



DRAFT  
CITY OF KINGSTON  
CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
CHARTER  
REFRESH

WIDER ENGAGEMENT

**Survey and Targeted Discussions Report**  
September 2017

### Limitations of use

This report has been prepared by MosaicLab on behalf of and for the exclusive use of the Kingston City Council.

The sole purpose of this report is to provide a summary of community feedback provided via a survey and three targeted workshops conducted over August and September 2017.

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*MosaicLab is a Victorian-based consultancy that specialises in community & stakeholder engagement, facilitation, negotiation, strategic planning and coaching.*



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The City of Kingston (Council) is refreshing its Customer Service Charter via a high-influence, collaborative engagement process that will involve both staff and community members. The last formal review of the Council's customer service charter was in 2010, and the Council is now ready to work with its community and employees to co-design a new, refreshed charter that will guide the organisation's customer service performance into the future.

The process to develop the new charter includes both wide and deep engagement phases. This report provides a summary of the findings of the wider engagement phase, which was conducted over August and September 2017.

The wider engagement phase offered every City of Kingston ratepayer and employee the opportunity to have their say via a survey or by making a submission (both options were available online and in hard copy). 138 people from across the municipality completed the survey. 5 formal submissions were also received.

This phase sought to include diverse perspectives and include people from all walks of life, an aim which was supported by conducting three targeted, face-to-face discussions with representatives of groups that are less likely to fill out a survey or make a submission. The 25 participants that took part in these discussions were representative of the following types of groups within the community:

- Young people
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- People with a disability

MosaicLab was engaged by the City of Kingston to design and facilitate the wider engagement process, including the targeted discussions, and independently collate and review all comments, input and data received by participants. In summary, the high level findings of the survey were:

- Across many of the responses given to a range of questions, it was clear that customers want Council to respond and address concerns/issues in a timely manner with respect and understanding. Response times, in particular, were identified as a key element of customer service for Council to focus on.
- The respondents preferred to contact Council via convenient methods that offer them the most immediate answer or response (i.e. via phone) or that allow you to record and track an enquiry (i.e. via email).
- Overall, respondents are satisfied with Council's recent performance with the majority of respondents (57%) indicating that their customer service experience was 'Good' or 'Very Good' across all the different measures. The highest rated measure was 'How easy it was to get in touch with Council' (68% of respondents rated their experience as 'Good' or 'Very Good'), closely followed by 'Manner of the Council employee' (64% rated their experience as 'Good or 'Very Good' against this measure).
- The measure of Council's performance that received the lowest rating was 'Time taken to resolve the issue', which had 48% of respondents rate their experience against it as 'Good' or 'Very Good', and received the most ratings of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' (35%) when compared against other measures.
- Respondents indicated that the number one thing Council could to improve customer service was to improve follow up (i.e. communication about the progress of an issue or enquiry) and follow through (e.g. action as promised). 15% of comments made in this section of the survey indicated that this was an area for improvement. This was followed by response times, which were mentioned in 9% of the comments made.
- The commitments in the current charter are generally well supported, although some respondents would like to see certain commitments changed or improved. The current commitment that had the most comments indicating it should be changed was 'Taking the time to understand your needs' – 19 respondents (37%) felt this commitment needed to be changed or improved.
- The current commitments that had the most responses indicating they should be removed were 'Responding with care and courtesy' and 'Valuing your opinion' however, only 5 (10%) respondents thought these

commitments should be removed.

- The top theme in response to the question 'is there any commitments missing in the current charter?' was that there needed to be a commitment to consistent, transparent communication (16% of comments made were categorised under this theme) followed by a commitment to trained, knowledgeable staff (16% of comments made were categorised under this theme) and a commitment to prompt response times (14% of comments made).
- When it comes to prioritising Council's resources, respondents again indicated that response times were the most important area to focus on, followed by skills and knowledge of both the customer service team and all employees across the Council.

In summary, the high level findings of the targeted discussions were:

- Participants were most likely to define 'poor' customer service as disrespectful or rude staff, long wait or response times, communication issues caused by language barriers and/or staff lacking in skills or knowledge.
- Participants were most likely to define 'good' customer service as polite, respectful and knowledgeable staff that provide prompt service and action and go beyond expectations.
- When reflecting on what was good about their recent customer service interactions with Council, 57% of participants said that staff were welcoming, polite and professional, which was the top type of response to this question.
- When reflecting on what could be improved about their recent customer service interactions with Council, 31% of participants said they had no improvements to suggest, which was the top type of response to this question.
- Participants provided ideas that would help Council to better its customer service performance in future and reach for 'great' customer service. The most common type of ideas was that staff were knowledgeable, helpful and well trained. 25% of ideas shared were categorised under this theme.

A noticeable difference between the survey results and the results of the targeted sessions was that participants in the latter were more likely to talk about the need for customer service staff to be non-discriminatory, non-judgmental, open and flexible. There was also discussion around language barriers and the need for staff to use appropriate language and tone that was suitable to the customer.

This report will be considered and used during the deep engagement phase, which will commence in October 2017. This next phase will incorporate a deliberative process, which will involve convening two representative, deliberative panels (a community panel and an employee panel), who will consider the views of the wider community captured in this report and co-design a new charter that speaks to and reflects the needs of those affected by it and those charged with its implementation.

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# 1.0 BACKGROUND

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Kingston City Council (Council) is performing at a similar level in terms of Customer Service satisfaction when compared with other Metro Councils; in the 2016 Community Satisfaction Survey (a survey coordinated by the State Government into the Local Government sector) Kingston received an overall score of 74 for Customer Service. The Metro average was 73 and the State average was 69.

Council has made significant gains over recent years in achieving its key customer service performance indicators and over the last few years digital improvements to enhance customer service have also been introduced. Whilst improvements made over the last few years are good, there is more Council would like to do to improve its customer service performance.

The last formal review of Council's customer service charter was in 2010 and included internal and external research that lead to the identification of 52 recommendations designed to improve the organisation's commitment to Customer Service. The Council is now ready to build on this work and develop a new Customer Service Charter.

## 1.2 WIDER ENGAGEMENT PHASE

Council recognises the need to involve those who are going to be affected by the new Customer Service Charter an opportunity to be part of designing and developing it. To ensure everyone who lives and works in the City of Kingston was given this opportunity, a wider engagement process was conducted over August and September 2017. This phase sought to include a range of perspectives through engagement with people from all walks of life.

Everyone was invited to complete a survey, or provide a submission during this period. In addition, to ensure a diverse range of views are heard and included in the process, targeted discussions were held with groups that are usually less likely to participate in a survey or submission process. The three targeted sessions conducted were held with youth, people with a disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

This wider engagement report, which summarises the findings of this wider engagement process, will now be considered by the Community Panel - which forms part of the deep engagement phases of the charter co-design process.

## 1.3 DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT PHASES

The 'deep' engagement phases, which will commence in October 2017, incorporates a deliberative process and deliberative principles. This phase aims to involve and collaborate with a representative sample of staff and the wider community by convening two deliberative panels (community and staff) to co-design a new charter that speaks to and reflects the needs of those affected by it and those charged with its implementation.

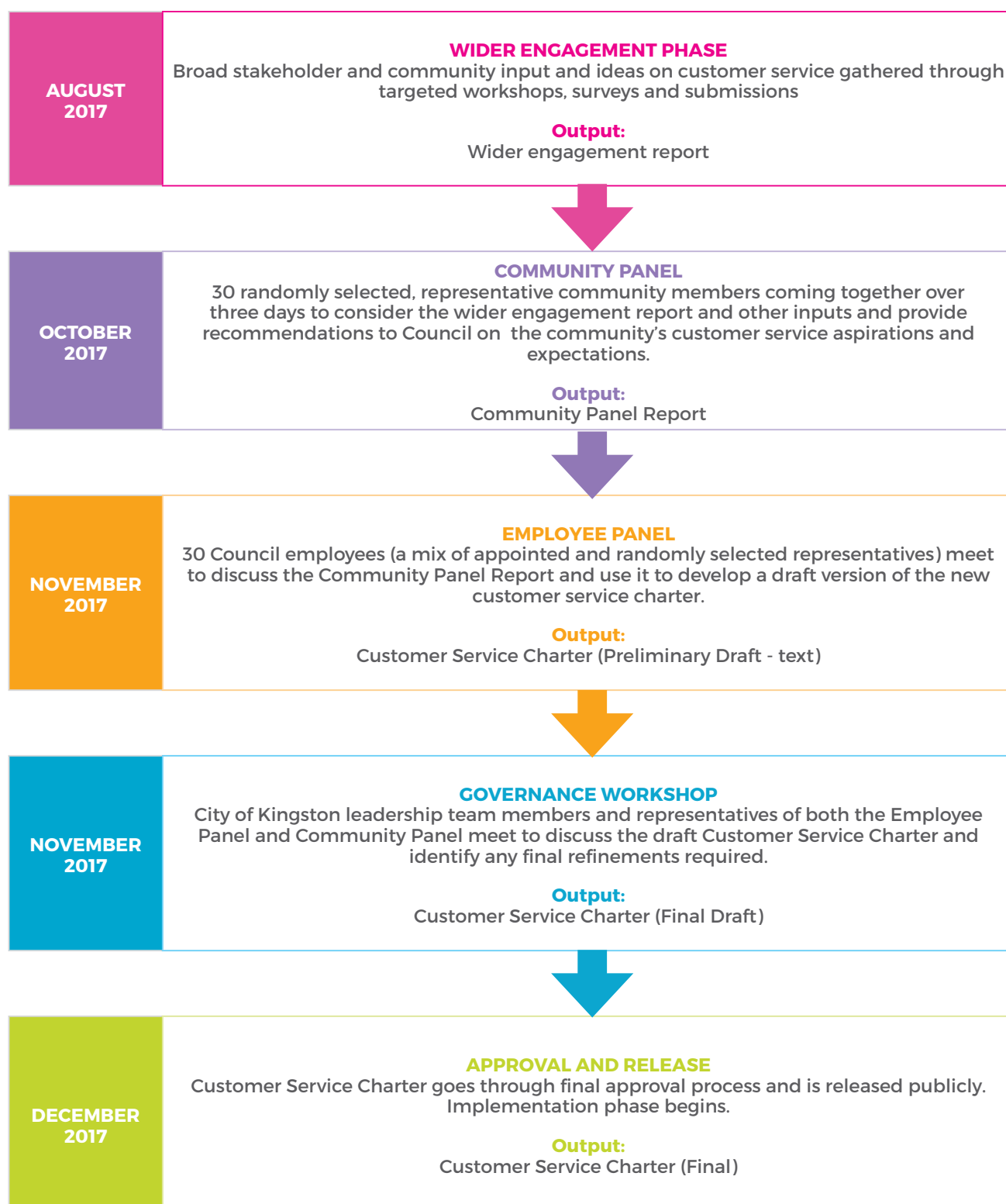
The next step in the co-design process will see 30 randomly selected community members come together to form a Community Panel. The community panellists will dive deeper into the issues and matters that affect customers and customer service most.

