



SCOPE

This assessment tool is to be used when preparing any new Council Policy or amending/updating an existing policy. It also applies to any new or updated CEO Directive.

WHY DO WE NEED AN ASSESSMENT TOOL?

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Gender Equity Act 2020 both require Council to consider the impacts on rights and responsibilities when making decisions, preparing or updating a new local law, when making changes to council services and when preparing/updating new policies and procedures. Council is also required to consider climate change mitigation and planning in its decisions under section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020. This same act also outlines strategic principles that must be considered when developing or updating policies and directives.

This tool is to guide you through how to complete such an assessment to ensure that Council is meeting its legislative obligations, as well as ensuring there is no unconscious bias or inadvertent adverse implications for peoples' rights when preparing policies and CEO Directives.

HOW DO I USE THIS TOOL?

You must use this tool whenever updating or preparing a new Council Policy or CEO Directive. This assessment will form part of the documentation provide to ELT and Council to inform their consideration of the proposed policy or directive.

All sections of the tool need to be completed – if there are no apparent implications, then please write something along the lines of '*It is considered there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.*' For the Local Government Act 2020 principles, you may include the text '*Not applicable*' if it is irrelevant to the policy or directive.

CONSIDERATION OF PRINCIPLES OUTLINED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

Principle	Comment
Governance and Strategic Principles (section 9)	
Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law	The Community Engagement Policy achieves the requirement on the Local Government Act 2020 to include deliberative engagement in the development of the Council Plan and Community Vision.
Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations	The Community Engagement Policy helps Council achieve this principle. By working with our community, and seeking their input into our decisions and projects, we create better outcomes.
The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted	This is achieved in all relevant Communications and Engagement Plans
The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making	The policy intent ensures communication and engagement plans are developed to support all Council projects, programs and initiatives – including strategic planning and decision making.
Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued	Through the adoption of this policy Council's C&E Team will ensure all communications and engagement activities are effective and are of high quality.
Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought	Where possible we work with other Council to share information.
The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured	The policy adopts a set of principles our engagement must adhere too. One of these is responsive and flexible. It also ensures the C&E Team where possible identifies cost efficiencies through streamlining or consolidation to avoid duplication or to maximise impact or the opportunity.
Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making	The policy intent ensures communication and engagement plans are developed to support all Council projects, programs and initiatives
The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured	The policy adopts a set of principles our engagement must adhere too. One of these is 'genuine and transparent'.
Community Engagement Principles (section 56)	
A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope	The policy ensures all communications and engagement activities are effective and of high quality. C&E Plans define the objective and scope.

Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation	The policy ensures all communications and engagement activities are effective and of high quality.
Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement	When using deliberative engagement practice – recruitment is independent and representative.
Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement;	This is particularly relevant when using deliberative engagement practice which are independently facilitated.
Principle	Comment
Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making	This is outlined in the policy's engagement principles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine and transparent • Inclusive and accessible • Responsive and flexible • Listen and learn
Public Transparency Principles (section 58)	
Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act	This is in line with policy principle.
Council information must be publicly available unless— (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest	This is in line with policy principle.
Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community	This is in line with policy principle.
Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated	This is in line with policy principle.
Strategic Planning Principles (section 89)	
A Council must undertake the preparation of its Council Plan and other strategic plans in accordance with the strategic planning principles	This policy ensures deliberative engagement is used for preparation of Council Plan.
An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted	This policy ensures evaluation processes and continual improvement to our community engagement approach.
Strategic planning must address the Community Vision	This policy ensures deliberative engagement is used for preparation of Community Vision.

Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation	This policy sets Council business units as being responsible for initiative the need for C&E Plan – early.
Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation	Risk identification and mitigation is a key aspect of all C&E Plans
Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.	This policy creates a flexible approach to community engagement.

Principle	Comment
Financial Management Principles (section 101)	
revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans	All procurement (be this items or contractors) is inline with Council's financial policies.
Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances For the purposes of the financial management principles, financial risk includes any risk relating to the following— (a) the financial viability of the Council (b) the management of current and future liabilities of the Council (c) the beneficial enterprises of the Council	Budgets are outlined in each C&E Plan.
Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community	It is considered there are no implications at the time of preparing this document
Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept	It is considered there are no implications at the time of preparing this document
Service Performance Principles (section 106)	
Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community	Community engagement ensures community is engaged in issues and services that affect them.
Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended	Inclusive and Accessible is a key principle of the policy.
Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community	Community engagement ensures community is engaged in issues and services that affect them.

A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring	Community engagement ensures community is engaged in issues and services that affect them.
Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision	Community engagement ensures community is engaged in issues and services that affect them.

