

Isle of Wight Council  
**POLICY MANAGEMENT  
FRAMEWORK**  
**2023/24**

# 1 Document Information

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Policy Management Guidance Handbook</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<i>Draft</i>
<b>Current Version:</b>	2.3 (April 2023)
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<b>Consultation:</b>	Strategic Manager – Organisational Intelligence Assistant Director of Corporate Services Programme Manager - Accessibility
<b>Approved by:</b>	Corporate Management Team
<b>Approval Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Every 2 Years
<b>Next Review:</b>	April 2025

Version History		
Version	Date	Description
1.0	February 2023	Initial draft
2.1	March 2023	Consultation feedback & changes
2.2	April 2023	Accessibility edits
2.3	April 2023	DRAFT agreed at Corporate Management Team
2.3	May 2023	Final version to Scrutiny Committee for comment

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### 3 Introduction

Policies, strategies & plans are key documents for any organisation. They set out the principles the organisation will follow in delivering a service and the specific processes/procedures that are used. As policies and strategies are central to the way a service is delivered, this framework is designed to assist officers when developing or reviewing these key documents.

The purpose of this high-level, over-arching *Policy Management Framework* is to provide a consistent and fit-for-purpose basis for policy & strategy management across the Council.

This document should be reviewed and interpreted alongside the *Policy Management Guidance Handbook* (*this will be a link*).

#### 3.1 Scope

This framework applies to the development of all policies, strategies and plans throughout the organisation. The recommended best and good practice can also be applied on a wider basis to any other supporting documentation (e.g. procedures, guidance).

##### 3.1.1 Defining Terms

For the purpose of this document and associated guidance, the term “*key document*” is used to describe any policy, strategy or plan the local authority has responsibility for.

#### 3.2 Is it a Policy, Strategy, Plan or Procedure?

The definitions and names given to key documents are often used inconsistently and many characteristics associated with one type of document are present in another. This section of the framework intends to establish commonly accepted definitions and linkages to simplify the process of developing these documents using a practical example.

➤ Example – **Restricting speed on certain roads.**

##### 3.2.1 What is a Policy?

A **Policy** provides guidance, a framework, or set of principles that determine decisions, actions, and other matters.

➤ The **Policy** is that there will be speed restrictions on certain roads.

##### 3.2.2 What is a Strategy?

A **Strategy** is defined as a long term approach to implementing a set of principles, based upon a shared vision, establishing the current situation (*‘where we are now’*) and the desired future situation (*‘where we want to be’*). A Strategy is not static and should evolve in response to or anticipation of changing needs and circumstances.

➤ The **Strategy** outlines the intended means by which the policy will be implemented, how people who speed will be dealt with and how the effectiveness of the policy will be measured and monitored.

##### 3.2.3 What is a Plan?

A **Plan** follows from a Strategy and is a detailed document that sets out the intended methods of progressing from the current situation to achievement of one or more desired outcomes. The sequence of steps must be measurable, action plans with specific actions, outcomes and

delivery timescales are a useful way of illustrating these steps.

- The **Plan** ensures that the various elements of the strategy are achieved. That the correct speed limits are imposed on the right roads, purchases are made, signs erected, staff recruited and trained, publicity material issued and that the appropriate levels of penalty and means of enforcement are in place.

### 3.2.4 What is a Procedure?

A **Procedure** is a particular way of accomplishing an objective (sequence, timing, execution, etc.) and is usually developed to describe the methods for implementing a policy.

- A **Procedure** would outline precisely how each component of the plan is acted upon. E.g. how to procure the correct materials or equipment.

## 4 Aims and Objectives of the Framework

### 4.1 Aims of the Framework

The primary aim of this framework is to establish a clear and consistent approach to policy formulation, development and management across the local authority, embedding the corporate direction into policies, strategies & plans to offer improved performance and service delivery.

### 4.2 Objectives of the Framework

In order to achieve the aims of the framework, a set of objectives to be achieved have been established.

- Embed good practices in policy development & monitoring and ensure the corporate objectives are considered and reflected in policy development.
- Policy development is joined-up and collaborated & consulted upon by relevant directorates/services/stakeholders, ensuring cohesion with other key policies, strategies and plans at local, regional and national levels.
- Facilitate the implementation and monitoring of key documents.
- Facilitate the timely review of key documents, ensuring they are current and fit-for-purpose.

## 5 Components of the Framework

This section of the details components and processes supporting policy management across the organisation, designed to contribute to achieving the objectives of the framework.

### 5.1 Policy Development Process

This process breaks down the activity of developing key documents into defined stages, from initial formulation, through approval, implementation and on-going monitoring & review. The *Policy Management Guidance Handbook* provides a step-by-step approach to the five stages of policy development.

[Figure 1 – Diagram of Policy Management Cycle](#) illustrates the five stages, loosely defining

conceptual steps within each stage. These steps are flexible and may cross over between stages of the process.

