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Policy Framework - Council Policy

Effective Date	<i>4 November 2015</i>
Policy Owner	<i>Customer Support and Governance</i>
Link to Corporate Plan	<i>Sustainable Organisation</i>
Review Date	<i>August 2024</i>
Related Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 2009 Human Rights Act 2019</i>
Related Documents	<i>Human Rights - Council Policy Human Rights Guideline</i>

Policy Version	Approval Date	Adopted/Approved
<i>1</i>	<i>04/11/2015</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>08/12/2021</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>

*This policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be found in the policies section of Council's intranet or Website. **A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.***



Policy Framework - Council Policy

1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes the framework for the management of policies, procedures and supporting documents at Western Downs Regional Council (Council). A policy should be adopted for any matter where direction or purpose needs to be set in order to conduct Council business.

This Framework establishes a hierarchy and categories of policies and procedures which set out the requirements and standards for each step of the development and improvement process. All policies and procedures must be developed, deployed, monitored and revised in accordance with this Policy.

2. SCOPE

This Framework applies to the development, implementation and review of all policy categories at Council:-

- Council Policies;
- Organisational Policies;
- Organisational Procedures/Guidelines; and
- Standard Work Procedures (SWP).

Note: The use of the term 'procedure/guideline' in the title shows that it is a policy with an operational focus.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 Applicability of Policy and Procedure

A policy or procedure will remain in force unless formally repealed by the relevant approval authority or superseded by another policy or procedure.

Where organisational structure change results in a different approval authority or other role referenced in a particular policy or procedure, the existing responsibilities and accountabilities will remain in force until the policy or procedure is amended to reflect the new or amended position title, authority or role that takes its place.

The General Manager (Corporate Services) has the authority to approve immaterial changes to policies or procedures (outside the standard review period) without the need for undertaking the full review process.

Policy and procedure compliance is mandatory for all employees, affiliates and where applicable, Councillors. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may commence disciplinary action or seek other penalties if a person or entity breaches policy or any of its related procedures.

Policies and procedures must be applied fairly and consistently and be compatible with the human rights protected by the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

3.2 Characteristics

This section specifies the essential characteristics of acceptable policy and procedure at Council. All policies and procedures within the Policy Framework must uphold the local government principles and Council's Corporate Plan priorities in a balanced and integrated manner in order to be approved.

Council Policy

- Significant public interest
- External / community focus and/or impact
- Statutory requirement

Organisational Policy

- Internal focus
- Affect whole or majority of organisation



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Organisational Procedure / Guideline

- Linked to policy
- Provides practical guidance on implementation of policy
- Internal focus
- Affects whole or majority of organisation

Standard Work Procedure (SWP)

- Internal focus
- Applies to specific functional area
- May provide practical guidance on implementation of policy or procedure

3.2.1 Content

The content of policies and procedures will:-

- uphold the local government principles and Council's Corporate Plan priorities, the 'Code of Conduct for Employees' and core values;
- be consistent with Council's practices;
- clearly articulate expectations, accountability and clearly assign responsibility;
- show due consideration of risk mitigation and consider the precautionary principle in order to minimise potential harm;
- provide a clear and discernible separation between governance and management responsibilities;
- ensure compliance with legislative and industrial requirements.

3.2.2 Process

The process of development, deployment and review of policies and procedures will:-

- be appropriately consultative;
- be directed by the principles of continuous improvement;
- not be unnecessarily burdensome;
- be informed by prevailing legislative requirements, sector best practise and Council's Corporate Plan;
- actively consider and take into account human rights;
- be appropriately communicated.

3.2.3 Procedures

Procedures will:-

- where relevant align with applicable policies;
- be open to continuous review and improvement;
- clearly articulate roles and responsibilities;
- where practical include a diagrammatic workflow reflecting the procedures.

3.2.4 Presentation

All documentation will be:

- consistent with approved organisational templates and writing style guides;
- centrally registered and accessible;
- clear and comprehensible
- retained according to the prevailing standard;
- current and accurate.



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4. CONTENT

Policies are developed in order to provide parameters and guidelines for the achievement of Council's strategic and operational objectives, giving consideration to statutory, best practice and quality management requirements.

The Policy Framework requires that each of the policy categories are written in clear concise English; conform to adopted guidelines; are approved at an appropriate level of the organisation and are regularly reviewed by the Policy Owner.

4.1 Compliance

Policies must comply with the relevant principles set out in all relevant legislation, Council resolutions and other strategic documents and priorities.

4.2 Policy Currency and Access

The public will have access to relevant policies through Council's external website. Printed copies of these Policies will be made available on request. The electronic version of each policy will be verifiable as the current version whilst printed versions will contain a disclaimer advising that the version may be superseded.

4.3 Policy Review

All policies will have specified time frames for review. Unless specified otherwise in legislation or budget related, policies will be reviewed on **4 yearly** intervals, depending on the updated risk assessment of the policy.

5. ENDORSEMENT AND APPROVAL AUTHORITIES

All Policies and Procedures are to be endorsed and approved in accordance with the following table:-

ENDORSE/ APPROVAL MATRIX	Endorse	Approve New	Review Recommendation		
			Approve Change on Review	Approve No Change on Review	Approve Rescission on Review
Council Policy	CEO/EMT	Council	Council	Council	Council
Organisational Policy	EMT	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO
Operational Procedure/ Guideline	General Manager	General Manager	General Manager	General Manager	General Manager
Standard Work Procedure (SWP)	Manager	Manager	Manager	Manager	Manager

*NB The General Manager (Corporate Services) has the authority to approve immaterial changes to policies or procedures (outside the standard review period) without the need for undertaking the full review process