1.5 Strategic Policy Framework

Responsible Areas	Council/Governance
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Affected Personnel	Elected Members, Management Team, Governance Officer, Executive Assistant/OCM

Objective

To ensure that all policies within the Shire are relevant, clear, consistent, authorised at the correct level and reflective of good governance across the district.

Scope

1. This policy applies to all employees and Elected Members involved in the review, development, preparation and adoption of policies regarding the governance and the performance of the Shire.
2. Additions, deletions or alterations to Council Policy shall only be made by specific Council resolution stating:

   a) the current Council Policy number if an amendment or deletion,

   b) the proposed policy number to clearly indicate functional area if a new Council Policy, and

   c) proposed wording and justification for the amendment, deletion or adoption.

3. This policy amends and replaces former Policy 1.5 Council Policy – making, amending, deleting.

Policy

The Shire of Victoria Plains will operate with three layers of documentation to govern its operations and practices to maintain longevity and ensure standardised service delivery to the community in line with the principle of achieving better practice.

These layers are:

A. Council Policy. Council Policies must be adopted by Council and provide the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with high level rules/limits/boundaries in respect to decision making and actions to be undertaken by the local government.

B. Executive Policy. Is a policy implemented by the CEO to staff and establishes a whole of organisation approach to operational practices. An executive policy is also known as an executive instruction.

C. Procedures/Manuals. Procedures detail the key processes, operations and activities conducted within a position on a day to day basis. This will provide the Shire with a record of operational practices and allow for an open transfer of knowledge and business continuity where necessary.

D. Reusable Components and Measurements of Success. What are the tools and templates that can be used to achieve a policy outcome and how will the Shire measure the success regarding its policies?

The underpinning requirements for each layer is provided in Attachment A: 1.5 Prescriptive Requirements.

The CEO is to maintain the official copy of the Council Policy Manual, updated as soon as possible after each authorised resolution of Council.

Definitions

Nil

Relevant management practices/documents
Shire of Victoria Plains Council Policy Manual

Legislation/local law requirements
Local Government Act 1995: Section 2.7 and Section 5.41

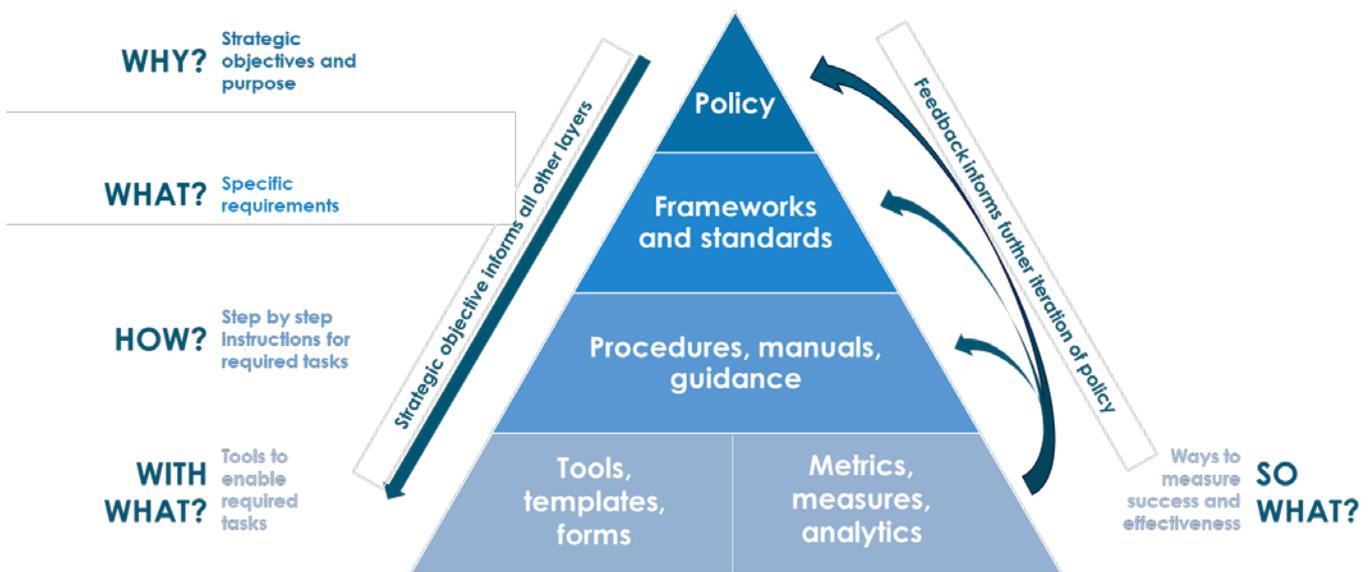| Office Use Only				
Relevant delegations				
Initial Council adoption	Date	16 May 2018	Resolution #	
Last reviewed	Date	N/A	Resolution #	
Next review due	Date	May 2022		

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Model

The policy hierarchy is encapsulated in a model developed by the Policy Lab (NSW). How a policy is implemented within an organisation can be seen in the following pyramid:

Essentially, a council policy is the intent (strategic direction) of Council whereas delegations are about "who may" conduct a particular requirement. Accordingly, a council policy may not be altered without a decision of Council.

