

City of Greater Geraldton

Customer Service Community Workshop

29 June 2017



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Customer Service Community Workshop

Background

Advancements in technology and changes in the way people do things prompted the City to review how it provides customer service to the community. With more than 3000 people contacting the City every week either in person, by phone or by mail and email the City is keen to improve the customer service experience by offering the thousands of people who interact with the City on a weekly basis with a variety of options to do so.

Engaging with the Community

The City implemented a staged approach to engage with the community regarding customer service provision, which began with a survey, available both online, and in hard copy, followed by a Customer Service Workshop.

The objective of the Survey and Workshop was:

To gather feedback from the community on the way they communicate with the City and their willingness to try new methods of communication.

The results of the community survey and workshop community will be used to inform the development of the Customer Service Plan.

Promotion of the survey and workshop was widely undertaken and included: a media release; numerous Facebook posts and Facebook advertisements on the City Facebook page; a dedicated City website page; emails sent to community and sporting groups; posters displayed at various City facilities; and staff encouraged external organisations they work with to also take the survey.

Customer Service Community Survey

Between 29 May and 19 June 2017, The Customer Service Community Survey was undertaken. During this time, 156 people either took the online survey or filled out and submitted a hard copy. Hard copies of the survey were available at a number of City facilities including the City Civic Centre, Geraldton Regional Library, Aquarena, QEII Centre, Visitor Centre and Mullewa District Office.

The survey was designed to gather feedback from the community on the current methods they use to interact with the City, measure their knowledge of other methods also currently available and measure their willingness to try new methods.

Survey results were presented during the Customer Service Workshop. (See Appendix – page 10 for full survey results)

Customer Service Community Workshop

The two-hour community workshop was held during the evening on Thursday 29 June 2017 in the Committee Room at the City Civic Centre. Eleven people registered for the workshop and seven members of the community attended.

The workshop featured a number of short presentations which, informed discussions around suggestions to improve customer service, the prioritisation of previously identified actions for inclusion in the Customer Service Plan and encouraged feedback on the current Customer Service Charter.

The workshop began with City of Greater Geraldton Manager Corporate Services Jeff Graham welcoming members of the community and providing background information on the City's development of a Customer Service Plan. This was followed by the workshop objective:

To gather feedback from the group to inform development of the Customer Service Strategy.

Presentation 1 – Survey Results

The first presentation of the workshop shared some of the results of the community survey, which included the following summaries. (See APPENDIX – page 10 for full survey results)

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| Most people communicated with the City either by visiting the Civic Centre, using the website or by telephone. |
| Less than 50% knew of available online payments options but more than 70% would be willing to use them. |
| Almost 70% are willing to receive information electronically. |
| Less than 50% know about the Snap Send Solve smart phone App but 63% said they would be willing to use it. |
| Less than 25% knew of web-chat and only 50% said they would be willing to use it. |
| Less than half said they would be willing to use text messaging. |
| Less than 40% said they would be willing to use a self-serve kiosk. |
| Almost 70% said they would be willing to use a personal Council account. |

The presentation of the survey results was followed by a group discussion in which participants were asked to identify other ways customers could communicate with the City, which included the following ideas.

- a) Consider implementing an online account webpage similar to 'My Gov'.
- b) Revisit the online meeting scheduling tool, which was previously trialled at the City where external customers could book appointments directly into staff calendars.
- c) Consider use of automated telephone responses (i.e. press '1' to...).
- d) Consider use of Messenger option on mobile devices to send automatic responses or bots to push information to people.

Presentation 2- Improving the Customer Service Experience

The second presentation focused on the survey results around improving the customer service experience, which included the following suggestions.

