LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT, POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

LODDON
SHIRE

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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Strategic documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult the Strategic Documents on the Loddon Shire website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date.

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1   PURPOSE

To ensure consistent and effective strategic document, policy and procedure development and management for Loddon Shire Council. This is aimed at:

- assisting Council's compliance and decision making processes
- ensuring important information and systems are consistently continued and maintained by the organisation despite staff changes.

This framework must be followed by all staff (or consultants) writing strategic documents, policies or procedures.

2   TYPES OF DOCUMENTS

2.1   Strategic documents

Strategic documents include the Council Plan, frameworks and high-level plans or strategies that define Council's approach and objectives. A framework is a system of rules, ideas or principles that provide a logical structure for classifying and organising ideas or information.

2.2   Policy – 'what' and 'why'

A policy is a set of principles that define <u>what</u> we will do and <u>why</u>. It can:

- translate values into the way we operate
- achieve compliance with our responsibilities and legal obligations
- help achieve the Council Plan and other strategic documents
- help manage risk.

Policies are either Council or organisational:

- Council Policies relate to our customers and community, and include planning policies. Council Policies will influence and guide what services are provided and consequently how Council is perceived by our community.
- Organisational Policies relate to the internal business of the council (around matters such as corporate services or governance). Organisational Policies will have a direct effect on our staff but will not have specific relevance to our customers.

Along with legislation, local laws, charters, delegations and Terms of Reference, policies provide the controls that Council operates within.

2.3   Procedures – 'how', 'when', 'who'

Procedures prescribe specific actions needed to be taken to implement a policy or other requirement such as a legal obligation. They set out the <u>how</u>, <u>when</u> and <u>who</u>, in order to:

- provide clear instruction on the way that a policy will be implemented
- ensure uniformity and compliance across the organisation
- allow monitoring of policy implementation.

2.4 Document levels

Level of detail	Document	Description/purpose	Approved by
Low	Strategic document	Defines Council's approach and objectives	Council
	Council Policy	Defines <u>what</u> we will do and <u>why</u> Relates to our customers and community	Council
	Organisational Policy	Defines <u>what</u> we will do and <u>why</u> Relates to the internal business of the council	MEG
High	Procedures	Prescribe specific actions needed to be taken to implement a policy or other requirement such as legal obligation	MEG/Directors/ Managers

3 GENERAL THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

There are specific things to remember when writing certain types of documents, but the following general considerations apply to all documents under this framework:

- Keep it simple and straightforward, avoid jargon, acronyms and technical language. Test the level of understanding on someone who is not familiar with the subject matter.
- Write for the intended audience – councillors, staff, community members, etc.
- Be clear about what the document is for, and what it needs to achieve.
- Avoid confusing issues by only including what is necessary – do not add information that is not critical to achieving the document's objective.
- Obtain feedback from relevant stakeholders – who is the document going to affect? What is the best way to obtain effective feedback from them?
- Identify the approval method (Council, MEG) and allow enough time for this to happen before your deadlines.
- Consider the Human Rights Charter for any obligations that Council has to meet under this legislation. As a public authority, Council has a duty to act compatibly with human rights and to give human rights proper consideration in decision making. The Policy Coordinator has a copy of the Charter and the guidelines for policy makers.
- Consider the Council Plan, Document and Writing Style Guide and any other corporate documents that determine the direction and appearance of the document. Also consider other external documents that must be followed, e.g. the National Asset Management Financial Management Assessment Framework.

4 DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

4.1 Writing a strategic document

Things to remember when writing a strategic document:

- If it must be a large or complex document, include an executive summary to outline the key points or issues in the strategy.
- Action plans relating to the strategic document should form separate working documents. This allows them to be regularly updated or changed during the life of the strategy or plan, without needing to change the strategic document.

- Include a section on budget implications over the life of the strategy, particularly the costs and benefits to Council of individual actions in the strategy.
- Include a section showing analysis of potential risks from implementing the strategy.

Some strategic documents are written for Council by consultants or other external parties. It is the responsibility of the council officer who engages these authors to ensure that they follow the requirements under this framework. This should be incorporated into the consultant's brief for the project.

