

Limerick City and County Council

Strategic Policy Committee

Standing Orders

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1. Establishment

- (a) Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) shall be constituted in accordance with an SPC Scheme as adopted by the Council from time to time.
- (b) The Strategic Policy Committees of the Council shall be the following:
 - Home and Social Development
 - Travel and Transportation
 - Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Planning
 - Community, Leisure, Arts, Heritage and Culture
 - Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment

2. Membership

- (a) The Strategic Policy Committees shall be appointed as soon as possible after a local election, and the members shall hold office for the period of the life of the Council.
- (b) The Strategic Policy Committees shall consist of Members of the Council, Representatives of National Sectoral Pillars and Members of the Public Participation Network (PPN) as outlined in SPC Scheme.
- (c) If a Councillor member of an SPC ceases to be a Councillor, then he/she automatically ceases to be a member of the SPC and the Council shall appoint a person in his/her place.
- (d) If a Sectoral Representative of the Committee resigns from membership of an SPC or states that they are unable to attend meetings of the SPC for a period greater than 1 year, then the nominating sector/subsector concerned shall select a replacement representative. Sectoral Representatives should ensure that they feed back to their sector and that they are in a position to represent the views of their sector on issues being considered by the SPC.
- (e) Each nominating Pillar shall be entitled to deselect any of its nominees and in this event the nominee shall cease to be a member of the Committee. In the event that person is so deselected, the sector/subsector so concerned may nominate another person in his/her place.

3. Arrangements for Meetings

- (a) A minimum of four meetings will be held each year. In order to deal with Notices of Motion that have been forwarded to the SPC from the Council/Districts and report back on same, each SPC meeting will be held at least two weeks in advance of the date of a bi-monthly meeting of the Council. Where a Notice of Motion is forwarded to the SPC for consideration, the mover of the Notice of Motion, if not already a member of that SPC, shall be entitled to attend at the meeting of the SPC where that motion is considered. Where possible, there will be an agreed schedule of meetings each year.
- (b) A Special Meeting of the Committee can be called at any time by the Chairperson.

4. Notice of Meetings

- (a) At least ten days' notice will be given to SPC members for ordinary meetings of an SPC. In the case of a Special Meeting of an SPC, at least three clear days' notice will be given. The notification of a Meeting will normally be circulated via email.
- (b) In so far as practical meeting documentation should be circulated ten days in advance of a meeting to allow sectoral representatives an opportunity to consult within their sector in relation to same. Lack of receipt of documentation by any member or members of the committee shall not affect the validity of the meeting.

5. Public Notice of Meeting

- (a) Public notice of the place, date and time of a Meeting shall be published on the Council's website.
- (b) The Notice shall include the Agenda for the Meeting or specify a place where the Agenda can be inspected.

6. Quorum

The quorum for meetings shall be one quarter of the approved membership plus one. Where one quarter is not a whole number the next highest whole number plus one applies. If after twenty minutes from the agreed starting time of a meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the Chairperson.

7. Chairperson

- (a) In accordance with the SPC Scheme adopted by Limerick City & County Council, the Chairperson shall be appointed by the Council.

- (b) At a meeting of the committee, the Chairperson shall preside. If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, the members of the committee shall choose a member from among the councillors to preside as acting Chairperson.
- (c) The Chairs are appointed for a minimum of three years and the overall spread of the SPC chairs must, in accordance with the guidelines, reflect the elected representational spread on the full Council. Any change required to the SPC chair shall require approval of council by resolution at a full plenary council meeting.

8. Order of Business

- (a) It shall be the function of a Strategic Policy Committee to consider matters connected with the formulation, development, monitoring and review of policy which relate to the functions of the Strategic Policy Committee and the Local Authority and to advise on those matters. Recommendations of the Committee shall be submitted to the Plenary Council for approval and presented by the Chairperson of the Committee.

The following are the suggested Items of Business of a Committee:

- Confirmation of Minutes
 - Matters arising from Minutes;
 - Disclosure of Interests
 - Notices of Motion referred from Municipal, Metropolitan and Plenary Council Meetings;
 - Progress report by the Director of Services;
 - Consideration of agenda items as submitted by Committee Members and Director of Services;
 - Position Papers prepared for consideration by Committee;
 - Correspondence;
 - Any other business;
- (b) Each SPC shall agree a multi-annual work programme linked to the Council's Corporate Plan.
 - (c) SPC Meetings should be conducted in a much less rigid and formal way than plenary council meetings to create an informal and collaborative atmosphere that would allow honest views and opinions on policy issues.

