Kingborough

Continuous Improvement Policy

Policy No:	1.24
Approved by Council:	June 2024
New Review Date:	June 2027
Minute No:	C168/11-2024
ECM File No:	12.289
Version:	1.0
Responsible Officer:	Chief Information Officer
Strategic Plan Reference:	2.4 The organisation has a corporate culture that delivers quality customer service, encourages innovation and has high standards of accountability

Kingborough

Continuous Improvement Policy 1.24

1. **POLICY STATEMENTS**

   1.1   We are committed to continuously improving operational efficiency and delivering quality, efficient and fit for purpose services and outcomes, with a focus on innovation, accountability, and stakeholder satisfaction.

   1.2   Our continuous improvement activities are further supported by our commitment to ensuring that service provision meets the current and future requirements of the community.

2. **DEFINITIONS**

   2.1   **Continuous improvement** means the systematic and ongoing effort to improve business and service delivery outcomes by making positive, incremental changes that collectively lead to significant improvements in organisational capabilities, efficiencies, effectiveness, and performance.

   2.2   **Council** means the body of elected Councillors for the Kingborough Council.

   2.3   **Council staff and employees** means any person employed by the Kingborough Council to carry out the functions of the Council.

   2.4   **Chief Executive Officer** means the General Manager for the purpose of s.61 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (Tasmania)* and all other legislation administered by or concerning the Council.

   2.5   **Community** means residents, ratepayers, landowners, and members of the public including individuals, groups, visitors, organisations, government, and businesses to whom Council provides services.

   2.6   **Stakeholder** means the community (external) and Council employees (internal) who may be affected by (directly or indirectly), have a specific interest in, or influence over, the implementation of proposed business process and service delivery improvements.

   2.7   **Root Cause Analysis** is a process used to identify the primary causes of issues or inefficiencies and it aims to determine the fundamental reason behind a problem rather than just addressing symptoms or surface-level issues.

   2.8   **Business Needs Analysis** is a process used to identify, assess, and document the business requirements of an organisation and to determine what changes are necessary to improve performance, productivity, and overall effectiveness, in alignment with organisational strategies and resources.

3. **OBJECTIVE**

   3.1   The objectives of this Policy are to:

      3.1.1   Convey the importance of continually reviewing and evaluating Council's processes and accountability systems to improve performance, service delivery, and employee and community satisfaction.

      3.1.2   Promote a culture of continuous improvement that delivers quality customer service, encourages learning and innovation, and has high standards of accountability.

      3.1.3   Foster a corporate commitment to continuous improvement activities, the benefits of which boost employee engagement and result in a more resilient and agile organisation better able to respond to changing priorities.

      3.1.4   Ensure the optimal use of Council funds and resources.

      3.1.5   Embed continuous improvement into the daily activities of all Council functions, by encouraging routine identification and implementation of improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

4. **SCOPE**

    4.1   This policy encapsulates the framework for continuous improvement, and it applies to all Council operations, services, processes, and systems, and is relevant to all Council employees and Councillors.

    4.2   This policy reinforces the synergies between Council's current policies, procedures, strategies, and plans to promote optimal outcomes.

5. **PROCEDURE (POLICY DETAIL)**

    5.1   The following principles underpin this policy:

    5.1.1   **Customer Centric**

    Commitment to understanding customer needs and directing efforts toward improving business processes and services to meet or exceed customer expectations.

    5.1.2   **Collaboration and Engagement**

    Encouraging all employees to contribute their insights and ideas. The collective capabilities of the workforce drive innovation and problem-solving in the continuous improvement process.

    5.1.3   **Leadership Support**

    The driving force behind continuous improvement, visible leadership support is crucial to the success of improvement efforts. Leaders should actively demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement and actively participate in continuous improvement activities. Their engagement is critical for sustaining a culture of continuous improvement.

    5.1.4   **Innovation**

    Identifying innovation opportunities, including process and service delivery improvements, through the optimal use of technology and human resources.

    5.1.5   **Incremental Change**

    Emphasis placed on gradual, incremental improvements which are more manageable, achievable, more readily accepted, and cumulatively lead to considerable progress.

    5.1.6   **Efficiency**

    Leveraging existing practices and systems to streamline processes and maximise resources. Recognise and enhance what is working well within the organisation.

    5.1.7   **Effectiveness**

    Ensuring continuous improvement efforts are measurable, aligned with the Council's strategic goals and lead to tangible and beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders.

    5.1.8   **Data-Driven Decision Making**

    Continuous improvement requires a systematic and ongoing effort to evaluate and refine business processes and services based on reliable data and evidence. Performance is evaluated against defined/desired outcomes and service levels, and strategies adjusted accordingly, enabling ongoing optimisation.

    5.1.9   **Transparency**

    Maintaining open communication about improvement processes and outcomes. Lessons learned and successful improvements are shared.

5.1.10 **Accountability**

Accountability within the context of continuous improvement ensures that everyone is committed to learning, adapting, and driving positive change.