Recruitment of the community panel is being undertaken independently - Council has no influence over the selection process, and the panel will be representative of the demographics of the wider Kingston community. The community panel will meet over three days to consider and weigh up a wide range of input and views (including the results of the wider engagement process), and make recommendations in response to the following remit:

**'Council wants to deliver great customer service. In developing a new customer service charter, we need to find a balance between meeting diverse community expectations and budget constraints. How do we do this?'**

An Employee Panel made up of both appointed and randomly selected staff members from across Council's various service areas will then use the community panel's recommendations to develop a final version of the Customer Service Charter. Randomly selected panelists on the employee panel will be independently selected, and will be broadly representative of the City of Kingston's diverse staff team.

The roadmap below provides an overview of the different phases of the engagement process, and an insight into where the wider engagement phase (which is the subject of this report) fits into the overall development of a new customer service charter.



## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

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MosaicLab was engaged by the Kingston City Council to conduct, analyse and review all comments and data provided by participants who completed the survey or attended the targeted discussions. It is important to note that the data are unweighted, and that the responses that follow are only indicative of the attitudes of those who chose to participate.

### 2.1 SURVEY

The survey, titled 'Help us to deliver great customer service', was available online from Monday 7 August 2017 - Thursday 14 September 2017. The survey was also offered as a paper version and distributed at several Kingston City Council's key customer service desks.

A total of 138 people participated in the survey which contained 14 questions. The survey was available online and in hard copy during August and September 2017.

Where qualitative data has been collected, comments have been analysed categorised into themes which have been outlined in the document below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

### 2.2 TARGETED DISCUSSION WORKSHOPS

Targeted discussion workshops each took place over a 1-2 hour period. Participant ideas and input was initially captured on butchers paper and templates within the targeted workshops, and then transcribed and categorised into key themes which have been outlined in the document below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

### 2.3 SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER FEEDBACK

Open submissions were also invited - both in hard copy and online. 5 submissions were received via this process. In addition, comments were made informally on the Council's Facebook page. The submissions received and comments posted on Facebook have been provided in the Appendix.



## 3.0 PROMOTION

The Council promoted the opportunity for people living and working in the municipality to have a say via the following channels and activities.

TYPE OF CHANNEL	ACTIVITY	DATE PUBLISHED	REACH
PRINT	Full page ad with survey - Moorabbin Kingston Leader	24/08/2017	50,000
PRINT	Full page ad with survey - Mordialloc Chelsea Leader	24/08/2017	26,000
PRINT	Quarter page ad - Moorabbin Kingston Leader	16/08/2017	50,000
PRINT	Quarter page ad - Mordialloc Chelsea Leader	16/08/2017	26,000
DIGITAL	Facebook advertisement: 'Last chance to have your say'	6/09/2017	18,035
DIGITAL	Facebook advertisement: 'Survey promotion'	11/08/2017	19,222
DIGITAL	Facebook advertisement: 'Community panel invite reminder'	31/08/2017	2,594
OTHER	Digital screens in customer service, libraries, hubs	Distributed from 8/8/17	n/a
OTHER	Email invitations/alerts to community group contacts and other databases	14/08/2017 - 17/08/2017	182
OTHER	Email invitations/alerts to Council employees	Distributed from 8/8/17	n/a
DIGITAL	Lead article in Kingston City Council Advertorial (also features in Moorabbin Kingston Leader)	13/09/2017	n/a

## 4.0 SURVEY RESULTS

### 4.1 ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

A total of 138 people participated in the survey. 91 (66%) participants completed the survey using the online platform 'Engagement HQ' while 47 (34%) submissions were completed via hard copy versions of the survey.

#### 4.1.1 CONNECTION TO THE CITY OF KINGSTON

There were 138 responses to this question. The question asked participants to select all categories that applied to them (multiple answers were allowed). Of those who completed the survey, the majority were owner occupiers (109 people or 46%) and/or ratepayers (77 people or 33%). See Figure 1 below.

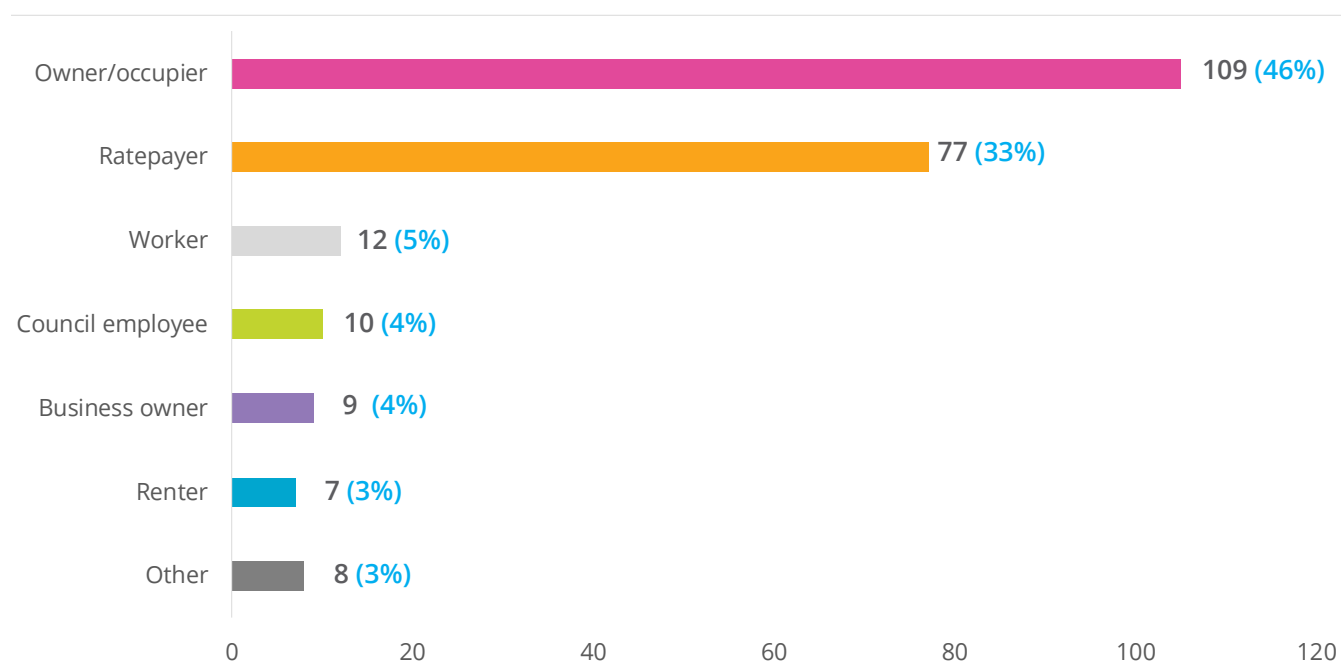


FIGURE 1. Respondents' connection to the City of Kingston.

Five (8) people selected 'other'. Their responses included:

- "Treasurer of local sports club"
- "Community volunteer Clean up group in Parkdale"
- "(I have a) child at Council kinder (Edithvale Hub)"
- "Local business owner"
- "Visitor"

## 4.1.2 AGE RANGE OF RESPONDENTS

135 respondents completed this question. The age range of these participants is provided in *Figure 2* below.

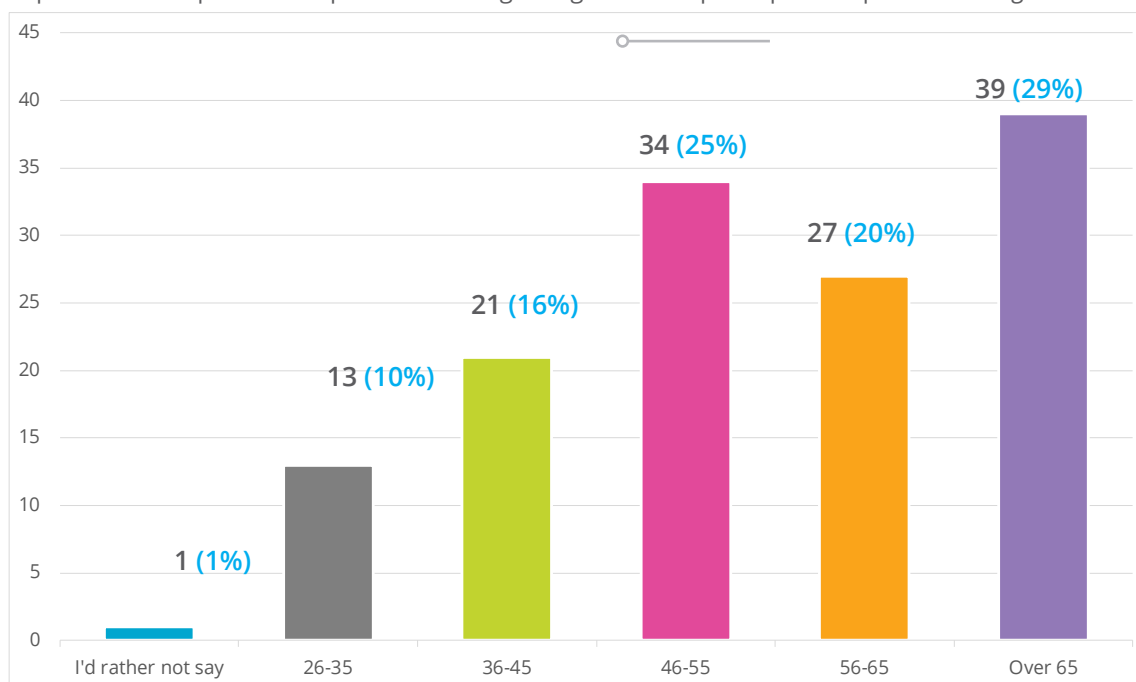


FIGURE 2. Age range of respondents.

## 4.1.3 GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF RESPONDENTS

131 respondents completed this question. *Figure 3* below shows where the majority of respondents selected as their primary place of residence (the suburb they live in). This graph does not include the suburbs that were nominated as a primary place of resident by one (1) respondent.

Suburbs that had one nomination were: Brighton East VIC, Cheltenham North VIC, Clarinda VIC, Elsternwick VIC, Frankston South VIC, Glenroy VIC, Hampton East VIC, Heatherton VIC, Highett VIC, Mentone East VIC, Narre Warren VIC and Oakleigh South VIC.

