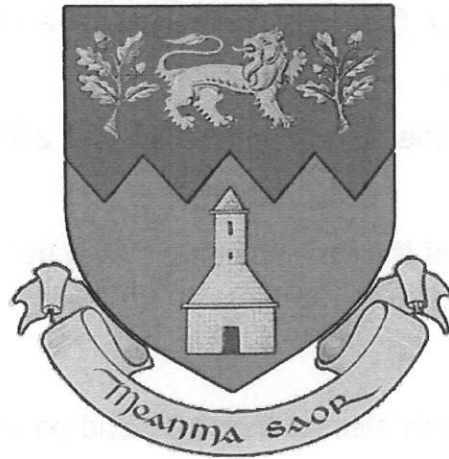


WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE SCHEME

2014 – 2019

8th September, 2014.

Introduction

The statutory basis for Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) is set out in section 48 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by section 41 of the 2014 Act.

The SPCs

- assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy;
- reflect the major functions or services of a local authority within the broader context;
- are tailored to the size, membership and administrative resources of the council;
- have one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the committees' work.

SPCs bring together both elected members and people actively working with social, economic, cultural and environmental bodies, to develop and review policies related to Council services. The SPCs provide elected members with external views as they discharge their strategic role in the development of the local authority, including their policy development and oversight roles within the local authority.

Role of SPCs

The Council is, and remains, the decision making authority, and it is the task of the SPCs, as committees of the Council, to advise and assist the Council in its work. 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 full Council. 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, when policy options are more fluid.

SPCs have a major role in assisting and advising the Council in relation to functions of a strategic statutory nature, i.e. policy to mirror the functions of a

local authority, e.g. preparation of a development plan. They also have a function in other non statutory non policy fields such as urban, village and rural renewal plans, policy related to the development of work programmes and the establishment of priorities in relation to particular services; consideration of the needs of people with disabilities in the formulation and implementation of relevant policies; integration of sustainability principles to particular services, and in the strategic monitoring of local authority services.

Cathaoirleach of the SPCs will be appointed for a minimum period of 3 years and ordinary members will normally be appointed for a period of 5 years. Meetings of SPC's will normally be held on a quarterly basis and will be conducted in a much less rigid and formal way than full council meetings in order to create an informal and collaborative atmosphere that will allow honest views and opinions on policy issues.

Where agreement is reached on recommendations of an SPC to be made to the full Council the Cathaoirleach of the SPC "or his/her nominee" shall present the SPC's recommendation to full Council. The outcome of the Council's consideration of the SPC's recommendation should likewise be reported back to the SPC.

The Council will facilitate the nominations of representatives from the Business and Employers', Farming and Agricultural and Trade Unions', Pillars and the Community and Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental Sectors set out in Appendix A to circular LG 07/2014 in accordance with the Guidelines for establishment and operations of SPCs and in accordance with local arrangements.

- The SPC Framework is set out in Appendix I to this scheme
- SPC meetings and procedures are set out in Appendix 11 to this scheme
- Principles applying in relation to the appointment of Members/Sector representatives are set out in Appendix 111 to this scheme.

APPENDIX I

Framework

The overall configuration of the Wicklow County Council Strategic Policy System is as follows:-

Strategic Policy Committee	Number of Elected Members	Membership from External Sectors
Planning and development	7 elected members Cllr. V. Blake/Cllr. S. Bourke (2.5 years shared) Cllr. T. Cullen Cllr. C. Fox Cllr. S. Matthews Cllr. G. O'Neill Cllr. E. Timmins Cllr. P. Vance	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Development/Construction (Anthony Lawlor)2. Agriculture/Farming Michael Byrne3. Environment/Conservation Joan Campbell4. Business Commercial Trevor Wood (Wicklow Chamber)
Transportation, water and environmental services	5 elected members Cllr. D. Mitchell Cllr. D. Nolan Cllr. P. Doran Cllr. P. Fitzgerald Cllr. M. McDonald	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Environment/Conservation Paul Leahy2. Agriculture/Farming Community Shane O Loughlin3. Development/Construction Paddy Mordaunt (Arklow Chamber)4. Trade Union Christy Byrne (SIPTU)
Housing and corporate estate	6 elected members Cllr. J. Snell Cllr. S. Bourke/Cllr. V. Blake (2.5 yrs shared) Cllr. T. Annesley Cllr. J. Behan Cllr. M. O'Connor Cllr. M. Kavanagh	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trade Union Tony Robinson, SIPTU2. Homeless sector (Simon Community) Pat Green Simon3. Social Inclusion Eamonn McCann4. Business Commercial Nichola Vance5. Community/Voluntary Ann Halpin
Community, cultural and	7 elected members Cllr. J. Ruttle	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Business commercial Irene Sweeney (Arklow

