GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

ATTACHMENTS

Under Separate Cover
Ordinary Council Meeting

6.00pm Tuesday 24 September 2019

Table of Contents

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Policy and Procedure Framework

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Strategic document
DOCUMENT STATUS:	[Approved / Not Approved]
DOCUMENT OWNER POSITION:	Director Corporate Services / Corporate Governance Coordinator
APPROVED BY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON:	24 September 2019
VERSION NUMBER:	1
REVIEW DATE:	August 2023
DATE RESCINDED:	Not applicable.
RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES:	Golden Plains Shire Council Plan 2017-2021

Council Strategies: https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-council/aboutcouncil/council-strategies

Council Policies: https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-council/about-council/council-policies

Organisation Policies: Accessible internally on the intranet https://intranet.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/the-hub

Procedures: Accessible internally on the intranet https://intranet.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/the-hub |
RELATED LEGISLATION:	*The Local Government Act 1989* (Vic)
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	_____ Signed by Chief Executive Officer _____ Date
FILE LOCATION:	Reference Number: INT19/1C05F6F1
NOTES:	Strategic documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version.

Please consult Council's Strategies page on the Golden Plains Shire Council website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date. Available at: https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-council/about-council/council-strategies |

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

CONTENTS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

1 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

Golden Plains Shire Council (**Council**) is constituted under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community. The purpose of this Policy and Procedure Framework (**Framework**) is to ensure consistent and effective policy and procedure development and management for Council.

The objectives of this Framework are to:
- govern the development, establishment, amendment and review of policies and procedures to ensure relevance, authority and consistency with internal and external legislation;
- ensure important information and systems are consistently continued and maintained by Council despite staff changes or passage of time;
- define the roles, responsibilities and authorities in relation to the development, establishment, amendment and review of policies and procedures; and
- assist Council's compliance and decision making processes.

This Framework must be followed by all staff (or consultants) writing policies or procedures.

2 TYPES OF DOCUMENTS USED BY COUNCIL

2.1 Strategic documents

A list of current Council strategic documents are located on Council's website. They include Council's Plan (2017-2021), and other high-level plans or strategies that define Council's approach and objectives.

This Framework is another example of a strategic document. It is designed to assist all staff (or consultants) when preparing or reviewing policies or procedures.

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

Along with legislation, local laws, charters, delegations, policies and procedures provide the controls within which Council operates.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

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 Council
- allow monitoring of policy implementation.

2.4 Summary: Document levels and approvals

Level of detail	Document	Description/purpose	Approved by
Low ↓ High	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	Senior Management Team (**SMT**) (which is made up of the three Directors together with the Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**))
	Procedures	Prescribe specific actions needed to be taken to implement a policy or other requirement such as legal obligation	SMT or Director

Examples:

Policy	Type	Approval level
Council Complaints Handling Policy	Council Policy	Council
Corporate Uniform Policy	Organisational Policy	SMT
Staff Performance Review Procedure	Procedure	SMT

3 ROLES UNDER THE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Policy and Procedure Coordinator

The Policy and Procedure Coordinator is undertaken by the Corporate Governance Coordinator. The Corporate Governance Coordinator may assign the responsibility of administration to another person in their team who will become the Policy and Procedure Assistant.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

The Policy and Procedure Coordinator and the Policy and Procedure Assistant administer the Golden Plains Shire Council Policy and Procedure Register.

The Policy and Procedure Coordinator ensures that the process of developing, approving, reviewing and rescinding a policy or procedure is managed effectively for Council.

The Policy and Procedure Coordinator achieves this by supporting Council staff awareness of this Framework, and ensuring the Framework and Policy and Procedure Templates are kept up to date.

The Policy and Procedure Coordinator and Policy and Procedure Assistant are responsible for keeping the Golden Plains Shire Council Policy and Procedure Register up to date, however, this can only be achieved when Policy and Procedure Owners ensure that the Policy and Procedure Coordinator is provided with up-to-date information.

Any policy or procedure not listed in the register will not be considered a formal policy or procedure of Council. See section 4.6 below for further information.

The Policy and Procedure Coordinator and Policy and Procedure Assistant also keep a policy and procedure review schedule, and will send out a reminder every 6 months to the SMT, outlining the review status of Council's documents.

3.2   Policy and Procedure Owner

Policy and Procedure Owners are accountable for the timely review, updating, and dissemination of policies and procedures.

In the absence of a specific delegation, the Director who has been assigned operational responsibility for the policy/ procedural subject matter will be the Policy and Procedure Owner. Refer to the organisational structure accessible to staff on the intranet.

When developing new, or revising existing, policy/ procedure, Policy and Procedure Owners have an obligation to identify those who will be directly affected by new or revised policies/procedures and to consider their views early in the development discussions.

Sometimes it may be necessary for more than one operational area of Council to contribute to a policy/procedure. In that instance, there may be more than one Policy and Procedure Owner. Where this occurs, one of the Policy and Procedure Owners should lead the policy/procedure review/development and any other Policy and the Procedure Owner/s should agree to contribute to the document/s. If agreement cannot be reached between the Policy and Procedure Owners concerning who will lead or what level of contribution will be provided, the SMT will decide.

In addition to documenting the approved policy/procedure, the Policy and Procedure Owner should develop support and training options, if appropriate, for the customers/users who will need to adhere to their policy/procedure. This includes, at a minimum, the designation of "experts" to which Council staff can turn for guidance or to resolve problems.

Once a policy/procedure has been finalised, the Policy and Procedure Owner must ensure that the Policy and Procedure Coordinator is provided with the relevant document/s in order to update the Golden Plains Shire Council Policy and Procedure Register.

As noted above, any policy or procedure not listed in the register will not be considered a formal policy or procedure of Council. See section 4.6 below for further information.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

3.3 Policy and Procedure Author

Policy and Procedure Owners can also be the Policy and Procedure Author, however, they may decide to assign responsibility of writing or reviewing a policy/procedure to another person in their team who will become the Policy and Procedure Author. The Policy and Procedure Owner still has accountability for the policy/procedure and must ensure it meets its objectives.

This ability to assignment responsibility from the Policy and Procedure Owner to a Policy and Procedure Author is necessary to ensure Council Policy and Procedure Owners are not left with the sole responsibility of preparing all policy/procedure documents that they have operational responsibility of, as well as being required to perform their other day-to-day operational duties/functions. It also allows other subject matter experts to play an active role in document contribution.