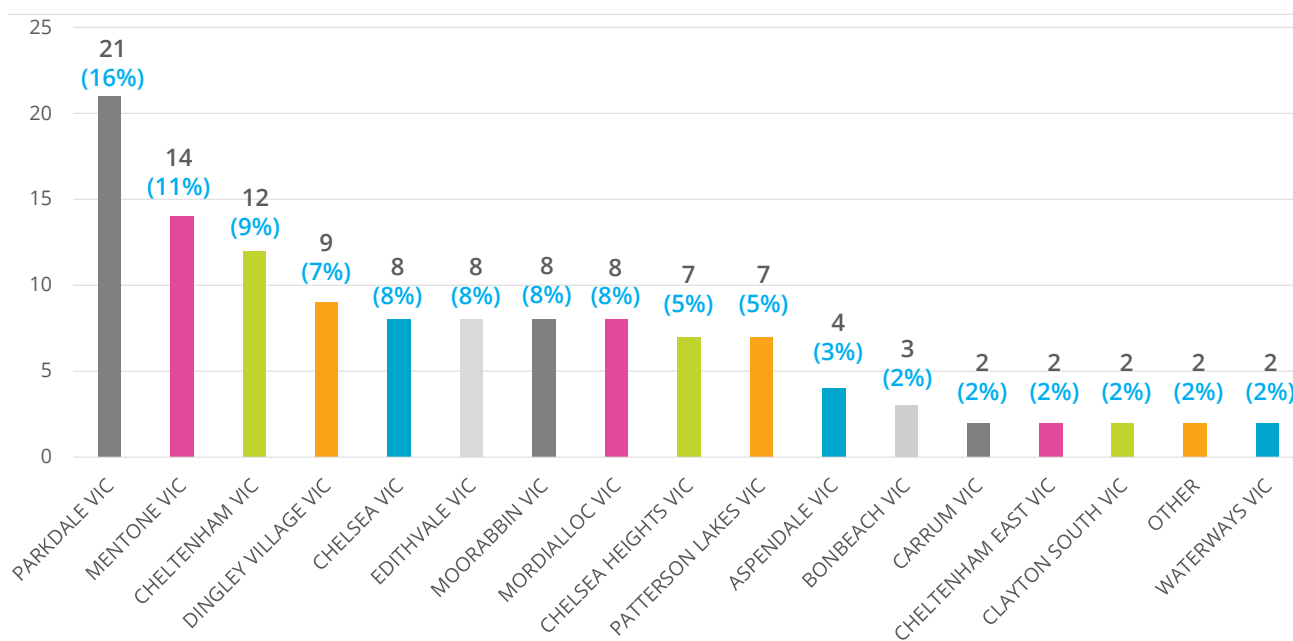


FIGURE 3. Primary place of residence of respondents

## 4.2 RECENT CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Respondents were asked to think of their most recent contact with Council, and answer the questions that followed.

### 4.2.1 MOST RECENT CONTACT WITH COUNCIL

A total of 138 people completed this question. Most participants had been in contact with Council within the last year (91%), with the majority having contacted Council within the last week or month (84%). Only 13 people had been in contact with Council more than a year ago (7%) or not at all (4%). See Figure 4 below.

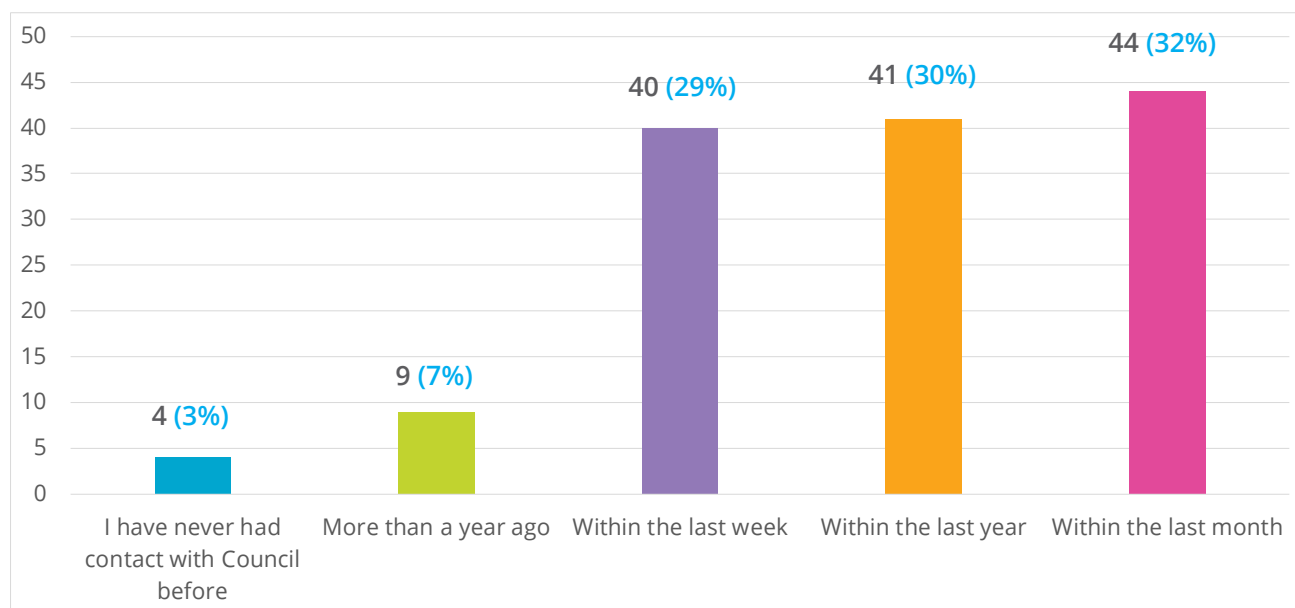


FIGURE 4. Most recent contact with Council (length of time)

### 4.2.2 CONTACT METHOD

132 respondents completed this question. Participants were asked to indicate what method they used to contact Council the last time they made contact. The Council phone line (main Council number) was the most popular response, with 36 (28%) respondents indicating that this was how they got in touch, followed by email (20% indicated that they used the [info@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@kingston.vic.gov.au) address), and in person at a customer service desk which was selected by 14 (11%) of participants. For full results, see Figure 5 below.

Five (5) people selected 'other'. Responses included:

- "Attended council meeting."
- "I am an employee so my customer service experience is mostly with internal staff - email, phone, customer service desk."
- "In person at Waves"
- "In person - visited a customer service in Cheltenham/Chelseea and email - [info@kingston.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@kingston.vic.gov.au)."

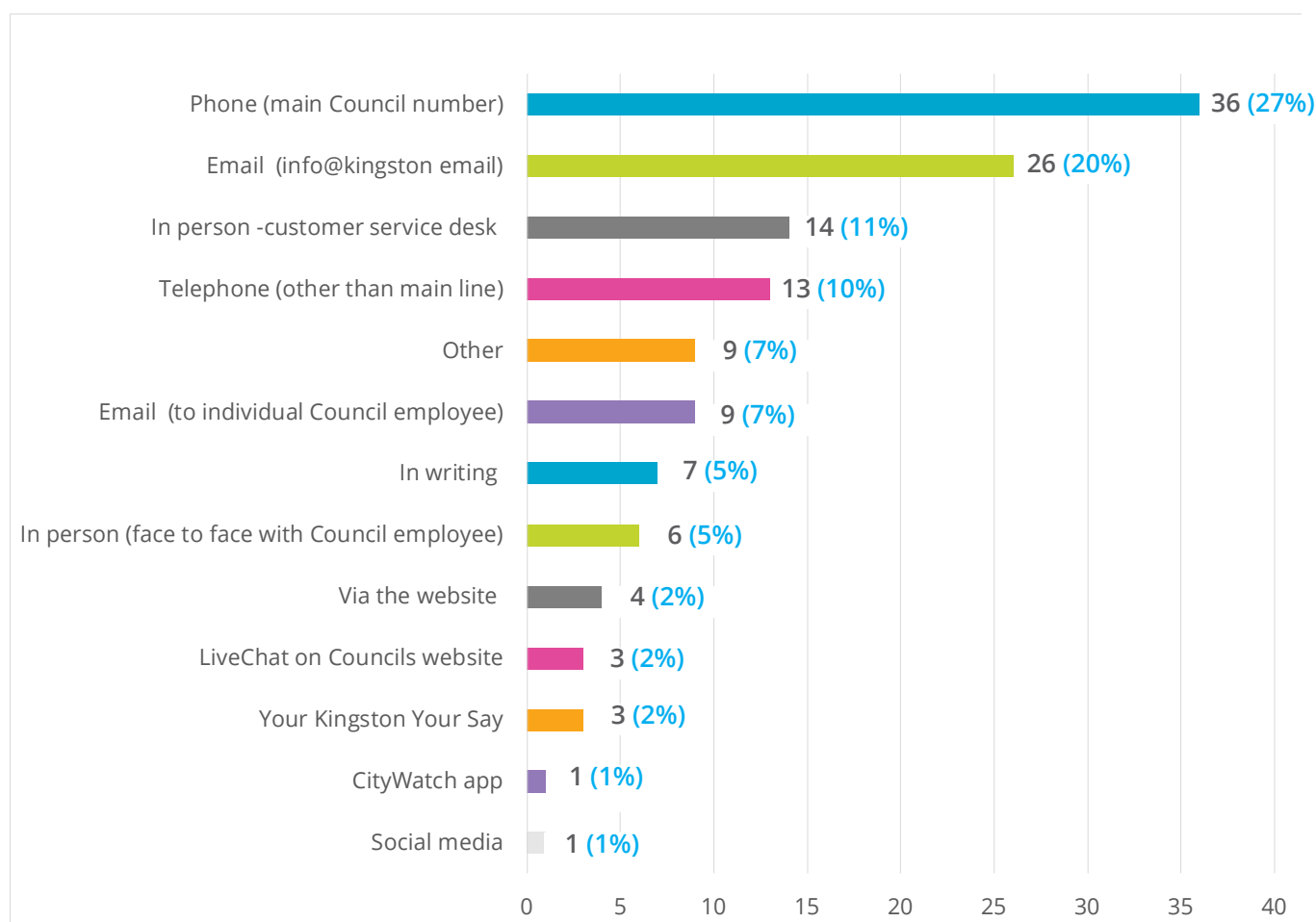


FIGURE 5. Most recent contact with Council (contact method)

### 4.2.3 RATIONALE BEHIND CONTACT METHOD

A total of 129 people completed this question, which asked respondents to describe why they chose a certain contact method over other options on offer. The following table outlines the overall key themes arising from the responses given to this question. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>The easiest option available</b>	This was the quickest, easiest, most convenient option available	30 (22%)	<i>"It was the easiest method for me."</i> <i>"It was the most convenient to where I work."</i>

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Needed to enquire about Council project or service</b>	It was the best way to find out more information about a Council service or project.	22 (16%)	<i>"I requested to be sent the garbage collection calendar as you longer send them out with rate notice."</i> <i>"Query regarding pet registration"</i>
<b>Wanted to speak to a person face-to-face</b>	These respondents indicated that they needed to speak to a specific individual (including councillors) or wanted face-to-face contact with someone.	15 (11%)	<i>"I wanted to ask a question face-to-face."</i> <i>"To meet councillors face-to-face"</i>
<b>Gain immediate response</b>	These respondents said they were seeking an immediate response to their queries and wanted the opportunity to ask follow up questions.	15 (11%)	<i>"I would get a response and some action taken. It is too easy to delete emails"</i> <i>"Immediate attention"</i>
<b>Have written records</b>	Chose a method that allowed the respondent to keep a paper trail of communication between them and Council. This includes official statement, objections and proposals.	14 (10%)	<i>"At least with email, there is a paper trail record."</i> <i>"I wanted a reply in writing"</i>
<b>Responding to Council enquiry</b>	Council contacted participants in regards to a matter and participants were responding to Council as instructed (or via the same channel they were contacted).	7 (5%)	<i>"Believe [written statement] was required"</i> <i>"Response to letter received advising rejection of Infringement Review Request"</i>
<b>Only method available to participant</b>	These comments indicated that the respondents' choice of channel was because it was the only contact method available to them.	7 (5%)	<i>"I don't have a computer"</i> <i>"Not sure who else to contact - only have land-line phone."</i>
<b>Have a contact at Council</b>	Have established contact at the Council and so the respondent contacted them directly.	6 (4%)	<i>"Regular client"</i> <i>"Have been liaising regularly with the Council employee for contracted work-related purposes either by phone, email or in person"</i>
<b>Outside business hours</b>	Best way to contact Council outside business hours.	4 (3%)	<i>"Because contact was made outside business hours"</i>
<b>Staff not helpful</b>	Chose as an alternative to a phone call, as they feel staff are not helpful over the phone.	2 (1%)	<i>"Staff not very helpful on the phone"</i>

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
Other	These comments could not be attributed to the key themes identified above.	3 (2%)	<p><i>"Do not narrow Beach Road "</i></p> <p><i>"I like to give staff time to research and think about my comments/questions."</i></p> <p><i>"Website directed me to."</i></p>

#### 4.2.4 PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATING WITH COUNCIL IN FUTURE

138 people completed this question, which asked them to select what their preferred method of contact with Council would be into the future. Respondents were asked to select all options that applied to them (multiple responses were allowed).

