SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Subject : Policy and Procedure Management Policy
Committee : Governance, Policy & HR Committee
Date : 28 July 2025
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1. Report Summary:

1.1 This report presents a revised and updated version of the Council's Policy and Procedure (& Guidelines) Management Policy for consideration.

1.2 The revised policy clarifies definitions, responsibilities, and review processes, and aligns with updated governance arrangements, the use of SharePoint (Aline), and current statutory and operational practices.

2. Background:

2.1 The Policy and Procedure Management Policy was last formally reviewed and approved in 2017. Since then, internal systems, management responsibilities, and compliance requirements have changed significantly.

2.2 The revised version updates definitions, improves clarity between 'Policy' and 'Procedure', introduces a tiered classification system (Types 1–3), and outlines a structured approval, review, and dissemination process.

3. Recommended changes

3.1 The revised Policy includes a clearer distinction between the role and function of Policies ("why/what") and Procedures ("how"), and aligns terminology with ISO definitions.

3.2 A three-tier classification system (Types 1–3) for both Policies and Procedures is introduced and clarified within Annex A.

The following structural and procedural improvements have been made:

3.3 Responsibilities have been formally assigned to the Head of Corporate Services (HCS), with relevant Committee involvement as per Standing Orders.

3.4 The policy mandates consistent formatting, numbering, archiving and SharePoint publication (Aline), with officer responsibility assigned by post rather than individual.

3.5 The review cycle is formally set according to policy type, with mechanisms for early review in response to legislative or operational changes.

3.6 The policy has been updated to reflect SCC's use of SharePoint (Aline), the Corporate Governance Register, and PeopleHR, and outlines dissemination requirements to councillors, staff and external stakeholders.

3.7 Non-compliance by staff is addressed under the Disciplinary Procedure.

3.8 Councillor compliance is aligned with the Code of Conduct.
IT systems and document archiving practices.

4. Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee:

4.1 Approves the updated Policy and Procedure (& Guidelines) Management Policy as set out in the attached document;

4.2 Notes that the Policy will be re-adopted by Full Council following this Committee's approval, in line with Standing Orders.

4.3 Agrees that the Head of Corporate Services will oversee the scheduled reviews and dissemination mechanisms, in accordance with the revised Policy.

Wards Affected: All

Background papers: Policy and Procedures Management

Implications:

Financial: None identified.

Legal: Strengthens compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Personnel: Clarifies staff responsibilities; aligns with HR processes.

Environmental Impact: None.

Equalities Impact Statement: No negative impact identified; the document supports consistent and fair treatment across the organisation.

Policy and Procedures Management

Policy Number	Version	Owner	Date Reviewed	Date Cllrs Reviewed	Date Published	Review Due	Review Team
	2	Corp	July 2025			July 2028	SMT
CS040	1	DCC			Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Man

Distribution

Internal: All Salisbury City Council staff

External: Published on the SCC website and shared with Councillors and relevant partner organisations

1. Introduction

This document:

1.1. Describes the difference between a 'Policy' and a 'Procedure' (or Guideline).

1.2. Outlines and describes how Salisbury City Council's (SCC's) Policies will be initiated, reviewed, adopted and shared.

1.3. Applies to all Policies, including statutory, general and HR policies.

2. Policy vs Procedure and/or Guidelines

Policies and **Procedures** are two fundamental components of any organisation's framework, each serving distinct purposes and having different attributes. These are outlined in the table below:

Policy	Procedure
A Policy sets the strategic direction of the Council. It defines the Council's position on a particular issue and establishes the "why" (purpose) and "what" (intended outcome), without prescribing the "how" — which is set out in supporting procedures. Policies are developed by senior officers in consultation with the Chief Executive and are approved by Committee or Full Council. They reflect both local priorities and statutory requirements (e.g. COSHH, safeguarding, and data protection), and provide a stable framework for consistent, lawful, and accountable decision-making. Policies are enduring in nature and formally enforceable. They set boundaries for acceptable conduct and may form the basis for disciplinary or legal action where breached.	A Procedure (or Guideline) is a document that outlines the specific, step-by-step actions required to implement a Policy. Procedures provide the "how" — the operational detail — to achieve the aims set out in strategic Policies. They are created by officers with operational expertise, usually Heads of Service or Team Managers, and may involve subject-matter specialists where appropriate. Procedures are designed to be task-focused, practical, and frequently updated to reflect changes in legislation, technology, or internal processes. Procedures promote clarity, consistency, and efficiency across the organisation. By standardising how tasks are performed, they reduce risk, eliminate ambiguity, and ensure continuity of service delivery — even when staffing or conditions change.
Definition Broad, strategic statements that outline the Council's position or approach to an issue, setting out principles that guide decision-making across the organisation. **Purpose**	**Definition** Procedures are detailed, task-based instructions that describe how to carry out a policy or complete a specific process within the Council. **Purpose**