4.2   Templates

All strategic documents must be written using the current Strategic Document Template available on the Loddon Shire Council K drive (under TEMPLATES). Do not copy an old document and change the content, as the template requirements may have been updated.

Using the template will make it easier for the author. For example, by applying the correct text and numbered heading styles, an automated table of contents can be created.

The template contains information and headings that must be completed for every strategic document that is written for Council: headings must not be deleted or ignored.

Additional information may be included, particularly where there is a requirement to follow guidelines or other directions to have specific information in a document.

4.3   Strategic document development checklist

A checklist is attached to this framework at Appendix 2, which should be followed by an author when developing or reviewing a strategy. It is a set of prompts to ensure that all critical steps are addressed.

5   POLICY DEVELOPMENT

5.1   Is a policy needed?

Things to consider when identifying the need to develop a new (or continue a current) policy:

- What is the trigger for the policy or policy update? Examples include funding body requirements, changed legislation, changed ways of doing things, something gone wrong, other policies.
- Which Council Plan strategy or objective is the policy aiming to achieve? If it does not relate to the Council Plan, what is the specific need for a policy?
- Is there a current policy that can be reviewed, rather than writing a new one?
- Will the new policy contradict or duplicate a current policy, legislation, Council Plan objective, or other key document? If so, the new policy must not be created – consider the need to review the existing documents instead.

5.2   Writing a policy

Things to remember when writing a policy:

- Try to limit the policy to two pages.
- Do not duplicate or contradict other policies, legislation or other documents. Check the existence of other policies that may be relevant to the issue, and decide if they require updating to align with your new policy.
- Where the policy relates to record keeping or management of records, it should refer to the Records Management Policy and Procedure as a related policy.

5.3   Templates

All policies must be written using the current Policy Template available on the Loddon Shire Council intranet (under "Style Guide").

This will ensure that Loddon Shire has a consistent set of policies that are easily recognised and distinguished from other formal documents. Readers of the policies will know where to find similar information in each policy.

Using the template will also make it easier for the author, for example, by applying the correct text and numbered heading styles, an automated table of contents can be created.

Do not copy an old policy and change the content, as the template requirements may have been updated.

The template contains information and headings that must be completed for every policy that is written: headings must not be deleted or ignored.

Additional information may be included, particularly where there is a requirement to follow guidelines or other directions to have specific information in a policy.

5.4   Policy development checklist

A checklist is attached to this framework at Appendix 3, which should be followed by a Policy Author when developing or reviewing a policy. It is a set of prompts to ensure that all critical steps are addressed.

5.5   Naming principles

A policy is given a title that clearly describes the objective of the policy, e.g. Prevention of Fraud Policy. Policies will no longer be given a code or number, as searches are easier to do using a title than a numerical reference.

5.6   Version control

Every time there is an adopted change to a policy, the version number will change, which enables the organisation to know which version of a policy was in place at a particular time.

Version numbers increase by whole numbers, rather than version 1.2, 1.3, etc.

The filename for the document must also include the version number, e.g. Prevention of Fraud Policy v1.docx.

6   ROLES

6.1   Policy Coordinator

The Policy Coordinator ensures that the process of developing, approving, reviewing and rescinding a policy is managed effectively for the organisation. This role is undertaken by the Executive and Commercial Services Officer, who also administers the policy register.

6.2   Policy Owner

Staff who are accountable for particular areas are Policy Owners. This role ensures that the policies they are accountable for are kept up to date, reviewed on time, and communicated effectively.

6.3 Policy Author

Policy Owners may assign responsibility of writing or reviewing a policy to a Policy Author in their team. The Policy Owner still has accountability for the policy and must ensure it meets its objectives.

6.4 Policy Review Group

The Policy Review Group consists of the Manager Executive and Commercial Services and three members of the Loddon Leaders group (who are appointed annually on a rotating basis). The role of the group is to check all policies and procedures to ensure they are checked, complete and ready for finalisation prior to them being submitted to the MEG for approval.

7 POLICY REVIEW

7.1 Timings

The Policy Owner will determine the regular review frequency in accordance with the guidelines in the table below. However, a review may be triggered at any time if necessary, due to events such as changes in legislation, Council Plan or stakeholder issues.