The most popular response was phone or email (67% of respondents selected one of these options). *Figure 6* below provides a full breakdown of responses received.

Three (3) people selected 'other'. Their responses were:

- *"Hand written letter"*
- *"Mail"*
- *"Very seldom need to phone."*

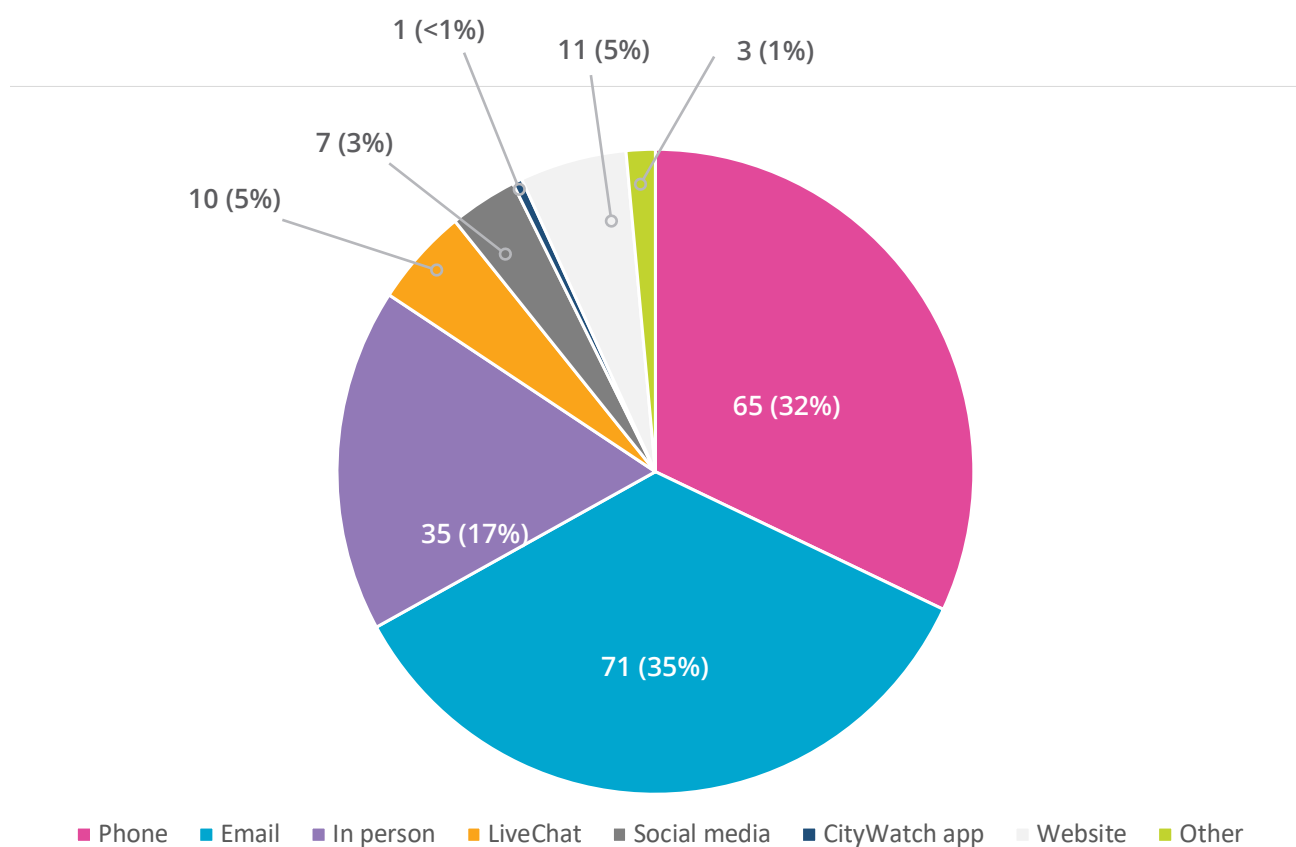


FIGURE 6. Preferred methods of contact (future)

## 4.2.5 RATIONALE BEHIND PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD IN FUTURE

A total of 130 people completed this question, which asked respondents to describe why they chose a certain contact method over other options on offer. The following table outlines the overall key themes arising from the responses given to this question. The number of comments provided is a rough guide. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Most convenient</b>	Easiest option for participant - quick, easy and convenient. Respondents made this type of comment quoted phone, email, website or LiveChat as their preferred methods of contact.	39 (28%)	<i>"It is convenient and easy."</i> <i>"It's quick and easy. The system works well for me."</i>
<b>Gain immediate response</b>	Able to gain an immediate response to queries and the opportunity to ask follow up questions when using immediate channels like the phone or in person. Emails and the website were also mentioned as good channels for a quick response.	27 (20%)	<i>"If I have a question/concern it can be answered on the spot most of the time."</i>
<b>Track responses</b>	Able to keep records of answers and track responses when there's an email trail or written trail.	18 (13%)	<i>"It ensures a trail and response"</i> <i>"Have record of what and when."</i>
<b>Personal interaction</b>	Like the personal interaction with face to face or phone conversations.	17 (12%)	<i>"A person can understand my concern; more personalised."</i> <i>"I like to develop a rapport with the individual."</i>
<b>Flexibility and ease of access</b>	24/7 online options like email or website channels fit in with an individual's schedules and work hours.	15 (11%)	<i>"Can do it any time via website"</i> <i>"As a business owner myself, sometimes it is easier to send and respond to emails when I have other work commitments during the business day."</i>
<b>Limited or no access to other methods</b>	Participants who don't own or know how to use a computer or the internet chose phone, written communication or face to face options.	13 (9%)	<i>"No internet or email"</i> <i>"Have no other way do not own any technology."</i>
<b>Better answers</b>	Respondents indicated that they felt some channels (namely email or phone) gave them the opportunity to access better answers to their questions.	4 (3%)	<i>"To get better and correct feedback and information "</i>



Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Depends on enquiry</b>	Different methods are more useful for different enquiries.	4 (3%)	<i>"Depends on reason for contact. If an action or information required, an email sufficient and convenient."</i>
<b>Cheapest option</b>	Cheapest option available to participants.	2 (1%)	<i>"Because I did not want the expense of the other methods."</i>

## 4.2.6 CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE RATING

A total of 138 people completed this question. Respondents were asked to think about their most recent contact with Council, and rate the customer service experience they had. Overall, there were high levels of satisfaction, with, on average, the majority of respondents (57%) indicating that their customer service experience was 'Good' or 'Very Good' across all the different measures. Figure 7 below provides the overall results (taken from across results recorded against all measures).

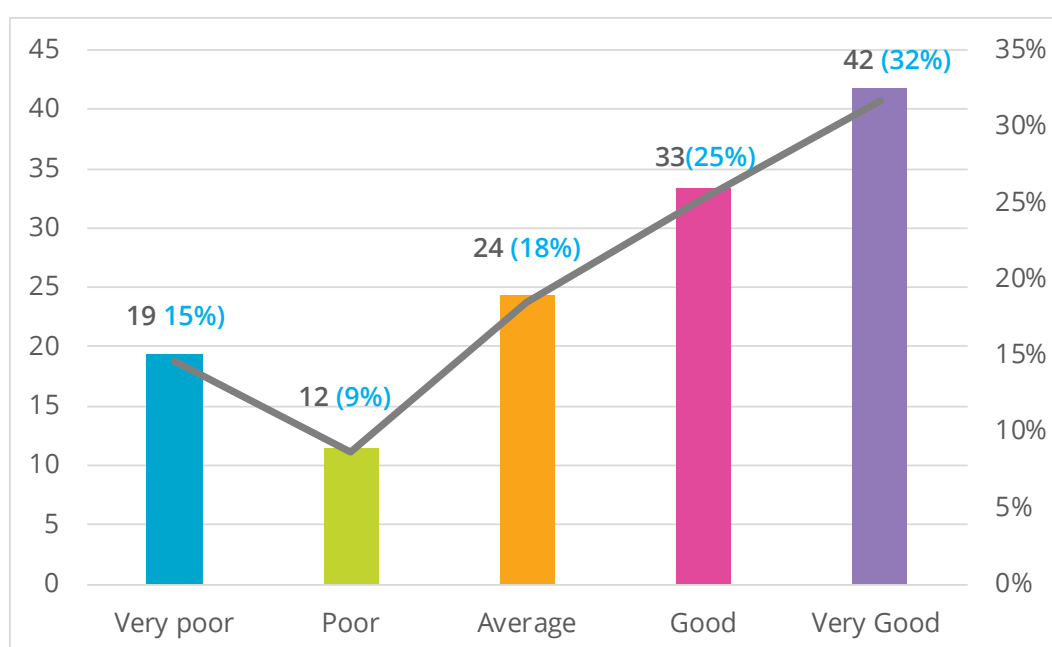


FIGURE 7. Overall satisfaction with customer service experience

The measure that received the highest rating was 'How easy it was to get in touch with Council' - 68% of respondents rated their experience as 'Good' or 'Very Good' against this measure. This was closely followed by 'Manner of the Council employee' (64% rated their experience as 'Good or' 'Very Good' against this measure).

The measure that received the lowest rating - 'Time taken to resolve the issue' - had 48% of respondents rate their experience against it as 'Good' or 'Very Good', and received the most ratings of 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' (35%).