3.4 Policy and Procedure Review Group (SMT)

The SMT is the Policy and Procedure Review Group. The role of the group is to check all policies before finalisation and finalise and approve procedures.

For policies, the SMT will ensure policies are complete and ready for finalisation prior to them being submitted for final approval. As noted in section 2.4 above, all Organisational Policies must be approved by the SMT (which is made up of the three Directors together with the CEO), and all Council Policies must be approved by Council.

For procedures, the SMT will be able to provide final approval on these documents. If the SMT considers it is appropriate, they may allow the Director with operational responsibility for the procedural subject matter to approve the procedure.

3.5 Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is an independent advisory Committee to Council. Under this framework, the role of the committee is to provide commentary for consideration on policies that relate to financial/risk/governance matters before finalisation and approval by SMT/Council. The SMT will determine which policies should go to the committee for comment. The committee may also request to see a specific policy.

3.6 Council

Council policies are to be adopted by Council (e.g. by resolution at a Council meeting).

4 NEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4.1 Overview

Planning is essential for the formation of good policy and procedure. There are 5 key steps to be taken when developing new Council policies, organisational policies and procedures as described below.

This Framework also contains some guidance materials to assist Policy and Procedure Authors in planning, including:

- Appendix 1, which is a high level summary of the policy and procedure development, approval and review process.

- Appendix 2, which is a checklist that should be followed by a Policy and Procedure Author when developing or reviewing a policy/procedure. This checklist contains a set of prompts to ensure that all critical steps are addressed.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

4.2   Step 1: Analysis

If you are a Policy and Procedure Author, before you begin, the first question you should ask is, why is the policy or procedure needed?

Ask yourself:

- What is the trigger for the policy or procedure?

  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?

  If so, you should review that policy or procedure.

- 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.

4.3   Step 2: Consult with stakeholders (internal and external)

Stakeholder feedback is important to developing a document that will be understood, accepted and followed by those affected.

Before developing or reviewing a document, the Policy and Procedure Author must discuss with the Policy and Procedure Owner what level of consultation is appropriate for the policy or procedure.

Depending on the document, consultation may be carried out:

- before developing a 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. Consider who is the document going to affect? And what is the best way to obtain effective feedback from them?

4.4   Step 3: Drafting the document

Before you begin writing a policy or procedure, remember:

- Do not duplicate or contradict other policies, legislation, procedures or other documents.
- Be clear about what the document is for, and what it needs to achieve.
- Write for the intended audience – councillors, staff, community members, etc.
- Use clear, concise and consistent language throughout.
- Keep it simple and straightforward, avoid jargon, acronyms and technical language.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

Test the level of understanding on someone who is not familiar with the subject matter.

- Have regard to feedback from relevant stakeholders.
- Avoid confusing issues by only including what is necessary

  Do not add information that is not critical to achieving the document's objective.
- Remember that policies and procedures guide Council, staff and community members about how Council's powers and discretions should be, or are likely to be, exercised. However, they cannot dictate an outcome and so take care to ensure that they are not drafted so as to purport to require Council or staff to make decisions on particular matters in a particular way.
- Identify the approval method (Council, SMT, Director) and allow enough time for this to happen before your deadlines.
- Use the correct template.

4.4.1 Templates

All policies and procedures must be written using the relevant Policy Template or Procedure Template accessible to staff on the intranet.

These templates aim to ensure that Council has a consistent set of policies and procedures that are easily recognised and distinguished from other formal documents.

Using a template makes it easier for the author to remember what content is needed and apply the correct text and numbered heading styles. Readers of the policies and procedures will know where to find similar information in each document.

Both templates allow for additional headings or sections if needed, depending on the nature of the policy or procedure. Additional information may be included, particularly where there is a requirement to follow guidelines or other directions to have specific information in a policy/procedure.

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

4.4.2 Policy Template

The Policy Template contains information and headings that must be completed for every policy that is written: headings must not be deleted or ignored unless otherwise indicated.

The Policy Template is set out with the following structure and each of the following topics contain further guidance text within the template:

1. Purpose

The policy purpose is a brief statement about the intended purpose of the policy, why it is being put into place, and should articulate the overall goal of the policy.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

2. Scope

The Scope needs to include brief statement/s that identify to whom (e.g. specific groups of people) and to which parts of Council's the policy applies. In other words, the "who" or "what" of the policy. Which persons, departments, branches, regions, etc. does this policy affect? And to whom or which situations will the policy not apply?

3. Policy Statement

Policy statements are about identifying the broad principles/standards of expected action/behaviour and/or compliance, i.e. setting the 'rules' or 'framework' within which decisions are made on a particular matter.

4. Procedures

This section should include reference to the procedures that coincide with the policy.

5. Supporting Information

This section should include additional information regarding the policy that has not been covered so far in the sections above. Here the Policy Owner can make any miscellaneous notations about the policy or link to any related information such as exclusions or special situations.

6. Responsibilities

The responsibilities section should identify any compliance, monitoring, review, reporting or records management obligations.

7. Definitions of terms or abbreviations used

This section should identify any definitions, terms or abbreviations used in the policy.

8. Related Legislation and documents

This section should list any related legislation and other documents, like regulations or the Council Plan.

9. Appendix

This section should include any exhibits, appendices or forms that are tied to the policy.

10. Human Rights Statement of Compatibility

The Victorian Ombudsman can receive and investigate complaints about whether administrative actions taken by councils are in breach of, or have not properly considered, human rights. In all policies, Council must include a statement that shows it has given proper consideration to any obligations that Council has to meet under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).

11. Policy Owner

This section should detail the owner of the policy.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

12. Feedback

A feedback mechanism should be available to enable either feedback to be provided about the policy and for a person to be able to request to speak to someone about the policy. Whether the feedback is good or bad, it is in Council's interest to know how the policy is received.

13. Document information
The document information section records details about the policy type, status/version and key dates around its review and adoption. This information is important to have attached to the policy for good record management and transparency about the document's history.

4.4.3   Procedure Template

Similar to the Policy Template, the Procedure Template also contains information and headings that must be completed for every procedure that is written: headings must not be deleted or ignored unless otherwise indicated.

