



Policy Approval Process Policy

Version	2.1 – 13 April 2021
Endorsement	Executive – 15 April 2021 Policy Review Panel – 12 May 2021
Authorisation	Council – 7 June 2021
Review date	30 June 2022
Responsible officer	Manager Legal & Governance
Policy owner	Governance Coordinator

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the requirements, accountability and responsibility for the approval, dissemination, implementation and review of policies and associated documents.

2. Scope

Applies across Council.

The approach to policy development, format, review, maintenance, approval and access is outlined in the Policy Development, Implementation and Review Guidelines and the Writing Policy and Procedures Guidelines.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Action Plan (or Management Plan)	Plan that identifies the steps the Council intends to take over the next one to five years to achieve the objectives identified in Council strategy or policy. <i>Example:</i> Council's Annual Action Plan steps out how Council will deliver on the Council and Wellbeing Plan over a year.
Associated documents	Associated documents support the implementation of Council policy. Procedures and guidelines as defined above are included in this group as well as tool-kits, templates, forms and instructions.
Council Annual Action Plan	Council's annual business/operational plan that sets out the activities and initiatives Council will undertake to achieve Council Plan objectives.
Council & Wellbeing Plan	The primary vision and strategic planning document that sets out the broad direction Council has decided on for its term of office (4 years). The Council and Wellbeing Plan contains objectives, strategies and performance indicators.
Council Policy	A Council Policy has at least one of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It relates to or impacts on the community; ie. it has an external focus • Where a Council is required by legislation or statute to have a policy (eg. Child Safe Policy, Privacy Policy) • Is connected to or relates to the Council & Wellbeing Plan; ie. it may influence the Council's strategic direction

Word/Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require consultation with the community • Has a Council-wide application <p>Council Policies are sometimes referred to as External or Public Policies. A Council Policy is approved by the Council after endorsement by the Policy Review Panel and before that, endorsement by the Executive.</p>
Council Strategy	<p>Strategy takes an element of the Council and Wellbeing Plan or Council Policy and builds a framework for going forward. A Strategy is usually between 3 to 4 years.</p> <p>Examples include Council's Youth Strategy, Leisure Strategy.</p>
Diversity	<p>Refers to dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age and disabilities.</p>
Guidelines	<p>Guidelines are a document outlining best practice processes that are strongly recommended. Guidelines are written to provide information and advice on a particular subject.</p>
Operational Policy	<p>An Operational Policy has at least one of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It relates to the internal business of the Council; operational management, administrative or staffing matters of the Council. • It relates to the functions of the Chief Executive (refer s94A of the <i>Local Government Act</i> 1989 and after 1 July 2021 s46 of <i>Local Government Act</i> 2020) • It relates to the day-to-day operation of the Council <p>Operational Policies are sometimes referred to as Internal or Administrative Policies.</p> <p>An Operational Policy is approved by the CEO after endorsement by the Executive.</p>
Local laws	<p>The highest form of local legislation. The power to enact local laws is granted by the <i>Local Government Act</i> 1989 and its successor the <i>Local Government Act</i> 2020. Local laws, in this sense, have the same quality as acts of the state legislature, both being authorised by the state constitution. They must be adopted by the formalities required for the adoption of local laws.</p>
Major Policy amendments	<p>Major changes or amendments that alter the actual policy. These are to be submitted to either the Executive, for approval of Operational Policies or Council, for approval of Council Policies.</p>
Minor Policy/procedure changes	<p>Minor changes or amendments that do not alter the actual content of the policy. These do not need to be formally approved but the amended date needs to be inserted into the revised document for version control.</p>
Policy	<p>A statement of the Council's intent, commitment or position to achieve an objective which provides a decision-making framework for day-to-day applications. In essence, it describes what Council considers to be appropriate on a particular issue.</p>
Policy owner	<p>Position responsible for writing and/or reviewing the policy or procedure. Ensuring the document is kept up-to-date with any legislative or operational chain.</p>
Procedure manual	<p>A manual which contains supporting procedures, guidelines and other supporting documents relating to one subject matter. For example City Safe is our OH&S procedure manual.</p>

Word/Term	Definition
Responsible officer	Manager with operational responsibility for the services area generating the policy/procedure.
Work instruction	Step-by-step instructions for the accomplishment of a task by one person are retained in the department or unit where the work is performed. Work Instructions are often referred to as Desk Procedures, Task Outlines or SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures).