**social
development**

Cllr. S. Cullen
Cllr. P. Kennedy
Cllr. N. Lawless
Cllr. G. McLoughlin
Cllr. M. Murphy
Cllr. B. Thornhill

- Chamber)**
2. Community/Voluntary
Ejvind Mogensen
3. Community/Voluntary
Ann Halpin
4. Social inclusion
Gertie Salley

**Economic
development
and enterprise**

7 elected members
Cllr. G. Walsh (Chair)
Cllr. O. O'Brien
Cllr. T. Fortune
Cllr. J. Ryan
Vacancy
Cllr. J. Whitmore
Cllr. I. Winters

1. Environment/Conservation
Judy Osborne
2. Agriculture/Farming
Community
Declan O'Neill
3. Development/Construction
Michael Allen
4. Business Commercial
Vacant
5. Trade Union
Martin Burke (SIPTU)
6. Business-West Wicklow
Killian McGreal
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APPENDIX II

SPC meetings and Procedures:

- Each SPC should adopt a multi-annual work programme linked to the local authority's Corporate Plan and updated regularly as necessary.
 - The CPG should decide the work programmes of the SPCs and recommend issues to be considered by the SPCs.
 - The SPC chair and relevant Director of Service should meet well in advance of an SPC meeting to clarify the agenda for the forthcoming meeting and to agree on objectives and what they would like as expected outcomes.
 - A calendar of SPC meetings should be agreed at the start of each year. SPCs should normally be held about 4 times yearly at suitable times for all SPC members.
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- SPC meetings should be conducted in a much less rigid and formal way than full council meetings in order to create an informal and collaborative atmosphere that would allow honest views and opinions on policy issues.
 - The Local Authority should provide a key contact person (other than the Director of Service) for all SPC members and particularly for sectoral representatives to deal with SPC matters.
 - Local Authorities should also consider the most appropriate locations for holding SPC meetings perhaps making greater use of community halls and centres.

- Local Authorities should ensure that documentation concerning SPC meetings is sent well in advance of the meetings and if possible four weeks in advance is suggested.
- The agenda and minutes of SPC meetings should also be circulated well in advance to all SPC members.
- Directors of Service should undertake appropriate research on relevant policy options when SPC members are formulating policy. These options should be presented to the Chairs and members of SPCs in a clear, concise, and brief manner.
- Local Authorities should develop as practicable as possible the policy support role for SPCs. This could include making greater use of the research capacity within local authorities and also making greater use of external agencies such as the LGMA, third level institutions etc.
- Once the SPC members have analysed all the potential policy options and avenues open to them and have come to a consensus conclusion the policy can be drafted for presentation at the next SPC meeting.
- Guidelines coming from the central Government Departments should be interpreted as guidelines rather than as a prescriptive set of instructions except in matters covered by a service level agreement, in order to allow in determining and implementing plans and programmes locally.
- Training programmes would be valuable for SPC members and consideration of needs in this regard could be included in the training and development programme for Councillors. Effective meeting skills would be useful for SPC chairs and training on policy areas would be significant for all SPC members. Policy development/research skills and facilitation skills would be valuable for Directors of Services and their support staff.

