

County of Essex Policy and Procedures Manual

Policy and Procedure Governance Framework

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Office of Responsibility:	Legislative and Community Services
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1.0 Introduction

The Corporation of the County of Essex has established this framework for the administration of its' Corporate and Administrative policies and procedures program.

Section 224 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, establishes the Role of Council. Two of the identified responsibilities relate to policies:

- (b) to develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality;
- (d) to ensure the administrative policies, practices and procedures and controllership policies, practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of council;

Section 227 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, identifies the role of the officers and employees of the municipality. Two of the identified responsibilities also relate to policies, practices and programs of the municipality:

- (a) to implement council's decisions and establish administrative practices and procedures to carry out council's decisions;

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- (b) to undertake research and provide advice to council on the policies and programs of the municipality;

Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, identifies the policies that a municipality shall adopt, and which specifically includes:

- (a) For its sale and other disposition of land;
- (b) For its hiring of employees;
- (c) For the relationship between members of council and the officers and employees of the municipality;
- (d) For its procurement of goods and services;
- (e) For the circumstances in which a municipality shall provide notice to the public and, if notice is to be provided, the form, manner, and times notice shall be given;
- (f) For the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions, and the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that its actions are transparent to the public;
- (g) For the delegation of its powers and duties;
- (h) For the manner in which the municipality will protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation in the municipality; and
- (i) For pregnancy leaves and parental leaves of members of council.

2.0 Scope

This framework applies to all Corporate Policies, Administrative Policies and Standard Operating Procedures developed, reviewed and approved for the Corporation of the County of Essex operations.

3.0 Definitions/Glossary

Corporate Policy: Corporate Policies establish a strategic direction consistent with resolutions or decisions made by Council and/or principles

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impacting employees, board members, elected officials or members of the public as it relates to County operations. Corporate Policies steer the administrative process on matters of public interest or County function and are consistent with Federal and Provincial Legislation. Corporate Policies are researched and prepared by administration and require Council approval and review.

Administrative Policy: Administrative policies establish the principles and protocols for staff to execute operations with consistent standards and established conventions, and do not include the items enumerated in Section 270 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended. Administrative Policies address issues that may affect one or more departments and are drafted and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. Administrative Policies do not require Council approval.

Standard Operating Procedure: SOP's establish the criteria and steps required for County operations and to accomplish tasks, job or technical/mechanical functions. SOP's provide the process instructions and may outline responsibilities for task success. They may also contain timelines, flow charts, links, images, list specific documentation and approvals required. SOP's are drafted by departmental subject matter experts and approved by the Senior Leadership Team, if they apply to the entire Corporation or multiple Departments. Departmental SOP's require the approval of the applicable Department Head.

Issuance Date: Is the date that the Policy or Procedure Document is approved and takes effect.

Office of Responsibility: Is the Department Head who has the responsibility of the program named in the Policy or Procedure.

Approval Authority: Is dependent on the policy or procedure type. The approval authority for Corporate Policies is County Council, the approval authority for Administrative Policies is the CAO, approval authority for SOP's is the designated Department Head and the Senior Leadership Team.

Policy and Procedures Program: Includes all documents categorized as Corporate Policies, Administrative Policies or Standard Operating Procedures.

4.0 Purpose/Description

This guidance document provides direction for developing, classifying and categorizing policy and procedure documents for the County of Essex. In addition, this document is intended to provide a framework that will ensure consistency, control, clarity and quality in the development, review and approval process associated with all policies and procedures.

5.0 Policy and Procedures Development

- 5.1 A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes in an open, transparent and accountable way. It describes what is to be done and must be consistent with the overall goals and strategic directions of the organization. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented through a procedure or protocol. The County has two types of policies: Corporate and Administrative.
- 5.2 The need for new or revised documents may be required from time to time, with changes to legislation or when the need arises as identified during the usual conduct of business, by a department or staff member.
- 5.3 For example, municipalities are required to have policies in place, such as those stipulated in the *Municipal Act, 2001*, including Section 270 of the said Act, and other pieces of legislation.
- 5.4 Types of issues which commonly require a policy and procedure document include:
- Equity in services provided;
 - Adherence to established standards and statutory requirements;
 - Safeguarding corporate assets;
 - The fair and equitable treatment of employees; and
 - The health and safety of employees.
- 5.5 Prior to developing or revising a policy or procedure, the department governing the program to which it relates, should determine the requirements, constraints and expected outcomes.