The table below provides detailed results against each measure of customer service performance. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Measure	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
How easy it was to get in touch with Council	10 (8%)	6 (5%)	26 (20%)	40 (30%)	50 (38%)
Response time (following initial contact)	19 (14%)	12 (9%)	31 (23%)	31 (23%)	38 (29%)
Manner of Council employee	12 (9%)	9 (7%)	25 (19%)	32 (24%)	52 (39%)
How helpful the Council employee was	19 (14%)	13 (10%)	19 (14%)	32 (24%)	45 (34%)
How clear the Council employee was regarding the progress of the enquiry	28 (21%)	11 (8%)	25 (19%)	33 (25%)	35 (27%)
Time taken to resolve the issue	28 (21%)	18 (14%)	20 (15%)	32 (24%)	31 (23%)

Low score: 15% or less of selections

Medium score: 16 - 30% of selections

High score: 31% or more of selections

## 4.2.7 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE

A total of 101 people provided a response to this question. The following table outlines the overall key themes arising from comments provided. The number of comments provided is a rough guide. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Improved follow up or follow through</b>	Keep customers up to date with progress of their enquiry, or follow through on what is promised. 5 of the comments in this category specifically referred to Council following up their promises with actions.	<b>20 (15%)</b>	<p>"The officer closing the job should be obliged to contact by email first, saying the council understands the matter to be resolved and describe the resolution. This should include contact details should the matter not have been resolved."</p> <p>"Respond/take action promptly. Keep me informed of progress."</p>
<b>No improvements</b>	Currently happy with how Council is conducting customer service.	<b>15 (11%)</b>	<p>"All good thanks"</p> <p>"No, I have always found everyone I have contacted at Kingston Council very helpful and courteous, even though I have not always agreed with them. (Not like Telstra!)"</p>

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Improve initial response times</b>	Request for faster response times to enquiries, phone calls and reception wait times.	<b>13 (9%)</b>	<i>"More staff to answer more calls quicker."</i> <i>"A response with 24 hours of the initial complaint/enquiry should be mandatory."</i>
<b>Understand the request</b>	Staff to take the time to really understand and listen to customers questions.	<b>9 (7%)</b>	<i>"There needs to be a preparedness to sit down and listen to each other, appraise the real parameters."</i>
<b>Consider individual circumstances</b>	Understand the diversity of needs and how to respond to those flexibly, rather than a 'one policy fits all' approach.	<b>8 (6%)</b>	<i>"Consider individual circumstances rather than a blanket 'that is the policy' with no discussion."</i>
<b>Improve staff skills and knowledge</b>	Improve and hire staff that have in-depth knowledge in their field.	<b>7 (5%)</b>	<i>"Employ people in the chosen field they are representing who actually have knowledge in that select field"</i>
<b>More transparent communication</b>	Deliver clear, transparent communications about the services, processes and other enquiries.	<b>6 (4%)</b>	<i>"Clearer instructions on what information is necessary for council requirements"</i> <i>"Council needs to advertise all works occurring in the municipality from street works to major builds and provide regular updates."</i>
<b>Improve services offered</b>	Assess areas where extra services could be added for an easier customer experience.	<b>6 (4%)</b>	<i>"Monitor customer flows during the day, taking note of peak days/times, and having staff at the front counter to meet those demands."</i>
<b>Provide customer service training to staff</b>	Up-skill staff with customer service training.	<b>5 (4%)</b>	<i>"Train staff to provide a higher level of friendly service. Commit to hire the right people whom enjoy serving customers"</i>
<b>Extended opening hours</b>	Extend opening hours across Council premises to allow more access to Council services.	<b>5 (4%)</b>	<i>"Please keep the office open. Closing it at 2pm is not acceptable customer service."</i>
<b>Easy contact methods</b>	User friendly website to allow easier access to contact details for relevant departments.	<b>4 (3%)</b>	<i>"Make it easier to know who to contact for what issues. Website more intuitive and user friendly."</i>
<b>Improved internal sharing of information</b>	Improved internal communication and systems regarding customer enquiries and databases and sharing information.	<b>5 (4%)</b>	<i>"The left hand clearly doesn't speak to right hand."</i> <i>"Some areas of the council use the current address database and other sections have been using a database which is over 10 years old."</i>
<b>Other</b>	These comments could not be attributed to the key themes above.	<b>9 (7%)</b>	<i>" Allow the amazing sessional Kinder program at Edithvale hub to continue unchanged!"</i> <i>"More opportunities to engage with council electronically or digitally."</i>

## 4.3 REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRENT CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

### 4.3.1 COMMITMENTS TO BE CHANGED OR REMOVED

A total of 52 people completed this question, which asked respondents to consider the Council's current Customer Service Charter and the six commitments it contains. Respondents were able to select the top 3 current commitments that they would like to see changed/improved or removed.

The low response rate (when compared to previous question response rates) indicated that many respondents didn't want to change or remove any commitments.

There were very few respondents that wanted a commitment removed completely, with the commitments most likely to have a request for removal - 'Responding with care and courtesy' and 'Valuing your opinion' - being selected by only 5 participants for each.

However, some respondents did indicate that they believed certain commitments needed to be changed or improved. The commitment that received the most 'change' responses against it was also 'Taking the time to understand your needs' - 19 respondents (27%) felt this commitment needed to be changed or improved.

Figure 8 below provides a full breakdown of all responses against each current commitment in the charter.

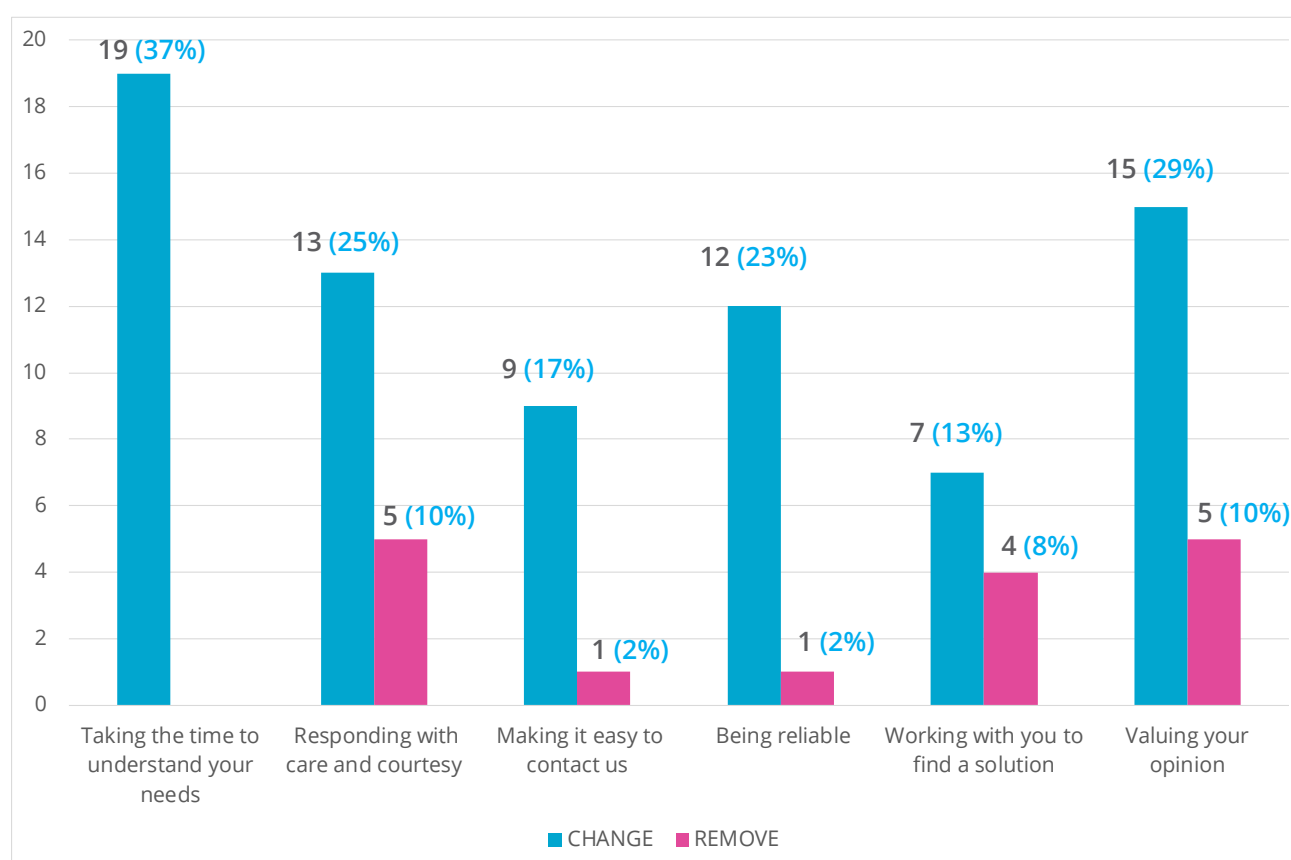


FIGURE 8. Which commitments respondents' would like changed or removed.

Respondents were asked to provide comments detailing why they wanted a commitment changed or removed. Each respondent could provide three comments (one against each choice they made to change or remove a commitment). 76 comments were made in total. The following table details these comments.

Comments were not made by all respondents to this question, even if they opted to 'change' or 'remove' a current commitment. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Commitment	Suggestion + no. of comments	Comments made regarding why respondents wanted a commitment changed or removed
Responding with care and courtesy	<b>CHANGE</b> (8 comments)	<p>"That should be a given!"</p> <p>"If you call them will be nice that someone call you back because they always told me that busy or they not in today"</p> <p>"Should be along the lines of guarantee a response with correct information"</p> <p>"Responding with care, courtesy and honesty"</p> <p>"I don't have any specific issues with any of these. Don't like responses in council meetings, i.e. only three min and no right of reply to questions"</p> <p>"Need to learn how to be polite to people's inquiries"</p> <p>"Very little courtesy is given from anywhere in the organisation of Kingston Council from customer service representatives right up to the top. In particular officers"</p> <p>"Not resolved"</p>
Responding with care and courtesy	<b>REMOVE</b> (2 comments)	<p>"These charter items are like soothsayers - they are put down to appease without any hard edge commitment. We see no evidence of results when it counts"</p> <p>"All very fine but doesn't necessarily achieve anything."</p>
Working with you to find a solution	<b>CHANGE</b> (10 comments)	<p>"In my opinion, the current customer charter seems reasonable to me. If at any time, I feel the service is of an unsatisfactory standard, I would be advising of same in writing. I am reasonably happy with the customer service to date."</p> <p>"This never happens - they just give you whatever information they think is right or correct and if you try work through it with them, they just brush you off or get impatient with you"</p> <p>"Don't knock back ideas without discussing matters properly."</p> <p>"Self-evident!"</p> <p>"In terms of animal management and parking signs, it doesn't work. We pay over \$3k in annual rates and are treated with disdain. Street parking when neighbours on each site have up to 4 cars each on the street and none on their drive."</p> <p>"Maintaining communication through the process, focus on outcomes not just process."</p> <p>"Refusal to act."</p> <p>"Most important to me these issues, but are you really adhering to them."</p> <p>"Listen to their ratepayers"</p> <p>"To resolve the issues I have."</p>
Working with you to find a solution	<b>REMOVE</b> (2 comments)	<p>"I find this is not happening now. Council staff always fine excuses not to take action."</p> <p>"As before it is not happening at this time."</p>

