



STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE SCHEME 2019 - 2024



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council



**CORK CITY COUNCIL
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE
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1. Introduction

In accordance with the provisions of Section 48 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended by Section 41 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Council shall establish, by resolution, committees to be known as Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) to consider matters connected with the formulation, development, monitoring and review of policy which relate to the functions of the local authority and to advise the Council on those matters.

2. Role of the Strategic Policy Committee

The Council is, and remains, the decision making authority, and the task of the SPCs is to advise and assist the Council in its work in the formulation, development and review of policy in relation to functions of a strategic nature reserved to the Elected members of Cork City Council, subject to the relevant statutory framework.

While it is the task of each SPC to assist the Council in the formulation and development of policy, the final policy decisions rest ultimately with the Council (Section 130 Local Government Act 2001 – 2014). The SPC system is intended to give Councillors and relevant sectoral interests an opportunity for full involvement in the policy-making process from the early stages. Therefore, much of the preliminary and background work, discussion and recommendation should be completed at SPC level for final consideration and ratification by the Council. In some cases, it may be appropriate that a number of SPCs will work together.

A key role for SPCs will be to focus on strategic issues and in taking a strategic overview of relevant policy areas in the wider context. Accordingly:

- Each SPC will agree its annual programme, linked to the strategic policies in the Council's Corporate Plan;
- SPC chairs will report to the Council on the proceedings of the Committee;
- Each SPC's work will take account of the Council's overall corporate policy and objectives, comply with statutory provisions, integrate with statutory plans where relevant, and link realistically to financial resources;
- Each SPC may decide on appropriate consultative arrangements, having regard to statutory provision, the interests already represented on the SPC and any guidelines provided by the Council;
- When formulating, developing, adopting, monitoring and reviewing policies which relate to the functions of a local authority, each SPC of the local authority shall have regard to the Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy of the appropriate Regional Assembly, and the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), and other such policies as appropriate;
- The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) should co-ordinate the work and monitor the work programmes of the SPCs.

3. Assistance from Public Authorities

Section 48(3A) of the 2001 Act (as inserted by Section 41(d) of the 2014 Act) empowers an SPC to seek the attendance of public authorities at a meeting for the purpose of assisting it in developing policy.

A request to a public authority to attend a meeting of an SPC should:

- set out the issue on which advice is being sought, including providing any policy papers of the local authority, or draft policy papers, and the linkages to the policy responsibility of the public authority and
- provide at least one month's notice, or shorter interval if mutually agreed.

The Act provides for the public authority to assist the SPC in the formulation of its policy by the SPC. The purpose of the provision is to give an additional resource in formulating policy and to strengthen linkages between local authorities and public bodies with wider responsibilities in the sectoral area in which the SPC operates. The invitation to attend at a meeting of an SPC cannot be used to query the public authority in the performance of its functions or duties.

4. Role of the Corporate Policy Group

The CPG comprises of the Lord Mayor and the Chairpersons of the SPCs and will be attended by the Chief Executive or his/her nominees. The CPG will link the work of the different SPCs, and provide a forum where policy positions affecting the whole Council can be agreed for submission to the full Council. The Lord Mayor will report to the Council on the work of the CPG.

The CPG should:

- Play a key role in preparing the budget (subject to guidelines on the budgetary process);
- Provide input to the full Council on any matter of general concern to the Council either on its own initiative or following a request from the Council;
- Monitor the overall performance of the Council;
- Deal with overall issues in relation to service delivery plans, customer service, value for money, etc., (individual SPCs will deal with such issues in their work insofar as their particular service remit is concerned);
- Co-ordinate the work of the SPCs and monitor their work programmes;
- Request SPCs to consider particular policy issues where appropriate;
- Provide feedback to the SPCs on Council policy and views in areas relevant to the SPCs.

5. Lobbying Act 2015 – Transparency Code

The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 (the Act) is designed to provide information to the public regarding who is lobbying whom about what. Individuals and organisations who participate in SPCs established by local authorities may have obligations under the Act.

A critical element of public policy formulation by the SPCs is the availability to the local authorities of expertise, skills and knowledge from persons outside of the public service. Where membership of the Committee comprises of at least one person who, for the purposes of the Act is a Designated Public Official, it may be the case that communications within the group could be considered lobbying communications. The person making these communications may be required to register as a lobbyist and to submit a return of this communication to the Lobbying Register.

However, the Act provides for an exception from the requirement to register in such cases once specified transparency criteria have been put in place. A transparency code was published by the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform to address this situation. Communications between members of SPCs about the work of the Committee would be exempt where the group in question complies with the Transparency Code.

6. Proposed Number of SPCs

In determining the number of SPCs, the Council has taken the following factors into account in determining the overall framework of SPCs:

- Section 48 Local Government Act 2001 as amended by Section 41 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014;
- DHPLG Circular LG07/2014 – Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Corporate Policy Groups and Strategic Policy Committees;
- The total number of elected members on the Council;
- The range of sectoral and other interests to be represented, including facilitating a reasonable spread of interests;
- The desirability of allowing adequate opportunity for participation by Councillors and sectoral interests;
- The organisational arrangement of service groupings within the authority and the remit envisaged for each SPC;
- Integration with other meeting requirements and committee structures and ensuring streamlined procedures generally.

Regard was also had to the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), including its membership and remit.

7. Policy Configuration and Functions

Having regard to the foregoing, Cork City Council will have 6 SPCs, which will meet bi-monthly and will be configured as follows:

- Roads & Transportation
- International Relations and Tourism
- Housing
- Environment, Water & Amenity
- Community, Culture and Placemaking
- Strategic, Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning

The membership of each of the above SPCs shall be fifteen, comprising of 10 elected members of Cork City Council, one of whom will be Chairperson, and five from sectoral interests.