### 5.1.1 Stage 1 – Policy Identification and Justification

Policies are identified from many different sources; the following three are regarded as some of the most important:

- The primary source of policy identification is the Corporate Plan, the over-arching set of principles and goals which define the local authorities direction; it is through these principles that policies, strategies and plans are identified to meet the intended goals.
- The secondary source are statutory duties placed upon the local authority or legislative instructions from central government.
- The tertiary source is through identifying the needs of the community through mechanisms such as residents' feedback, consultations, surveys and complaints.

This identification process will underpin the justification and rationale (“*Why does the organisation need this policy?*”) behind developing the solution to meet the intended outcomes. It is at this stage a lead officer will be assigned, establishing and coordinating a policy development team.

### 5.1.2 Stage 2 – Policy Development

This stage focuses on developing the core content of the policy. A best practice approach is recommended, using suggested key areas for consideration and learning from how other local authorities have developed similar policies, E.g. undertaking consultation. Those officers drafting the policy will apply specific expertise and knowledge therefore the framework does not set out to determine the core content of the policy.

It is at this stage (and onwards) that specialist and professional advice from various departments such as Legal Services, Financial Management and Organisational Intelligence is incorporated into the development process. Democratic Services will need to be consulted early on to ensure the correct approval process is followed for the document in question.

### 5.1.3 Stage 3 – Policy Approval

If the policy or strategy requires approval, consideration will need to be given early on in the develop process to which approval path a document should take. Depending on the requirement, the service lead officer will be responsible for completing checks that requirements have been met. This could be statutory elements such as ensuring the *Plain English Guide* has been followed or proper consultation with stakeholders has been undertaken. The approval path will stipulate the necessary checks in place.

All documents must be approved in accordance with the Council Constitution and approval process. Key to this process are documents which form part of the ‘Policy Framework’ as defined in Article 4 of the Constitution and documents specifically defined in legislation which must be approved at Full Council. The *Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations (2000)* also specify documents which must be approved by the Regulatory & General Purposes Committee, as detailed within the Constitution.

### 5.1.4 Stage 4 – Policy Implementation and Communication

Implementation and communication are important steps in ensuring the success of a policy. Consideration will need to be given to how the policy will be implemented and communicated to identified audiences & stakeholders.

### 5.1.5 Stage 5 – Policy Monitoring and Review

Policy development does not end when the policy is approved, Figure 2 – Diagram of Policy

Management Cycle demonstrates the on-going life cycle of a policy. Every policy needs to be monitored and reviewed on an appropriate timescale. The review should take into account how the policy is performing (measured through monitoring processes, e.g. Action Plan monitoring or performance indicators) and assess whether the policy is achieving the aims and objectives. Through this evaluation process, any improvements to the content and any changes in circumstances can be incorporated within the document.

Equally, it may be felt that a policy is no longer necessary, has been superseded or has achieved the desired outcomes, in which case a policy could be terminated.

Monitoring of action plans should be undertaken on a formal basis between the sponsor and lead officer.

## **5.2 Reviewing the Framework**

The framework will be formally reviewed every two years (first review one year from approval) to ensure it remains relevant and takes consideration of any changes in circumstances. The review process and any amendments to the framework or guidance will be undertaken by the Organisational Intelligence Team through the appropriate schedule.

# **6 Roles and Responsibilities**

## **6.1 Role of Councillors**

Councillors are responsible for setting the policy of the Isle of Wight Council at the highest level. High level strategic policies are approved by Councillors either at the meetings of the Full Council, Cabinet or Cabinet member delegated powers, or through other Committees of the Council. The Constitution sets out the policies that can only be determined by Full Council itself, and the delegations to the Committees. All other high level strategic policies are for the Cabinet (or Cabinet members) to determine.

Councillors have a role in developing these policies either by feeding comments through any consultation phase, or by commenting on proposals to adopt policies – these will be set out in the Forward Plan that is published by Democratic Services on a monthly basis to cover the decisions to be made of the next four months.

There is also a role for the Scrutiny Committee to review and make comments on the effectiveness of any policies.

## **6.2 Role of Director**

Directors represent the ‘gatekeepers’ in the approval process. All key documents must be approved by Directors before proceeding through the process to the appropriate level.

## **6.3 Role of Policy Sponsor**

The role of policy Sponsor will be undertaken by a Director, Assistant Director or Strategic Manager. The sponsor provides ownership to the policy by directly linking it to the most appropriate directorate or service area, ensuring the necessary focus is maintained and issues are escalated through the appropriate channels/forums. The sponsor will nominate an appropriate policy lead officer.

## **6.4 Role of the Service Lead Officer**

The service lead officer responsible for coordinating the activities of development, authoring, approval & implementation, monitoring and review for the duration of the document life cycle.

## 6.5 Role of Policy Development Team

The policy development team is established by the service lead officer. The group should comprise of officers key to developing and implementing the policy/strategy/plan. The group is responsible for supporting the lead officer and providing links to different services with an interest in the development and implementation of the policy, ensuring a coordinated and joined-up approach.

## 6.6 Role of Democratic Services

All policies, strategies or plans that require a decision for approval are submitted through Democratic Services, who will ensure that the documents are progressed through the appropriate approval path.

