

2 April 2013

Ms. Grace Haden
Via email: Grace@verisure.co.nz

Dear Grace,

Memo regarding case management

Please find attached a memorandum sent to His Worship the Mayor and Councillors on Thursday 28 March 2013 from the Chief Executive in response to the 28 February 2013 Governing Body resolution.

Yours faithfully,



Jason Marris
Acting Manager Democracy Services

Memo

28 March 2013

To: His Worship the Mayor, Councillors
cc: Executive Leadership Team
From: Doug McKay, Chief Executive

Customer Case Management

Your Worship and Councillors,

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to respond to the Governing Body resolutions made at the 28FEB13 meeting on the public forum items about our customer case management approach, which were:

That the Governing Body:

- a) Receive the presentation by Gary Osborne regarding censorship.
- b) Refer the complaint regarding censorship to the Chief Executive for investigation and a report back.

and

- a) Confirm that email correspondence to all elected members will be unfiltered until the Chief Executive has carried out his investigation.

Background

It is a simple process to set up an email address and then to use it inappropriately. Council is very aware of this and, like every organisation, has steps in place to ensure communication can occur with valid customers but allow inappropriate emails to be managed. There are three methods for filtering emails utilised by us, listed below:

- **SPAM filter:** This is provided by Microsoft, and council utilises their rules to identify inappropriate emails (e.g. viruses, pornography, direct marketing) and does not allow them into the council email system.
- **Set filter:** This is a filter under council's control to further reduce SPAM emails which have for some reason cleared the SPAM filter. These emails are redirected to a SPAM folder and are retained in the council email system. On very rare occasions, specific email addresses are redirected to the SPAM folder. This only occurs in circumstances where council has assessed the risk to staff of personal harassment or abuse as being at an unacceptable level. Council has clear obligations as an employer to protect staff in these circumstances. Since November 1st 2010 there have only been a very small number of email addresses in this category.
- **Case management:** This is where the council has identified customers who would benefit from specific management to provide a better result for both parties. There are currently three customers in this category.

Further to the above, individual council email server users are able to 'block' email addresses through the Microsoft Outlook system themselves. Council does not promote this, however, staff and elected members are able to set email rules themselves. Removing this option is possible but not recommended as doing so would impact on users' ability to manage their emails for legitimate business requirements.

The case management option has been implemented in rare situations and for a variety of reasons:

- There is legal action in progress – in these cases council needs to ensure that correct information to and from these customers occurs in a timely manner and in a way that does not compromise council's legal position
- To provide better customer service to high maintenance customers with high volume demands
- To allow council to operate efficiently and cost effectively
- Where there are health and safety concerns for staff

As you are aware, there have recently been discussions regarding two of the three specific customers who fall into the case managed category. It became clear through our interactions with these customers that our processes weren't delivering a good outcome for them or the council, and for this reason we adopted the case management approach.

In practice, case management involves all emails and/or phone calls from these customers being redirected to a senior officer, who acts as the case manager. The requests are then directed to the correct officials so that an accurate, timely and correct response can be provided to the customers. Clearly, with high volume requests to numerous officers, the risk of not providing a coordinated and accurate response is high, therefore, case management is an efficient and effective process for both parties involved, resulting in an improved outcome. This case management approach in these three cases also applied to elected members emails as appropriate. The situations regarding the two who presented at the Governing Body have been summarised below. The remaining customer is not described, however, falls into the reasons listed above and is similar in nature.

Mr. Osborne

There is significant history relating to Mr. Osborne and his correspondence with both the previous Waitakere City Council and the Auckland Council. This mainly relates to the volume of the correspondence (including phone calls) received from Mr. Osborne and the desire for council to give him correct and timely information. To provide some context, since November 1st 2010, council email addresses have received 688 emails from Mr. Osborne and a further 49 emails were received from 28 February (when the Governing Body met), to 13 March 2013 (a period of 10 working days).

Due to the nature and volume of the correspondence, it was decided in June 2012 that Mr. Osborne be case managed in a similar way that the Waitakere City Council had successfully adopted pre amalgamation. Darryl Griffin, the Manager Democracy Services at the time, who was responsible for the case management in Waitakere, was asked to perform the same role for the Auckland Council.

Mr. Osborne, was advised of this via a conversation with the Manager Democracy Services, and subsequently confirmed by email, on 21 June 2012. All elected members who were in routine contact with Mr. Osborne were also informed. Until recently, there had been no known issues or complaints with this approach.

Ms. Haden

There is also significant history relating to Ms. Haden and her correspondence with both the previous Waitakere City Council and the Auckland Council. This mainly relates to legal issues and the volume of correspondence received from Ms. Haden. Given the legal risk involved, it was decided that Ms. Haden would be case managed by Wendy Brandon General Counsel and this has been in place since last year.

Since approximately 2006, Ms Haden has sought information from Waitakere City Council and subsequently the Auckland Council in relation to a Trust Animal Welfare of New Zealand (AWINZ), and its Trustees. Ms Haden alleges 'corruption' on the part of the Trust, and its trustees. Her allegations have been tested in both the District Court and the High Court and found to be baseless. Her campaign against the trustees persists in the face of an injunction prohibiting her from persisting with her 'denigration' of the trustees. She has made numerous requests for information and over the years every piece of information that both councils have that relates to that issue, has been provided to her or she has been advised that it does not exist. It is the view of General Counsel that the orders made by the District Court and the High

Court forbid Ms Haden from publishing any material that repeats the various allegations examined and dismissed by the Courts. Any further publication in breach of those orders constitutes a contempt of court.

Since November 1st 2010, Ms Haden has sent nearly 500 emails to Auckland Council, nearly all of which have been sent or copied to General Counsel. All of Ms Haden's emails to council have been read, assessed for action, and retained in council's records. Ms Haden has been advised that no further correspondence will be entered into in relation to her campaign against AWINZ and its trustees. Ms Haden runs a number of websites and does not lack for means of communication and she publishes all correspondence on her websites.

Current situation

The Acting Manager Democracy Services, Jason Marris, confirmed to you via email after the February Governing Body meeting, that any known management of elected members' emails not specifically requested by you had been removed, in accordance with the resolution. The result of this is that all correspondence from the three case managed customers will now be received by you directly and this will continue into the future as requested, unless you advise otherwise.

Future

To ensure some customers receive the high level of customer service council is committed to providing, case management of their requests to the organisation may on occasion be the most appropriate manner by which this can be achieved. I intend to keep a watching brief on any future need for this approach to provide the best result for both the customers and council. There will be no impact on your communication with them without your prior agreement.

It is clear that council could have more explicit protocols around customer case management and when they should be applied, even though this is relevant in only a very small number of cases. I will be developing an internal protocol, which I will work with you on, to ensure there is clear understanding of these situations in the future. That work forms part of a wider review, which I have also instigated of our external customer, elected member and staff communication protocols. The goal is to build adequate and effective communication processes for our staff. As you will appreciate, it is essential that we provide an efficient and robust level of customer service whilst also ensuring that the issues raised overleaf are mitigated when required.

Regards,

Doug McKay
Chief Executive