8. Strategic Policy Committee Functions

The following section sets out details on the functions of each of the 6 SPCs. The remit of the Strategic Policy Committees is to cover issues of a policy nature at a strategic or city-wide level. It should be noted that this is an indicative and not an exhaustive listing.

Roads & Transportation

Parking Policy, Speed Bye-laws, Cycling Strategy, Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, Capital Infrastructure Development, Transportation Planning, Public Transport Issues, Cork Road Safety Plan, Walking Strategy

International Relations and Tourism

Reports from Visits, Twinning requests, Events, Christmas Celebrations, St. Patrick's Day, Fleadh Cheol, SeaFest, EU Funding Programmes, Tourism Development, Marketing and City Promotion

Housing

Housing Strategies: Homelessness, Strategic Housing Developments, New Scheme Policy Adoption e.g. Affordability Housing, Allocation Schemes, Estate Management Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Traveller Accommodation Plan

Environment, Water & Amenity

Flood Relief Policy, Flood Defence Strategy, Environmental Impact Studies, Waste Management Plans, Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Policy, Recycling Strategies, Sustainable Development Policy, Street Cleaning Policy, Litter Control Policy, Drainage and Waste Water Treatment Plans, Parks & Open Spaces Policy, Agricultural Policy, Climate Change

Community, Culture and Placemaking

Arts Policy, Arts Grants, Community Grants, Sports Grants, Creative Ireland Plan, Library Service Policy, Fire Service Policies and Strategies and Public Safety, Safety of Structures and Places, Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, Arts and Culture Development, Sports Facility Policy, Event Management Policy, Street Trading and Markets Policy, Development Contributions Scheme, UNESCO Learning Cities, Events - Glow

Strategic, Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning

Urban Development Fund, Local Area Plans/Master Plans/Statutory Area Plans
City Centre Retail Policy, Cork Area Strategic Plan Policy Reports, Protected Structures, Derelict Sites Policy, Docklands, City Development Plan – Policies, Enterprise Development, Enforcement Policy, Noise Action Plan

9. Chairpersons

The Chairperson of each SPC will be an elected member of Cork City Council, nominated by Cork City Council, and will hold office for a minimum period of three years.

Subsequent Chairpersons will be appointed by Cork City Council from among the existing Councillor members of the SPC. If a Chairperson ceases to be a Councillor, he or she will automatically cease to be a member of the SPC.

The Chairperson of an SPC at the time of a Local Election will continue to hold office until the ordinary day of retirement of members following the election, in accordance with Section 17 of the Local Government Act 2001.

10. Membership

In accordance with the provisions of the legislation and guidelines, the membership of the SPCs will consist of two thirds Councillors and one third sectoral representatives. The following shall apply in relation to the membership of SPCs:

- Each Councillor will be a member of 2 SPCs;
- Every member of an SPC will hold office for the lifetime of the Council (five years);
- If a member of an SPC ceases to be a Councillor, he or she will also automatically cease to be a member of an SPC;
- Each nominating sector is entitled to deselect its nominees as required;
- A sector may be represented on more than one SPC.

The following factors were taken into consideration in determining sectoral representation on and across each SPC in the draft Scheme.

- The need to foster economic and social development generally;
- Active consideration towards gender balance and to encourage as fully as possible gender balance in representation from the sectors;
- The need to ensure a pro-active approach to having as many relevant sectors as possible across the SPC system;
- The need for balance between divergent interests;
- The priority concerns of each sector and the appropriateness of the SPCs to these concerns;
- The relationship between the number of SPCs and the range of interests which can be represented;
- A commitment to the fostering of social inclusiveness and equality.

11. Nomination process for Sectoral Representatives

Nominations

Nominations for the SPCs were sought from the following:

- Agriculture/Farming
- Environmental/Conservation
- Development/Construction
- Business/Employers
- Trade Union
- Community/Voluntary
- Social Inclusion

The nomination process for the national pillar organisations were as follows:

- The agricultural/farming sector will be facilitated by the farming and agricultural organisations pillar.
- The business/commercial and development/construction sectors will be facilitated by the business and employers' organisations national pillar.
- The trade union sector will be facilitated by the trade union pillar.

With regard to the

- Environmental/Conservation sector
- Community/Voluntary sector and
- Social inclusion sector

nominations were determined on the basis of the local nomination process through the Public Participation Network (PPN).

12. Knowledge/Expertise Required by Sectoral Representatives Review

The nomination of sectoral representatives is the sole responsibility of each particular sector. However, the Council expects that the nominee(s) to specific SPCs have broad knowledge (or expertise) in the relevant area.

14. Expenses Incurred by Members

In general, any travel expenses arising for an SPC member would be met by the organisation that the SPC member represents. However, in exceptional circumstances, where the nominating body is unable to pay such travel expenses, the member would be entitled to claim travel for attendance at SPC meetings, at the rate applicable to Elected Members of the Council.

15. Circulation of Draft Scheme

Following consideration by the Council of the Draft Scheme (as amended), the Draft Scheme was forwarded for consideration to the PPN and to the appropriate national stakeholder pillars. A notice to the effect that the Council has considered the Draft Scheme and that the Council has issued the Draft Scheme for consultation was published in a National and local newspaper and on the Cork City Council website.

Six weeks, from the date of publication of the notice, was given for the making of submissions on the Draft Scheme.

16. Adoption of Scheme

Following receipt of submissions, the Draft Scheme was approved by Cork City Council at its meeting held on 30th September, 2019.