The Procedure Template is set out with the following structure and each of the following topics contain further guidance text within the template:

1. Purpose

The procedure purpose is a brief statement about the overall purpose of the procedure, i.e. what outcome/s is the procedure intended to achieve, why it is being put into place, and should articulate the overall goal of the policy it is attached to.

2. Scope

The Scope needs to include brief statement that identifies to whom (e.g. specific groups of people) and to which parts of Council the procedure applies. This section should specify exclusions to clarify scope if needed.

3. Procedure

This section addresses how the policy is implemented. Include brief statements about the process or steps to be followed to implement Council's strategies, operational requirements, values or policy. This section also identifies the positions and their specific responsibilities for these processes or steps. Procedures must have enough detail to enable staff to carry out the procedure successfully. Check that systems are in place to support the procedure.

4. Responsibilities

The responsibilities section should identify any compliance, monitoring, review, reporting or records management obligations.

5. Definitions of terms or abbreviations used

This section should identify any definitions, terms or abbreviations used in the procedure

6. Related Legislation and documents

This section should list any related legislation and other documents, like regulations or the Council Plan.

7. Appendix

This section should include any exhibits, appendices or forms that are tied to the policy.

8. Human Rights Statement of Compatibility

The Victorian Ombudsman can receive and investigate complaints about whether administrative actions taken by local councils are in breach of, or have not properly considered, human rights. In all policies, Council must include a statement that shows it has given proper consideration to any obligations that Council has to meet under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).

9. Procedure Owner

This section should detail the owner of the procedure. Council should assign a responsible party for each procedure, this should be at position level to enable some flexibility should Council experience staff movements.

The procedure owner is the individual who is given the responsibility to review, edit and maintain the associated policy. They will also be the point of contact for any questions regarding said policy and procedure.

10. Feedback

A feedback mechanism should be available to enable either feedback to be provided about the procedure and for a person to be able to request to speak to someone about the procedure and associated policy. Whether the feedback is good or bad, it is in Council's interest to know how the procedure is received.

11. Document Information

The document information section records details about the policy type, status/version and key dates around its review and adoption. This information is important to have attached to the policy for good record management and transparency about the document's history.

4.4.4   Exceptional circumstances: Combination of policy and procedures

There may be circumstances where an industry-specific template for a combination of policy and procedures must be used (for example, there is requirement for an education and care service to have policies and procedures in place under regulations 168 and 169 of the *Education and Services National Regulations 2011*).

In these circumstances, a combined document can be used, which is based on the policy template but incorporates the procedures in the same document.

4.4.5   Writing a procedure

Given the high level of detail contained in procedure and their connection to policy, there are certain additional things to remember when writing a procedure:

- Council's procedures identify 'how' it does things, 'when' it does things, and 'who' does it.
- Procedures prescribe specific actions needed to be taken to implement a policy or other requirement such as a legal obligation. They set out the how, when and who, in order to:

<table>
<tr><td>POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK</td></tr>
</table>

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

- 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 procedures should clearly state which policy they are linked to.

  In turn, policy template has an entry field to be completed to show any related procedures.

- The SMT (or Responsible Director with approval of SMT) approves 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.

- Check that systems are in place to support the procedure.

4.4.6 Naming principles

Naming principles are important to ensure Council's policy and procedure documents are named consistently.

A policy must be given a title that clearly describes the objective of the policy, e.g. Complaints Handling Policy.

Procedures relating to a particular policy should be given the same title with "procedures" added to it, e.g. Complaints Handling Procedure, would relate to the Complaints Handling Policy.

Although it is more likely that the public and Council staff will search for policies and procedures using a title than a numerical reference, Council still assigns policies with a code or number to be included in the footer of the document.

4.5 Step 4: Communication and Training

Communication and training are an essential part of implementing policy and procedure. Before the document is finalised, plan how and when you are going to communicate the 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?

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

Have these been addressed (e.g. consider simple English options/ document accessibility to ensure people with disability have the same access to information and services as others in the community)?

- Do you need a budget for implementation?
- Once approved, when will the policy or procedure be adopted? In other words, what is the commencement date?

4.6 Step 5: Approval

Once the policy or procedure has been finalised, it must be approved by the relevant person or body.

For Council Policies, this is Council.

For Organisational Policies, this is the SMT.

For Procedures, this is the SMT or, where approved by the SMT, the Director with operational responsibility for the subject matter.

Once a policy or procedure has been approved, it must be sent to the Policy and Procedure Coordinator.

Except in the case where a procedure is approved by a Director, once the document has been approved, the CEO (through the Policy and Procedure Coordinator) will sign and date it.

For procedures approved by a Director, not the SMT, that Director will sign and date it.

4.6.1 Golden Plains Shire Council Policy and Procedure Register

Once the document is approved, the Policy and Procedure Coordinator or Policy and Procedure Assistant will make a record in the Golden Plains Shire Policy and Procedure Register.

The register will be kept up to date and will be incorporated into Council's internal reporting system.

The register will be able to be sorted in several ways and will be structured as follows:

DOCUMENT TYPE Council Policy/ Organisational Policy/ Procedure	DOCUMENT NAME	DOCUMENT REFERENCE NUMBER / CODE	DOCUMENT OWNER	RESPONSIBLE DIRECTORATE / AREA	APPROVED BY	ADOPTION DATE	REVIEW DATE	VERSION NUMBER

4.6.2 Electronic filing

Approved policy and procedure documents will be kept in a secure folder managed by the Policy and Procedure Coordinator and Policy and Procedure Assistant to ensure version control. PDF versions will be the only ones available for access, however, a Word version will also be kept for future amendment by the Policy and Procedure Owner when the document is reviewed.

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

4.6.3 Accessibility

Approved policies and procedures should be accessible by the adoption date.

Council Policies and Strategic Documents are available to the public on the Golden Plains Shire website.

Organisational Policies and procedures are accessible to staff on the intranet.

5 REVIEWING EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5.1 Version control

Every time there is an adopted change to a policy or procedure, the version number will change, which enables Council to know which version of a policy or procedure 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. Complaints Handling Policy v1.docx.

5.2 Review timings

The Policy and Procedure 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, the Council Plan or stakeholder issues.

The Policy and Procedure Coordinator or Policy and Procedure Assistant will enter the review date and Policy and Procedure Owner on the Golden Plains Shire Policy and Procedure Register. The Policy and Procedure Coordinator or Policy and Procedure Assistant will issue a reminder to the Policy and Procedure Owner six months in advance for each review. Every six months, a report will be provided by the Policy and Procedure Coordinator or Policy and Procedure Assistant to the SMT on the status of review dates and their completion.

