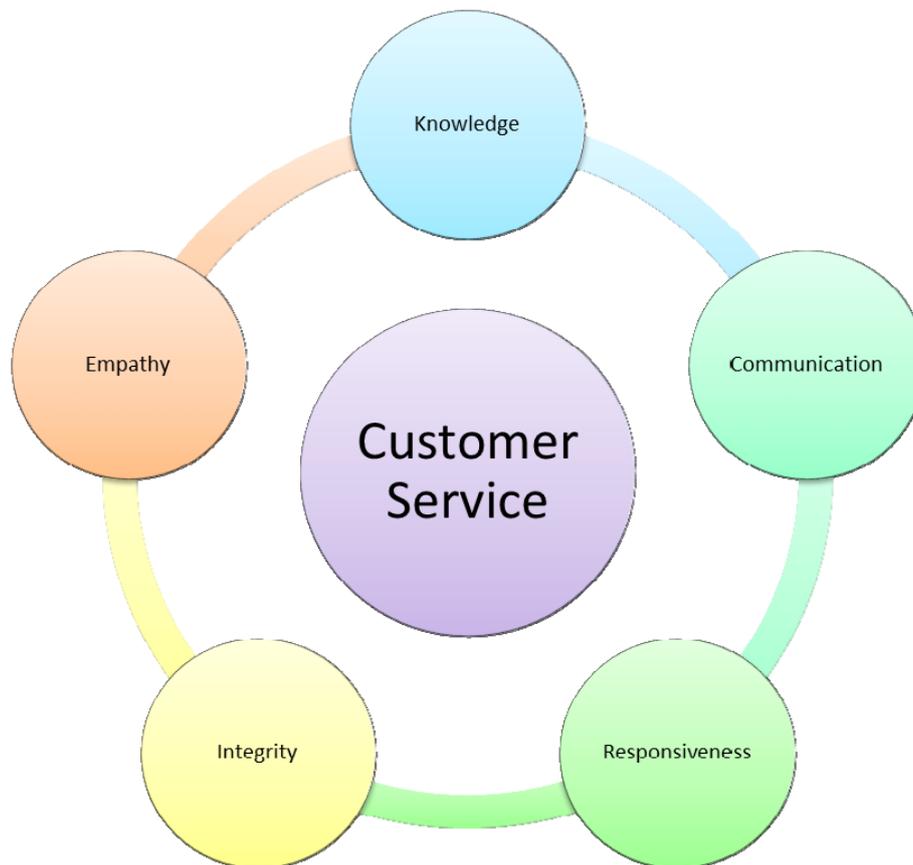
- Being professional, honest and ethical at all times
- Using plain language in all of our communications
- Being friendly and accessible
- Providing a 24 hour enquiry service
- Listening to our customers with respect and endeavouring to understand their needs
- Responding to enquiries promptly and efficiently
- Responding immediately to high priority incidents
- Being transparent and accountable
- Respecting confidentiality
- Providing a quality service and working continually to improve our service
- Where necessary, enforcing rules that protect the safety of the community and environment
- Acknowledging our mistakes and where appropriate apologising for any inconvenience caused

## Our Service Standards

---

We aim to:

- Deal with enquiries at the first point of customer contact, wherever possible
- Respond to telephone enquiries within one working day
- Where telephone enquiries are more complex we will either make an appointment to meet or arrange to contact the customer when the information is available
- Acknowledge, and where possible, respond to correspondence by mail, email or via website within 5 working days
- See customers punctually at the scheduled time for pre-arranged appointments. If there is a delay, communicate the reason for the delay at an early time
- Attend to enquiries as soon as practicable where a pre-arranged appointment has not been made
- Provide feedback on the outcome of any Service Request in a timely manner



*The values that contribute and support the strategy*

## Waitomo District Council Community Outcomes (LTP 2012 – 2022)

This strategy supports Waitomo District Council to achieve its Community Outcomes.

Community Outcomes are a description of the results or the desired state that a Council aims to achieve for its community, in order to promote the four well-beings (cultural, social, economic and environmental).

The Community Outcomes for the Waitomo District are reviewed every three years to assess where the wants and needs of the community lie and to ensure that the activities and work streams are aligned to areas of greatest needs and community wishes.



*Community Outcomes Long Term Plan 2012 -2022*

## Our Priorities / Strategic Goals

This strategy identifies key service improvements that will assist WDC to develop a culture that focuses on the delivery of high standard customer service, consistently.