The Policy Coordinator will enter a policy's review date and Policy Owner on the policy and procedure register, and reminders will be sent six months in advance for each policy review. Every six months, a report will be provided by the Policy Coordinator to the MEG on the status of review dates and their completion.

All policies must be reviewed at least once every four years to ensure they are consistent with the Council Plan (which is required to be prepared after each Council general election). The following table provides guidance about how often different policies should be reviewed.

Please note: If legislation requires a particular review frequency, that will override the guidelines provided here.

Frequency	Description
1 year	Annually is the most appropriate frequency for most policies. A regular review ensures that any new information, risks, processes, continuous improvement, etc. is captured.
2-3 years	Policies that have been on an annual review that do not require any changes through at least two cycles may be moved to a 2 or 3 year cycle: • if it is likely that there will be no changes to the relevant issues, and • the policy is effective for the organisation or community. When reviewing a policy and you wish to move it to a 2-3 year review cycle, it is important to advise stakeholders – they may be aware of possible changes coming up and this may help you determine the most appropriate review cycle.
4 years	All policies must be reviewed within at least four years. This is in line with a Council Term to ensure consistency with the Council Plan. Planning schemes and any other policy that is stable can be reviewed once within a four year cycle.

7.2 Process for review

Refer to the 'Strategic document, policy or procedure development, approval and review process' (Appendix 1) for reviewing policies.

For minor changes, the MEG may decide that the revised policy does not need Council adoption. Minor changes can be small changes to wording, clarification of intent, corrections or template changes. Where possible, minor changes should wait until a scheduled review date.

7.3 Rescinding a policy

There will be situations where a policy is no longer required, or has been superseded by another policy or legal requirement.

During the review process, you will determine if a policy should be rescinded. To ensure that it is properly made inactive, the following process should be followed:

1. Check if other documents refer to the policy. These will need to be reviewed to remove the reference.
2. Consult with relevant internal and/or external stakeholders about any ongoing need for the policy.
3. For an external policy, Council will need to be advised that it is rescinded. The MEG must decide whether the decision to rescind should be approved by Council, for example, if a law is changed, there is no judgment call to be made, and Council can simply be advised.
4. Communicate to stakeholders that the policy is no longer active.
5. Advise the Policy Coordinator once all steps have been completed so that the policy can be removed from current listings and its status changed to "rescinded" on the Policy and Procedure Register.

7.4 Exceptional circumstances combination of policy and procedures

There are rare circumstances where an industry-specific template for a combination of policy and procedures must be adopted by Council staff, for example, kindergarten policies and procedures. In these circumstances, the MEG must approve the use of a combined document, which would utilise the policy template and incorporate the procedures in the same document.

8 PROCEDURES

8.1 Writing a procedure

Things to remember when writing a procedure:

- Procedures must have enough detail to enable a new council officer to carry out the procedure successfully. Before finalising it, test the draft procedure on someone who is not familiar with the area.
- Procedures should be linked to the policy, but not included with it. The policy template has an entry field to be completed to show any related procedures. In turn, procedures should clearly state which policy they are linked to.
- Individual managers, directors or the MEG adopt procedures. They do not need to be approved by Council.
- Any forms or templates to be used for implementation should be attached to the procedures, not the policy.
- Procedures relating to a particular policy should be given the same title with "procedures" added to it, e.g. Corporate Uniform Procedures.
- Check that systems are in place to support the procedure.

8.2   Templates

All procedures must be written using the current Procedure Template available on the Loddon Shire Council intranet (under "Style Guide"). Do not copy an old procedure and change the content, as the template requirements may have been updated.

Using the template will make it easier for the author, for example, by applying the correct text and numbered heading styles, an automated table of contents can be created.

As procedures will take many different forms, the content will be flexible, e.g. there may be additional headings or sections needed, depending on the nature of the procedures.

8.3   Process for review

Refer to the 'Strategic document, policy and procedure development, approval and review process' (Appendix 1) for reviewing procedures.

9   CONSULTATION

Stakeholder feedback is important to developing a document that will be understood, accepted and followed by those affected. Depending on the document, consultation may be carried out:

- before developing a strategy, policy or procedure
- on specific issues within the document as it is being drafted, and
- once a draft document is available.