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| Online communication and information, interactive website and mobile phone app would be beneficial which incorporates all aspects of dealing with the City including payments, tickets, pool swipe access, checking rates, contact a Councillor, etc...) |
| Implement more online forms so people can access them and submit them without having to come to the Civic Centre or staff having to email/mail them. |
| Put more processes online - pet registrations or applying for a burning permit. |
| An 'ask a question' feature on social media would provide or direct people to the answers. |
| Have regular introductions and Q&A type interactions from each department on social media. Department/team roles should also be listed on the website. |
| Implement a notification system so the customer knows if their call has been received and is being actioned. i.e. Rangers after hours. |
| Consider the option of sending rates notices by email for people who travel. |
| Ability to pay rates fortnightly. |
| Review the need to submit three hard copies for a planning application and consider accepting applications and sending approvals via email. |
| Ensure complex matters are referred higher up and implement an official escalation process such as a tracking number system i.e. 'Sorry I can't answer that today but here is a number that will let you track it's progress higher up and someone more senior will be in touch soon'. |

The presentation of the survey results was followed by a group discussion in which participants were asked to identify other ways the City could improve the customer service experience, which included the following ideas.

- a) Investigate a process around animal related issues regarding the timeliness of responses and sharing information about the response taken with the customer.
- b) Provide customer service training to all staff so they can provide better overall customer service from initial contact to on ground delivery.
- c) Slow down staff turnover at the front counter so customers do not have to explain their issues repeatedly to new staff members.
- d) Do not implement automated telephone responses (i.e. press '1' to...).
- e) Improve website navigation.
- f) Consider implementing one password to access all services on the website, multiple passwords is too confusing.
- g) Develop a City App. The website isn't mobile device friendly and ensure it is regularly updated.
- h) Educate community on City services (i.e. if sponsoring quiz nights - provide questions to the organiser about City services, website, etc... to be included in the quiz).
- i) Empower first point of contact staff with decision making capabilities.
- j) Implement a call back service if there could be a long wait – similar to Westnet.

Presentation 3 –Prioritising Customer Service Plan Actions

The third presentation introduced a series of actions, included within the draft three year Customer Service Plan. The Customer Service Plan is a living document which will be reviewed annually and updated. The actions are designed to improve customer satisfaction, reduce the cost of servicing customers and increase delivery channels whilst offering more choice to access services. Actions from years one, two and three were reviewed and participants were asked to prioritise the actions they wanted the City to focus on first in each year. They were also given the option of moving actions from one year to another.

Prioritisation of Year 1 Actions

Participants were given five coloured dots and asked to place a dot beside the actions (up to a maximum of five) they wanted the City to focus on first. Below is the prioritised list of actions.

| No. of Dots | Actions |
|-------------|---|
| 6 | Start offering pet registration renewals online |
| 5 | Review and update the number of methods available for customers to contact the City |
| 4 | Review external after hours service including on-hold messages |
| 4 | Establish a centralised Customer Service Contact Centre at the Civic Centre |
| 3 | Start taking credit card payments over the phone |
| 3 | Create a business continuity plan that details how the Customer Service Centre will continue to operate in case of an emergency |
| 2 | Review and update Customer Service Charter |
| 2 | Undertake comprehensive customer satisfaction survey and benchmark results |
| 2 | Review options for a customer self service area at the Civic Centre |
| 1 | Utilise knowledge management software for Customer Service to have access to technical expert colleague's information |
| 1 | Review the process for managing Councillor Helpdesk Queries |

Recommendations for additional Year 1 Actions

- Run employee customer service workshops for all staff – customer service is everyone's role.
- Increase the amount of services available online further enabling 24/7 access to services.

Prioritisation of Year 2 Actions

Participants were given five coloured dots and asked to place a dot beside the actions (up to a maximum of five) they wanted the City to focus on first. Below is the prioritised list of actions.

| No. of Dots | Actions |
|-------------|---|
| 7 | Run employee customer service workshops for all staff – customer service is everyone’s role. |
| 6 | Increase the amount of services available online further enabling 24/7 access to services. |
| 5 | Review forms and where possible make these electronic online forms. |
| 4 | Investigate the potential to provide digital literacy sessions for members of the community. |
| 4 | Investigate options for residents to notify the City of a change in circumstances that updates all relevant services at once. |
| 3 | Undertake Customer Journey Mapping workshop to gain understanding of opportunities to increase customer satisfaction. |
| 1 | Investigate possibility of informing Councillors of service problems in their ward and the progress being made to resolve these problems. |
| 1 | Initiate a detailed call quality program for the Contact Centre. |
| 0 | Review and update the complaints process and system used to manage complaints. |
| 0 | Review number of phone numbers available to contact the City with a view to rationalising some of them. |
| 0 | Review Art Gallery opening hours to better meet needs of customers. |

Recommendations for additional Year 2 Actions

- Develop and implement a continuous program of training for all front line customer service staff.