9. Minutes

- (a) The Minutes of all committee meetings shall contain particulars of the names of the persons present, apologies received, together with particulars of all decisions arrived at or recommendations made.
- (b) The Minutes of every committee meeting shall be signed by the Chairperson or acting Chairperson following confirmation by the Committee.
- (c) Minutes of a Meeting shall be submitted for confirmation as an accurate record at the next following Meeting of the SPC.
- (d) Any discussion of the Minutes except as to their accuracy shall be out of order and the Chair shall rule accordingly.
- (e) A copy of the Minutes, when confirmed at the following meeting in accordance with this Standing Order, shall be available on the Authority's website.

10. Duration of Meeting

Meetings shall commence at the appointed time and conclude within two hours. However, Standing Orders can be suspended, by agreement of Members, to extend the duration of the meeting in order to complete the Agenda.

11. Rules of Debate

- (a) Matters for discussion shall relate to policy or strategy and not to individual cases.
- (b) A Member while speaking shall address himself/herself to the Chairperson. Each member of the Committee shall have the right to speak on an issue, and the chairperson shall ensure that all members have an opportunity to contribute to debates and discussions.
- (c) No Member shall speak for more than 3 minutes on any 1 issue without the consent of the Chairperson, which shall be given only where the question under discussion is of exceptional importance.
- (d) No Member shall use offensive language or make personal remarks at the meeting.
- (e) When two or more members at the same time offer to speak, the member called upon by the Chair shall have precedence.
- (f) A member speaking shall not be interrupted except upon a question of order but may give way to a member desiring to make a personal explanation.

- (g) When a member seeks to make a point of order, the member then addressing the Chair shall give way until the question of order has been determined by the Chair, unless the former seeks to address the Chair upon the question of order.
- (h) The Committee shall, as far as possible, arrive at all decisions and recommendations by consensus.
- (i) Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and inclusiveness.
- (j) The ruling of the Chairperson on a point of order shall be final.

12. Confidential Material

- (a) Certain matters which may arise for discussion by the Strategic Policy Committee may be confidential and it shall be a matter for the meeting to declare that confidentiality be maintained on the issue.
- (b) It shall be the responsibility of each member of a Committee to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

13. Business not reached

When at a meeting of the Committee the whole business set down for such meeting has not been reached, such business shall be set down to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee, save that any item included in such business may be withdrawn by the Member who submitted the item.

14. Deputations

A request to receive a Deputation at a Meeting of the Committee shall be made in writing to the Meetings Administrator and shall include:

- (i) The name of the group or organisation and its role or purpose
- (ii) The name, address and telephone number of a contact person
- (iii) The issue or topic on which the deputation wishes to address the Meeting

15. Submission of Items for Agenda

Each member may submit one agenda item relevant to the business of the SPC per SPC meeting. The Chair shall have the final decision on matters for consideration at the SPC meeting. Agenda items must be submitted to the SPC administrator at least twelve days before the SPC meeting.

16. Votes and Divisions

The Committee shall, as far as possible, arrive at all decisions and recommendations by consensus. Voting, if required, may be by a show of hands or by roll call vote. The Chair shall have a casting vote, if required.

17. Attendance of Public and Media

- (a) The right of the public and representatives of the media to attend SPC meetings is subject to the following: Where the SPC Members are of the opinion that the absence of members of the public and representatives of the media from the whole or part of a particular Meeting is desirable because of the special nature of the Meeting or of an item of business to be or about to be considered at the Meeting or for other special reasons, the SPC Members may, by Resolution in respect of which at least one-half of the total number of Members vote in favour, decide to meet in Committee for the whole or part of the Meeting concerned. The Resolution in this instance shall indicate in a general way the reasons for the Resolution and those reasons shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- (b) Members of the public and representatives of the media will occupy the parts of the meeting room allotted to their use.
- (c) Members of the public shall be seated and maintain silence and observe any directions given by the Chairperson or by any employee in attendance. Such employees are responsible for the execution of all measures necessary for the maintenance of order and decorum in and about the meeting room.
- (d) If a member of the public interrupts a Meeting at any time or endeavours, without the permission of the SPC Members, to address a Meeting the Chairperson shall warn him or her and if the interruption continues shall order that person's removal.
- (e) In the case of a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairperson shall order that part to be cleared.
- (f) The SPC Members may, taking account of available space, limit the number of persons to be admitted to Meetings.
- (g) No cameras of any kind or sound recording or communication equipment may be used at Meetings of the SPC without the prior approval of the SPC Members.
- (h) The use of mobile phones shall not be permitted at SPC Meetings.
- (i) No recording of the Meeting and its proceedings by any person, including members of the SPC and attending members of the Public and media, is allowed.