Stakeholders may be internal or external to Council.

Before developing or reviewing a document, the Policy Owner must discuss with their Director what level of consultation is appropriate for the strategy, policy or procedure.

10 COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

Before the document is finalised, plan how and when you are going to communicate the strategy, policy or procedure to those affected once it is adopted. Consider:

- What method of communication will be most effective - what types of media will be used?
- Do you need to prepare 'frequently asked questions' to help stakeholders understand the issues?
- Does the document require training sessions as well as simply informing stakeholders?
- Were communication needs raised during consultation on the document? Have these been addressed (e.g. consider easy English options)?
- Do you need a budget for implementation?

11 APPROVAL

As a general rule, Council approves Strategic Documents and Council Policies. If only a minor change results from a review of a Council Policy, MEG may decide that Council adoption is not needed.

Organisational Policies and Procedures are approved by the MEG.

If a Procedure is for use only in particular directorate and has no application across the organisation, the responsible director or manager may approve the document and send it directly to the Policy Coordinator for finalisation. This is subject to another person in the relevant department reviewing the document prior to approval.

The CEO (through the Policy Coordinator) will sign and date a document once it has been approved. For Procedures approved by a director or manager, that director's or manager's signature will be applied by the Policy Coordinator.

Examples:

Policy	Type	Approval level
Public Hall and Reserves Allocation Policy	Council Policy	Council
Corporate Uniform Policy	Organisational Policy	Management Executive Group
Community Grants Policy	Council Policy	Council
Staff Performance Appraisals Policy	Organisational Policy	Management Executive Group

12 LOCATION AND REGISTERING OF STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

12.1 Accessibility

Council Policies and Strategic Documents will be available to the public on the Loddon Shire website under Our Documents.

Organisational Policies and procedures will be accessible to staff on the intranet under Organisational Policies, Procedures and Forms.

12.2 Loddon Shire Policy and Procedure Register

Any policy not listed in the register will not be considered a formal policy of Loddon Shire Council. This will ensure that there is a central, secure location for a listing of all policies and procedures. It avoids duplication and confusion about where to find up-to-date versions.

All policies and procedures will be recorded in the Loddon Shire Policy and Procedure Register.

The Policy Coordinator is responsible for keeping the register up to date, and policy owners must ensure that the Coordinator is provided with the required information.

The register will be kept up to date on the Loddon Shire Council K drive (in the secure Executive folder) and will be incorporated into the CAMMS reporting system once implemented. It will be able to be sorted in several ways and will be structured as follows:

DOCUMENT TYPE Council Policy/ Organisational Policy/ Procedure	NAME	ADOPTION DATE	APPROVED BY	REVIEW DATE	OWNER	DEPARTMENT	VERSION NUMBER

12.3 Electronic filing

Adopted strategic and policy documents will be kept in a secure folder managed by the Policy Coordinator to ensure version control. PDF versions will be the only ones available for access,

but a Word version will also be kept for future amendment by the Policy Owner when the document is reviewed.

Superseded versions and rescinded documents will also be retained by the Policy Coordinator for recordkeeping purposes, and will allow identification of differences between versions.

APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND REVIEW PROCESSES

STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS:

Council	MEG	Policy Coordinator	Owner/Author	Comments
			Identify need to develop or review strategy	
			Consult with all stakeholders (internal and external)	Ensure correct, up-to-date template is used. Links to relevant policies, procedures or strategies must be included in the Document Information
			Draft or amend strategy	
			Circulate to all stakeholders for feedback and amend or develop further as necessary, including Loddon Leaders. Provide draft **strategy** to the Policy Review Group for endorsement.	If the document needs endorsement by an internal committee, such as risk management or consultative committee, include the endorsement process here.
	MEG approval, or alter as necessary to the satisfaction of MEG		Send to MEG for approval after Director has checked final draft	MEG will reject the document if template is not applied or relevant links are not included.
			Brief Council and provide draft at Council Forum or Briefing	Council adoption is required for all **strategies**.
Council adoption			Revise if required and provide Council report for formal adoption at least one month after Council Briefing, or the next meeting after Forum	**NOTE:** If there is a requirement to advertise a draft for public comment under regulation, factor in timing to present the draft for Council to resolve to advertise the draft, and then present the document for Council adoption following the public comment period.
			Provide final electronic copy to Policy Coordinator	
		• CEO signature, PDF, register on database • Add signed hardcopy to master folder • Arrange for uploading onto website	Communicate strategy to relevant stakeholders	
		Initiate review of strategy by owner at review date	Monitor operation of strategy and initiate review at any time as required	Reviews should follow all steps of this process, unless otherwise indicated in comments.