All policies and procedures 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).

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 and procedures.
	A regular review ensures that any new information, risks, processes, continuous improvement, etc. is captured.
2-3 years	Policies and procedures 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 document is effective for the organisation or community.
	When reviewing a document 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 and procedures must be reviewed within at least four years.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

5.3 Process for review

Steps 1 to 5 set out in section 4 above to develop a policy or procedure, similarly apply when reviewing an existing policy or procedure.

This Framework contains some guidance materials to assist Policy and Procedure Authors, including:

- Appendix 1, which is a high level summary of the policy and procedure development, approval and review process.
- Appendix 2, which is a checklist that should be followed by a Policy and Procedure Author when developing or reviewing a policy. This checklist contains a set of prompts to ensure that all critical steps are addressed.

5.4 Rescinding a policy or procedure

There will be situations where a policy/procedure is no longer required, or has been superseded by another policy/procedure or legal requirement.
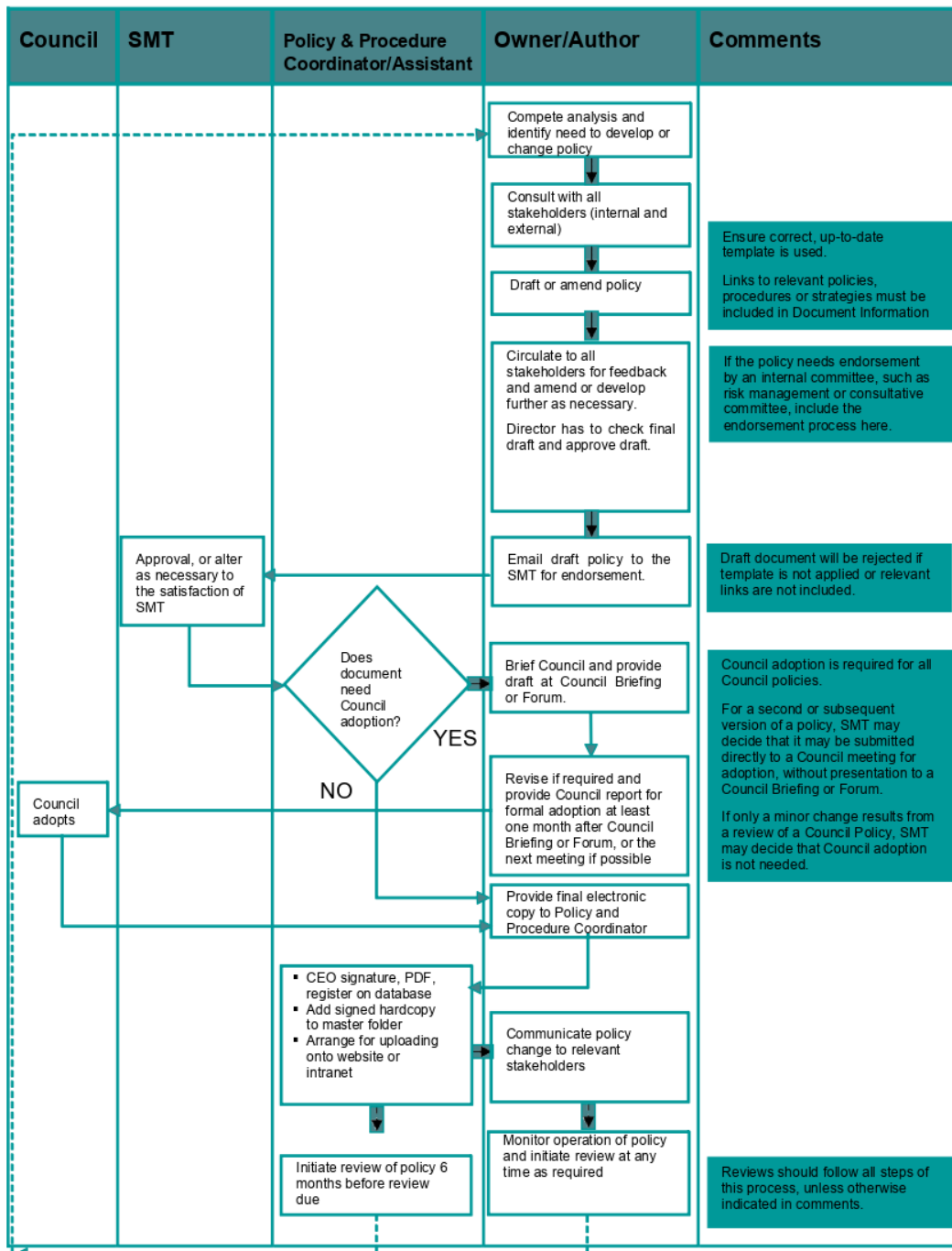
During the review process, the Policy and Procedure Owner will determine if a policy/procedure should be rescinded. If it should, the person or body who approved the policy or procedure in the first place, should generally approve the rescission.

