

Title	Council Policy and Procedure Framework
Council Resolution	Item 6 (25 January 2016) as per Council Minutes
Responsible Directorate	Corporate Governance
Due for Review	24 January 2020
Strategic Plan Reference	<i>4.1 Govern in an open and responsible manner in the best interests of the community</i>
ECM	Council Policies

PURPOSE

This policy provides direction on the management of Glenorchy City Council (Council) policies, procedures and other similar documents.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- the drafting, approval, review, amendment, and distribution of Council policies, procedures and directives, guidelines, manuals, work instructions and other similar documents.

It does not apply to Council delegations, authorisations, by-laws or similar.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Council has certain statutory requirements with respect to specific policies under the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act):

- the Aldermen functions collectively include determining and monitoring the application of policies, plans and programmes for:
 - the efficient and effective provision of services and facilities
 - the efficient and effective management of assets, and
 - the fair and equitable treatment of employees of the Council (section 28(2)(b))
- the General Manager's functions include implementing the policies, plans and programs of Council (section 62(1)(a))
- the General Manager 'is to develop human resource practices and procedures in accordance with policies of the Council to ensure employees of the Council receive fair and equitable treatment without discrimination' (section 63)
- Council must prepare an asset management policy for the municipal area (section 70C) and review it at least every four (4) years (section 70E). The Minister, by order, may specify certain matters that must be contained in that policy (section 70F).
- the Council's Audit Panel is required to review the Council's performance in relation to all policies, systems and controls the Council has in place to safeguard its long-term financial position (section 85A(1)(c))
- Council must adopt a rates and charges policy and review it in accordance with section 86B(4) of the Act (section 86B), and
- Council must adopt a policy in respect of payment of expenses incurred by councillors in carrying out the duties of office and make a copy of the policy available for public inspection (Schedule 5 (Office of Councillors)).

Other functions of Council may have specific requirements with respect to policies under other legislation (e.g., Child Care under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, Dog Policy under the *Dog Control Act 2000*).

Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> • <i>Archives Act 1983</i> • <i>Dog Control Act 2000</i>
Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations</i>
Australian/International Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS/NZS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems

DEFINITIONS

Policy	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, describes what Council considers to be appropriate on a particular issue.
Procedure	Describes how decisions or actions must be undertaken with respect to a Council policy. It supplements a policy document and is used primarily to enable business areas to implement Council's intentions.
Directive	An operational procedure, through the General Manager, that is mandatory in nature and seeks to control the actions of Council employees.
Guideline	Less prescriptive than a procedure, guidelines set out a best or safest practice for Council to follow.
Work Instruction	Describes in detail how to perform a task under a procedure. It is a tool to assist someone to do a job correctly.
Process Map	Essentially a breakdown of a process to determine workflow and decision points in diagrammatic form.
Checklist	A comprehensive list of items required to be done (or at least considered) as part of a procedure.

COUNCIL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICIES

Council policies are generally formal statements that outline governing principles and intentions that underpin Council practices. These governing principles are derived from and shaped by:

- the law and regulations that govern the Council
- national (and where applicable) international standards
- community expectations, and
- the values and objectives as articulated in the Council's strategic documents.

Council policies have the role of:

- ensuring compliance with statutory responsibilities
- setting Council standards
- improving the management of risk.

Council policies are intended to be longer term in application.

PROCEDURES

Council procedures set out the Council's requirements for a particular course of action (often in a step-by-step approach). Council procedures clearly define how a policy is implemented and by whom. Council procedures may take the form of guidelines or directives and may be underpinned by supporting work instructions, process maps, checklists or similar.

Council procedures focus on:

- who performs what action
- what sequence of steps must be undertaken
- the criteria or standard that should be met.

Council policies, procedures and similar represent an integral part of the Council's internal control environment and assist in providing a level of assurance that internal risks faced by Council are minimised or contained to acceptable levels.

APPROVALS

In accordance with section 28(2)(b) of the LG Act, all Council policies must be approved by Council. All Council policy documents in the first instance are to be endorsed in principle by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), through the relevant Director.