POLICIES

Council	MEG	Policy Coordinator	Owner/Author	Comments
			Identify need to develop or change policy	
			Consult with all stakeholders (internal and external)	Ensure correct, up-to-date template is used. Links to relevant policies, procedures or strategies must be included in Document Information
			Draft or amend policy	
			Circulate to all stakeholders for feedback and amend or develop further as necessary, including Loddon Leaders. Email draft policy to the Policy Review Group for endorsement.	If the policy needs endorsement by an internal committee, such as risk management or consultative committee, include the endorsement process here.
	Approval, or alter as necessary to the satisfaction of MEG		Send to MEG for approval after Director has checked final draft	Draft document will be rejected if template is not applied or relevant links are not included.
		Does document need Council adoption? — YES / NO	Brief Council and provide draft at Council Forum or Briefing	Council adoption is required for all Council policies. For a second or subsequent version of a policy, MEG may decide that it may be submitted directly to a Council meeting for adoption, without presentation to a Council Briefing or Forum. If only a minor change results from a review of a Council Policy, MEG may decide that Council adoption is not needed.
Council adopts			Revise if required and provide Council report for formal adoption at least one month after Council Briefing or the next meeting after Forum	
			Provide final electronic copy to Policy Coordinator	
		• CEO signature, PDF, register on database • Add signed hardcopy to master folder • Arrange for uploading onto website or intranet	Communicate policy change to relevant stakeholders	
		Initiate review of policy at review date	Monitor operation of **policy** and initiate review at any time as required	Reviews should follow all steps of this process, unless otherwise indicated in comments.

PROCEDURES

MEG/ Manager	Policy Coordinator	Owner/Author	Comments
		Identify need to develop or change procedure	
		Consult with all stakeholders (internal and external)	
		Draft or amend procedure	Ensure correct, up-to-date template is used. Links to relevant policies, procedures or strategies must be included in Document Information
		Circulate to all stakeholders for feedback and amend or develop further as necessary.	If the document needs endorsement by an internal committee, such as risk management or consultative committee, include the endorsement process here.
The department manager may approve a procedure **subject to** another person from the department having checked the draft.	**YES**	Is procedure specific to only one directorate? **NO**	
Approval, or alter as necessary, to the satisfaction of MEG		Send to MEG for approval after Policy Review Group has checked final draft.	Procedure will be rejected if template is not applied or relevant links are not included.
		Provide final electronic copy to Policy Coordinator	
	• CEO/Director/Manager signature, PDF, register on database • Add signed hardcopy to master folder • Arrange for uploading onto intranet	Communicate procedure change to relevant stakeholders	
	Initiate review of procedure at review date	Monitor operation of procedure and initiate review at any time as required	Reviews should follow all steps of this process, unless otherwise indicated in comments.

APPENDIX 2
STRATEGIC DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

	Step 1 - Analysis	
☐	Identify the reason for having the strategic document	What is the problem or current situation? What is Council trying to achieve?
☐	Identify any relevant legislation, regulations, guidelines or codes	Also, when doing a review – is there anything new?
☐	Determine who else within the organisation should be involved	Consider who the document will impact on. For a complex issue a working group may be appropriate
☐	Identify who will be affected by the strategic document and any other stakeholders	Or who is affected by the problem? Could be internal and or external to Council. Includes internal committees, e.g. risk, OH&S, consultative committee.
☐	Identify the purpose, scope and objective	If there is any doubt, a brief should be prepared and endorsement sought from the responsible Director or MEG before work commences.
☐	Is the document consistent with the Council Plan and not in conflict with any other policies or strategic documents?	Council requirement and good practice
☐	For a review, identify if the document is still relevant and in use	Are there any examples to support this?
☐	Identify what has changed since the last review	Internal and external to Council.
☐	Are any future changes anticipated which will impact on the strategic document?	For example legislation under consideration or a report about to be published.
☐	Check compatibility against the 20 rights enshrined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*	Council must consider the implications of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Refer to Policy Coordinator for a guide or see http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/
☐	Consider compatibility with other requirements where relevant, e.g. Equal Employment Opportunity, gender equity, Occupational Health and Safety.	Council must consider the implications of the strategy on all relevant legislation and obligations it adheres to.
☐	Identify links to other Loddon Shire documentation	For example another policy, procedure, Code of Conduct, Council Plan, Budget or a strategy.
☐	Undertake a review of any lower level Loddon Shire documentation at the same time as reviewing the strategic document	Such as associated policies, procedures, forms or templates.

