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## ABOUT THESE GUIDELINES

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This **guideline** is to promote consistency in the development of strategy and policy documents.

The **guideline outlines** the considerations which are to be taken into account by staff of the Wanganui District Council.

This **guideline** also serves to inform the public and practitioners of the principles which guides the development of good strategy and policy documents.

The word "**strategy**" derives from the **Greek word** stratēgos; which derives from two words: -

- "**stratos**" – meaning army.
- "**ago**" – which is the ancient Greek for leading/guiding/moving.

**"All people can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved."**

**Sun Tzu the Art of War  
6<sup>th</sup> century**

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Reviewed: October 2010  
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## 1. What is a strategy?

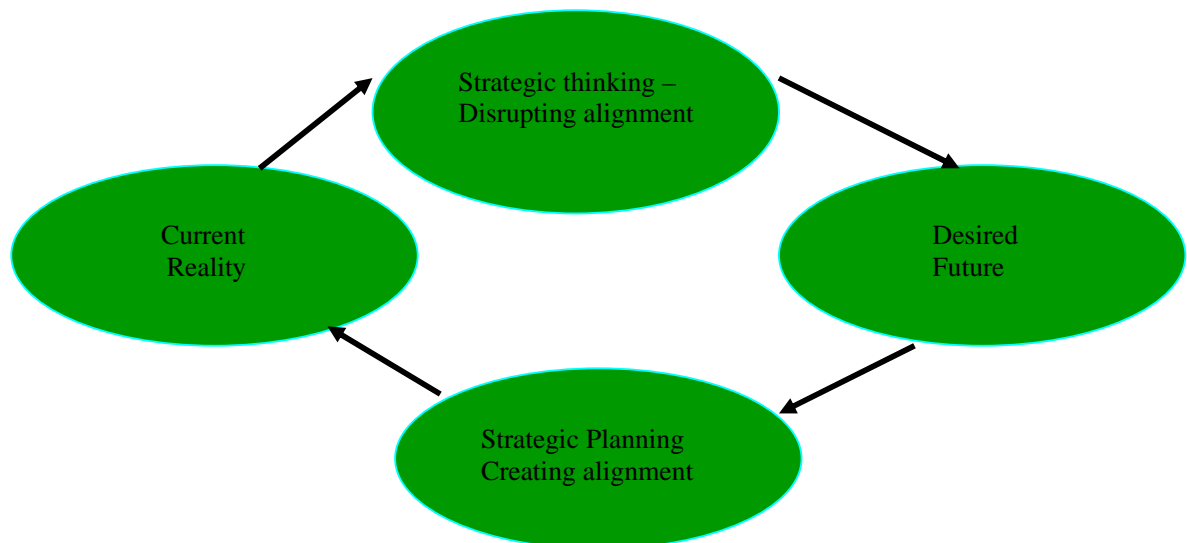
A **strategy** can be defined as –

**A general direction set for the organisation/community to achieve a desired goal, and includes the necessary steps to get there.**

Within this broad definition of **strategy** there are various interrelated concepts:

- **Strategic policy** takes a long-term view and focuses on medium to long-term implications. It emphasises outcomes and the relation between outputs and outcomes. Strategic policy and planning examines external trends and forces that affect the community.
- **Strategic management** is concerned with getting alignment between the organisation and external forces.
- **Strategic thinking** requires intuition and creativity to formulate a vision of where the organisation should be heading.
- **Strategic planning** is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions which shape the nature and direction of the organisation, within legislative bounds.

### **Linking strategic planning to strategic thinking**



## 2. What is a policy?

A **policy** can be defined as:

**A well researched statement of position on an ongoing or recurring matter that directs any response or action, and has been adopted by resolution of the Council or by the Chief Executive (as appropriate).**

Policies are also a guide for developing appropriate operating procedures and practice.

A policy explains the established position for an organisation to undertake a course of action on an ongoing or recurring matter, and it directs any response, future action or inaction. Policies arise from major strategic directions, values and principles of an organisation. We write policy for a number of reasons:

- So people working within the Council have a framework to help them get on with their job.
- To ensure consistent decisions are made across the organisation.
- To provide transparency of the Council's decision-making for the wider public.
- To be efficient in our work – one well thought-out decision in the form of a policy can be applied to many cases.
- To meet statutory requirements.

Policies can be divided into two categories:

1. **Council policy**, - generally about what we do for the community; and
2. **Organisational policy**, - how we go about our business within the organisation.