Commitment	Suggestion (Change or Remove)	Comments made regarding why respondents wanted a commitment changed or removed
Being reliable	<b>CHANGE</b> (3 comments)	<p>"In my experience, the commitment to take real action is very vague. Sometimes action is much slower than promised. Sometimes there is no action at all without repeated follow-up. Need to set an agreed action time-frame with closure follow-up."</p> <p>"Being reliable and accountable.... they need to be answerable and accountable for the answers and information they give us and be more responsible. Not act and behave in a high-handed manner which comes from not being held responsible."</p> <p>"Find transparent visible measures of reliability, rated by the customer, and feeding into employee's performance appraisals."</p>
Valuing your opinion	<b>CHANGE</b> (7 comments)	<p>"Kingston Council have never demonstrated valuing any of its resident's opinions."</p> <p>"Because you don't listen."</p> <p>"We live in the area so if you have a request all effort should be made to make it happen."</p> <p>"Needs to change so you actually feel valued. Rather than feeling like you are dealing with a large corporate company. There is no community feel anymore."</p> <p>"It is a spurious and valueless goal as external factors and policies override ratepayer opinion."</p> <p>"Not interested in factual advice"</p> <p>"How is this measurable? Our opinions are ignored by your processes. What is the escalation path?"</p>
Valuing your opinion	<b>REMOVE</b> (2 comments)	<p>"It is a matter of understanding my opinion not necessarily valuing it"</p> <p>"Most Councillors seem to think their opinion is the not to be argued against."</p> <p>"It is not taken into consideration."</p>
Making it easier to contact us	<b>CHANGE</b> (4 comments)	<p>"I would like to see the customer service app expanded to more types of reporting of issues. E.G. Street lighting and able to attach photos; map references (E.g. Drop a pin in Google maps) or documents to illustrate the issue. The staff should be available by phone. The elderly does not always have access to a computer, nor are they able to come in to the council premises."</p> <p>"Improvements in Home and Community Care (HACC) please, especially aged, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, dementia."</p> <p>"There are no booklets on available service no way of getting any other than technology which isolates people."</p> <p>"My late husband did all the paperwork and I really hate it. I have a daughter that can help when needed, not often."</p>
Making it easier to contact us	<b>REMOVE</b> (1 comment)	<p>"I think you are quite easy to contact and therefore this statement is unnecessary."</p>

Commitment	Suggestion (Change or Remove)	Comments made regarding why respondents wanted a commitment changed or removed
Taking the time to understand needs	<b>CHANGE</b> (9 comments)	<p><i>"It's a phony and flimsy goal."</i></p> <p><i>"Council officer took months to respond and then failed to consider points made."</i></p> <p><i>"They need to ring you regarding your issue. Need to ring you quick."</i></p> <p><i>"For a better and quicker resolution of problems."</i></p> <p><i>"Self-explanatory"</i></p> <p><i>"Have more public meetings with council to discuss issues concerning residents / visitors on a face to face level. Q&amp;A sessions perhaps."</i></p> <p><i>"Consideration is lacking at Kingston Council. If it is an issue that they do not understand or care about it is made very clear with being dismissed, postponed or just flat out ignored"</i></p> <p><i>"Once over 60 we are made to feel irrelevant"</i></p> <p><i>"Listen to their ratepayers"</i></p>

6 respondents also made comments that indicated they thought all the current commitments in the charter were important and that none of them needed to be changed. Examples of these type of comments include:

- "Why would you have any of these commitments changed or removed?"*
- "I don't have any specific issues with any of these."*
- "All seem necessary."*

### 4.3.2 VALUES OR COMMITMENTS MISSING FROM THE CHARTER

There were 63 suggestions made in response to this question, which asked participants to indicate if they thought any commitments were missing from the current customer service charter. Respondents could provide up to three suggestions. Some respondents provided multiple suggestions, others provided one.

Key themes arising from these suggestions are provided in the table below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Consistent and transparent communication</b>	Provide consistent and transparent communication to customers about policies, status of enquiry and other operations.	<b>10 (16%)</b>	<p><i>"Getting informed of the status of claim/ issue process"</i></p> <p><i>"Transparency of service and operations."</i></p>
<b>Trained, knowledgeable, skilled staff</b>	Provide adequate customer service training for all staff to ensure they are aware of how to respond to a customer (tone, promises, manner) in a respectful way and have an in-depth knowledge of their area.	<b>10 (16%)</b>	<p><i>"Ensuring knowledgeable staff"</i></p> <p><i>"Tone of voice...when dealing with stakeholders, all staff need to be trained in proper and courteous tone of voice... most of the staff come off as aggressive and in a hurry to get it over with."</i></p>



Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Prompt responses to customers</b>	Responding to customer enquiries in a prompt manner (between 2 – 7 days) and follow up if required.	<b>9 (14%)</b>	<i>"Responding to messages to contact resident"</i> <i>"Contact customers within two days."</i>
<b>Valuing all members of community</b>	Understand and listen to all members of the community including CALD, homeless and elderly.	<b>5 (9%)</b>	<i>"Value the involvement of homeless/disadvantaged"</i> <i>"Valuing our senior population"</i>
<b>Improved accountability</b>	Hold Council staff to account for their actions, information they provide and ability to respond on time.	<b>4 (6%)</b>	<i>"Values are fine, implementation is key!"</i> <i>"I think they should have a public forum on what makes up the latest rate hike and why we are asked to pay well over CPI each year. They never seem to be accountable in any public forum."</i>
<b>Up to date content</b>	Keep websites, phones and digital content up to date.	<b>3 (5%)</b>	<i>"Change the hold message regularly - different themes or upcoming events."</i>
<b>Lack of faith in customer service standards in general</b>	Comments that indicated that past customer service performance had led them to have a lack of confidence in future performance.	<b>3 (5%)</b>	<i>"Why bother - you won't change"</i>
<b>Nothing else to add</b>	Happy with the current charter - comments that indicated there were no commitments missing.	<b>2 (4%)</b>	<i>"Happy with it all"</i>
<b>Improve systems and internal communication</b>	Improve internal systems, processes and communication to ensure the customer service function is more efficient and effective and that there is continual improvement.	<b>2 (4%)</b>	<i>"Use customer feedback, complaints and compliments, to improve customer focus and process improvements. For serious complaints and major errors, set up a simple incident review to allow process improvement."</i> <i>"Working across Council departments to find a solution, single contact point for the customer, not multiple with often different views or agendas and time-frames."</i>
<b>Other</b>	These comment could not be attributed to any of the key themes identified above, or did not relate to customer service.	<b>6 (9%)</b>	<i>"Apply common sense"</i> <i>"Be pro-active to improve certain residential streets where obvious improvement is required."</i>



## 4.4 PRIORITISING OPTIONS AND BALANCING COSTS

### 4.4.1 PRIORITISING RESOURCES

138 respondents completed this question, which asked people to rank 12 customer service activities or areas and indicate where Council should focus the most resources and effort. The following table provides the results, displaying which customer service areas or activities respondents' would like to see Council prioritise over others.

Final ranking (most important to least important)	Customer service activity or area	On average, this activity was ranked as number:
1	Response times (e.g. time taken to respond to a phone call letter or email)	3.3
2	Skills and knowledge of our customer service team	4
3	Customer service skills for all of employees	4.9
4	Complaints processes	5.6
5	Information availability and access general	6
6	Existing face to face customer service options i.e. our front desk information kiosks	6.3
7	Existing digital and online customer service options and technology (i.e. LiveChat CityWatch app)	7
8	New face to face customer service options	7.1
9	Customer service access for people with a disability	7.5
10	New digital and online customer service options and technology	7.7
11	After hours services	7.8
12	Customer service access for culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities	8

## 4.5 GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE

### 4.5.1 WHAT GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE LOOKS LIKE

Respondents were invited to describe, in one sentence, what good customer service looked like for them. 104 people responded to this question. Key themes arising from these responses are provided in the table below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Polite, courteous and respectful</b>	Staff are polite, courteous and respectful of all community members and their concerns.	<b>23 (22%)</b>	<i>"Always treat me with respect and acknowledge that my issues are important to me."</i> <i>"Articulate, polite and responsive."</i>
<b>Prompt responses</b>	All enquiries are responded to quickly and followed up within set time-lines.	<b>20 (19%)</b>	<i>"A quick response to the issue and approx. time to deal with it."</i>
<b>Respond and act on promises</b>	Deliver and follow up promised actions in a timely manner.	<b>16 (15%)</b>	<i>"Responding to the needs of the community and acting effectively."</i>
<b>Listen and understand</b>	Staff listen to customers concerns and work to understand the real issues and needs of the individual.	<b>15 (14%)</b>	<i>"Respectful, listen, show and have care about my concerns, polite, integrity."</i> <i>"Understanding what the customer is trying to say and actually helping them rather than reading from a script."</i>
<b>Knowledgeable staff and accurate information</b>	Staff are knowledgeable and able to provide accurate and relevant information to the enquiry, and customers are able to access the right person and the correct information.	<b>13 (13%)</b>	<i>"Making it easy for me to find the information I need, or answer my enquiry, first time."</i> <i>"Have the most up to date information and allow residents to communicate with representative or manager appropriate to customer enquiry."</i> <i>"Courteous, accurate and informative with clear answers given."</i>
<b>Positive tone and manner</b>	Communicating with customers in a friendly manner which includes positive tone, body language and professionalism in general.	<b>11 (11%)</b>	<i>"Professionally done."</i> <i>"Assistance with queries in a friendly, helpful and timely matter."</i>

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Honest, transparent and genuine communication</b>	Provide clear communications to customers in an honest manner.	<b>7 (7%)</b>	<i>"Prompt, friendly, knowledgeable, honest with genuine outcomes"</i> <i>"Be transparent and act on feedback."</i>
<b>Speak to the right person</b>	Being able to speak to the correct person for the enquiry rather than staff who are unable to help.	<b>4 (4%)</b>	<i>"Have the most up to date information and allow residents to communicate with representative or manager appropriate to customer enquiry."</i>
<b>Understand and exceed expectations</b>	Staff that go above and beyond the needs and expectations of customer.	<b>3 (3%)</b>	<i>"Understand customer expectations"</i> <i>"Exceeding customer expectations in all things"</i>
<b>Other</b>	These comments could not be attributed to any of the key themes identified above, or indicated that they had no comment to make.	<b>6 (6%)</b>	<i>"Customer Service for disability and CALD should be [priority number] 1 or 2 but I didn't have the option to choose."</i> <i>"It doesn't occur at Kingston Council. Very ordinary customer service."</i> <i>"Some measures to improve quality control of all Council activities."</i> <i>"None."</i>

## 5.0 TARGETED DISCUSSIONS

### 5.1 ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

25 people participated in targeted discussions, which ran for 1-2 hours (depending on the group's request). These discussions were held with representatives of people in the community who are less likely to participate in a survey or make a submission, and were designed to help bring diverse perspectives into the engagement process. The table below lists the groups that participated.

Group represented	Session organised through	Date	No. of participants
<b>Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities</b>	Kingston City Council Multicultural group	7 September 2017	<b>7</b>
<b>Young people (16-24)</b>	Kingston City Council Youth Services	14 September 2017	<b>14</b>
<b>People with a disability</b>	Central Bayside Community Health Services	18 September 2017	<b>4</b>

### 5.2 RESULTS

#### 5.2.1 'TOP OF MIND' INSIGHTS

Participants at the CALD and young people workshops were asked to share their 'top of mind' thoughts on customer service at the start of their session. The below comments were shared:

- *Expectations are important in customer service - and knowledge of the topic*
- *Prompt follow up is key*
- *Manners/impatience is important*
- *There's sometimes issues with lack of understanding /language*
- *Patience is important*
- *Friendliness is important*
- *Respect is important*
- *Open mindedness is important*
- *Customer service staff and forms etc. should consider more gender options - e.g.. Survey gender, option to write gender instead of tick a box*
- *All aspects of Council including customer service should be more gender inclusive generally - language used etc.*

## 5.2.2 DEFINITION OF 'POOR' CUSTOMER SERVICE

Participants at all three sessions discussed and provided thoughts on what they thought 'good' customer service and 'poor' customer service looked like when it occurred.