	Step 2 – Research and consultation	
☐	Benchmark against strategies adopted by other councils	Use your networks and the internet. Being specific in what you are looking for will save time. Selection of councils is generally on the basis of being a similar size. However, depending on the topic a larger or smaller council could be useful, or any councils known to be leading in this area.
☐	Research or review for any guidance on best practice	Use your networks, the internet, publications by Local Government Victoria or other relevant authorities. Reports by the Victorian Auditor-General or Ombudsman Victoria are a good source of guidance.
☐	Are there any delegations applicable?	Check against instruments of delegation to identify any statutory powers, duties or functions that apply.
☐	Identify legal, financial, environmental, social and political implications	Ensure that development or review considers and addresses these implications.
☐	Consider risk analysis implications	Refer to Council's risk management process.
	Step 3 – Development or review process	
☐	Plan the time needed to develop, consult and seek approval on the strategic document	If there is a deadline, work back from that, allowing enough time for all levels of approval and adequate consultation.
☐	Prepare draft strategic document using Strategic Document Template. For a review, track the changes proposed	Use template and guidance from Strategic Document, Policy and Procedure Framework.
☐	Take an overall look at the strategy and identify any improvements or potential changes required	Use possible scenarios to make sure it does not have any unintended consequences.
☐	Check that strategy does not stray into irrelevant considerations	Irrelevant considerations must not be taken into account in making administrative decisions.
☐	Identify how the strategy will best be communicated once approved	How, when, and to whom. Refer to the framework for guidance.
☐	Identify the appropriate timeframe for the strategy to be reviewed, if applicable	Refer to relevant Director for guidance.
☐	Obtain endorsement of draft strategic document	From responsible Director.
☐	Circulate to all stakeholders for feedback and amend or develop further as necessary, including presentation of draft to the Management and Leadership Team meeting, and endorsement by internal committees.	By this step, there should be no surprises in the feedback received, if consultation has been conducted during the development of the document.
	Step 4 – Approval	
☐	Obtain endorsement of draft strategic document	From responsible Director.

☐	Prepare report/s on strategic document	All documents are initially considered by MEG. A Strategic Document will require inclusion in a Council agenda for formal adoption, following presentation of the draft document at the previous month's Council Briefing.
	Step 5 – Housekeeping and implementation	
☐	Update Council records	Once a strategy is adopted or approved, provide the electronic version to the Policy Coordinator to add signature, PDF the document, update the register, review schedule, and include on website.
☐	Communication	Confirm approval or adoption to all stakeholders involved in the process. Conduct training or information sessions if necessary.
	Step 6 – Review	
☐	Review according to approved timeframe	Continue to schedule reviews according to timeframe set, or earlier when changes are identified.