18. Disclosure of Pecuniary or Other Beneficial Interests

- (a) Where a matter is listed for discussion or otherwise arises at a meeting and an SPC member present at the meeting has actual knowledge that she or he or a connected person has a pecuniary or other beneficial interest in, or which is material to that matter, that SPC member shall, in line with Part 15 of the Local Government Act, as amended:
 - i. disclose the nature of his or her interest, or the fact of a connected person's interest at the meeting before discussion or consideration of the matter commences;
 - ii. withdraw from the meeting for so long as the matter is being discussed or considered;
 - iii. take no part in the discussion or consideration of the matter and refrain from voting in relation to it;
- (b) Where an SPC member has actual knowledge that a matter is likely to arise at a meeting at which that SPC member will not be present and which, if she or he were present, a disclosure would be required to be made under (i) above, that SPC member shall, in advance of such meeting, make such disclosure in writing and furnish it to the Ethics Registrar and the Chairperson of the SPC.
- (c) The minutes of the meeting shall contain a record of any disclosure made under (a) or (b) above and any withdrawal from the meeting.

19. Chairpersons Report and Recommendations

- (a) A written report summarising each SPC Meeting shall be prepared. The report should reflect the matters considered by the SPC, the views expressed by Members, and the final recommendation(s), if any, agreed by the SPC.
- (b) The report shall be included on the agenda of the next Corporate Policy Group. The report and any recommendation(s) shall be reviewed by the Corporate Policy Group prior to their submission to the Council for consideration.
- (c) Any recommendation(s) from the SPC must be set out at the end of the Chairperson's report immediately above the Chairperson's signature. Only the wording of each recommendation from an SPC shall be included on the agenda of the next Plenary Meeting exactly as the wording appears on the report from the SPC under the heading Recommendation(s). This wording shall form the basis of the resolution recorded in the minutes of that Plenary Meeting.

20. Sub-Committee's

- a) The Committee shall be entitled to establish Sub-Committees or Working Groups to examine specific policy issues.
- b) These sub-committees are to have a timeline for completion of their work. The members will then provide a report of their work and findings to the SPC.
- c) Composition of sub-committees/working groups to be comprised of a mix of the membership of the Committee.
- d) The SPC Chairperson is an ex-officio Chair of any subcommittee if she/he so wishes, or an ordinary member of it if she/he prefers.

21. Substitute Membership

Attendance of substitute members shall not be permitted at meetings.

22. Non-Attendance

In the event of a member failing to attend three consecutive meetings without adequate reason the appropriate nominating body will be formally requested to review the situation.

23. Suspension Of Standing Orders

Standing Orders may at any time by consent of not less than three quarters of the members present at the meeting of the committee be suspended on a proposal made for the purpose of any specified business. Prior notice of any such proposal shall be given to the chairperson.

24. Remote Meetings

- (a) This section of the Standing Orders provides the means and guidance for the conduct of any remote meeting of the SPC in light of the designation of the Local Authority in the Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (Section 29) (Local Authorities) (Designation) Order 2020 (S.I. No. 445 of 2020).
- (b) Remote Meetings of an SPC may, where the technology allows, be held at:
 - (i) One or more Council owned Chambers or rooms, linked remotely;
 - (ii) An external venue used to accommodate meetings of the SPC, linked remotely;
 - (iii) An electronic, digital or virtual location, web address or a conference call telephone number;
 - (iv) A combination of the above to provide for physical and/or remote attendance by members (known as a 'Hybrid Meeting'). The decision on whether to hold a meeting in accordance with this section will be made by the Chairperson in consultation with the Meetings Administrator.

25. Interpretation of Standing Orders

The Chairperson's ruling on any question of the Standing Orders shall be final.

26. Amending Standing Orders

A Strategic Policy Committee can recommend an amendment to or review of Standing Orders for consideration and decision by the Corporate Policy Group. The proposed amendment must have the agreement of the majority of the total membership of the Committee.