- Goal 1** : Understand our customers and their needs
- Goal 2** : Effectively communicate with our customers and the community
- Goal 3** : Empower all employees to serve our customers
- Goal 4** : Value customer satisfaction and simplify the customer experience
- Goal 5** : Embrace technology to benefit our customers
- Goal 6** : Investigate the provision of joint services facility

## Goal 1 - Understand our customers and their needs

---

Waitomo District Council engages with a varied and diverse group of customers.

To meet our customer's needs, we need to understand their requirements. This is an area that is open to constant change in line with the changing environment we all live in, and conduct our day to day business in.

To effectively meet a high standard of customer service, consistently, we need to establish and understand what our customers require, and then deliver. We must continually review our service delivery model and modify where required.

We must also keep in mind the diversity of our customer base, therefore the diversity in our customer's requirements.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
Strengthen relationships with our customers and consistently meet expectations for a high standard of customer service delivery	Review and consider establishing forums with the wider WDC customer base to gather feedback regarding individual requirements and WDC customer service delivery	Group Manager – Customer Services	High	Complete by 1 October 2014
	Review with regular customers the level of service they have received versus their service expectation, including the method of delivery	Group Manager – Customer Services	High	Complete by 1 September 2014
	Review and consider implementation of a range of targeted customer satisfaction surveys	Group Manager – Customer Services Group Managers	Medium	Complete by 1 September 2014

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
	Gather regular feedback from Elected Members	Chief Executive	High	Ongoing
	Develop and implement internal Service Level Agreements where appropriate to clearly identify agreed levels of service and required customer service standards	Chief Executive Group Managers	Low	Completed by 1 July 2015
	Review monthly statistical reporting requirements to support continual improvement in customer service delivery	Group Manager – Customer Services Manager – Customer Services	Medium	Ongoing

## Goal 2 - Effectively communicate with our customers and the community

---

Demonstrating to our customers that we are listening to them and value their feedback, combined with the ability to convey clear messages with professionalism and empathy will enhance our customers' experience.

Customers of Waitomo District Council will be treated fairly and considerately when accessing any of our services whether in person, by phone, in writing, by email or by internet enquiry.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
Establish and maintain principles of customer service that put the interests of the customer first	Ensure effective monitoring systems are in place to measure responsiveness to customer communications and service standards identified in the WDC Customer Service Charter	Chief Executive Group Manager – Customer Services	High	Ongoing
	Provide regular customers with key contact/organisational structure information	Group Managers	Medium	Ongoing
	Review feedback gathered from customer forums on a six monthly basis	Chief Executive Group Managers	Medium	Ongoing
	Development and implement staff feedback forum and review feedback gathered on six monthly basis	Group Manager – Customer Services	Medium	Ongoing

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
	Review After Hours Service delivery and customer satisfaction levels	Group Manager - Customer Services Manager – Customer Services	High	Complete by 1 September 2014
	Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities to respond to correspondence, email and telephone enquiries	Chief Executive Group Manager – Customer Services	High	Completed by 1 July 2014
	Review/implement business continuity plans in key customer areas with an emphasis on promptly restoring services to customers when required	Group Manager – Customer Services Group Managers	Medium	Completed by 1 December 2014

### Goal 3 - Empower all staff to serve our customers

The majority of customers expect an answer at their first point of contact. In most instances the customer does not care who they deal with or what department they work in. Customers want their questions answered, promptly and accurately.

Encouraging common sense judgement calls by staff whilst being aware of our legislative requirements will promote greater resolution of issues for customers at first point of contact.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
Foster, recognise and acknowledge a staff ethos that supports a high standard in customer service delivery	Deploy WDC Customer Service Charter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Senior Managers and Senior Leadership Group</li> <li>➤ All staff</li> <li>➤ Contractors</li> <li>➤ WDC Reception Areas and Meeting Rooms</li> <li>➤ WDC Intranet</li> <li>➤ WDC Website</li> </ul>	Group Manager – Customer Services  Manager Customer Services	High	Completed by 30 June 2014
	Deploy WDC Customer Service Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Senior Managers and Senior Leadership Group</li> <li>➤ All staff</li> <li>➤ WDC Intranet</li> <li>➤ WDC Website</li> </ul>	Group Manager – Customer Services  Manager Customer Services	High	Completed by 30 June 2014