APPENDIX 3
POLICY DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

	Step 1 - Analysis	
☐	Does Council need a policy?	If specific guidance is available from legislation, regulations or a code, a policy won't be needed. A policy can be effective to provide direction where legislation is silent or allows for discretion.
☐	Identify the reason for having a policy	There are usually triggers to the request for a new policy. What is the problem or current situation? What is Council trying to achieve?
☐	Identify any relevant legislation, regulations, guidelines or codes	When doing a review – is there anything new?
☐	Identify the type of policy: Council or Organisational Policy?	Or would a procedure be more appropriate?
☐	Determine who else within the organisation should be involved	Consider who the policy will impact on. For a complex issue a working group may be appropriate?
☐	Identify who will be affected by the policy and any other stakeholders	Or who is affected by the problem? Could be internal and or external to Council. Includes internal committees, e.g. risk, OH&S, consultative committee.
☐	Identify the purpose, scope and objective	If there is any doubt, a brief should be prepared and endorsement sought from the responsible Director or MEG before work commences.
☐	Is the policy consistent with the Council Plan and not in conflict with any other policies or strategic documents?	Council requirement and good practice.
☐	For a review, identify if the policy is still relevant and in use	Are there any examples to support this?
☐	Identify what has changed since the last review	Internal and external to Council.
☐	Are any future changes anticipated which will impact on the policy?	For example, legislation under consideration, or a report about to be published.
☐	Check compatibility against the 20 rights enshrined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*	Council must consider the implications of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Refer to Policy Coordinator for a guide or see http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/
☐	Consider compatibility with other requirements where relevant, e.g. Equal Employment Opportunity, gender equity, Occupational Health and Safety.	Council must consider the implications of the strategy on all relevant legislation and obligations it adheres to.
☐	Identify links to other Loddon Shire documentation	For example another policy, procedure, Code of Conduct, Council Plan, Budget or a strategy.

☐	Undertake a review of any lower level Loddon Shire documentation at the same time as reviewing the policy	Such as associated procedures, forms or templates.
	Step 2 – Research and consultation	
☐	Benchmark against policies adopted by other councils	Use your networks and the internet. Being specific in what you are looking for will save time. Selection of councils is generally on the basis of being a similar size. However, depending on the topic, a larger or smaller council could be useful, or any councils known to be leading in this area.
☐	Research or review for any guidance on best practice	Use your networks, the internet, publications by Local Government Victoria or other relevant authorities. Reports by the Victorian Auditor-General or Ombudsman Victoria are a good source of guidance.
☐	Are there any delegations applicable?	Check against instruments of delegation to identify any statutory powers, duties or functions that apply.
☐	Identify legal, financial, environmental, social and political implications	Ensure that policy development or review considers these implications.
☐	Consider risk analysis implications	Refer to Council's risk management process.
☐	Identify potential policy options	This could include doing nothing, saying no on an issue, educating rather than regulating, developing a "for and against" case for a range of options.
	Step 3 – Development or review process	
☐	Identify any discretion which may be required in its implementing the policy	Include the basis for that discretion with the policy.
☐	Prepare draft policy using Policy Template. For a policy review, track the changes proposed	Use Policy Template and guidance included in the Strategic Document, Policy and Procedure Framework.
☐	Take an overall look at the policy and identify any improvements or potential changes required	Use possible scenarios to test the policy to make sure it gives effect to the policy and does not have any unintended consequences.
☐	Check that policy does not stray into irrelevant considerations	Irrelevant considerations must not be taken into account in making administrative decisions.
☐	Identify how the policy will best be communicated once approved	How, when, and to whom. Refer to the policy framework for guidance.
☐	Identify the appropriate timeframe for the policy to be reviewed	Refer to criteria in the Strategic Document, Policy and Procedure framework. Maximum is four years.
☐	Obtain endorsement of draft policy	From responsible Director.

☐	Circulate to all stakeholders for feedback and amend or develop further as necessary, including presentation of draft to the Management and Leadership Team meeting, and endorsement by internal committees.	By this step, there should be no surprises in the feedback received, if consultation has been conducted during the development of the document.
Step 4 – Approval		
☐	Obtain endorsement of draft policy	From responsible Director.
☐	Prepare report/s on new or reviewed policy	All policies are initially considered by MEG. A Council Policy will require inclusion in a Council agenda for formal adoption, following presentation of the draft document at the previous month's Council Briefing or Forum.
Step 5 – Housekeeping and implementation		
☐	Update Council records	Once a policy is adopted or approved, provide the electronic version to the Policy Coordinator to add signature, PDF the document, update the policy register, review schedule, and include on intranet.
☐	Communication	Confirm approval or adoption to all stakeholders involved in the process. Conduct training or information sessions if necessary.
Step 6 – Review		
☐	Policy review	Continue to schedule policy reviews according to timeframe set, or earlier when changes are identified.