Prioritisation of Year 3 Actions

Participants were given three coloured dots and asked to place a dot beside the actions (up to a maximum of three) they wanted the City to focus on first. Below is the prioritised list of actions.

| No. of Dots | Actions |
|-------------|---|
| 5 | Provide customers with their own secure area on the website to manage services personal to them. |
| 4 | Increase the amount of services available online enabling further 24hr access. |
| 4 | Review the existing customer service phone system to determine if it still meets customer and business needs. |
| 3 | Develop and implement a continuous program of training for all front line customer service staff. |
| 2 | Identify all outgoing post and develop online options where appropriate starting with top 10 items. |
| 0 | Investigate options to promote customer service assistance to other local Councils. |

Reviewing the Customer Service Charter

The last workshop session focused on the current service standards the community can expect when they visit City facilities, phone the City or write to the organisation.

The session reviewed the following standards and made a number of recommendations in each section.

Face to Face - when you visit our offices we will:

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|---|
| Greet you immediately and provide you with professional, polite and attentive service every time. |
| Wear name badges so we can be easily identified. |
| Treat you with respect, courtesy and dignity. |
| Listen to you carefully and fully consider your issues. |
| Endeavour to satisfy your request at the time of your visit. |
| Ensure that when enquiries of a technical or specialised nature are made at the front counter of the Geraldton Civic Centre or the Mullewa District Office, the appropriate officer will be called to assist if available. If the matter cannot be dealt with at the time of your visit, contact will be made with you within 24 hours to arrange an appointment or to discuss the matter over the phone. |

Participant Recommendations:

- a) Replace 'greet you immediately' with 'greet you in a timely manner'.
- b) All staff including Councillors and Executive Management Team members should wear names badges while performing City duties.
- c) Ensure that when enquiries of a technical or specialised nature are made which cannot be answered immediately that a detailed message is taken and responded to as soon as possible or an initial response is provided within two working days.

On the Telephone – when you phone us we will:

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|---|
| Answer the telephone within 3 rings. |
| Introduce ourselves using our first name and our business unit. |
| Provide a direct contact name and number where necessary. |
| Return your telephone enquiry no later than the next working day. |
| Take personal responsibility for and ownership of your enquiry to reduce transferred calls. |
| We will also provide a 24 hour telephone service for after hours or emergency calls. |

Participant Recommendations:

- a) Remove 'Answer the telephone within 3 rings'. What is important is that the phone is answered, and ideally, an appropriate response is provided at that time.
- b) It's important to the customer to be able to speak to a 'real person' and this should be stated in the charter as this is stated in the City's internal operational policies.

In Writing – when you write us we will:

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| Reply to you in clear, concise, plain English that is easily understood. |
| Send out standard information to you within 2 business days. |
| Acknowledge your letter of general correspondence within 5 working days of receipt and provide a full reply to your letter within 10 working days. |
| If your written enquiry (letter or email) requires in-depth research or follow-up that will take longer than 10 working days, we will acknowledge your correspondence and where possible provide an expected completion date. |

Participant Recommendations:

- a) Replace 'plain English' with 'plain language'.
- b) Amend 'Send out standard information to you within 2 business days' with 'we will send appropriate information to you within two working days. This recommendation clarifies the difference between sending information and the time needed to receive it as the Post is now sorted in Perth.