5.2 The following process facilitates a consistent approach to the delivery of continuous improvement activities:

5.2.1 **Discovery**

- Identify opportunities for improvement through various stakeholder feedback mechanisms, benchmarking, and evaluation of performance data.

- Where there exist important information/data gaps, establish a process to gather that information/data to inform improvements.

- Once opportunities have been identified, determine the key stakeholders and subject matter experts (SMEs) who will participate in business requirements gathering activities, such as:

  - Workshops.

  - Interviews.

  - Process modelling.

  - Researching.

  - Observation.

- Gather and document detailed business, stakeholder, and improvement solution requirements.

- Undertake Root Cause Analysis to ensure any proposed improvement solution addresses the underlying cause of the identified problem or inefficiency.

- Undertake Business Needs Analysis to determine the appropriate approach to the change initiative. Solution options must:

  - Effectively address the identified needs while considering the trade-off between the value generated and the effort required.

  - Be directly relevant to the change initiative's objectives.

  - Be realistic to implement.

  - Be aligned with relevant Council strategies, policies, or initiatives.

  - Leverage existing infrastructure or systems where possible.

- Improvement solution options can include, but are not limited to, the following:

  - Staff training.

  - Enhancing/refining/fixing an existing system.

  - Developing a custom-built system.

  - Refining existing business processes.

  - Developing new business processes.

  - Refining existing policies.

  - Implementing new policies.

  - Exploring innovative options where existing solutions are not readily available.

5.2.2 **Planning**

- Define scope and goals and determine scale of change, complexity of implementation and likely internal/external resource requirements.

- Prepare an Improvement Project Plan which includes a baseline scope, schedule, key stakeholders, and budget. The plan must support strategic and operational goals and deliver value through an agreed set of objectives and deliverables.

- Seek feedback from stakeholders during the development of, and prior to finalising, the proposed improvement plan.

- Business Cases are prepared for more significant continuous improvement projects requiring additional funding or significant allocation of internal resources. These are also used in conjunction with the Improvement Project Plan to measure project success.

- Business Cases must document the justification for the change and are assessed for approval and prioritisation by Council's Executive Management Team (EMT).

- Business Cases should be completed using the Project Business Case Toolkit and must provide the following:

  - An outline of the problem being addressed, including key findings from the data analysis activities.

  - A summary of how the improvement project relates to Council's broader strategic aim and objectives.

  - An assessment of the potential implications of the change and the identified controls.

  - A comparison between different options for implementing the change, each option detailing expected benefits, costs, schedule, financial considerations, and risk assessment.

  - A recommendation that delivers value-adding benefits to the organisation and stakeholders.

- Projects will be selected and prioritised for implementation based on certain criteria such as the level of risk being addressed, or the level of effort and cost required to achieve value-adding benefits.

5.2.3 **Implementation**

- Implement approved improvement projects and activities, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders and using sound project management techniques.

- Undertake quality assurance activities to support the implementation.

- When implementing improvements, consider the impact on people, processes, and systems.

5.2.4 **Review**

- Regularly measure and evaluate the results of the process improvements for effectiveness against predefined goals and objectives.

- When applicable, adjust and refine these processes to ensure they remain effective and aligned with Council's goals and objectives.

- Identify areas for further improvement.

5.3 Change Management

5.3.1 Integrating change management into a continuous improvement policy is essential for fostering a dynamic and adaptable organisational culture.

5.3.2 To ensure that changes are successfully implemented and adopted, employees need to be well equipped and supported throughout the entire change process. This involves:

- Clearly defining and communicating the reasons for the change, the objectives that the change aims to achieve, and the benefits of the change.

- Identifying and involving all stakeholders in the change process by seeking their input, addressing concerns, and actively listening to their feedback.

- Assessing readiness for change, analysing the potential risks, and developing strategies to mitigate these risks.

- Providing training and support to those affected by the change to ensure that everyone understands the new processes or tools.

- Creating feedback loops that allow employees to share their experiences during improvement initiatives. Use this feedback to refine processes, adjust communication strategies, and adapt to changing circumstances.

- Regularly reviewing the progress of the change initiative and making necessary adjustments.

- Recognising and celebrating achievements resulting from continuous improvement efforts and highlighting how these successes contribute to the organisation's overall transformation.

5.4 Responsibilities

5.4.1 Chief Executive Officer

- Providing leadership that encourages initiative and a progressive culture within the organisation, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

- Reviewing and publishing continuous improvement data.

5.4.2 Management

- Promoting and supporting continuous improvement initiatives that contribute to enhanced business outcomes and improved customer service outcomes.

- Identifying and reporting on improvements.

- Prioritising and facilitating the implementation of improvement activities.

- Supporting employees working on continuous improvement activities.

5.4.3 Chief Information Officer and Business Improvement Officer

- Providing leadership that encourages initiative and a progressive culture within the organisation, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

- Supporting organisational change initiatives from initial identification through to the benefits of the change being realised by the organisation.

- Maintaining this Policy.

5.4.4 All Council Staff

- Understanding this policy and the Council's continuous improvement framework.

- Identifying and reporting business process and service delivery improvements.

- Actively taking part in, and supporting, continuous improvement activities.