- 5.6 The Office of Responsibility designate is tasked with researching the issues and options for the policy or procedure direction, and may include feedback from internal and external stakeholders, benchmarking, legal research and financial impact analysis.
- 5.7 The Coordinator of Communications and Organizational Development will provide support to authors of these documents to ensure conformity to the requirements of the policy and procedure framework. The Coordinator of Communications and Organizational Development is also responsible for control and custody of final documents into the Corporate Policy and Procedures Manual, available on the CountyConnect and in Laserfiche.

6.0 Categorization and Classification

6.1 Corporate Policies

Council must approve all Corporate Policies. This is necessary when Council's position on an issue should be part of the public record, in keeping with open and accountable government. Examples of types of policies that affect the public directly and that should be part of the public record include those that are required by legislation, that establish standards for service delivery, provide funding or establish fees, charges or payment terms for services and those issues that may become sensitive or controversial in the community. Council must approve all policies which regulate or impact members of Council.

Policies that do not reflect any of the above criteria should be deemed to be administrative in nature and are to be considered Administrative Policies.

6.2 Administrative Policies

Administrative Policies are developed by the Senior Leadership Team and are approved by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). An Administrative Policy is a corporate direction which governs staff with consistent standards and practices on a recurring issue that may affect one or more departments. The CAO may elect that an Administrative Policy be presented to Council for approval, and will consequently be categorized as a Corporate Policy.

6.3 Standard Operating Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures supplement Corporate and Administrative Policies and document the methods, actions and steps required to support a particular policy as well as to complete a function or task. Procedures are approved by the appropriate Department Head or their delegated authority

7.0 Office of Responsibility

7.1 An Office of Responsibility will be assigned to all policy and procedure documents. The Office of Responsibility will have the obligation for regular review in accordance with assigned revision dates of the document and for incorporating changes as may be required from time to time, such as changes in legislation or by-laws.

7.2 The Office of Responsibility assesses any areas of overlap, contradiction or integration with other existing or draft policy or procedure documents, and ensures the dissemination of this information through the proper channels before presenting revisions or new policies and procedures for approval.

8.0 Templates and Format

8.1 Templates, in accessible formats, have been established and must be used in the development of all policy and procedure documents. They are located on CountyConnect under Templates.

9.0 Revisions

9.1 Minor housekeeping revisions, such as those to reflect changes in organizational structure and/or correcting minor errors, such as spelling and grammar, may be authorized by the CAO.

9.2 All policy and procedure documents are scheduled for review at minimum every four years from the Issuance Date. Where required, review may be more frequent. The Coordinator of Communications and Organizational Development is responsible for initiating the review process and shall provide notice to the Office of Responsibility of revision timelines.

10.0 Supporting Documentation

10.1 References to administrative reports and resolution from County Council approving the Policy and Procedure Framework, legislation, other County policies/procedures or any other relevant supporting documents should be listed in the Related Documentation/Legislation section of the policy and procedure document.

11.0 Plain Language

11.1 All policy and procedure documents will contain plain, clear and concise wording, enabling a wide range of users to understand the document. Where prescribed terminology is used (i.e. from legislation) a clear description of the terminology should be contained in the definitions section of the policy and procedure document to allow for ease of referencing and comprehension.

12.0 Access

12.1 All policy and procedure documents will be electronically available and accessible to staff on CountyConnect. Selected Corporate Policies and Procedures may be made available to the public on the County website. Administrative Policies and Procedures are generally considered internal documents.

13.0 Summary of Amendments

Date	Amendment(s)
2022-03-16	New policy initiated by Council Report number 2022-0316-CCS-R05-MB. Adopted by County Council by Resolution 059-2022.

Appendices

- Appendix A – [Policy and Procedures Manual – Template](#) (Link to CountyConnect)