General Recommendations:

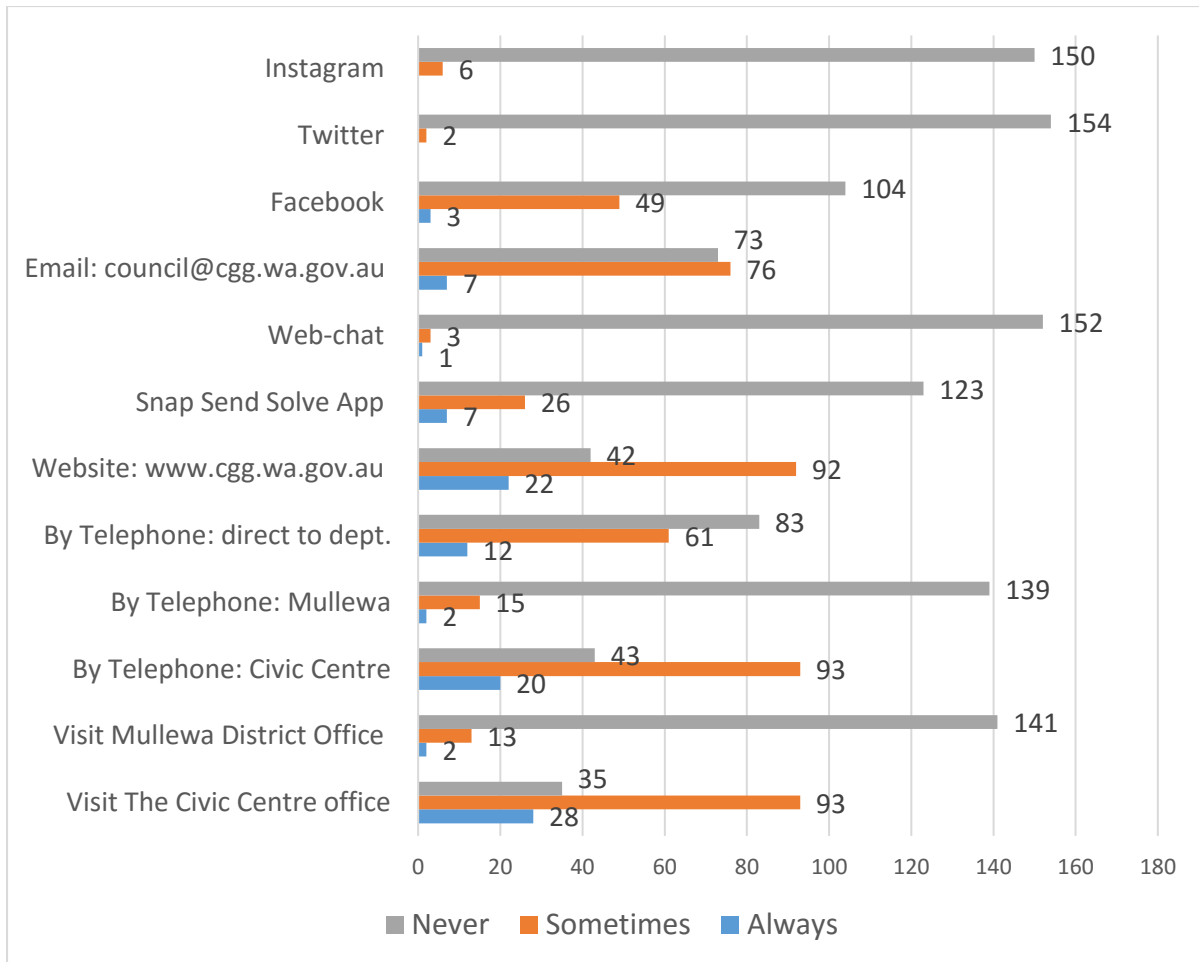
- a) Consider including Snap Send Solve, web chat and email in the Customer Service Charter.
- b) Consider including a section in the Customer Service Charter with the heading 'Response Times' and list a timeframe beside each method of contact.
- c) State in the Customer Service Charter what steps a customer can take if they are unhappy with the timeliness of the response they received (i.e. link to complaints process).

Workshop Conclusion

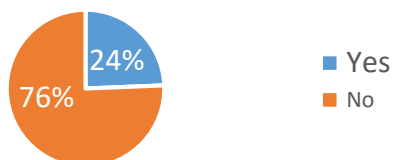
The workshop concluded with the outlining of next steps, which included collating workshop results; compiling and sharing a workshop report with participants; and workshop results being used to inform the new Customer Service Plan.