One of the reasons why there needs to be a consistent approach to formulating policies and strategies comes from Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2002 that requires:

*“If a decision of a local authority is significantly inconsistent with ... any policy adopted by the local authority ... the local authority must, when making a decision, clearly identify –*  
*(a) the inconsistency; and*  
*(b) the reasons for the inconsistency; and*  
*(c) any intention of the local authority to amend the policy or plan to accommodate the decision.”*

Any decision to depart from the Council's policy should be conducted in a public manner e.g. through council resolution during the public part of a formal

meeting. Likewise, if there is any departure from organisational policy, permission of your manager should be obtained.

### **3. What is a procedure?**

Operating procedures show how the policy will be applied. They indicate **how** policies will be implemented at the practical level and determine who does what and when.

### **4. What is a guideline?**

A guideline offers a flexible approach and is intended to offer guidance on an issue that is very broad and where any attempt to capture all possibilities and give clear procedures for dealing with all of them would be extremely difficult.

### **5. The 10-Year Plan**

The 10-Year Plan is Council's primary strategic planning document that is informed by the Community Outcomes. All other strategic documents, (including the District Plan) should, at least, be consistent with it, and ideally, support it. These other strategy documents should provide more operational detail than included in the 10-Year Plan.

The relationship of the 10-Year Plan to other strategic plans are set out in **Appendix 4** of this document.

### **6. How do we document our policies?**

#### **1. Council's Policy Register**

Part of the Council's governance role is to be responsible for overseeing the Council's Policy register and any policies that are required to be revoked. The Policy Register contains Council's policy resolutions (cross referenced to Council minutes) as opposed to policy documents.<sup>1</sup>

#### **2. Council's Inventory of Policy and Plans<sup>2</sup>**

To enable better and consistent stewardship of our corporate policies, the Council maintains an internal policy information database that informs staff of all Council policies and plans and other relevant documents produced by the Council.

The inventory will be automatically updated after a policy has been approved by the Council or Management Team and the generated web page approved by the policy owner.

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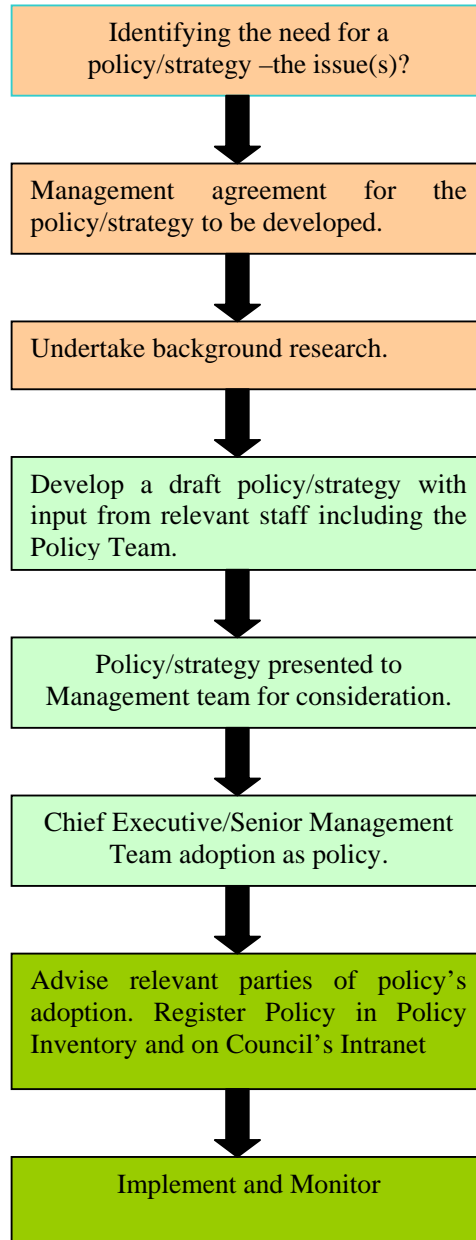
<sup>1</sup> Ref. Trim D-72349

