



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 Complaints policy is a requirement under s 107 of the Local Government Act 2020.
Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations	Ease of raising issues of concern around the way a service has been delivered or the way a decision has been made achieves good outcomes for the local community, as well as achieving good governance objectives through continuous improvement.
The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making	There are no substantial impacts arising from this policy on these matters.
Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued	Learning from the issues raised by complainants is an important way that Council services and facilities can continuously improve.
Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured	There are no substantial impacts arising from this policy on this matter.

Principle	Comment
Governance and Strategic Principles (section 9)	
Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making	A transparent and user friendly complaints process is consistent with State government policy and directives.
The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured	This policy support's Council's philosophy of continuous improvement and responding to community concerns.
Community Engagement Principles (section 56)	
A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation	There are no substantial impacts arising from this policy on these matters.
Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement	The Complaints Policy enables members of our community to raise concerns about the way processes were undertaken.
Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement;	The Complaints Policy enables members of our community to raise concerns about the way processes were undertaken.
Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making	The Complaints Policy enables members of our community to raise concerns about the way processes were undertaken.
Principle	Comment
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	The Complaints Policy enables members of our community to raise concerns about the way processes were undertaken.
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	There are no substantial impacts arising from this policy on these matters however a member of the community may complain about how access to information has been provided or denied.
Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community	Every effort is made to provide information using plain English, however it is noted that certain types of Council documents are complex and technical in nature and need to be so to meet legislative requirements (eg budgets, long term financial plans, planning scheme amendment documents). The Complaints Policy enables matters of concern to be raised in formal way.

Principle	Comment
Public Transparency Principles (section 58)	
Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated	The Policy is available on Council's website.
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	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Strategic planning must address the Community Vision	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.	It is considered there are no notable 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	Complaints in relation to service provision should be used to inform service reviews and process improvements.
Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended	The Complaints Policy enables concerns around access to be raised in a formal manner.
Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community	The Complaints Policy enables concerns around access to be raised in a formal manner. Complaints are a meaningful way in which improvements to our services and processes can be made.
A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring	The Complaints Policy enables concerns around access to be raised in a formal manner. Complaints are a meaningful way in which improvements to our services and processes can be made.

Principle	Comment
Service Performance Principles (section 106)	
Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision	Our complaints policy is one of the documents that our community has ease of access to through our website, with copies able to be posted or provided in hard copy upon request.

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)	The Complaints Policy aims to make the process of lodging a complaint as easy as possible. Concerns relating to failure of Council to support this right can be raised formally under this policy.
Right to life (section 9)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (section 10)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Freedom from forced work (section 11)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Freedom of movement (section 12)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Privacy and reputation (section 13)	Concerns relating to failure of Council to support this right can be raised formally under this policy.
Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (section 14)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Freedom of expression (section 15)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 16)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Protection of families and children (section 17)	Concerns relating to failure of Council to support this right can be raised formally under this policy.

Right to take part in public life (section 18)	It is considered that the ability to easily lodge a complaint with Council supports the participation of all our community members in public life.
Cultural rights (section 19)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Property rights (section 20)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Liberty and security of person (section 21)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Fair hearing (section 24)	Concerns relating to failure of Council to support this right can be raised formally under this policy.
Rights in criminal proceedings (section 25)	It is considered there are no impacts of this document on this human right.
Overall, does the policy, local law or decision raise human rights issues?	It is not considered that there are any adverse impacts on human rights, rather the ability to raise concerns about Council decision making processes and services support the implementation of the Charter.
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? If yes, are the limitations or restrictions reasonably and demonstrably justified under Section 7 of the Human Rights Charter?	There are considered to be no adverse impacts.
Are there any less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose that the limitation seeks to achieve?	Not applicable.

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 is required to meet our obligations under the Local Government Act 2020.
Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy or directive included in the decision-making?	This policy aims to ensure that people impacted by decision making have a vehicle through which they can raise the concerns about the process, behaviour or service provision.
Do you think that people of different genders access this policy or directive at the same rate?	It is considered that access to complaints mechanisms will be used at the same rate and complaints can be made anonymously.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	Council aims to provide equal access to complaints mechanisms and there is a section on how we can support this process by way of an interpreter, talking with people rather than relying on a written complaint and allowing someone to act on a person's behalf.
Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy or directive has the same needs from it?	It is considered that people will have the same needs in terms of raising an issue of concern to them about a process, decision, behaviour or service.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	Council aims to provide equal access to complaints mechanisms and there is a section on how we can support this process by way of an interpreter, talking with people rather than relying on a written complaint and allowing someone to act on a person's behalf. In this way, the policy aims to overcome any barriers that may be posed by different social roles or responsibilities.