APPENDIX Survey Results

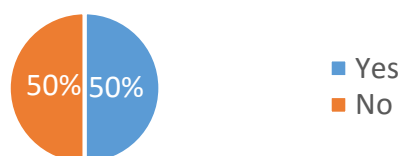
1. When you contact City of Greater Geraldton, which of the following methods do you use?



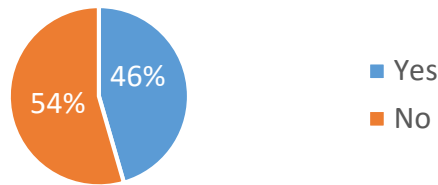
2. Did you know the City has online web-chat (online real-time messaging service) available for customer requests?



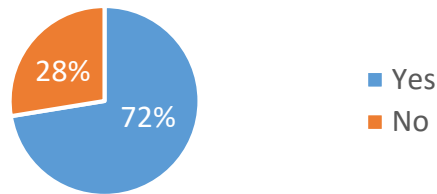
Would you consider using this in the future?



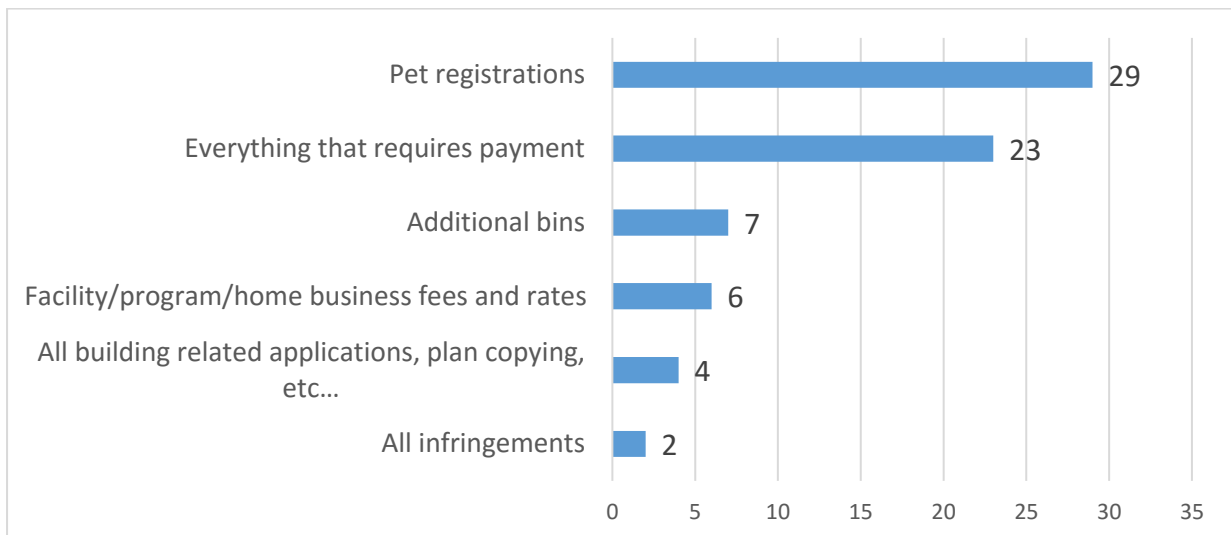
3. Did you know the City takes payments online now for Building Permit Applications, Debtor Payments, Infringements, QPT tickets and Rates?



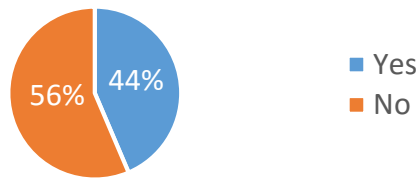
Would you consider using this in the future?



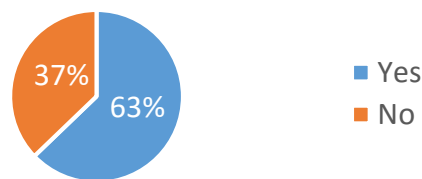
4. Which additional payment services would you most like to have available online? For example online dog and cat registrations, additional bins etc.