To ensure lawful, consistent governance and service delivery by establishing expectations and aligning decisions with organisational and legal responsibilities. **Characteristics** • High-level and strategic in nature • Stable and long-term • Formally adopted and enforceable • May allow some interpretation in application • Aligned with legislation, regulation, and corporate priorities **Examples** • Data Protection Policy • Equality and Diversity Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Member-Officer Protocol	To ensure that operational tasks are completed consistently, efficiently, and in compliance with legal and policy requirements. **Characteristics** • Specific and detailed in content • Aligned with a parent policy • Require consistent adherence • Regularly reviewed and updated as needed • Focused on officer-level use • **Examples** • Procedure for reporting staff absence • Customer complaint-handling procedure • Lone working or site visit protocol • Risk assessment guidance
Policies are drafted by officers using approved templates and in accordance with relevant legislation. If councillors wish to propose a policy, this must be done in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and the relevant Head of Service. Draft policies must consider broader legal, statutory, and operational implications. Once prepared, they are: • Submitted to the relevant committee or Full Council for adoption • Filed in the "Policies" section on Aline (SharePoint) • Shared with staff and councillors at induction, through briefings, training, and by email • Published on the Council's website where appropriate Once adopted, policies are enacted and monitored by the responsible officers.	Procedures are drafted by officers in response to: • New or amended Council policies • Legislative or regulatory changes • Service development or operational need Once prepared, they are: • Circulated internally for officer feedback • Approved by the Senior Management Team and Chief Executive • Shared with relevant Council committees (for information, where appropriate) • Filed under "Procedures (& Guidelines)" on Aline (SharePoint) • Disseminated to staff via induction, team briefings, training, or email Procedures are reviewed more frequently than policies, to ensure they remain accurate and effective. They are maintained in line with the same governance standards that apply to policies, including version control and oversight.

In summary: Policies set the direction; Procedures provide the roadmap to get there.	

3. Officer in Charge of Policy, Procedures & Guidelines Management

3.1. The officer in charge of Policy and Procedure Management for the council is the Head of Corporate Services (HCS), who reports to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

4. Creation of a Policy or Procedure/Guideline

All Policies should be drafted such as to be short, simple and easy to understand, and to the point. A Template is available for use as a guide.

Details on how Policies are enacted should be included in the Procedures document – which can be lengthier and more detailed in content.

Policy Creation	Procedure (Guidelines) Creation
A Policy can be initiated as follows:	A Procedure and/or Guideline will be initiated as follows:
1. By Officers in response to legislative change or service development or by the Chair and/or Leader of the Council, Chair of a committee or Working Group, or group of councillors (as permitted under the Council's Standing Orders) in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service, who will have a wider overview of council and local government working practices etc.	1. By Officers in response to a Policy amendment and/or legislative change, service development or change to working practices.
2. Once the need for a Policy is identified the appropriate officer will draft the policy.	2. Once the need for a Procedure is identified the appropriate officer will draft the appropriate Procedure.
3. The Draft will be circulated for comment to fellow officers.	3. The Draft will be circulated for comment to fellow officers.
4. The Draft Policy will be tabled at the appropriate committee meeting for councillors to approve for adoption by Full Council.	4. The Draft Procedure and/or Guideline will be tabled at SMT and the Chief Executive Officer to approve.
5. All Policies will be shared with councillors and staff, and appropriate ones will be available to view on the council's website.	5. Procedures & Guidelines will be shared with all staff and with councillors 'for information only'.
	6. The final version of the Procedure / Guideline will be adopted in accordance with its 'type' (ie frequency of review, etc), which will be established as part of the consultative process.

6. The final version of the Policy will be adopted in accordance with its 'type' (i.e. frequency of review, etc), which will be established as part of the consultative process. 7. Some Policies may need sharing with statutory bodies/authorities – e.g. Safeguarding to Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership, and health and safety policies to the Health and Safety Executive.	7. Most Procedures are unlikely to need sharing with statutory authorities, but Heads of Service should be mindful that some may.

5. Adopting a Policy or Procedure/Guideline

Policies	Procedures
The approval and adoption made for a policy will depend on its type. Policies will be presented by the appropriate Head of Service or CEO to the appropriate committee/Full Council for councillor approval as appropriate.	The approval and adoption of Procedures (and Guidelines) will depend on its type. Procedures will be presented to SMT and the Chief Executive Officer to approve. Procedures will be shared with the appropriate committee as required.
Annex A includes further information regarding and how they are adopted.	