## 7 Conclusion

Policy development & management are essential elements in providing a 'back-bone' to effective service delivery. If properly implemented it can; improve the organisations reputation with residents, visitors and local businesses; improve performance and value for money; establish and maintain effective partnership working; support staff and contribute to organisational development and improvement.

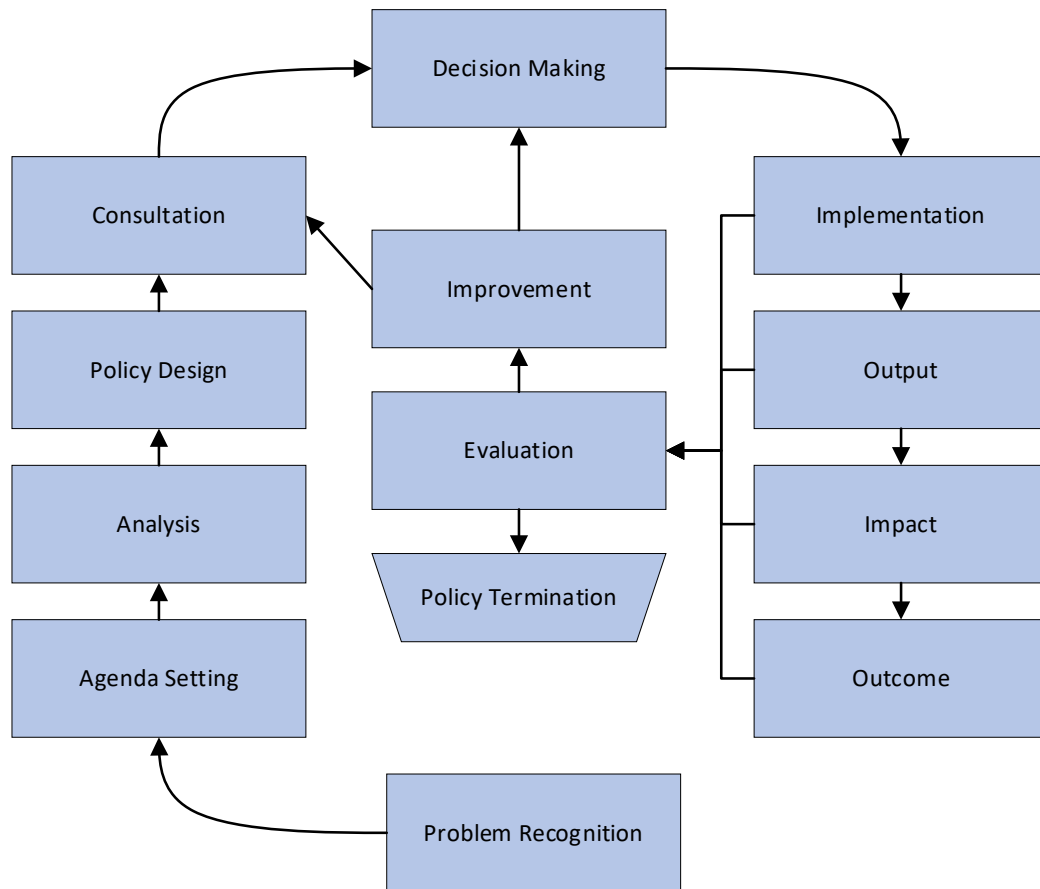
Through improvements in policy development and management arrangements, the authority can continue to meet the aspirations of the Corporate Plan in the successful delivery of priorities, improving outcomes for the community.

## 8 Related Documents

Corporate Plan	<a href="#">Viewing Document: Corporate Plan 2021-2025 (iow.gov.uk)</a>
Policy Management Guidance Handbook	<a href="#">Viewing Document: Policy Management Guidance Handbook (iow.gov.uk)</a>
Policy Template	<a href="#">Viewing Document: Policy Management Framework -Document Template (iow.gov.uk)</a>
Council Constitution	<a href="#">Council Constitution (iow.gov.uk)</a>
Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations (2000) [Schedule 1]	<a href="#">The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>
Plain English Guide	<a href="#">Viewing Document: Plain English Guide - second edition (iow.gov.uk)</a>



### 9.0 Figure 1 – Diagram of Policy Management Cycle



STAGE	STEP	DESCRIPTION
Stage 1 – Identification and Justification	Problem Recognition	Selection of the problem that will be addressed.
	Agenda Setting	Generating interest in the problem.
	Analysis	Analysis to understand the problem (resource & financial implications, potential impacts, wider perspective etc.)
Stage 2 – Development	Policy Design	Development of solution(s).
	Consultation	Testing the acceptance of the solution(s) by different stakeholders.
Stage 3 – Approval	Decision Making	Choosing the solution.
Stage 4 – Implementation & Communication	Implementation	Provision of resources for required activity.
	Output	What the solution actually produces.
	Impact	Specific impact of the solution on the community / organisation.
	Outcome	Degree to which the impact on the community / organisation solves the problem.
Stage 5 – Monitoring & Review	Evaluation	Evaluation of the policy during different stages of the cycle.
	Improvement	Modifying the solution to include improvements identified through evaluation
	Policy Termination	Ending a policy that does not work or is no longer required.