What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?	Council aims to provide equal access to complaints mechanisms and there is a section on how we can support this process by way of an interpreter, talking with people rather than relying on a written complaint and allowing someone to act on a person's behalf.
Step 2 – Understanding the policy context	
What information is available to understand who is likely to be affected by the policy or directive?	Council aims to provide equal access to complaints mechanisms and there is a section on how we can support this process by way of an interpreter, talking with people rather than relying on a written complaint and allowing someone to act on a person's behalf.
Do you already have this information?	Yes
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	By researching recommendations from the Victorian Ombudsman's Office in relation to model complaints policies and benchmarking against other council policies and procedures.
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	That there must be a variety of ways in which complaints can be lodged to facilitate equal access by all groups in society.
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 consultation has been undertaken as part of the policy's review.
What information is available to understand the lived experiences of the diverse groups who will be affected?	Complaints that have been lodged since the adoption of the policy.
Do you already have this information?	Yes
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	N/A
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	There is no significant impact on the policy review in relation to the lived experiences of diverse groups within our community.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	The draft Complaints Policy was released for community comment and feedback when it was first prepared in 2020. Given there are no changes to the policy's intent, no further consultation was undertaken.
How is this policy or directive likely to have different impacts for different people?	As stated above, the policy has been designed to overcome any different impacts on groups of people.

Do you already have this information?	Yes
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	N/A
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	There is no significant impact on the policy review in relation to the different people within our community.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	The draft Complaints Policy was released for community comment and feedback when it was first prepared in 2020. Given there are no changes to the policy's intent, no further consultation was undertaken.
Step 3 – Options analysis	
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.	The policy review has not identified any issues of concern that need addressing since the original policy was adopted in 2020, therefore it is considered that there are no other policy options that require consideration. The policy meets legislative requirements and was based on advice from Local Government Victoria in relation to best practice approaches as recommended by the Victorian Ombudsman.
What are the potential policy options and what gendered impact might they have?	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts.
What are the gendered costs and risks? <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? 	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts and does not give rise to costs or risks.
What are the gendered benefits? <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? 	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts.

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?	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts.
Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way?	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts but the complaints process is varied to cater for differing situations and needs.
Does your policy, program or service potentially have negative unintended consequences for certain groups of people?	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts.
Overall, do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa?	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts.
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.	It is considered that the policy review is gender neutral in its impacts.
<p>Include here the rationale for your recommendation as well as any mitigation strategies needed. In line with the Gender Equality Act, explain:</p> <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. 	The variety of means through which complaints may be made follows best practice and is designed to suit all groups within our community. Ease of access to the complaints process, including being able to make a verbal complaint or having a representative make a complaint for you, are some of the mechanisms in which gender equity is achieved.

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 has finalised its 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

It is considered there are no notable climate change or sustainability implications at the time of preparing this document aside from the ability to minimise hard copies of documents from being produced through access to Council information online and in soft copy, reducing paper consumption, printing costs and the need for people to travel to a customer service centre to access information.

Chapter 6 Climate Resilient Shire	Comment
Increasing heat	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Changing rainfall patterns, drought conditions, and extreme meteorological conditions	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Increased bushfire conditions and declining volunteer numbers	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Increased social impacts	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Chapter 7 A low carbon shire	Comment
Net Zero by 2025	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Energy Efficiency	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Energy Storage	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Renewable Energy	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Community Renewable Energy	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Chapter 8 A water sensitive shire	Comment
Conserving valuable potable water	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.

Stormwater management	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Adaptive and recycled water resources	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Keeping our shire green, cool and resilient	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Chapter 9 A zero waste shire	Comment
Environmental impacts of landfill	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Limited landfill capacity	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Increased illegal dumping	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Economic benefits from resource recovery	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Chapter 10 An ecologically rich shire	Comment
Deforestation	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Rural green infrastructure	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Increasing our urban canopy	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Rural roadsides	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Rivers & Wetlands	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Benefitting from our native forests	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Chapter 11 An active and connected shire	Comment

Security of fuel supply	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Transition to new fuel economy	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.
Enabling access to the outdoors	It is considered there are no notable implications at the time of preparing this document.