Therefore the purpose of policy documents is to enable the effective and efficient management of Shire resources and to assist staff and Council achieve an equitable decision making process. Written policies also enable the community to be aware of the reasoning behind administrative and Council decisions, and to be familiar with the philosophy behind individual decisions.

If it is not in the Council Policy Manual, it may be usual practice, but it is not Council Policy. Unless it is specifically stated in a resolution that the authority is to be included in the Policy Manual, it is to be considered that the authority to act, is for a specific matter and is not general or on-going.

Key Elements – Council Policies

With the exception of a Council Policy established under a Town Planning Scheme, legislative framework or Australian Standard which determines the policy format, all policies must use the below format:

Format (Template Attached)

1. Council Policy Title – this is to be included within the header with the Shire logo to ensure it carries across all pages of the Policy.

2. Policy Objective – this is to outline the key reason why the policy is being developed in the first place and the benefit of having it in place.

3. Policy Scope – this determines who the policy is to apply to i.e. is it being set to govern councillor actions or employee actions

4. Policy Detail – this is where the actual content of the policy is to be included.

5. Definitions – if any acronyms or technical terminology is used within the policy then it should be defined within this section.

6. Related Legislation – this is where any Act or legislative framework that is linked to the Policy would be listed and where possible specific sections should be referenced.

7. Other Related Policies/Key Documents – this will detail and other related council or executive policies or key documents that guide the implementation of the policy.

8. Delegated Authority – detail any delegated authorities that need to align with the policy.

9. Review Date – the date the Council Policy is due for review.

10. History – details of original adoption date and previous revisions.

Policy Process

All Council Policies are to be considered in their own right and the Shire must maintain a list of all adopted policies and when they are next due for review.

Once a Council Policy has been adopted it must be published on the Shire website to improve transparency and understanding of Shire practices.

Outlined below is a standard process that will be followed by the Shire for the development and adoption of new or substantially amended Council Policies:

i.   Need for Policy or review identified;

ii.   Draft Policy developed;

iii.   Draft Policy reviewed by CEO;

iv.   Draft Policy submitted to Council with a report outlining the reasoning behind the policy and requesting approval to develop further/undergo public consultation;

v.   Draft Policy revised based on public consultation**;

vi.   Report submitted to Council outlining the results of public consultation, any changes made since the initial draft and requesting formal adoption;

vii.   After adoption the list of Council Policies must be updated to keep an accurate measure of what policies are in place or due for review.

** In order to add rigour to the Council Policy process the Shire may implement a public engagement process for the adoption of new or significantly amended council policies. Public consultation will be for a minimum of 14 days and the Shire will notify the community via a notice placed on the Shire's website, in the Newsletter, Noticeboards and where appropriate on the Shire's social media platforms.

Important: All Council Policies must be recorded and reviewed, at a minimum, every 2 years.

Key Elements - Executive Policy (Executive Instruction)

An Executive Policy adopted by the CEO is to establish a whole of organisation approach to operational practices. Executive Policies may be used to:

- Specify in detail how the administration will carry out, apply or action a Council Policy;

- Establish a minimum standard or rule to be applied across the organisation in areas such as Information Communication Technology and Human Resources to ensure there is a consistent approach.

Executive Policies are created as internal documents for operational purposes and do not require Council adoption. However, the CEO may discuss the development of Executive Policies with Council, or an appropriate Committee of Council and seek input regarding their development.

The CEO is responsible for determining the format and content of Executive Policies but they must be reviewed at a minimum every 2 years.

Key Elements - Procedures/Manuals

As part of continuing better practice through continuous improvement, it is acknowledged that the CEO will encourage all employees to establish and keep up to date, appropriate procedures/manuals that detail the key processes, operations and activities conducted within their position on a day to day basis. This will provide the Shire with a record of operational practices and allow for an open transfer of knowledge and business continuity where necessary.

Key Elements – Tools/Forms/Templates and Tricks

These are components that make life easier and are refernces in the procedures and manuals. Examples include:

- Spreadsheets;
- Registers;
- Word Templates e.g. memo templates, policy templates, letter templates and so on.

Key Elements – Measuring Success

When required, specific metrics and measures will be established as to whether the Shire has successfully achieved the Policy intent, and to what degree. This maybe both quantitative data (a metric) and qualitative data (vebal, written feedback).

Measurements will be used to inform and regularly iterate your Policy and the supporting layers. These changes can be at the macro level (such as a change in the strategic objective) or involve more minor adjustments in the implementation of the Policy (such as changes to frameworks or standards, procedures or tools).

Consider will also be given towhether this information needs to be publicly available. It is acknowledged that making the Shire's analysis open to the public can help ensure transparency and accountability. Detailed data may also be useful to and reusable by other agencies, or to members of the public.

Attachement B 1.5 – Policy Template

Responsible Areas	Administration
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Affected Staff	Nil

Objective

Scope

Policy

Definitions

Relevant management practices/documents

Legislation/local law requirements

Office Use Only				
Relevant delegations				
Initial Council adoption	Date	Insert date here	Resolution #	
Last reviewed	Date	Insert date here	Resolution #	
Next review due	Date	Insert date here		