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
	Customer Services Team act as customer service leaders for WDC	Group Manager – Customer Services Customer Services Team	High	Ongoing
	Group Managers and Senior Leadership Group act as customer service advocates for their respective groups/ teams	Chief Executive Group Managers	High	Ongoing
	Frontline staff receive conflict resolution training	Group Manager – Customer Services Manager Customer Services Customer Services Team	Low	Completed by 1 July 2015
	All staff take part in customer service workshops/ training programs	Group Managers All Staff	Low	Ongoing
	In-house Excellence in Customer Service Award developed and implemented	Chief Executive Group Manager – Customer Services	Medium	Completed by 1 December 2014

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
	Ensure customer service competency forms part of evaluations process for contract tendering and selection	Chief Executive Group Managers	Low	2014/2015
	Ensure there is a commitment to customer service in all WDC maintenance/service contracts and that it is evident in the way Service Requests are managed on WDC's behalf	Chief Executive Group Managers	Low	2014/2015

## Goal 4 - Value customer satisfaction and simplify the customer experience

---

Customer satisfaction refers to the extent to which customers are satisfied with a particular product or service.

The provision of efficient and effective systems and tools, along with a welcoming, professional and informative customer environment will support the goal of valuing customer satisfaction and simplifying the customer experience.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
Review and simplify systems and processes to drive customer engagement and satisfaction	Review layout of WDC Reception areas (WDC Office, Library, iSITE) including signage to ensure they provide a professional and welcoming customer environment	Chief Executive Group Manager – Customer Services Group Manager – Community Services	Low	2014/2015
	Review all frontline systems for availability, user friendliness, timeliness and accuracy	Group Manager – Customer Services Manager – Customer Services Customer Services Team	High	Ongoing
	Review all WDC forms to ensure they are available, informative and user friendly	Group Managers	High	Ongoing

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
	Develop policy and procedures to support first point of contact service delivery (i.e. staff rosters, DDI technology, etc)	Group Manager – Customer Services	Medium	Completed by 1 December 2014
	Develop systems and procedures to ensure frontline staff receive regular 'exchanges of information' with relevant parts of the organisation	Group Manager – Customer Services Group Managers	High	Ongoing

## Goal 5 - Embrace technology to benefit our customers

---

Technology forms a major part of our day to day communications and the Internet has become one of the most important methods of information transfer.

Awareness and understanding of how emerging technologies can assist us to anticipate customer needs and tailor business processes to best serve the customer will ultimately improve organisational efficiencies and customer connectivity.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
Provide technology solutions that streamline business processes, simplify customer interaction and provide accurate real-time information sources	Implement NCS Customer Database to act as a central portal to a range of WDC data sets	Group Manager – Customer Services Leader – Information Services	High	Implemented by 1 December 2014
	Review NCS Service Request System with a view to introducing enhancements to improve customer interaction, response times and customer feedback	Group Manager – Customer Services Manager – Customer Services	High	Completed by 1 September 2014
	Develop systems to ensure staff are provided with timely and credible information, i.e. Knowledge-base	Customer Services Group Corporate Services Group	Medium	Ongoing

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
	Review mobile applications to provide real time data exchange between WDC field staff/contractors and WDC customer interface systems	Group Manager – Customer Services Leader – Information Services	Low	2014/2015
	Review functionality of Zeacom Phone System to ensure all applications that enhance customer interaction are utilised	Manager – Customer Services	High	Completed by 1 September 2014
	Ongoing review of WDC website to provide online communications and transaction processing – i.e. 24/7 customer access	Customer Services Group All Groups	Medium	Ongoing
	Ongoing review of WDC Intranet to provide timely and current information to staff	All Groups	Medium	Ongoing

## Goal 6 - Investigate the provision of joint services facility

---

Council has expressed an interest in the investigation of the provision of multiple services from a single location to take advantage of economies of scale and a better service to the public. The project allows for full investigation into options so that informed decision making can be undertaken leading into the 2015 review of the Long Term Plan.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Measure
Provide ease of access to a range of WDC services from a central location	Establish Project Team	Chief Executive	High	Completed by 30 June 2014
	Investigate options for future delivery of services from defined central location	Project Team	High	Completed by 31 October 2014
	Report findings of investigation to Council	Project Team	High	Report to Council 25 November 2014