<sup>2</sup> Ref. Trim D-67559

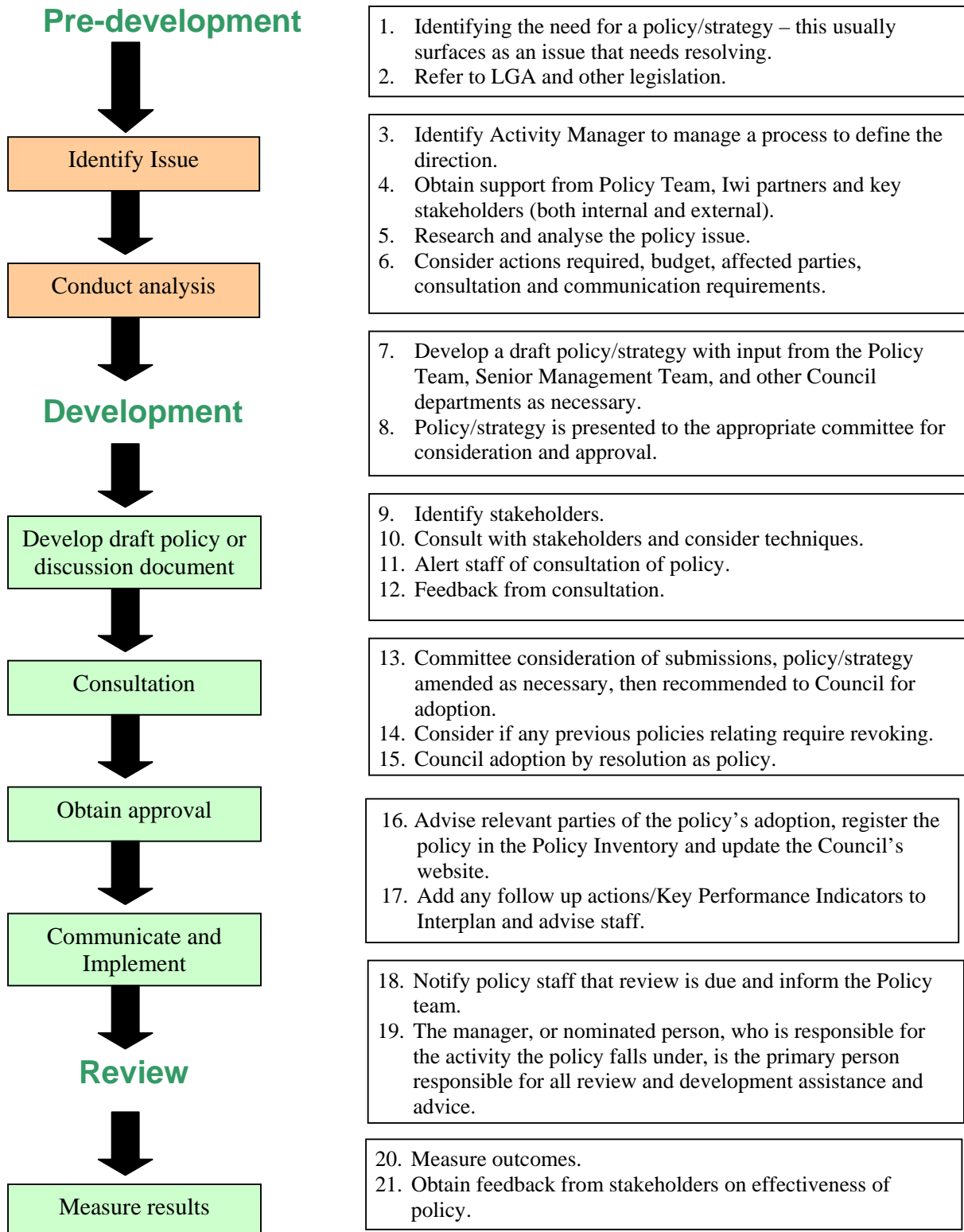
When a policy or other document requires updating, the current version is updated and superseded by the recent copy within the inventory.

## 7. Policy Development Process

7.1 **Organisational Policy** is usually developed as set out in flow chart below:



**7.2 Council Policy** is usually developed as set out in the following flowchart which outlines the key steps in policy development and approval



## **8. A Uniformed Approach**

The Wanganui District Council has adopted a uniform approach to the means by which Council policies and strategies are developed, using templates to guide policy and strategy development. These templates are to be used when preparing strategies and policies. (See Appendix 2 & 3).

## **9. Review of Existing Policy and Procedures**

Policies and procedures of the Council must be reviewed on a regular basis. The review cycle may vary depending on the policy type and its scope, but three years would be typical, and there must be no more than five years between policy reviews. Procedures are likely to be reviewed more frequently. Review dates should be set to allow adequate time for revision and approvals processes.

Minor editorial updates that do not affect the title or substance of the policy (purpose, scope, policy statement) do not need to go through the formal approvals process.

These include correction of typographical errors or changes to:

- stakeholders
- policy owner
- contact policy person/manager
- key words and definitions

### **Notify policy analyst/officer that a review is due**

The Manager, or nominated person, who is responsible for the activity the policy falls under is the primary person responsible for its review. They should engage the policy team for all policy review and development assistance and advice. The Policy Team will be notified by the Manager that a review of the policy is due.

