Cassowary Coast REGIONAL COUNCIL

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Document Control

Policy Reference:	ORG023
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Effective from:	14 October 2021
Review Date:	March 2023 (policy templates as per Style Guide)
	July 2023 (Organisation Review)
Next review date:	October 2026
Council Resolution:	LG1112

# Contents

1.   What is a Policy Framework

A policy framework (framework) is a logical structure that is established to organise policy documentation into groupings and categories to aid administration.

The framework provides a structure and process for the initiation, development, adoption and review of Council and Internal policies and procedures ensuring they:
- are developed in a consultative, comprehensive and uniform manner;
- are consistent with and meet the compliance requirements of legislation;
- do not duplicate legislation;
- are written in plain English and easy to understand;
- are aligned with the Council's core values;
- provide a clear understanding of the Council and management expectations;
- assign responsibility and accountability for development, review and approval;
- support strategies outlined in the Community Plan and Corporate Plan

2.   Policy Structure

Cassowary Coast Regional Council is governed by a range of legislation and regulations which it must comply with and can also develop its own Local Laws. Policies and procedures are a means of the Council further regulating its own activities by setting out principles and rules that must be followed by the Council when undertaking its activities.   The diagram below shows the hierarchy of policy documents within the policy framework:
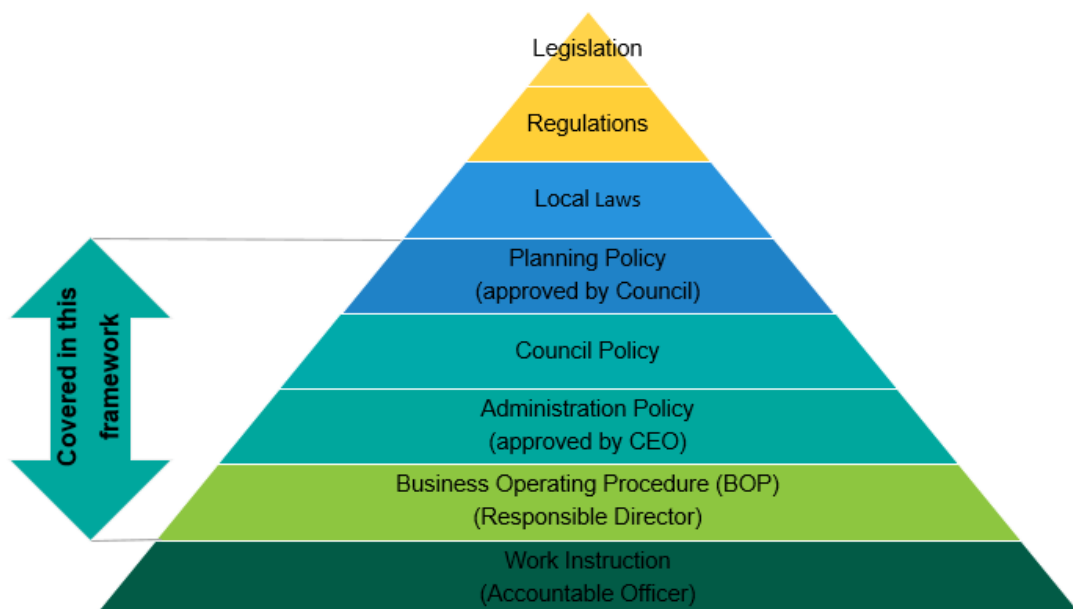
2.1   Planning Policy

Planning policies are a subset of Council policies that assist with the administration of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council Planning Scheme 2015.

Planning policies adopted under Planning Scheme are approved by Council.

2.2   Council Policy

Council policies focus on the strategic and statutory decision-making obligations of the Council. The policy may relate to an express power or duty or a matter that is non-statutory and entirely discretionary. A Council policy decision will impact the Local Government's strategic, financial or operational resources and may also impact service levels provided to the community. Care must be taken to ensure that Council Policy does not cross over into the statutory functions and responsibilities of the CEO for the day to day operations of the Local Government.

2.3   Administration Policy

Administration Policies are an important component of internal governance, providing principles for the control of activity and decision making relevant to the Chief Executive Officer's duties for managing the day to day operations of the local government.

The CEO is therefore the decision maker for the adoption, amendment or revoking of Administration Policy.

2.4   Business Operating Procedure (BOP)

A procedure is the second level of the Policy Framework, which is more detailed than a Policy and describes the who does what and when (in sequence order). They may directly relate to a policy or the stand-alone performance of an administrative function or activity. A BOP establishes the internal controls that support, consistent service levels, maximise efficiency and effectiveness, meet compliance obligations, mitigate risk and ensure operational standards.