The policy and procedure should also be checked to see if any other documents will be affected by the rescission (e.g. related or supporting documents). For example, it may be necessary to remove reference of the rescinded policy or procedure in these other documents.
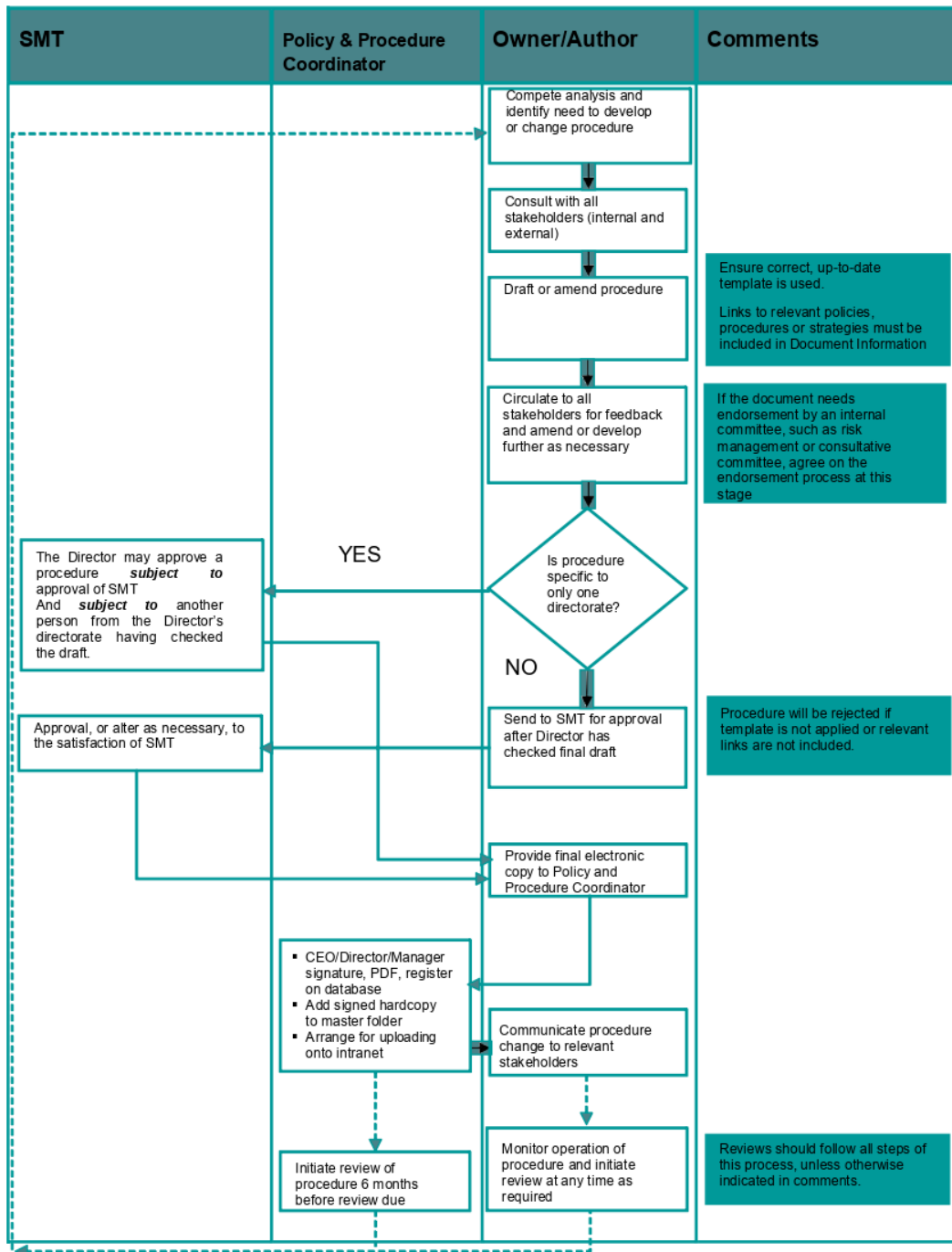
Advise the Policy and Procedure Coordinator once all steps have been completed so that the policy/procedure can be removed from Council's publications/databases (e.g. Council's website/intranet) and its status changed to "rescinded" on the Golden Plains Shire Policy and Procedure Register.

APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND REVIEW PROCESSES

POLICIES

Council	SMT	Policy & Procedure Coordinator/Assistant	Owner/Author	Comments
			Compete analysis and identify need to develop or change policy	
			Consult with all stakeholders (internal and external)	Ensure correct, up-to-date template is used.
			Draft or amend policy	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. Director has to check final draft and approve draft.	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 SMT		Email draft policy to the SMT for endorsement.	Draft document will be rejected if template is not applied or relevant links are not included.
		Does document need Council adoption?	Brief Council and provide draft at Council Briefing or Forum.	Council adoption is required for all Council policies. For a second or subsequent version of a policy, SMT may decide that it may be submitted directly to a Council meeting for adoption, without presentation to a Council Briefing or Forum.
Council adopts		YES / NO	Revise if required and provide Council report for formal adoption at least one month after Council Briefing or Forum, or the next meeting if possible	If only a minor change results from a review of a Council Policy, SMT may decide that Council adoption is not needed.
			Provide final electronic copy to Policy and Procedure 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 6 months before review due	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

SMT	Policy & Procedure Coordinator	Owner/Author	Comments
		Compete analysis and 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, agree on the endorsement process at this stage
The Director may approve a procedure *subject to* approval of SMT And *subject to* another person from the Director's directorate having checked the draft.	YES	Is procedure specific to only one directorate?	
	NO		
Approval, or alter as necessary, to the satisfaction of SMT		Send to SMT for approval after Director 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 and Procedure 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 6 months before review due	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
POLICY AND PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Step 1 – analysis and identity the need to develop a new policy and/or procedure		
•	Does Council need a policy/procedure?	If specific guidance is available from legislation, regulations or a code, a policy/procedure won't be needed. A policy/procedure can be effective to provide direction where legislation is silent or allows for discretion. Is there a current policy/procedure that can be reviewed rather than writing a new one? Will the policy/procedure contradict or duplicate other policies/procedures/legislation/etc?
•	Identify the reason for having a policy/procedure	There are usually triggers to the request for a new policy/procedure. What is the problem or current situation? What is Council trying to achieve? Which Council Plan strategy or objective is the document aiming to achieve?
•	For a review, identify if the policy/procedure is still relevant and in use	Are there any examples to support this?
Step 2: consult with stakeholders (internal and external)		
•	If a policy is required, identify the type of policy: Council or Organisational Policy? Or, would a procedure be more appropriate?	Policy identifies the 'what' Council does and 'why' it does it. o Council Policies: relate to Council's customers and community, and include planning policies. o Organisational Policies: relate to the internal business of Council (around matters such as corporate services or governance). Council's procedures identify 'how' it does things, 'when' it does things, and 'who' does it.
•	Identify the purpose, scope and objective of the policy/procedure and test this with stakeholders	If there is any doubt or disagreement, guidance and a decision should be sought from the responsible Director or SMT before work commences.
•	If a review, identify what has changed since the last review	Ask stakeholders internal and external to Council where appropriate.
•	Determine who else within Council should be involved in development	Consider who the policy/procedure will impact on. For a complex issue or a policy/procedure that impacts on more than one directorate/area of Council, a working group may be appropriate.
•	Identify who will be affected by the policy/procedure 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 potential policy/procedure options and test these with stakeholders	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 – Drafting the document: development or review process		
•	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.
•	Benchmark against policies/procedures adopted by other councils	Use your networks
•	Are any future changes anticipated which will impact on the policy/procedure?	For example, legislation under consideration, or a report about to tabled or published.
•	Is the policy/procedure consistent with the Council Plan and not in conflict with any other policies/procedures or strategic documents?	Council requirement and good practice.
•	Identify any relevant legislation, regulations, guidelines or codes	If completing a review – is there anything new?
•	Identify any discretion which may be required in its implementing the policy/procedure	Include the basis for that discretion with the policy/procedure.
•	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, Council's Risk Management Strategy action plan and Occupational Health and Safety plan.
•	Prepare draft policy/procedure using the relevant Policy Template/Procedure Template. For a policy/procedure review, track the changes proposed	Use Policy Template/Procedure Template and guidance included in the Policy and Procedure Framework.
•	Take an overall look at the policy/procedure and identify any improvements or potential changes required	Use possible scenarios to test the policy/procedure to make sure it gives effect to the policy objectives and does not have any unintended consequences.
•	Check that policy/procedure does not stray into irrelevant considerations	Irrelevant considerations must not be taken into account in making administrative decisions.
•	Check compatibility against 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 and Procedure Coordinator for a guide. See also http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/