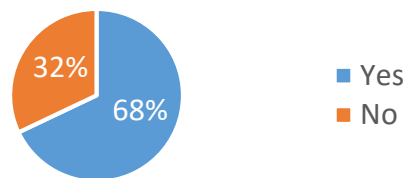
5. Did you know the City has a Snap, Send, Solve App for customers to use to report issues and request services?



Would you consider using this in the future?



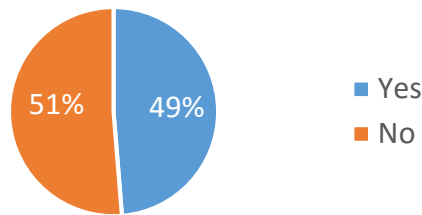
6. Many companies now send information to their customers electronically, rather than posting out paper copies. If the City offered this service, would you choose to receive information in this way?



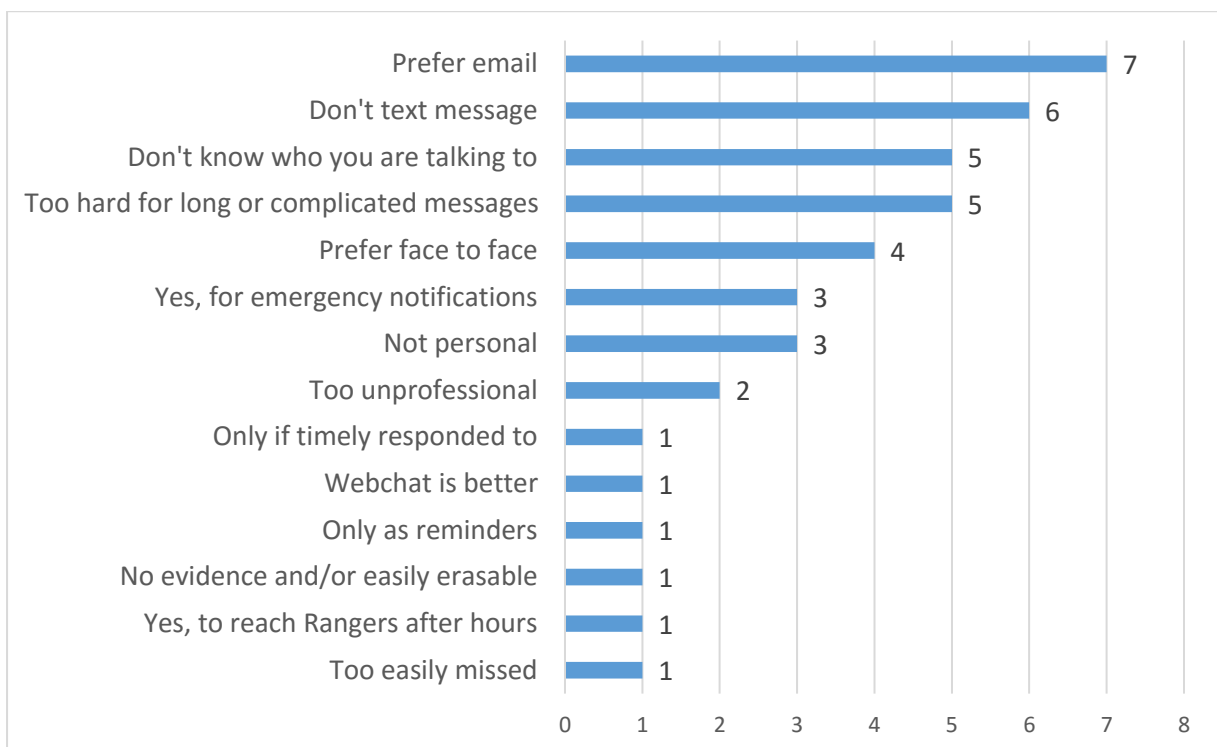
If no, why not?