2.5   Work Instructions

Work instructions should be very detailed on "how" to accomplish a specific job, task or assignment.

2.6   Example Policy Hierarchy

Classification	Intent	Example	Approval
Council Policy	• Policy that directly impacts the Council & community • Policy that guides Council decision making	• Asset Management Policy • Community Sponsorship Policy	Council Resolution
Planning Policy	• Policy linked to Planning Scheme	• Reduction in Development Application Fees Policy	Council Resolution
Administration Policy	• Policy that affects the running of the whole organisation	• Use of Council Vehicles • Acceptable Internet and Email Use	CEO sign-off
Business Operation Procedure	• Defines business rules (who/when we do something)	• Asbestos Management	Responsibly Directors
Work Instruction	• Localised processes (how we do something)	• End of day cash reconciliation procedure	Accountable Officer

3.   Policy Development

A policy response will be considered where there is either a complexity or lack of clarity in one or a combination of any of the following circumstances:

1. Legislative requirement;
2. Industry standards;
3. Organisational standards;
4. Strategic objective; or
5. Community need or expectation.

A policy will only be proposed where it can be demonstrated that it will deliver clarity and consistency in decision-making, improved efficiency, effectiveness, or improved community outcomes.

The initiation of a Council policy requires either a resolution of Council or a comprehensive Officer report to Council. The initiation of an Administrative policy is at the discretion of the CEO.

All new policies or major amendments to Council or Planning policies are to be workshopped with Council during the drafting stage prior to submitting to Council for adoption.

3.1   New Policies and Major Amendments

Where a new policy, or a review of an existing policy is commenced, the following key elements must be considered:
- Statutory compliance obligations
- Industry standards, codes of practice, guidelines
- Risk implications
- Customer / community needs and expectations
- Whether it effectively integrates in the Councils operations
- External stakeholder consultation, where determined appropriate
- Internal stakeholder consultation
- Potential resource and budget implications

3.2   Minor amendment to existing policies

Where amendments are required for any of the reasons listed below, provided the amendments do not alter the substantive operations of the policy, the amendments can be approved by the Manager Governance, Risk & Performance without referral to Council:
- Changes in legislative references
- Changes in Council position titles
- Changes in administrative arrangements of State and Federal Governments
- Changes in Council document titles
- Changes to correct grammar or typographical errors

3.3 Policy and Procedure writing tips

- Write documents in plain English
- Use simple words that readers will understand
- Use short sentences and break up statements into paragraphs
- Avoid using jargon or language that requires specialist knowledge
- Avoid using information that can be quickly outdated. For example, use positions and titles as opposed to names
- When using acronyms, provide the full term/title before using the acronym
- Stick to the point. Limit unnecessary background and non-critical content

The best written policies and procedures are written with the reader in mind.

4.   Policy and Procedure Review

Each Policy and Procedure is to be assessed using the following risk considerations:

a) Implications of statutory requirements;
b) Implications for operational effectiveness and efficiency
c) Potential for negative impact;
      I. Financial
      II. Health/Safety
      III. Reputational
      IV. Compliance
d) Complex procedures or technical information; or
e) Change is likely to occur

Where the risks are determined as **'high'** and especially where change is likely to occur, the policy or procedure must be scheduled for review on an annual basis.

Where the risks are determined as **'low – moderate'** and there is no likelihood of change, the policy or procedure is to be scheduled for a review at least once every three years. This does not preclude the Council from undertaking a review as and when required.

All Council and Planning Policy reviews are to be approved by Council. All Administration Policies are to be approved by the CEO. Business Operating Procedures reviews are approved by the Responsible Director.

Policy and Procedure Owners are required to do a **minor desktop review** annually to ensure that no minor changes as per 3.2 are required or that a **major review** is required.

Minor desktop reviews do not need the approval of Council or the CEO.

5.   Policy and Procedure Contents

Where possible, policy and procedures should have a consistent format. The table below has been provided as a guide.

Header	Council / Planning	Administration Policy	Business Operating Procedure
Contents	No	No	Optional
Purpose / Objective	Yes	Yes	Yes
Background	No	No	Optional
Policy Scope	Yes	Yes	No
Owner	Yes	Yes	Yes
Review Frequency	Yes	Yes	Yes
Related Documents	Yes	Yes	Yes
Links to Legislation / Regulation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Definitions and Principles	Optional	Optional	Optional
Process Diagram	No	No	Optional

6.   Policy Templates

Please refer to Council's Style guide for Policy and Procedure templates.