



George Town Council

# Policy Development, Approval and Review Policy

**Policy No. 09 Version: 01**

Adopted	16 <sup>th</sup> December 2015	Minute Ref: 418/15
Amended		
Next Review Date	December 2018	

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## Appendix One

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## 1. Introduction

This Policy has been developed to provide a definition and framework for the development/review and approval of policy documents for George Town Council.

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## 2. Type of Policy

This Policy is recognised as a “Council Governance” Policy in that it requires endorsement by Council and provides specific direction in relation to governance practices.

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## 3. Objective

The objective of this Policy is to ensure there is a uniform system for the development/review and approval of Council policies.

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## 4. Link to Strategic Plan

### **Goal 1: Organisational Accountability**

**Aim:** To be a responsible, accountable local government by:  
Audit organisational policies, procedures and reports to ensure accountability

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## 5. Legislative Requirements

Local Government Act 1993

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## 6. Risk Considerations

This Policy aligns itself with objectives for risk management at George Town Council, namely:

- Set performance standards and regular review and improve practices and procedures.

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## 7. Source of Policy Development

Policy may come from a variety of sources, such as:

### **7.1 Regulation Oversight Organisations**

Oversight bodies such as the Department of Local Government, the Tasmanian Ombudsman, the Auditor General's office and similar entities may routinely request Councils to amend, review or develop a policy position on a range of matters.

### **7.2 Legislative Requirements**

State and Commonwealth legislation which require Councils to develop a policy position on issues across the range of Local Government responsibilities. A significant amount of policy development is in response to regulatory requirements.

### **7.3 Councillors**

Issues may be brought to the attention of Councillors by community members. A Councillor should direct these issues to the General Manager or raise them at appropriate workshops, Council or Committee meetings.

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## 7. Source of Policy Development (Cont.)

### 7.4 Council Staff

Council reports and community events may highlight issues that could be subject to policy position consideration. The Strategic Plan and Annual Plan may also be the documents that lead into a requirement for policy development.

### 7.5 Community

The General Manager and Council staff may receive written and verbal requests from the community which may require the application of policy.

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## 8. Types of Policy

### 8.1 Statutory

Statutory policies are those policies that are adopted by Council due to a legislative requirement.

### 8.2 Strategic

Strategic policies are those policies that are adopted by Council to influence the direction of an issue or assist in decision making for Council staff.

### 8.3 Council Governance

Council Governance policies are those policies that require endorsement by Council and provide specific direction in relation to governance practices.

### 8.4 Operational/Administrative

These policies are approved by the General Manager and outline the manner in which operational issues or administrative practices should or may occur. These policies should reflect the delegations approved for various levels of Council staff and influence the day to day operations of the Council.

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## 9. Developing new Policy Documents

New policy documents are developed to address an identified need. Consideration should be given to amending an existing policy document or consolidating related policy documents before creating a new document.

Policies can be initiated by various staff in George Town Council. It is therefore essential that for uniformity, retention of standards and commonality of communication across the process that the procedures outlined within this document are followed.

There are several stages in the development of a policy and these are outlined below. In all respects each stage reflects a common sense approach and inclusive method.

### 9.1 Research and data/information gathering

Research/development of a draft policy document will be based on a variety of possible sources such as regulatory requirements, a request from Council, an auditor's report, a directive from the Department of Local Government and various other potential sources such as other local government bodies.

The initial research phase is critical in establishing the principle sources of information and relevance/ ensuring all regulatory elements, as required, are included and addressing the specific issue which is the subject of the policy.

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## 9. Developing new Policy Documents (Cont.)

### 9.2 Structure of a Policy Document

Policy papers should include a set structure in the presentation of information and should be in a standardised format including:

- The policy document title must be a brief description of the subject matter. Where possible, the key identifying word should be the first word of the title (eg. Risk Management Policy);
- Each Policy is to be assigned an identifier as provided by the Executive Officer (Governance);
- The Type of Policy (Statutory, Strategic, Council Governance or Operational/Administrative)
- The completion of the George Town Council Policy template document under the various headings (see Appendix 1);
- Paragraphs are to be numbered;
- The use of plain English is strongly recommended as the Policy will be read by a diverse audience;
- Titles of positions and organisational units;
- Appendices such as those referred to within the Policy document; and
- The policy document should be marked "Draft" until the Policy is formally adopted by the Approval Authority.

### 9.3 Stakeholder Consultation

The draft Policy document must be circulated for comment/consultation to interested parties such as key operational staff, the Management Team or other staff (as identified). This stage is essential in capturing additional information/knowledge and to ensure that any policy encompasses operational practice or is informed by any potential impact of change. It is also a key step in enabling those who have the most responsibility for the Policy's implementation to have input into its development.