CONSIDERATION OF CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 IMPACTS

Council can limit human rights when those limitations can be justified. This means that Council can continue to make decisions on behalf of the community about how best to balance rights, ensure community safety, and use limited funding for competing public interest challenges.

Are there any human rights implications arising from this policy or directive in relation to the 20 substantive rights? Note: some rights have been excluded that do not apply to local government (eg deprivation of liberty)	Analysis
Recognition and equality before the law (section 8)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Right to life (section 9)	Not applicable
Protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (section 10)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Freedom from forced work (section 11)	Not applicable
Freedom of movement (section 12)	Not applicable
Privacy and reputation (section 13)	This policy ensures people can contribute safely to Council decisions.
Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (section 14)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Freedom of expression (section 15)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 16)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.

Protection of families and children (section 17)	Not applicable
Right to take part in public life (section 18)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Cultural rights (section 19)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Property rights (section 20)	Not applicable
Liberty and security of person (section 21)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Fair hearing (section 24)	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Rights in criminal proceedings (section 25)	Not applicable
Overall, does the policy, local law or decision raise human rights issues?	A policy principle is inclusive and assessable. This means Council will create an environment where diversity of opinion is welcomed and everyone is heard.
Are there any human rights implications arising from this policy or directive in relation to the 20 substantive rights? Note: some rights have been excluded that do not apply to local government (eg deprivation of liberty)	Analysis
Overall, does the policy, local law or directive restrict or interfere with the scope of the human right/s identified?	No
If yes, are the limitations or restrictions reasonably and demonstrably justified under Section 7 of the Human Rights Charter?	
Are there any less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose that the limitation seeks to achieve?	The policy aims to increase participation.

GENDER EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender impact assessments (GIAs) are designed to help organisations think critically about how policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people. The purpose GIAs is to create better and fairer outcomes, and make sure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Your gender can affect your needs and experiences. This means that policies, programs and services can affect people of different genders in different ways. If we don't think about how their work affects different people, they might unintentionally reinforce inequalities.

A gender impact assessment must:

- assess the effects that the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders
- explain how the policy, program or service will be changed to better support Victorians of all genders and promote gender equality
- where practical, apply an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality can be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of other factors such as age, disability or ethnicity.

Step 1 – Defining the issues and challenge your assumptions	
What is the issue the policy or directive is aiming to address (think about why it is needed)?	The policy ensures that community needs and aspirations are considered in developing and implementing Council's strategic directions and priorities.
Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy or directive included in the decision-making?	Yes. The policy states that wherever possible we will be seeking community input into our decision-making process.
Do you think that people of different genders access this policy or directive at the same rate?	Most C&E Plans provide many different ways for people to have their say – online, in person, anonymously – are all options.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	Yes – this is why C&E plans are well thought out and include many different ways for people to share their thoughts, feedback, and advice.
Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy or directive has the same needs from it?	No – this is why C&E plans are well thought out and include many different ways for people to share their thoughts, feedback, and advice.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	This is why C&E plans are well thought out and include many different ways for people to share their thoughts, feedback, and advice.
What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?	Different communications tools – eg use of video to increase accessibility, captions etc.

Step 2 – Understanding the policy context	
What information is available to understand who is likely to be affected by the policy or directive?	This policy effects all in our municipality.
Do you already have this information?	Census data and demographics
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	We have the ability to ask questions through the survey tools via Share Strathbogie .
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Research, data and feedback is telling us rather than multicultural diversity our region's diversity is more around age. To combat this our C&E activities offer face-to-face methods.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	No. Engagement will be completed on the Community Engagement Strategy. This will be formal consultation.
What information is available to understand the lived experiences of the diverse groups who will be affected?	Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback.
Do you already have this information?	Yes
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	Continue to compete engagement reports and continue to offer flexible planning on C&E tools and methods.
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	No. Engagement will be completed on the Community Engagement Strategy. This will be formal consultation.
How is this policy or directive likely to have different impacts for different people?	Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback.
Do you already have this information?	Yes
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback

<p>Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?</p>	<p>No. Engagement will be completed on the Community Engagement Strategy. This will be formal consultation.</p>
Step 3 – Options analysis	
<p>What are the policy options? For each option describe the proposed policy solution. Provide a brief description of the proposed strategies, activities or service design elements and how they will meet the needs and create benefit for the target audience.</p>	<p>Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback</p>
<p>What are the potential policy options and what gendered impact might they have?</p>	<p>Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback</p>
<p>What are the gendered costs and risks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is likely to be negatively impacted by this? How are the most vulnerable groups likely to be impacted? • Will this reduce a certain group's access to economic resources or opportunities? If so, are they already disadvantaged? • Does it reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, for example, further promoting men in a male dominated industry? 	<p>Deliberative engagement means engaging with a representative section of the community. This is representative of age and gender.</p>
<p>What are the gendered benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will some people benefit more because they have greater access, or does this policy, program or service do everything it can to ensure resources are distributed and used equally? • Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way? Eg will it contribute to a more balanced distribution of unpaid care labour and family responsibilities between women and men? • Will it make women and children safer in public or private spaces? 	<p>Engaging with a representative sample of the community is best practice engagement.</p>
<p>Will some people benefit more because they have greater access, or does this policy, program or service do everything it can to make sure resources are distributed and used equally?</p>	<p>Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback</p>
<p>Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way?</p>	<p>Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback</p>
<p>Does your policy, program or service potentially have negative unintended consequences for certain groups of people?</p>	<p>Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback</p>

Overall, do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa?	Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback
Step 4 Recommendations	
Provide the rationale for the proposed recommendation and include any mitigation strategies that could be used to avoid any harmful unintended outcome.	The policy outlines best practice community engagement.
Include here the rationale for your recommendation as well as any mitigation strategies needed. In line with the Gender Equality Act, explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how your recommendation meets the needs of persons of different genders • how it addresses gender inequality • how it promotes gender equality. 	Our C&E planning continues to offer broad opportunities for feedback

HANDY HINTS

The above questions have been derived from the Gender impact assessment toolkit produced by the Commission for Gender Equality in the public sector. To access the gender equity impact assessment toolkit for more information, please use this link [Gender impact assessment toolkit | Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector \(genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/gender-impact-assessment-toolkit).

For Open Source gender data and research, please use the following resource – the final page is where you will find links to data and resources. [DPC 2011 CGEPS GIA-Templates & Resources FA-Web 0.pdf](#)

For Step 3 the following will assist in identifying whether an impact is a cost or a benefit for gender equity:

Negative or neutral gender impact

- Perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles and relations.
- Privileges men over women and gender diverse people (or vice versa).
- Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for people of different genders.
- Does not take into account issues of intersectionality.

Positive gender impact

- Considers gender norms, roles and relations for people of different genders and how they affect access to and control over resources.
- Promotes the elimination of existing gender gaps, or at least a significant reduction of them.
- Addresses the causes of gender-based health inequities, including the prevention of violence against women, girls and gender diverse people.
- Includes ways to transform harmful gender norms, roles and relations.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION/MITIGATION AND SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Local Government Act 2020 requires council to consider climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in all its key decision making, which includes policy development.

Council is also in the process of finalising a Climate Change Action Plan after declaring a Climate Emergency in 2021.

The Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020 sets out Council's responsibilities under the Act [Victorias-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Plan-2017-2020.pdf \(climatechange.vic.gov.au\)](#). The following factors should inform your analysis statement:

- Provide leadership and good governance, represent the needs and values of local communities, and foster community cohesion
- Manage climate change risks to council community services and assets, with support from the State Government
- Identify the needs and priorities of the municipality and communicate these to State Government where needed
- Develop and deliver locally-appropriate adaptation responses
- Build the resilience of local assets and services
- Plan for emergency management at the municipal level, provide relief and recovery services, and support emergency response operations
- Help the State Government understand localised impacts and responses
- Work with the community to help people understand and get involved in climate change adaptation
- Help connect the State Government with the community.

Sustainable Strathbogie 2030 Strategy (to be updated to the Climate Change Action Plan once adopted)

Chapter 6 Climate Resilient Shire	Comment
Increasing heat	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Changing rainfall patterns, drought conditions, and extreme meteorological conditions	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Increased bushfire conditions and declining volunteer numbers	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Increased social impacts	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Chapter 7 A low carbon shire	Comment
Net Zero by 2025	This target is outlined in the Climate Change Action Plan. The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Energy Efficiency	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Energy Storage	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Renewable Energy	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive

	engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Community Renewable Energy	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Chapter 8 A water sensitive shire	Comment
Conserving valuable potable water	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Stormwater management	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Adaptive and recycled water resources	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Keeping our shire green, cool and resilient	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Chapter 9 A zero waste shire	Comment
Environmental impacts of landfill	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Limited landfill capacity	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Increased illegal dumping	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive

	engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Economic benefits from resource recovery	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Chapter 10 An ecologically rich shire	Comment
Deforestation	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Rural green infrastructure	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Increasing our urban canopy	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Rural roadsides	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Rivers & Wetlands	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Benefitting from our native forests	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Chapter 11 An active and connected shire	Comment
Security of fuel supply	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive

	engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Transition to new fuel economy	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.
Enabling access to the outdoors	The Community Engagement Policy outlines C&E Planning which allows Council to understand community priorities. For example our extensive engagement activities to inform the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.