• Consider compatibility with other requirements where relevant, e.g. Equal Employment Opportunity, gender equity, accessibility, Occupational Health and Safety.	Council must consider the implications of relevant legislation and obligations it adheres to.
• Identify links to other Council documentation	For example another policy, procedure, Code of Conduct, Council Plan, Budget or a strategy.
• Undertake a review of any lower level Council documentation at the same time as reviewing the policy/procedure	Such as associated policies/procedures, forms or templates.
• Identify the appropriate timeframe for the policy/procedure to be reviewed	Refer to criteria in the Policy and Procedure Framework. Maximum is four years.
Step 4 – Communication and Training	
• Identify how the policy/procedure will best be communicated once approved	How, when, and to whom. Refer to the Policy and Procedure Framework for guidance.
• Will you need a budget for implementation?	Work out how much budget will be required
• Does the document require training sessions to be run or an information sheet prepared	Work out how the training will be provided or prepare the draft supporting information sheet
Step 5 – Finalisation and approval	
• Obtain endorsement of draft policy/procedure	From responsible Director/SMT. Do you need endorsement by internal committees?
• If the SMT/Director directs, circulate the draft to all stakeholders for feedback and amend or develop further as necessary	By this step, there should be no surprises in the feedback received, if consultation has been conducted during the development of the document.
• If a Council policy, prepare report/s on new or reviewed policy for Council	All policies are initially considered by the SMT. 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.
• Update Council records	Once a policy/procedure is adopted or approved, provide the electronic version to the Policy and Procedure Coordinator to add the appropriate signature, PDF the document, update the Policy and Procedure Register, review schedule, and include on intranet and/or internet.
• Communication and training	Confirm approval or adoption to all stakeholders involved in the process. Conduct training or information sessions if necessary.
• Policy/procedure review	Continue to schedule policy/procedure reviews according to timeframe set, or earlier when changes are identified. Set a reminder to commence review of the policy/procedure at least six months prior to its review date.

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

[Document Title] Policy

[IMPORTANT NOTES]

[This Policy Template with instructions describes what information to include in each section and how to write it – see the Policy and Procedure Writing Instructions at the end of this document and USE THIS AS A REFERENCE TOOL.

Remember before you begin:
- Policies are written in clear, concise, simple language.
- Policy statements address what is the rule rather than how to implement the rule.
- 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.
- Council Policies statements are to be made readily available to the community and organisational policies are be to made readily available to Council staff.
- As a body, Council's policies should represent a consistent, logical framework for Council's actions.

[DELETE THIS BOX]

<DOCUMENT TITLE> [E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING] POLICY

CONTENTS

<DOCUMENT TITLE> [E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING] POLICY

1. PURPOSE

1.1 [Insert a brief statement about the intended purpose of the policy, why it is being put into place, and should articulate the overall goal of the policy.]

1.2 *[Example: This policy guides how a complaint from a member of the community against a Councillor is to be investigated].*

2. SCOPE

2.1 [Include brief statement/s that identify to whom (e.g. specific groups of people) and to which parts of Council's the policy applies. In other words, the "who" or "what" of the policy. Which persons, departments, branches, regions, etc. does this policy affect?] Which actions are impacted by the policy? Specify exclusions to clarify scope if needed.]

2.2 *[Example: This policy does not apply to complaints made under the Protected Disclosure Act 2012.]*

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 [Policy statements are about identifying the broad principles/standards of expected action/behaviour and/or compliance, i.e. setting the 'rules' or 'framework' within which decisions are made on a particular matter. For example, policy statements address what is the standard, while procedures address how the standard is implemented. So:

    3.1.1 Describe the details of the policy. That is, detail the specific information, principles, and any other particulars relating to that policy outlined in key points.

    3.1.2 Order the information into a clear, logical structure of headings and numbered paragraphs/statements.

    3.1.3 Consider the use of simple diagrams or flowcharts in an appendix.]

3.2 *[Example – a complaints handling policy:*

    3.2.1 *Council's complaint handling system is based on the following principles.*

        1. Commitment

        Council is committed to resolving complaints. Council recognises people's right to complain and considers complaint handling to be part of the core business of serving the community and improving service delivery. etc.]

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 [Refer to any procedures that relate to the policy.]

<DOCUMENT TITLE> [E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING] POLICY

5.   SUPPORTING INFORMATION <delete if not required>

5.1   [Include any other relevant information regarding the policy that has not been covered above.]

6.   RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

6.1   [Include brief statement/s identifying actions/responsibilities and the position/s responsible for ensuring the policy:

- aligns with relevant legislation, government policy and Council's requirements/strategies/values;

- is implemented and monitored (i.e. the policy is followed, reflects the changing policy environment, and emerging issues are identified); and

- is reviewed to evaluate its continuing effectiveness (e.g. achieving its purpose, remains relevant/current.]

Reporting

6.2   [Refer to reporting requirements and the position/s responsible for reporting, if any.]

6.3   *[Example - No additional reporting is required.]*

Records Management

6.4   [Refer to relevant records management requirements.]