5.4.5 **Elected Councillors**

- Endorsing and promoting the continuous improvement policy.

6. **GUIDELINES**

6.1 Guidelines and procedures for implementation of this Policy are separately maintained as administrative documents.

7. **COMMUNICATION**

7.1 **Internally:**

7.1.1 Accessible by all staff via the intranet.

7.1.2 Included in the staff induction program and on an on-going basis.

7.2 **Externally:**

7.2.1 Accessible on the Kingborough Council website at www.kingborough.tas.gov.au.

7.2.2 Available in soft copy to be emailed upon request.

7.2.3 Available in hard copy to be mailed upon request.

8. **LEGISLATION**

8.1 *Local Government Act 1993 (Tasmania)*.

9. **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

9.1 Policy 1.6: Customer Service Charter

9.2 Policy 1.20: Complaints Management Policy

9.3 Policy 3.10: Risk Management Policy

9.4 Kingborough Council Strategic Plan 2020-2025

10. **AUDIENCE**

10.1 The Continuous Improvement Policy is a public document that applies to all Councillors, employees, contractors, and members of the community.

Annexure 1

Continuous Improvement Process

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┌──────────────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│           Identify           │                    │  Identification through       │
│  Identify process or service │ ---- Stakeholders  │  various stakeholder feedback │
│     delivery improvement     │                    │  mechanisms, benchmarking and │
└──────────────────────────────┘                    │     performance data.         │
                │                                    └──────────────────────────────┘
                ▼
┌──────────────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│     Information Gathering     │                    │  Collaborate with relevant    │
│  Gather and document detailed │ ---- Stakeholders  │  stakeholders and subject     │
│  business, stakeholder, and   │                    │  matter experts (SMEs) through│
│ improvement solution          │                    │  workshops, interviews,       │
│ requirements                  │                    │  processes modelling and      │
└──────────────────────────────┘                    │  research                     │
                │                                    └──────────────────────────────┘
                ▼
┌──────────────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│         Data Analysis        │                    │  Undertake Root Cause Analysis│
│ Undertake data analysis to    │ ---- Stakeholders  │  and Business Needs Analysis  │
│ identify the underlying       │                    └──────────────────────────────┘
│ issues, inefficiencies and    │
│ pinch points                  │
└──────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ Collaborate with     │  │           Solution           │
│ relevant stakeholders│--│ Identify and document         │
│ to identify          │Stakeholders improvement        │
│ alternative solutions│  │ solution(s)                   │
└──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌──────────────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│            Plan              │                    │ The project plan should       │
│ Prepare Improvement Project   │ ---- Stakeholders  │ provide the following:        │
│ Plan                         │                    │  ▪ Objectives                 │
└──────────────────────────────┘                    │  ▪ Deliverables               │
                │                                    │  ▪ Schedule                   │
                ▼                                    │  ▪ Resources & costs          │
┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐│  ▪ Responsibilities           │
│ For more significant │  │ Does the improvement     ││  ▪ Performance metrics        │
│ continuous improvement│--│ solution require approval││  ▪ Risk assessment & risk     │
│ initiatives requiring │  │ from Council's Executive ││    mitigation strategies      │
│ additional resourcing │  │ Management Team (EMT)?   │└──────────────────────────────┘
│ such as time, funding │  └──────────────────────────┘
│ and system changes    │        │
└──────────────────────┘        ▼
                          ┌─────────┐   ┌─────────┐
                          │   No    │   │   Yes   │
                          └─────────┘   └─────────┘
                                            │
                                            ▼
                          ┌──────────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                          │ Prepare Business Case for     │  │ The Business Case is to       │
                          │ consideration by Council's EMT│--│ outline the rationale for the │
                          └──────────────────────────────┘EMT│ improvement and provide a     │
                                            │                │ recommendation                │
                                            ▼                └──────────────────────────────┘
                          ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                          │ Has the Business Case been    │
                          │ approved?                     │
                          └──────────────────────────────┘
                                            │
               ┌──────────────┐  ┌─────────┐   ┌─────────┐
               │ Identify     │◄─│   No    │   │   Yes   │
               │ alternative  │  └─────────┘   └─────────┘
               │ improvement  │                    │
               │ solutions    │                    ▼
               └──────────────┘  ┌──────────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                                 │ Implement Improvement Project │  │ Implement improvement project │
                                 └──────────────────────────────┘--│ plan and monitor progress     │
                                            │          Stakeholders │ against agreed performance    │
                                            ▼                       │ indicators                    │
          ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐└──────────────────────────────┘
          │ Measure and evaluate  │  │      Monitoring & Review     │
          │ the results of the    │--│                              │
          │ improvement for       │Stakeholders                    │
          │ effectiveness         │  └──────────────────────────────┘
          └──────────────────────┘        │
                                           ▼
                                 ┌──────────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                                 │ Identify areas for further    │  │ Adjust/refine processes as    │
                                 │ improvement                   │--│ appropriate                   │
                                 └──────────────────────────────┘Stakeholders                   │
                                                                   └──────────────────────────────┘
```