## **10. The Wanganui District Council Policy Team**

The team of policy advisors, analysts and planners is led by the Senior Strategic Policy Advisor. The role of the policy team is:

- to provide quality advice
- to coordinate Council's strategy direction with development to ensure a sustainable future.
- to assist with the development of Council policy, including research and drafting;
- to perform a coordination role to ensure compatibility and consistency of policy across the organisation;
- to ensure there is input from various parts of the organisation.

## Contents

Set up hyperlinks from contents to section of document  
Introduction  
Why we need a policy  
Who it is prepared for  
Scope of policy  
Delivering the policy  
How the policy will be monitored

### 1. Executive Summary

Give a concise summary of the policy.

### 2. Strategy or Context

Outline the key direction provided by related strategies or policies. Potentially you may also need to refer to a national strategy.

### 3. Background and issues

Provide a brief outline of some of the issues that have created the need for the policy. Some of the key points from public engagement.

### 4. Vision, Principles or Purpose

A vision statement explains the ultimate outcome sought from the policy. Make it brief, understandable and relevant.

Vision points – describe what the situation looks like when the vision is achieved.

Principles identify the generally accepted truths, values or beliefs forming the basis or reasoning behind the policy. Principles underpin and guide the development of the policy.

Alternatively, there may just be a statement about the purpose of the policy.

### 5. Objectives and Policies

Outline the objectives of the strategy. Objectives should state what the council wishes to see to policies achieving. The policies explain how Council will achieve the stated objective.

**6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

How will the success of the policy be measured? Link measures to objectives and include data source.

**7. Action Plan/Implementation Plan**

**9. Appendices and references**

### **Contents**

#### **Executive Summary**

Give a concise summary of the strategy.

#### **Foreword**

Impart the key imperatives and aspirations for the strategy.

#### **Introduction**

Why we need a strategy  
Who it is prepared for  
Strategy status within Council  
Scope of strategy  
Delivering the strategy  
How the strategy will be monitored

#### **Context**

Outline the key direction provided by other strategies that relate to the subject of the strategy you are developing. Potentially you may also need to refer to a national strategy.

#### **Background and issues**

Provide a brief outline of some of the problems that face your local authority that have created a need for the strategy. Some of the key points from public engagement.

#### **Vision and Principles**

A vision statement explains the ultimate outcome sought from the strategy. Make it brief, understandable and relevant.

Vision points – describe what the situation looks like when the vision is achieved.

Principles identify the generally accepted truths, values or beliefs forming the basis or reasoning behind the strategy. Principles underpin and guide the development of the strategy.

#### **Goals and Strategies**

Outline the goals of the strategy. This is how the implementation plan is formatted. Goals should provide more detail to the vision. Should be stand

alone future focussed statements written as if we have achieved the desired end.

The strategies indicate how we are going to achieve the goals.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

How will the success of the strategy be measured? Link measures to goals and include data source.

### **Action Plan/Implementation Plan**

What we will do












Who will do it

How much it will cost

Timeframes

### **Appendices and references**

Effective policy is:

 Clear in its purpose	Papers set out clearly what is to be addressed and the background
 Flows logically	Arguments are set out coherently, the reader is taken logically through the arguments; and all conclusions are justified and recommendations arise from the arguments in the paper
 Accurate	Claims made are justifiable, facts are accurate, references are identified
 Timely	Work is produced to agreed timelines, any delays are signaled in advance and re-negotiated; Parties are given the longest possible time to provide input.
 Provides assessed options	Alternative options for action are identified; Implications and consequences of options are explored; Options are linked to strategic goals and outcomes.
 Reflects consultation	Work is based on good consultation practice as defined; All views are canvassed and taken into account; Consultation practice includes stakeholders as well as membership and staff (where appropriate for internal processes).
 Proposals practical as to implementation	Proposals put forward have been tested for workability and likelihood of being achievable in application
 Material clearly presented and free from error	Material is presented in modern professional style, free from gender bias, and with a minimum of jargon
 Cost/financial issues identified	The implications of any decision on the budget
 Promotes sustainable development	Economic, social, cultural and environmental costs and benefits should be assessed
 Clear recommendation	The recommendation should set out clearly what is being adopted. If it is Council policy the recommendation should say “That the policy be adopted”. The recommendation/resolution must be able to “stand alone” from the body of the report, either self-explanatory or clearly referenced to the policy document.