6. Policy and Procedure & Guideline Types

6.1. Policies and Procedures are categorised as Type 1, 2 or 3 according to their status, review process, scope and impact.

6.2. The drafter / reviewer of the Policy will propose the Policy Type, and this will be agreed by the Chief Executive Officer or HCS, committee and council.

6.3. Annex A shows details of the Policy types (these same principles will be used for Procedures and Guidelines).

6.4. Procedures and Guidelines will be categorised by the appropriate Head of Service, if required.

7. Dissemination of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

7.1. Staff and councillors will be made aware of Policies and Procedures which are relevant to them in the following ways:

7.1.1. At their induction

7.1.2. On election/co-option

7.1.3. At Committee meetings or councillor briefing sessions

7.1.4. At staff meetings

7.1.5. At team meetings

7.1.6. At 1:1 reviews as appropriate

7.1.7. On SCC's website

7.1.8. Via email

7.1.9. And via People HR, as appropriate

Dissemination of Procedures may vary slightly to that for Policies as they are operational not statutory or legislative.

8. Review Process

When being reviewed all Policies need to consider what elements constitute 'Policy' or operational 'Procedure/guidelines'. Elements that relate to working procedures and guidelines should be removed from the Policy and re-written into an appropriate Procedure/Guideline.

8.1. The overall review of Policies and Procedures will be overseen by the HCS.

8.1.1. **Type 1** Policies and Procedures will be reviewed at least annually

8.1.2. **Type 2** Policies and Procedures will be reviewed at least three yearly

8.1.3. **Type 3** Policies and Procedures will be regularly reviewed as required, but at least five yearly

8.1.4. Regardless of Policy and Procedures Type all Policies and Procedures will be reviewed more frequently if required, i.e. in response to legislative or operational changes.

8.2. Review means a thorough re-reading of the Policy and/or Procedure by the appropriate Head, or Manager, of Service, to ensure necessary changes are made, as a result of changing legislation or operational delivery.

8.3. Any changes proposed will be reported to the committee / full council, by the appropriate Head of Service, noting any/all significant and/or material changes.

8.4. The HCS will ensure the Policy is re-approved and adopted at the appropriate committee in accordance with its type.

8.5. The HCS will ensure the Procedure and Guidelines are reviewed by the appropriate Head of Service, in accordance with its type.

9. Archiving and Storage of Policies, Procedures online

9.1. The HCS will ensure approved copies of any Policies and Procedures are available in Aline (SharePoint) as a pdf document to all staff. The underlying word version of the document will have a circulation restricted to those involved in its drafting and review only.

9.2. The HCS will ensure that appropriate Policies are uploaded to the website for public viewing.

9.3. The HCS will appropriately archive old copies of published Policies and Procedures as soon as the new Policy or Procedure is agreed and published.

10. Format & Considerations

10.1. Policies and Procedures are to be presented in the standard policy format as prescribed by the Policy Template.

10.2. The Head of Service should consult the Governance Register and assign the same / correct Policy of Procedure Number, along with a Version Number. If it is a new Policy or Procedure a consecutive Policy or Procedure reference number should be assigned, along with a Version number.

10.3. It might be that some Policies need revised 'Policy Numbering' to better reflect the Service they are now held by. The HCS can provide appropriate guidance.

10.4. Every Policy and Procedure must have a designated Head of Service / Manager (author/drafter/owner) to be responsible for maintaining and updating the Policy and Procedures. This will be assigned to a post, not a person.

10.5. Each Policy will also have a nominated committee to retain oversight of the policy. This will be shown on the Corporate Governance Register.

11. Freedom of Information

11.1. The Council's Freedom of Information Policy Scheme, as shown on the council's website, details the Policies that are available to members of the public.

12. Non–Compliance with Policy, Procedures (and Guidelines)

12.1. **Staff** – Failure by staff to comply with the Council's approved Policies, Procedures, or Guidelines may be treated as misconduct and could lead to action under the Council's Disciplinary and Appeal Procedure. Non-compliance may also result in harm to others or risk to health, safety, or wellbeing.

12.2. **Councillors** – Councillors are required to comply with all Council Policies and act in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct and relevant legislation.

13. References and Associated Documents

13.1. Publication Scheme
13.2. Corporate Governance Register
13.3. Scheme of Delegation
13.4. Disciplinary and Appeal Procedure