In accordance with section 62(1)(a) of the LG Act, procedures (directives or guidelines) may be approved by the relevant Director. However, good collaborative practices dictate that such documents are circulated to relevant key stakeholders for input and modification, as relevant, prior to their adoption.

Departmental Managers are responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient work instructions, process maps, checklists or other supporting documents to assist Council officers in their operational day-to-day decision-making, as appropriate.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

Taking into account the normal term of Local Government elections, where practicable Council policies will have a four year tenure before Council review. Notwithstanding, Council policies remain in effect until otherwise replaced.

Trigger points that require an earlier review period of a policy (or associated document) include (but not limited to):

- change in legislation which has a bearing on the document
- change in senior management
- change in Council's position on a particular subject area
- recommendation from a governance body (e.g., Audit Panel, Internal Audit, Council Governance Committee etc.)
- quality assurance due to continuous improvement initiatives, and/or
- changes in Council's agreed service levels.

Internal Compliance will maintain a central database of Council policies, procedures and similar. Directorates will be informed at least six (6) months from the last review date of policies, procedures and similar that requires review. As part of the Council's internal control and risk management practices,

Internal Compliance will report as and when they occur to the General Manager and ELT any outstanding documents that have not been reviewed, as required. Similarly, Council will be notified of outstanding policies, as per agreed reporting timelines.

RECORDKEEPING

Information Management is responsible for ensuring that all Council policies, procedures and similar are appropriately stored on the electronic content management system. Section 10(1)(a) of the *Archives Act 1983* requires Council to preserve records until they are dealt with under the Act. This places a statutory obligation on Council to ensure that all records, regardless of format, remain available while they are in the custody of the Council.

It is noted that in line with the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office's (TAHO) [Disposal Schedule for Functional Records of Local Government](#), certain Council policy and procedure related documents have been identified as being a 'permanent record': i.e., need be transferred to the Archives Office 25 years after the date of creation. These include (but not limited to):

- Records documenting major negotiations and consideration of policy issues concerning organisations involved in providing local community services in association with council. These include:
 - Cats Home
 - Dogs Home
 - RSPCA
 - charities
 - religious organisations, and
 - welfare agencies.
- Policies relating to the rights, entitlements and responsibilities of councillors.
- Records illustrating the development of policy and documenting policy decisions and the establishment of precedents.
- Records documenting the development of governance procedures including final versions as issued to Councillors and Council staff.
- Master copies of instructions, guidelines and standards relating to:
 - health and safety issues and precautions
 - sex-based harassment and anti-discrimination, and
 - personnel matters.
- Master set of museum or galleries collection management procedures.

Other Council policy and procedure related documents have been identified as being a 'temporary record': i.e., those that can be destroyed under the authority of a disposal schedule. Information Management is responsible for assessing when to dispose of obsolete documents in accordance with TAHO requirements.

ACCESSIBILITY

Through the Tasmanian Government's [Disability Framework for Action 2013-2017](#), it has been identified that 'improving the accessibility of information' is a focus point for Government. Whilst not mandatory for Local Government, it is expected of Council to ensure that the needs of people with a disability are considered in the design and delivery of Council policies, programs, services and facilities. In line with this delivery is the access to information.

AVAILABILITY

Generally, all Council policy and procedure related documents are available from the GCC Intranet.

Similarly, most Council policy and procedure related documents that may have an impact on the general public and their dealing with Council will be published on the GCC Internet.

A register of current Council Policies will be maintained by Internal Compliance and presented to Council for information on an annual basis. The Register will be made available on the GCC Internet.

TEMPLATE

Internal Compliance is responsible for maintaining the template standards for Council policy and procedure related documents.

Fundamentally, policies and procedures should be written in clear and simple English. Ideally, policies should be no longer than two sides of A4 paper (although this will not always be possible). Procedures and similar will vary in length depending on the complexity of the processes involved.

BACKGROUND

As part of continuous improvement initiatives under the Council's Governance Strategy, Management has undertaken an extensive review of Council's policies. This necessitated the development of a Council Policy and Procedure Framework to underpin that review.