6.5   *[Example - Council must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in accordance with the Public Records Act 1973.]*

7.   DEFINITIONS OF TERMS OR ABBREVIATIONS USED

Terms and definitions <delete if not required>

7.1   **<Term:>** <Definition> [Add terms and definitions if required and list in alphabetical order, otherwise delete]

7.2   **<Next Term:>** <Definition> [Add terms and definitions if required and list in alphabetical order, otherwise delete]

7.3   [It may assist the reader to provide these in a table format, for example:]

Term	Definition
Council	*Golden Plains Shire Council*

<DOCUMENT TITLE> [E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING] POLICY

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction with: • the quality of a service provided, an action taken, or decision made by Council or its contractor • a delay or failure in providing service, taking an action, or making a decision by Council or its contractor

8. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

8.1 [In alphabetical order, list the related legislative documents (e.g. acts, regulations, standards), government policy, and Council policies and procedures etc that together form a suite or framework for this specific policy.]

8.2 [Example -

Strategic Documents, Policies or Procedures

Complaints Handling Procedure

Legislation

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) etc]

9. APPENDIX <or APPENDICES> <delete if not required>

9.1 [Refer to any appendices that are referenced in the policy and provide links.]

10. HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT OF COMPATABILITY

10.1 [Comment on the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*. As a public authority, Council has a duty to act compatibly with human rights and to give human rights proper consideration in decision making. See the guidelines for policy makers available at: https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/laws-and-regulation/human-rights-legislation/charter-of-human-rights-guidelines-for.]

10.2 [Example - It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)]

11. POLICY OWNER

11.1 [Identify the owner of the policy. *Example - The [insert position title] is the policy owner.*]

11.2 The policy owner is the individual who is given the responsibility to review, edit and maintain this policy and associated procedure. The policy owner is also the point of contact for any questions regarding this policy.

<DOCUMENT TITLE> [E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING] POLICY

12. FEEDBACK <delete if not required>

12.1 You may provide feedback about this document by emailing enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

13. DOCUMENT INFORMATION

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Council [/or Organisational] Policy document
DOCUMENT STATUS:	[For example: Approved/Not Approved]
DOCUMENT OWNER POSITION:	[For example: Director Corporate Services]
APPROVED BY:	[For example: Senior Management Team/Director/Manager]
DATE ADOPTED:	[Insert Date/Month/Year]
VERSION NUMBER:	[Insert version number]
REVIEW DATE:	[Insert review date – this should coincide with the policy review date. Best practice would be no longer than five years between reviews]
DATE RESCINDED:	[Include if relevant]
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	_____ Signed by Chief Executive Officer
FILE LOCATION:	[Include a file location (AltusECM Ref) so that it may be accessed in future and amended - Word and PDF – insert file path] INT[XX/XXXX]
NOTES:	Policy documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult Council's Policy page on the Golden Plains Shire Council website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date. Available at: [Select one URL below and delete the other] [for Council policy] https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-council/about-council/council-policies [for organisational policy] https://intranet.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/the-hub

<DOCUMENT TITLE> [E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING] POLICY

[USE THIS AS A REFERENCE TOOL]
POLICY AND PROCEDURE WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

Aligning legislation and policy documents

- Policy and procedure must align with relevant legislative, regulatory or organisational requirements, such as Council's Plan (2017-2021). Policies and procedure refer to legislation and government policies but do not duplicate their content.
- Procedures related to policies must align. Any changes in one document must also be made to related documents.

Choosing the right language

- Council's staff and community come from diverse backgrounds and rely on policy documents for essential information, so it's important to write clearly, concisely and simply. To help you achieve this, write with the reader in mind and follow these tips:
  - use short, easy-to-read sentences in plain English
  - use language that is positive and inclusive, e.g. gender-neutral ('their' not 'he' or 'she'), gender-inclusive (e.g. chair not chairman)
  - use active voice rather than passive voice
  - use terminology consistently (i.e. consistent across the document)
  - use words that are clear about what is mandatory (e.g. must, will) and what is discretionary (e.g. may)
  - use commonly understood language rather than jargon that requires specialist knowledge
  - explain in full what acronyms mean when using them
  - use generic contact details (e.g. enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au) rather than specific details that date quickly.

Writing in active voice

- Writing in active voice gives the reader a sense of action, identifies who or what is taking action, is more direct and often requires fewer words than writing in passive voice. Some examples are below.

Active voice	Passive voice
The complainant must submit a complaint in writing.	An complaint must be submitted in writing by the complainant.
Staff are responsible for implementing this policy and following the procedure.	Implementing this policy and following the procedure is the responsibly of staff.
Y must consider X.	Due consideration needs to be given to X by Y.

Referring to legislation

- When first mentioned in the document, the full title of legislation is in italics (*Local Government Act 1989*), but not when used subsequently and shortened, e.g. 'the Local Government Act' or 'the Act'.
- When referring to a section of an Act, reference as 's.' e.g. under s.89 of the Act.

<DOCUMENT TITLE (E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING)> PROCEDURE

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

[Document Title] Procedure

[IMPORTANT NOTES] –

[This Procedure Template with instructions describes what information to include in each section and how to write it – see the Policy and Procedure Writing Instructions at the end of this document and USE THIS AS A REFERENCE TOOL.

Remember before you begin:
- Procedures are tied to policies. Show how the procedure helps Council achieve its goals.
- Procedures are developed with the customer/user in mind.
- Procedures should be written so that what needs to be done can be easily followed by all users.
- Procedures should be written in clear, concise, simple language.
- When feasible, procedures should offer the user options. Procedures which are unnecessarily restrictive may limit their usefulness.

[DELETE THIS BOX]

<DOCUMENT TITLE (E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING)> PROCEDURE

CONTENTS

<DOCUMENT TITLE (E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING)> PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

1.1 [Insert the overall purpose of the procedure, i.e. what outcome/s is the procedure intended to achieve, why it is being put into place, and should articulate the overall goal of the policy.]

1.2 *[For example - This procedure establishes a complaints handling process to ensure Council's actions and decisions affecting staff and the community are fair and equitable. To achieve this, the Complaints Officer reviews issues raised by complainants where they reasonably consider Council's policies, procedures and processes have not been followed and they have been adversely impacted.]*

2. SCOPE

2.1 [Insert brief statement/s that identify to whom (e.g. specific groups of people) and to which parts of Council the procedure applies. Specify exclusions to clarify scope if needed.]