### 9.4 Response and Development

Following discussion with interested parties, any appropriate feedback or input is incorporated into the revised policy document then recirculated for agreement.

### 9.5 Approval

The first draft version is provided to the General Manager and Management Team and depending on delegation may require approval by Council.

The determination of the appropriate final Approval Authority (General Manager or Council) will need to be confirmed on a case-by-case basis and will be dependent on the subject of the Policy and whether the Policy is statutory, strategic, Council governance or operational/administrative by nature.

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## 10. Approval Authority & Approval Process

Generally Council will be the Approval Authority for all statutory, strategic and Council governance policies with the General Manager the Approval Authority for all operational/administrative policies and/or procedures.

All Draft Policy documents relating to fraud control, risk management and accounting and internal controls are to be reviewed by the Audit Panel in the first instance prior to consideration by Council. *(These Policies may be reviewed at an Elected Members workshop prior to them being reviewed by the Audit Panel).* Policies outside of this type can bypass the Audit Panel and can be presented directly to an Elected Members workshop prior to consideration by Council.

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## 10. Approval Authority & Approval Process (Cont.)

The responsible Officer is to then incorporate any relevant comments or feedback received by Elected Members at a workshop or the Audit Panel (where appropriate) into the Draft Policy document prior to formal submission to Council. The Draft Policy document must be accompanied by a full report from the submitting Officer to Council outlining the purpose of the document.

Council may determine that the Draft Policy is placed on public exhibition inviting comment. Public exhibition is required for a minimum of 14 days and all efforts should be undertaken to ensure draft Policy documents are advertised for comment/input in the Examiner Newspaper and on Council's website.

At the conclusion of the exhibition period, all submissions and comments received are to be considered and a further report provided to Council encompassing any findings.

It is at this final stage, that Council is to review the proposed Policy in light of any submissions made and resolve to adopt the Policy with or without modification, or not to proceed with the Policy.

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## 11. Reviewing Existing Policy Documents

Existing Council Policy documents must be reviewed at least every three years with the exception of Council's Code of Conduct which is to be reviewed within twelve months of an ordinary election.

Changes to related legislation or operations can trigger the need to review a policy document before its normal review date. The Manager responsible for the administration of the Policy concerned will identify if a Policy document requires early review.

Each year, the Executive Officer (Governance) will notify each Departmental Manager of the Policy documents due for review in that year for inclusion in Council's annual reporting schedule.

When preparing to review a policy document, Managers are to request the Executive Officer (Governance) to provide the Word version of the current published document for editing. All editing must be undertaken, and shown using 'tracked changes', on the version of the document provided by the Executive Officer (Governance). Tracking changes is essential to show the Approval Authority what changes are proposed.

Where only minor administrative amendments are required, the General Manager is authorised to direct the appropriate Departmental Manager to make and record the changes without the need for consultation or reference to the Approval Authority.

When a Policy document reaches its review date and does not require any amendments, the Departmental Manager must confirm that this is the case through appropriate consultation. If no amendments are required the Departmental Manager must notify the Approval Authority that the policy document has been reviewed and no amendments are required and the Executive Officer (Governance) will record a new review date.

***Refer to Section 10. Approval Authority & Approval Process***

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## 12. Rescinding Existing Policy Documents

When a Policy document has been consolidated into another policy document or is no longer required, the existing Policy document must be rescinded. The Approval Authority, on the Departmental Manager's advice approves the rescinding of the Policy document.

***Refer to Section 10. Approval Authority & Approval Process***

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## 13. Publication & Distribution of Policy Documents

The responsibility for the publication and distribution of any reviewed/newly adopted Policy documents rests with the Executive Officer (Governance).

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## 14. Implementation of Policy

### **Responsibility**

Responsibility for the administration of this Policy rests with the General Manager.

Date of Approval:	16 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
Approval Authority:	Council
Source of Approval:	Council Resolution: 418/15
Commencement Date:	16 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
Related Council Documents:	Council Policies
Next Review Date:	December 2018
Publication of Policy:	This Policy will be made publicly available via Council's website.



George Town Council

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# DRAFT [Insert Policy Title]

**Policy No:** [Obtain from EOG] - **Version:** [current versions]

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1. Introduction

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2. Type of Policy

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3. Objective

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4. Link to Strategic Plan

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5. Legislative Requirements

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6. Risk Considerations

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7. Definitions [if required]

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8. Policy

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9. Implementation of Policy

**Responsibility**

Responsibility for the administration of this Policy rests with the General Manager.

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