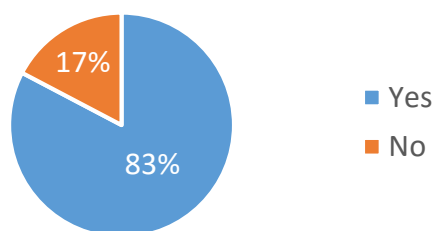
7. Would you like to communicate with the City by SMS text message?



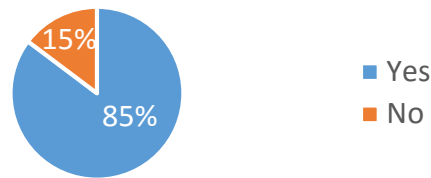
If no, why not?



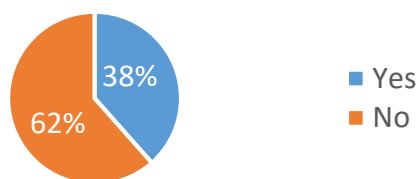
8. Do you have access to a Smartphone?



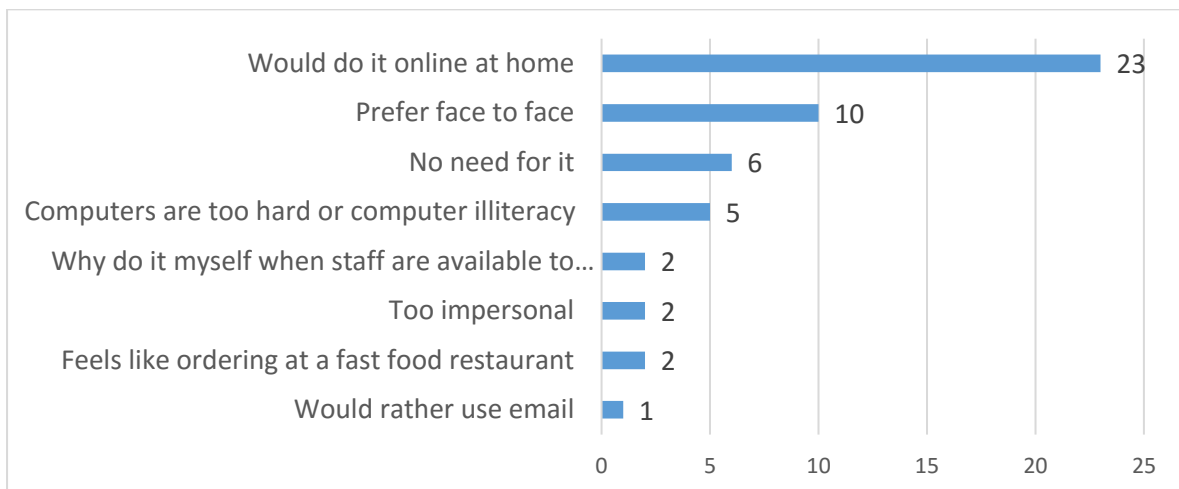
9. Do you have access to the internet?



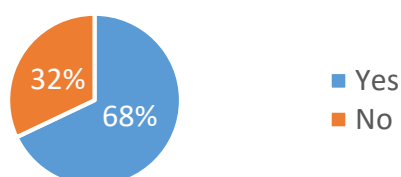
10. If the City offered a self-service kiosk (similar to a bank where you have access to a computer in our office and someone to assist you with your online transaction), is this a service you would use?



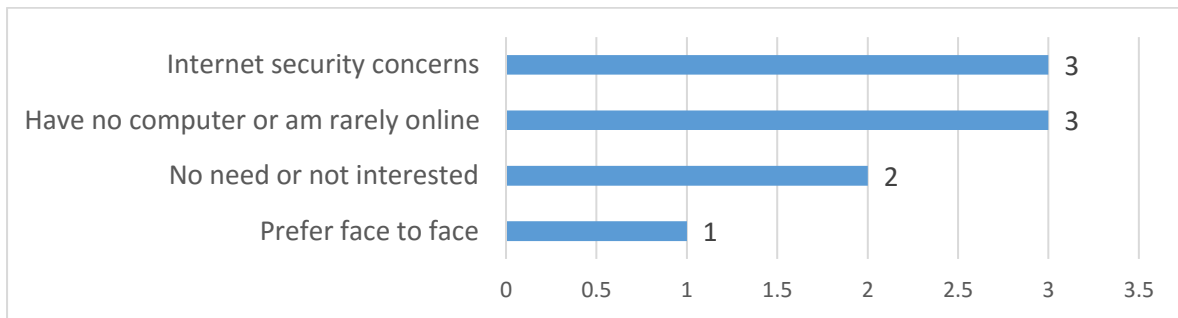
If no, why not?