35 individual ideas on what poor customer service could be defined as were provided by participants across the sessions. Key themes arising from these ideas are provided in the table below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Disrespectful or rude service staff (bad manners)</b>	Rudeness, bad manners or unfriendliness - any scenario where the customer feels uncomfortable, disrespected, or unimportant.	<b>12 (34%)</b>	<i>"Disrespectful and rude. Abruptly walking away without an explanation."</i> <i>"Bad phone manners."</i> <i>"Rude/ aggressive."</i> <i>"Being rude / swearing or yelling"</i> <i>"Unkind, disrespectful, inappropriate, rude."</i> <i>"Belittling the customer"</i> <i>"Pushy."</i> <i>Disrespectful."</i>
<b>Long wait or response times</b>	Long waiting times (for an initial response - i.e. queuing), and long waits for the request to be actioned.	<b>5 (14%)</b>	<i>"Impatient to explain, telephone put on hold for a long time."</i> <i>"Long wait and queue."</i> <i>Centrelink - poor service lengthy wait on the telephone</i>
<b>Difficulty understanding each other</b>	Language barriers or staff that speak quickly or use big, unnecessary or complex words.	<b>5 (14%)</b>	<i>"Difficult to understand."</i> <i>"Language barrier (neither can understand)."</i> <i>"Language - using big words that are hard to understand ."</i>

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Lack of skills or knowledge</b>	Customer service experiences where the person you are dealing with can't help you because they lack skills or knowledge and/or they pass you round to other people.	<b>5 (14%)</b>	<i>"Ignorant / incompetent."</i> <i>"Being passed around to different people. Slow response to query. Lack of knowledge or information on query being asked."</i> <i>"Not giving useful information."</i>
<b>Don't listen or make effort to understand</b>	Customers not being truly heard or understood due to lack of effort or poor listening skills.	<b>3 (9%)</b>	<i>"Not listening to the customer or passing on the information."</i> <i>"Not checking any of the facts."</i>
<b>Discrimination or judgment</b>	Any form of discrimination, prejudice or judgment displayed.	<b>3 (9%)</b>	<i>"Prejudice/discrimination."</i> <i>"Judgmental (age, sex, religion, etc.)."</i>
<b>Customer not a priority</b>	When the customer is disregarded, dismissed, ignored, or not made a priority in general.	<b>3 (9%)</b>	<i>"Employees prioritising themselves over customers."</i> <i>"Eating while serving customers."</i> <i>"People talking to each other while you wait."</i>
<b>Inflexible and lacking empathy</b>	Unable or unwilling to see a situation from someone else's point of view and make effort to address it for them.	<b>2 (6%)</b>	<i>"Inflexible and lots of rules."</i>

### 5.2.3 DEFINITION OF 'GOOD' CUSTOMER SERVICE

Participants at all three sessions discussed and provided thoughts on what they thought 'good' customer service and 'poor' customer service looked like when it occurred.

53 individual ideas on what good customer service could be defined as were provided by participants across the sessions. Key themes arising from these ideas are provided in the table below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Polite and respectful staff</b>	Staff that are generally friendly, helpful, positive and respectful, displaying good manners.	<b>12 (23%)</b>	<p><i>"I like greetings and I like good people too."</i></p> <p><i>"Personal and positive."</i></p> <p><i>"Being friendly, kind, patient and welcomed."</i></p> <p><i>"Being understanding and polite."</i></p> <p><i>"Friendly/ respectful / helpful/ listen."</i></p>
<b>Knowledgeable staff</b>	Skilled, trained, knowledgeable staff that are able to help customers with their requests or provide help and information	<b>7 (13%)</b>	<p><i>"Knowledge and knowing the answer."</i></p> <p><i>"Being helpful and supportive. Correct information. Recommendations."</i></p> <p><i>"Knowledgeable and helpful."</i></p>
<b>Prompt service and action</b>	Promptly helping customers and actioning the request, not delaying.	<b>6 (11%)</b>	<p><i>"Attentive and efficient."</i></p> <p><i>"Not hiding behind counter. Helping to find items."</i></p> <p><i>"At Karkarook Park eastern Mon. - asked park ranger to help us with power connection and instantly he gets to it. "</i></p>
<b>Going beyond expectations</b>	Customer service experiences where the staff member makes extra effort to help you out - going beyond your normal expectations.	<b>5 (9%)</b>	<p><i>"Library - the librarians are always cheerful and generous with the help they provide. Sometimes they go beyond their work as librarians."</i></p> <p><i>"Feel welcome and (given) extra care."</i></p>
<b>Flexible</b>	Taking the time to understand customer's individual needs and then making effort to tailor a solution to them if needed.	<b>4 (8%)</b>	<p><i>"The customer assistant was flexible and understanding to my health needs."</i></p> <p><i>"Having an open mind."</i></p>
<b>Good staff (general)</b>	Staff that are well trained and reliable in general.	<b>4 (8%)</b>	<p><i>"Reliable."</i></p> <p><i>"Good library staff."</i></p>
<b>Listening and being empathetic and caring</b>	Staff that are able to listen, understand and show care towards the customer.	<b>3 (6%)</b>	<p><i>"Caring, listening, engaging."</i></p> <p><i>"Caring for customer needs."</i></p>
<b>Nice atmosphere/ surroundings</b>	Customer service locations have a nice, welcoming, comfortable look/feel	<b>2 (4%)</b>	<p><i>"Private, quiet areas - like at the doctor."</i></p> <p><i>"Lovely background (i.e. surroundings)."</i></p>
<b>Other</b>	These comments could not be attributed to one of the above key themes.	<b>2 (4%)</b>	<p><i>"Easy to understand."</i></p> <p><i>"Easy to use app."</i></p>

## 5.2.4 RECENT CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCES - TYPE OF CONTACT

CALD and youth participants discussed memories of their recent interactions (within the 1-3 months) with Council and then filled out templates where they described the type of contact they had with Council. Some participants selected more than one type of contact and filled out more than one template, while others may have filled out only one template each. In total, 34 recent experiences were recalled.

Figure 8 below details the types of contact participants had recently had with Council. The most common type of contact was 'In person (face to face with a Council employee)', followed by 'In person (customer service desk)'. This result differed from the survey results (See Figure 4.).

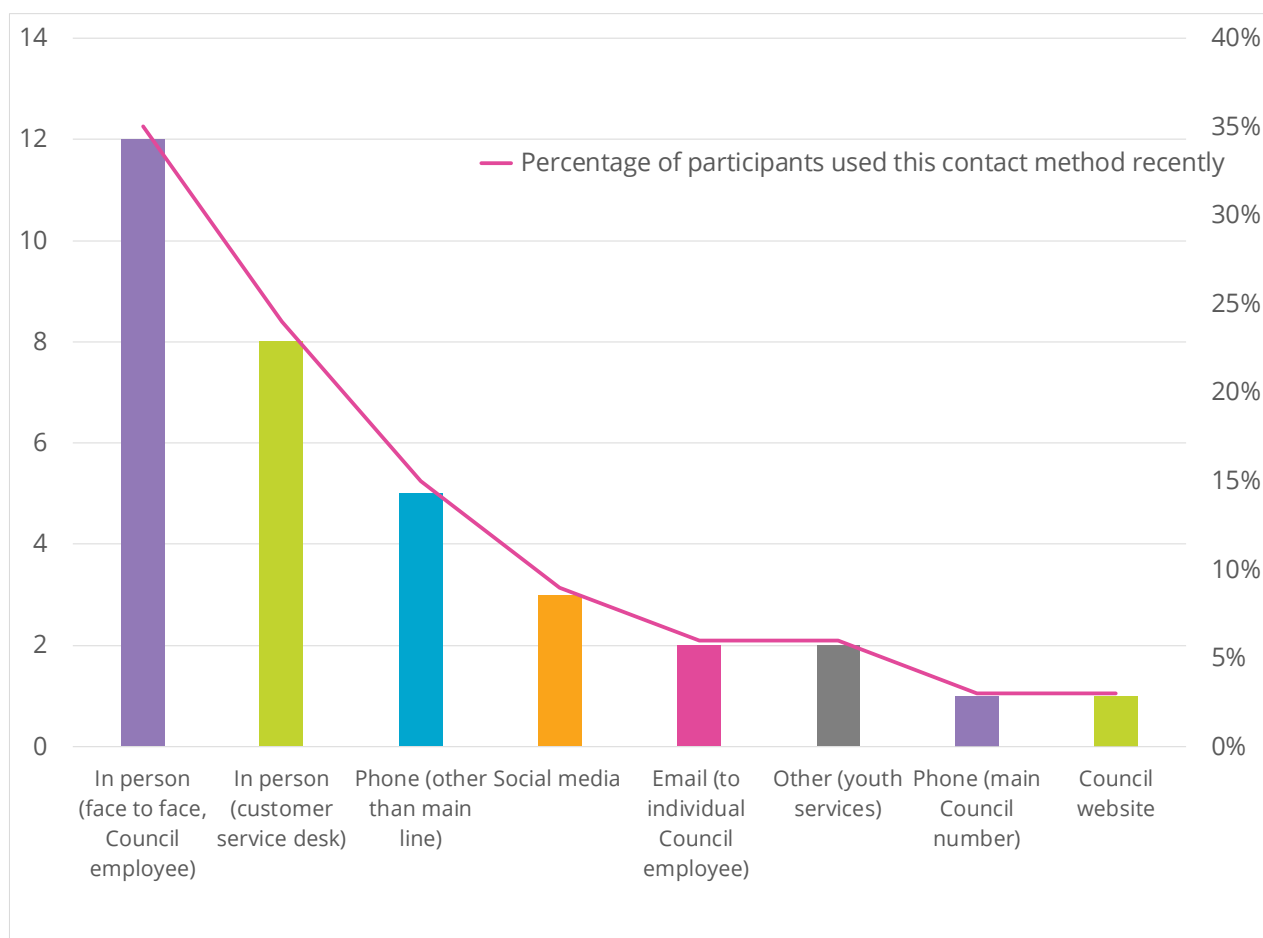


FIGURE 8. Recent methods of contact with Council

## 5.2.5 RECENT CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCES - POSITIVES

CALD and youth participants discussed memories of their recent interactions (within the 1-3 months) with Council and then filled out templates where they described the type of contact they had with Council. In total, 21 comments were made across both groups regarding what was good about these recent customer service experiences.

Key themes arising from these comments are provided in the table below. Percentages have been rounded to the



nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Welcoming, polite, professional staff</b>	A feeling of being welcomed by friendly, polite, professional, approachable staff.	<b>12 (57%)</b>	<p><i>"The workers are friendly and welcoming."</i></p> <p><i>"Attentive, communicated well. Was polite, friendly reception."</i></p> <p><i>"The librarian provided assistance with a personal touch. It didn't feel like a librarian and a customer. It felt more like a friend helping a friend."</i></p> <p><i>"Being able to talk to them."</i></p>
<b>Informative, knowledgeable staff</b>	Interacting with staff that are informative and helpful.	<b>7 (33%)</b>	<p><i>"Staff are always friendly and have given me good information on services that are for me, my brother and other young people aged 12-25 years." "</i></p> <p><i>"Informative, friendly and happy, insightful."</i></p> <p><i>"Direct, got information, relevant."</i></p>
<b>Prompt assistance</b>	Issue or need was responded to quickly.	<b>7 (33%)</b>	<i>"Any question or query is answered promptly"</i>
<b>Offering free food</b>	Three youth participants said that they appreciated the free food offered at the customer service desk	<b>3 (14%)</b>	<i>"I got free food, and nice people to talk to."</i>
<b>Non-discriminatory, inclusive experience</b>	A feeling of being included, safe and welcomed and not judged or discriminated against.	<b>3 (14%)</b>	<p><i>"Non-judgmental/ un-prejudiced."</i></p> <p><i>"Open minded, listened to what i had to say."</i></p> <p><i>"Felt safe (and) inclusive. (They use) youth friendly language (and are) reliable and understanding."</i></p>

## 5.2.6 RECENT CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCES - AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

CALD and youth participants discussed memories of their recent interactions (within the 1-3 months) with Council and then filled out templates where they described the type of contact they had with Council. In total, 16 comments were made across both groups regarding what could be improved about these recent customer service experiences.