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 [While policy statements address **what** is the standard, procedures address **how** the standard is implemented. Include brief statements about the process or steps to be followed to implement Council's strategies, operational requirements, values or policy. Procedures also identify the positions and their specific responsibilities for these processes or steps. So:

    3.1.1 Order the information into a clear, logical structure of headings and numbered paragraphs/statements.

    3.1.2 Consider the use of simple diagrams or flowcharts in an appendix.]

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

4.1 [Include brief statement/s identifying actions/responsibilities and the position/s responsible for ensuring the procedure:

- aligns with relevant legislation, government policy and Council's requirements/strategies/values;

- is implemented and monitored (i.e. the procedure is followed, reflects the changing policy environment, and emerging issues are identified); and

- is reviewed to evaluate its continuing effectiveness (e.g. achieving its purpose, remains relevant/current.]

Reporting

4.2 [Refer to reporting requirements and the position/s responsible for reporting, if any.]

<DOCUMENT TITLE (E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING)> PROCEDURE

4.3   *[Example - No additional reporting is required.]*

Records Management

4.4   [Refer to relevant records management requirements.]

4.5   *[Example - Council must maintain all records relevant to administering the [policy name] and this procedure in accordance with the Public Records Act 1973.]*

---

5.   **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS OR ABBREVIATIONS USED**

Terms and definitions <delete if not required>

5.1   **<Term:>** <Definition> [Add terms and definitions if required and list in alphabetical order, otherwise delete]

5.2   **<Next Term:>** <Definition> [Add terms and definitions if required and list in alphabetical order, otherwise delete]

5.3   [It may assist the reader to provide these in a table format, for example:]

Term	Definition
Council	*Golden Plains Shire Council*
Complaint	*An expression of dissatisfaction with:* • *the quality of a service provided, an action taken, or decision made by Council or its contractor* • *a delay or failure in providing service, taking an action, or making a decision by Council or its contractor*

---

6.   **RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS**

6.1   [In alphabetical order, list the related legislative documents (e.g. acts, regulations, standards), government policy, and Council policies and procedures etc that together form a suite or framework for this procedure.]

6.2   [Example -

Strategic Documents, Policies or Procedures

Complaints Handling Policy

Legislation

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) etc]

<DOCUMENT TITLE (E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING)> PROCEDURE

7. **APPENDIX <or APPENDICES> <delete if not required>**

7.1   [Refer to any appendices that are reference in the procedure and provide links.]

8. **HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT OF COMPATABILITY**

8.1   [Comment on the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*. As a public authority, Council has a duty to act compatibly with human rights and to give human rights proper consideration in decision making. See the guidelines for policy makers available at: https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/laws-and-regulation/human-rights-legislation/charter-of-human-rights-guidelines-for.]

8.2   *[Example - It is considered that this procedure does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic). Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. Council will formally involve elected employee Health and Safety Representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.]*

9. **PROCEDURE OWNER**

9.1   [Identify the owner of the procedure. *Example - The [insert position title] is the procedure owner.]*

9.2   The procedure owner is the individual who is given the responsibility to review, edit and maintain this procedure and associated policy. They are also the point of contact for any questions regarding this procedure.

10. **FEEDBACK <delete if not required>**

10.1   You may provide feedback about this document by emailing enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

11. **DOCUMENT INFORMATION**

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Procedure document
DOCUMENT STATUS:	[For example: Approved/Not Approved]
DOCUMENT OWNER POSITION:	[For example: Director Corporate Services]
APPROVED BY:	[For example: Senior Management Team/Director/Manager]
DATE ADOPTED:	[Insert Date/Month/Year]
VERSION NUMBER:	[Insert version number]
REVIEW DATE:	[Insert review date – this should coincide with the policy review date. Best practice would be no longer than five years between reviews]
DATE RESCINDED:	[Include if relevant]

[Document Title] Procedure
Reference Number:
[IN19/XXX]

Effective Date: [Day/Month/Year]
Page 5 of 7

<DOCUMENT TITLE (E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING)> PROCEDURE

EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	_____ Signed by Chief Executive Officer
FILE LOCATION:	[Include a file location (AltusECM Ref) so that it may be accessed in future and amended - Word and PDF – insert file path] INT[XX/XXXX]
NOTES:	Procedure documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult Council's Policy page on the Golden Plains Shire Council website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date. Available at: https://intranet.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/the-hub

<DOCUMENT TITLE (E.G COMPLAINTS HANDLING)> PROCEDURE

[USE THIS AS A REFERENCE TOOL]
POLICY AND PROCEDURE WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

Aligning legislation and policy documents

- Policy and procedure must align with relevant legislative, regulatory or organisational requirements, such as Council's Plan (2017-2021). Policies and procedure refer to legislation and government policies but do not duplicate their content.
- Procedures related to policies must align. Any changes in one document must also be made to related documents.

Choosing the right language

- Council's staff and community come from diverse backgrounds and rely on policy documents for essential information, so it's important to write clearly, concisely and simply. To help you achieve this, write with the reader in mind and follow these tips:
  o use short, easy-to-read sentences in plain English
  o use language that is positive and inclusive, e.g. gender-neutral ('their' not 'he' or 'she'), gender-inclusive (e.g. chair not chairman)
  o use active voice rather than passive voice
  o use terminology consistently (i.e. consistent across the document)
  o use words that are clear about what is mandatory (e.g. must, will) and what is discretionary (e.g. may)
  o use commonly understood language rather than jargon that requires specialist knowledge.
  o explain in full what acronyms mean when using them, and
  o use generic contact details (e.g. enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au) rather than specific details that date quickly.

Writing in active voice

- Writing in active voice gives the reader a sense of action, identifies who or what is taking action, is more direct and often requires fewer words than writing in passive voice. Some examples are below.

Active voice	Passive voice
The complainant must submit a complaint in writing.	An complaint must be submitted in writing by the complainant.
Staff are responsible for implementing this policy and following the procedure.	Implementing this policy and following the procedure is the responsibly of staff.
Y must consider X.	Due consideration needs to be given to X by Y.

Referring to legislation

- When first mentioned in the document, the full title of legislation is in italics (*Local Government Act 1989*), but not when used subsequently and shortened, e.g. 'the Local Government Act' or 'the Act'.
- When referring to a section of an Act, reference as 's.' e.g. under s.89 of the Act.