3.1 Hierarchy of Council Documents

	Approval Authority	Document type	Access via
Council	Melton City Council	Local Laws Council Policy Council & Wellbeing Plan Strategy Action Plans	Council website https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/
Organisational	Executive	Operational Policy Guidelines Procedures Associated documents	Intranet Governance Site
Directorate	General Managers	Directorate procedure, guidelines and other associated documents	Intranet Directorate / Service Unit Site
Service Unit	Approved by Managers	Service Unit procedures/ work instruction	Service Unit ECM files

4. Policy

- 4.1 All policies (and associated documents) shall be developed, implemented and reviewed in accordance with Council's Writing Policy and Procedure Guidelines.
- 4.2 All policies (and associated documents) must be consistent with and have appropriate reference to the:
- Federal and State Legislation (where applicable)
 - Melton City Council Local Laws (where applicable)
 - Meet regulatory and compliance requirements.
- 4.3 In developing a policy, consideration must be given to all implementation issues to ensure that the intent of the policy is achievable and that outcomes or compliance can be measured.
- 4.4 All policies will:
- Have Council or Operational application
 - Be prepared in a consistent corporate style using the Policy Template
 - Be written concisely, in plain English and clearly expressed (refer to Councils Writing Style Guide)
 - Be compliant with the *Local Government Act 2020* including:
 - Overarching Governance Principles and the Five Supporting Principles
 - provisions of the 2020 Act that might relate to the subject matter
 - Be compliant with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* including:
 - consult with Community Planning prior to determine if a Gender Impact Assessment is required
 - include a Gender Equity Impact Assessment (where applicable)
 - If a Gender Impact Assessment is not required, consider gender equity in its development
 - Consider Climate change (also part of the Overarching Governance Principles)
 - Consider diversity issues
 - Be compliant with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
 - Clarify individual officer responsibilities
 - Be assigned a 'Responsible Officer' and a 'Policy Owner'
 - Be reviewed at a maximum of four years, or earlier, if new legislation or exceptional circumstances make it appropriate
- 4.5 All procedures and guidelines will:
- Be prepared in a consistent corporate style using the Procedure/Guidelines template
 - Be written concisely, in plain English and clearly expressed (refer to Councils Writing Style Guide)
 - Clarify individual officer responsibilities
 - Be assigned a 'Responsible Officer' and a 'Policy Owner'
 - Be reviewed at a maximum of two years, or earlier if required.

5. Responsibility

5.1	Melton City Council (Councillors) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorisation of Council Policies.
5.2	Policy Review Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council advisory committee with oversight of Council Policies. The Panel is made up of four Councillors, with the Manager Legal & Governance and the Governance Coordinator as Council officers with ex officio status.
5.3	Chief Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under the <i>Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)</i> the Chief Executive is responsible for administration of council operations. They have the authority to authorise Operational (including administrative) Policy and associated documents including procedures, guidelines, templates, forms, tool-kits and checklists.
5.4	Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Endorse all OH&S policies and associated documents.
5.5	Governance Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive officer for Council Policy Review Panel• Coordination and implementation of the Policy Approval Process Framework• Reviews draft policies for compliance with this Policy• Provides advice in policy development and approval processes• Manages the Governance intranet site• Manages centralised repository of all current and approved policy documents in ECM
5.6	Responsible Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for ensuring that all policies and associated documents they endorse comply with this policy and have undergone the appropriate level of consultation.
5.7	Policy Owner <p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing and/or reviewing policy and associated documents assigned to them in accordance with this policy• ensuring appropriate consultation is conducted with stakeholders and that their feedback is considered and incorporated as appropriate• keeping documents up-to-date with any legislative or operational changes.
5.8	Council employees <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliance with all Council and organisational policies and associated documents.

6. References and links to other documents

Name	Location
<i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
Equality and Respect 2030 Strategy	https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Services/Health-safety-and-wellbeing/Health-and-Wellbeing/Equality-and-Respect
<i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Local Government Act 1989</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>	www.legislation.vic.gov.au
Policy Development, Implementation and Review Guidelines	Policy Intranet
Writing Policy and Procedures Guidelines	Policy Intranet
Councils Writing Style Guide	Policy Intranet
Version Control Procedures	Policy Intranet
Policy Template	Policy Intranet
Procedure/Guidelines Template	Policy Intranet

Appendix 1

Policy approval process