Key themes arising from these comments are provided in the table below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>No improvements</b>	These participants felt like their recent experience/s didn't require any improvement	<b>5 (31%)</b>	<i>"Nothing really. He in fact provided a service beyond his capacity."</i> <i>"Kingston Youth Services has really great customer service."</i>
<b>Extended hours (youth services)</b>	Several youth participants wanted to see customer service hours extended for the youth services area.	<b>3 (13%)</b>	<i>"I would like youth services to be open every day, and open longer hours (9am-7pm not 1pm-5pm) because I would like to stay longer during school holidays and weekends."</i>
<b>More/better information</b>	More information offered by customer service staff or clearer information.	<b>3 (13%)</b>	<i>"Had we had the information available at that time, the matter would have been sorted out, right there and then. "</i> <i>"Clear instructions."</i>
<b>Better follow up</b>	Follow up contact to notify the customer of progress or new information.	<b>2 (13%)</b>	<i>"We should have been notified of changes."</i>
<b>Other</b>	These comments could not be attributed to one of the above key themes.	<b>3 (13%)</b>	<i>"Shorter hold period of time"</i> <i>"Less loud construction outside (the youth services customer service area)"</i> <i>"Quiet room, quieter door please (at youth services)."</i>

## 5.2.7 IDEAS FOR GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Participants across all three sessions discussed what would help better Council's customer service performance and get it to 'great' in the future. A total of 24 ideas were shared.

Key themes arising from these comments are provided in the table below. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and some comments were categorised into multiple themes, which may result in totals equal to more or less than 100.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Knowledgeable, helpful, well-trained staff</b>	Staff that are informative and helpful and don't need to pass the customer around to other people because they are knowledgeable and well trained.	<b>6 (25%)</b>	<p><i>"Customer service knowledge and promotion of all services (especially youth)."</i></p> <p><i>"Not switching customer between people."</i></p> <p><i>"Telling us about what's on/ available ."</i></p>
<b>Make Kingston more customer friendly</b>	Ideas ranged from improving website navigation, to easier customer service processes and clearly communicating where customer service points are.	<b>4 (16%)</b>	<p><i>"More knowledge of where customer service points are."</i></p> <p><i>"Website more customer friendly - too many tabs. Get a young person to help design."</i></p>
<b>Prompt response and improved communication</b>	Prompt responses to initial inquiry and fast, timely updates on progress	<b>4 (16%)</b>	<p><i>"More reliable communications - faster update us"</i></p> <p><i>"Answering phone promptly."</i></p>
<b>Better communication and promotion</b>	Promoting customer service points, communicating about what's on and where things are.	<b>3 (12%)</b>	<p><i>"More knowledge of where customer service points are."</i></p> <p><i>"Telling us about what's on/ available."</i></p>
<b>Respectful, understanding staff</b>	Staff that are aware of how to work with other people from different walks of life, age stages and backgrounds and that are respectful.	<b>3 (12%)</b>	<p><i>"Being patient, talking slowly and clearly - understanding some people are older/ CALD (e.g.. repeating things)."</i></p> <p><i>"Avoid being patronising and talking down."</i></p> <p><i>"Not equating misunderstanding with deafness - no need to scream"</i></p>
<b>Appropriate language use</b>	Staff that use language appropriate to the people they are talking with (e.g. youth, CALD, people with a disability)	<b>2 (8%)</b>	<p><i>"Appropriate language e.g.. 'Love', 'darling' can seem disrespectful to some CALD seniors."</i></p> <p><i>"Customer service representatives that are better at engaging with young people (e.g. languages)."</i></p>
<b>Other</b>	These comments could not be attributed to one of the above key themes.	<b>4 (16%)</b>	<p><i>"Easier to reach people in some areas."</i></p> <p><i>"Acknowledgment and appreciation of volunteers."</i></p> <p><i>"More opportunities for youth."</i></p> <p><i>"Promoting opportunity."</i></p>

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

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It was clear from the results of this engagement process that overall, Council's customer service performance is generally considered good or very good by most respondents and participants, but that there is still room for improvements against some measures.

The Council services a wide range of different customers, and these customers have some diverse views and expectations when it comes to customer service. However, across both the survey results and the ideas discussed at the targeted sessions, there are some areas of customer service that were consistently highlighted as key areas for improvement, resourcing and focus. These areas were response times, follow up (i.e. communication to update someone on the nature of their enquiry) and follow through. The need for clear, transparent communication being in a respectful, professional way and delivered by knowledgeable, skilled staff was also a common theme.

The targeted sessions highlighted that some customers have different needs to others, and that these requirements need to be understood and catered for by Council.

This report will be considered by the Community Panel during the deliberative engagement phase, which will commence in October 2017. Panellists will consider the views of the wider community captured in this report and work to co-design, with Council, a new charter that speaks to and reflects the needs of those affected by it and those charged with its implementation.

## 7.0 NEXT STEPS

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The engagement process will now move into the next phase, with the Community Panel meeting in October 2017 to consider a wide range of inputs and information, including this report.

Additionally, representatives from the targeted discussion workshops will be invited to talk to the panel on their first day of deliberations, to ensure that the panel has access to diverse views and ideas.

More information regarding the Community Panel and this process, including next steps, can be found at: [www.yourkingstonyoursay.com.au/customerservice](http://www.yourkingstonyoursay.com.au/customerservice).

## 8.0 APPENDIX

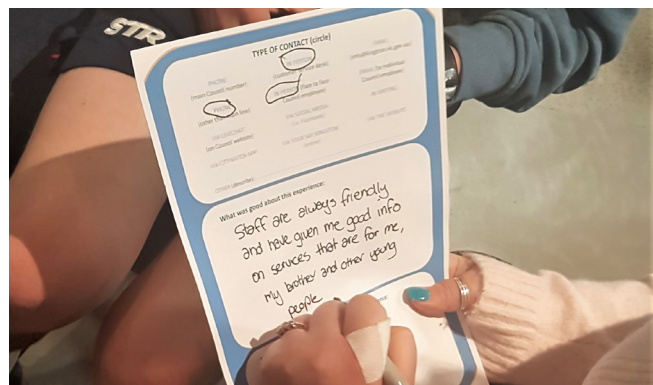
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### 1. TARGETED SESSIONS - MEETING PURPOSE AND AGENDA

OUR PURPOSE	AGENDA
<p>To capture ideas and views on customer service at the City of Kingston</p> <p>To inform you about the customer service refresh project and how to have your say</p> <p>To encourage you to spread the word and tell others about this opportunity</p>	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Background information</p> <p>Top of mind</p> <p>What good and bad customer service looks like</p> <p>Council's current performance</p> <p>What it would take ...</p> <p>Close</p>



## 2. TARGETED SESSIONS - PHOTO GALLERY



### 3. FORMAL SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

Suburb of submitter	Submission	Date submission received
Parkdale VIC	<p><i>"I think that we are wasting time and money having these surveys.</i></p> <p><i>The Council doesn't appear to be receptive to what the ratepayers want, and continue to waste money on consultants after consultants on the same subject.</i></p> <p><i>You need to concentrate on delivering services to a required time frame instead of giving reasons why you are unable to deliver a service. This is in regard to ALL services that council provides inc town planning, building, as well as reception. It also should apply to Councillors to represent that ratepayers on what ratepayers want."</i></p>	24 August 2017
Dingley Village VIC	<p><i>"Hi There, it would great to have consideration for a footpath that connects the Dingley bypass footpath to the existing footpath that commences at Jolimont Pl. I often see people walking (some being my work colleagues) along the side of the road and personally consider it to be unsafe. There is the grassed area on the other side but that area isn't conducive to walking in wet winter months."</i></p>	14 September 2017
Patterson Lakes VIC	<p><i>"I recommend that you sack the current council who are dysfunctional and ineffective due to their political ambitions getting in the way of properly representing the rate payers to do what's best for the municipality and not what's best for their political careers and the Victorian Labour party facilitated by an obvious Labour Party supporter majority vote of 5 that is currently held within the Councillors, including the Mayor and his girlfriend."</i></p>	17 August 2017
Carrum VIC	<p><i>"Actually listen to your paying rate payers.</i></p> <p><i>Listen to the people we vote in as councillors not just do your own thing."</i></p>	17 August 2017
Highett VIC	<p><i>"Payment of Rates should now include residents parking permits for Henry St. Can we make one side of the road residents parking only please. The street is now a parking Mecca for vehicles being parked by commuters catching the train at Highett or for workers in the retail precinct. My visitors are finding it very difficult to park near me, and some are elderly."</i></p>	12 August 2017



## 4. FACEBOOK FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

Informal comments and feedback were provided on the Council's Facebook page in response to posts promoting the survey and submission process. Approximately 45 comments were received. These comments have summarised into key themes and the top 4 themes identified have been listed below.

Theme	Description	No and % of comments	Example of comments provided
<b>Comments about specific projects, issues or services.</b>	These comments didn't mention customer service specifically, but were in reference to specific issues, projects, services or other specific requests.	<b>19</b>	<p>"Stop the high rises!."</p> <p>"You should have more permit parking at Carrum"</p> <p>"No more demolishing trees, free de-sexing for cats, parking is a HUGE issue especially around Westall station people cannot get out of their driveways and also around Clayton shopping centre. Less multi- level apartments especially where traffic is congested as it is."</p> <p>"Why they don't make a sea salt swimming pool at Chelsea beach like Sea bath in St. Kilda !!!"</p>
<b>Comments regarding Council's management of money or how rates are spent.</b>	These comments didn't reference customer serviced specifically, but generally indicated dissatisfaction regarding Council's spending, rate amounts, or how rates were used.	<b>10</b>	<p>"Council rates are ridiculous. How can you justify this ever increasing spiral? What is council supplying residents this year that they didn't last year?"</p> <p>"How about some relief on our rates. You are going to force my family out of the area it grew up in!"</p>
<b>Positive feedback regarding customer service.</b>	Comments within this theme provided positive feedback on Council's customer service performance.	<b>7</b>	<p>"I once also had a parking issue which was dealt with quickly and efficiently with no rancor from either side."</p> <p>"As a new resident I'm pleased with the service you are providing me. "</p>
<b>Mistrust of consultation processes</b>	People who made a comment within this theme indicated that Council would not follow through or listen to the community so they were not interested in having a say.	<b>5</b>	<p>"Another survey that they can ignore."</p> <p>"Why create this survey? Council doesn't seem to listen anyway. Another waste of money..."</p>





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