11. If you could access personalised information on your council account using a secure account number (similar to banking) would you use this?



If no, why not?



12. Do you have any additional ideas on how the City can improve its customer service?

Online communication and information, interactive website and mobile phone app would be beneficial which incorporates all aspects of dealing with the City including payments, tickets, pool swipe access, checking rates, contact a Councillor, etc...)

Implement more online forms so people can access them and submit them without having to come to the Civic Centre or staff having to email/mail them to people.

Put more processes online - dog registration or applying for a burning permit.

An 'ask a question' feature on social media would provide or direct people to the answers.

Have regular introductions and Q&A type interactions from each department on social media. Department/team roles should also be listed on the website.

Implement a notification system so the customer knows if their call has been received and is being actioned. i.e. rangers after hours.

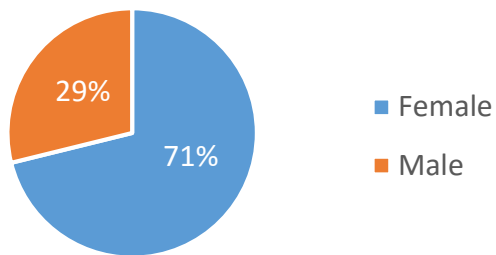
Consider the option of sending rates notices by email for people who travel.

Ability to pay rates fortnightly.

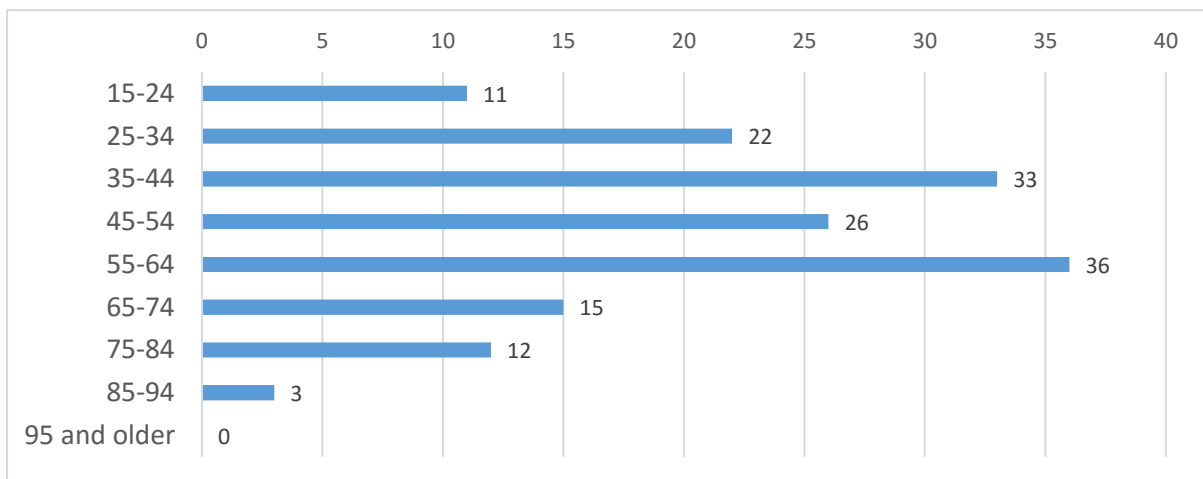
Review the need to submit three hard copies for a planning application and consider accepting applications and sending back approvals via email.

Ensure complex matters are referred higher up and implement an official escalation process such as a tracking number system i.e. 'Sorry I can't answer that today but here is a number that will let you track it's progress higher up and someone more senior will be in touch soon'.

13. Gender



14. What is your age?



15. Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

