

HSC Governing Policy

Setting Governing Policy

The following provides an overarching background to the setting of individual Governing Policy.

Setting Tone

Council is the critical social system charged with leadership responsibility for setting the strategic direction and maintaining oversight of Hepburn Shire. In this role the culture, behaviour and actions of Council are highly visible to our municipality and other stakeholders.

As such, the *'tone at the top'* displayed by this social system can directly impact on community recognition through the culture and behaviour of the organisation.

Council is the highest level decision-making cohort in the organisation. At the apex of this decision-making is Governing Policy: *the direction from Council of what their intentions are in terms of governance – 'tone from the top'*.

Governing Policy

Governing policies act as guidelines for the CEO and Executive in the development of matching Managing (Council) Policy and Procedures - through which to run the organisation.

Purpose

The purpose of Hepburn Shire Council is to help bring about and administer the needs and wellbeing of its municipality.

Achievement of high performance to our purpose is reflected in Council's vision - *Our Council: the desired state of community recognition of Council*.

Core Values

Core values support the vision, shape the culture and reflect what Hepburn Shire Council values.

They are the essence of the organisation's identity, and the principles and beliefs that underpin the decision-making processes.

Councillor Code of Conduct (Ethics and public accountability)

Ethics and public accountability are essential features of an effective local government. They refer to the culture, processes, structures and rules that ensure those in public office act in the wider public interest, rather than their own self-interest. They are an essential feature of good governance.

Ethics are the rules that define the conduct of public officials in order to ensure that the public is treated fairly and with equality. Ethics can help officials make better decisions in the public interest, as well as help people evaluate the decisions taken on their behalf by public officials.¹

Culture Setting

Culture is both a risk and an opportunity. If not taken seriously by Council it can lead to the destruction of community values (*the non-negotiable core principles or standards that the community's citizens wish to maintain*) and community respect for Council.

Culture is also a key organisational capability and fundamental to an organisation's long-term sustainable success and helps characterise the Shire in its community. It is crucial to the achievement of the Council Plan and other strategic goals, and is critical to the well-being of our CEO and his staff.

¹ Council of Europe, 2017, Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance, The Handbook on Transparency and Citizen Participation in Armenia

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Positive and aligned corporate cultures can motivate employees to perform and engage with their work, align behaviours to common values and purpose, share knowledge and insights, be more productive and responsive, and build trust. Organisational culture is the responsibility of the CEO.

The collective Governing Policy represents the guiding principles that lay down a desired corporate culture and behaviour – that can help our people understand the difference between right and wrong.

As Council we have a duty to care. The collection of Governing Policy represents the guiding principles that lay down a desired governance framework that can help our people understand the difference between right and wrong, and our community better understand the role of Council.

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Core Values

Core Values are how Council defines the core pillars of their identity and the principles which affect the way we conduct our business. This unique set of core values supports Council's vision and the decision-making processes across the organisation.

That Council:

Adopt Accountability, Probity and Transparency as the core values of Council.

Accountability, Probity and Transparency are core values which form the foundation on which council will perform work and conduct itself, and upon which all activities of the organisation will be based.

They are defined as:

Accountability (to our stakeholders and ourselves)

- *the fact or condition of being accountable; responsibility*

Probity (honest dealing between players)

- *the quality of having strong moral principles; honesty and decency*

Transparency (openness to allow validation and traceability)

- *the condition of being transparent - honesty and openness*

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