- SPC chairs should introduce SPC recommendations for full approval by full council.
- The SPCs sectoral representatives should provide feedback to their nominating organisations on the activities of the SPC.
- Members of SPCs should be provided with automatic feedback on the outcome of the council's decisions on SPC recommendations.
- Many Councils already promote the use of the Irish language in various facets of their work. This practice could be extended to SPCs. Bain usaid as an teanga ata again – as an obair a thagann an fhoghlaim.

APPENDIX III

PRINCIPLES

Each SPC should have a minimum of total membership of nine and one third of the membership drawn from sectoral interests. Some flexibility should be considered if particular local circumstances indicate the need for greater membership, however, particular care should be taken to avoid excessively large or unwieldy committees.

The following principles apply to:

(a) Appointment of Wicklow County Council Members

1. Each Member of Wicklow County Council shall, as a matter of equity and good practice, have the opportunity to serve on an SPC.
2. Council Members may not be nominated to represent sectoral interests.
3. SPC Membership for Council Members shall be for the lifetime of the Council. A person ceasing to be a Member shall automatically cease membership of the SPC.
4. Council Members shall not serve on more than two SPCs insofar as possible, again for reasons of equity and good practice and workload.
5. SPC Council membership shall reflect the proportionality and the local distribution of elected representation on the County Council.
6. The Chairs of the SPCs shall be appointed by the County Council from the Council Member appointees to the SPC for a minimum period of 3 years.
7. The allocation of the SPC chairs shall also reflect equitably the spread of elected representation on the County Council.

Appointment of Sectoral Representatives

The following principles should be respected in the selection of groups and associations for a particular sector, including those being facilitated by the national pillars.

1. Groups/Associations should be active within the area of the local authority and have a countywide impact or, at minimum, a relevance in a locality or number of localities in the area.
2. Groups/associations should be open to new members, hold AGMs, regular meetings, and should be broadly representative and accountable.
3. Single interest groups should be eligible e.g. campaign groups focused on disabled or elderly. Single issue groups should not be considered for inclusion in the sectors.
4. Local Development Agencies represented at Strategy Group/LCDC level should not be represented on an SPC.
5. Each sector shall select its own nominee(s) via PPN (Public Participation Network). The nomination of sectoral representatives is the sole responsibility of each particular sector. However the Council may recommend that such nominee(s) have broad knowledge (or expertise) of

a particular nature. Each sector will be asked to nominate the appropriate number of representatives as set out in the adopted scheme to the SPCs. While every effort will be made to accommodate preferences, final decisions on membership will ultimately rest with the local authority as a reserved function.

6. State and Local Development Agencies should not be included as nominating bodies to the sectors and should not be represented on an SPC. However sectors may nominate persons from a local development agency to sit on an SPC.
7. It is desirable that sectoral nominees would retain membership of the SPC for the life of the Council. It is open to each nominating sector to deselect its nominee, if considered necessary, and to notify the Council accordingly whereupon the person would cease to be a member. In such cases the relevant sector shall nominate a new representative.

The Nomination Process

- The nomination process for the agricultural/farming section 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 pillar.
- The trade union sector will be facilitated by the trade union pillar
- The environmental/conservation sector will be facilitated by the environmental pillar and the associated Environmental College under the PPN arrangements. To join the Environmental Electoral College under PPN, an organisation's primary objectives and activities must be environmental (i.e. ecological) protection and/or environmental sustainability. Membership of this Electoral College will be validated by the environmental pillar at a national level.
- The environmental/conservation, community/voluntary and social inclusion sectors will be determined on the basis of the local nomination process through the PPN
- Members organisations when joining the PPN at a county level must opt to be part of one of three electoral colleges within the PPN i.e. Environment, Social Inclusion and Community/Voluntary. To join the Environment

Electoral college an organisation's primary objectives and activities must be environmental (i.e. ecological) protection and/or environmental sustainability. To join the Social Inclusion Electoral College an organisation's primary objectives and activities must focus on social inclusion/social justice/equality. Organisations whose primary objectives are other than those listed above will be members of the Community and Voluntary Electoral College.

End.

