

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE SCHEME 2019-2024

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 the County 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 full 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, when policy options are more fluid. 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.

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 of work, linked to the strategic policies in the Council's Corporate Plan and submit the programme to the Corporate Policy Group.
- 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.
- Each SPC shall inform itself of all national, regional and local policies related to its area of work.
- 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 (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 a 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 An Cathaoirleach and the Chairpersons of the SPCs and will be attended by the Chief Executive and her nominees. The CPG will link the work of the different SPCs, act as a sort of cabinet as well as providing a forum where policy positions affecting the whole Council can be agreed for submission to the full Council. An Cathaoirleach will report to the Council on the work of the CPG.

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 Strategic Policy Committees established by local authorities may have obligations under the Act.

A critical element of public policy formulation by the Strategic Policy Committees 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 Strategic Policy Committee about the work of the Committee would be exempt where the group in question complies with the Transparency Code.

6. Proposed Number of SPC's

In accordance with statutory departmental guidelines the number of SPCs in a local authority will generally be 4 SPCs including the SPC for Economic Development and Enterprise. In accordance with the guidelines local circumstances may warrant additional SPCs in the larger local authorities. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council increased its SPC's from 5 – 6 in 2014.

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;
- The need to ensure that the organisational and financial resources of the particular local authority are not over-stretched; and

- Integration with other meeting requirements and committee structures and ensuring streamlined procedures generally.
- Local Community Development Committee (membership and remit).

Having regard to the above factors the number of SPC's for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council will remain at 6. The remit of the 6 SPC's as outlined will cover all services with the Council.

7. Policy Configuration and Functions

Having regard to the foregoing Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council will have 6 Strategic Policy Committees, which will meet quarterly and will be configured as follows:

- Housing
- Economic Development & Enterprise
- Community, Culture & Wellbeing
- Planning & Citizen Engagement
- Environment and Climate Action
- Transportation & Marine

The Chairpersons of the SPCs will report direct to the County Council.

8. Strategic Policy Committee Functions

The following section sets out details on the functions of each of the 6 SPCs.

Housing

Accommodation Programme for Travelling People
 Allocations / Accessibility & Disability / Priority/ Transfers
 Models of Delivery/Housing Construction / Refurbishment Programme
 Affordable/Social Housing
 Homeless Strategy
 Housing Strategy
 Estate Management

Economic Development & Enterprise

Tourism, Accessible Tourism and Twinning
 Economic development
 Enterprise support functions.
 Public Awareness and Education
 Preparation of the economic elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP),
 Implementation and review of the economic elements of the LECP
 Oversight of the operation of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).
 Village Renewal
 Town Centre Development
 Economic Sustainability

Community, Culture & Wellbeing

Young People & Ageing
Arts
Culture
Community Development
Heritage
Libraries
Social Inclusion
Community Engagement
Wellbeing

Planning & Citizen Engagement

Planning and Development including:

- Building Control and taking in Charge of Estates
- Forward Planning – Plans and Guidelines
- Urban Design and Renewal
- Conservation of Built Environment
- Sustainable Development

Citizen Engagement/Awareness and Education

Environment & Climate Action

Climate Action Plan
Energy & Buildings
Emergency Planning
Flood Resilience
Coastal Protection
Nature Based Solutions
Public Awareness and Education
Waste Management
Litter Management Plan
Water Quality Management Plan
Fire Service
Burial Grounds
Control of Animals
Open Spaces and Parks
Trees, Flora and Fauna
Sports participation and facilities

Transportation & Marine

Cycling policy
Smart Transportation Solutions
Accessible Friendly Streets and Footpaths
Environmental Traffic Planning and Placemaking
Pedestrian Facilities
Parking
Public Transport issues
Roads
Road Safety issues and Traffic Management
Public Awareness and Education
Dún Laoghaire Harbour and the Marine, including coastal issues
The S2S (Sutton to Sandycove)

9. Chairpersons

The Chairperson of each SPC will be a Councillor, nominated by the County Council, and in accordance with the guidelines will hold office for a minimum period of three years, which may be extended by the County Council.

Subsequent Chairpersons will be appointed by the County 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.

Chairpersons should be selected on the basis that they have an interest in the work of the SPCs and are aware of their role in providing leadership and working with the relevant Director to facilitate the smooth and effective operation of the Committee.

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 (normally five years);
- If a Councillor 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 will be 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;
- A stated commitment to working towards gender balance and to encouraging 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;
- Consultation with the PPN (Public Participation Network) ensuring the the fullest possible consultation with all sectors represented on the PPN;
- 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;

SPC Configuration

The following Sectors will be represented on the SPCs:

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

Having regard to the foregoing the proposed membership of the SPCs is set out in the following table:

	Councillors	Sectoral Representatives	Total Membership
Economic Development & Enterprise	14	7 as follows: 1 Agriculture/Farming 1 Tourism Sector 1 Development/Construction 1 Business/Commercial 1 Trade Union 1 Community/Voluntary 1 Social Inclusion	21
Transportation & Marine	14	7 as follows: 2 Environment/Conservation 2 Development/Construction 1 Business/Commercial 1 Community/Voluntary 1 Social Inclusion	21
Community, Culture & Wellbeing	12	6 as follows: 1 Business/Commercial 1 Environment/Conservation 2 Community/Voluntary 2 Social Inclusion	18
Housing	14	7 as follows: 1 Environment/Conservation 1 Development/Construction 1 Business/Commercial 1 Trade Union 1 Community/Voluntary 2 Social Inclusion	21
Planning & Citizen Engagement	14	7 as follows: 2 Environment/Conservation 2 Development/Construction 1 Business/Commercial 1 Community/Voluntary 1 Social Inclusion	21
Environment and Climate Action	12	7 as follows: 1 Agriculture/Farming 1 Environment/Conservation 1 Development/Construction 1 Business/Commercial 1 Community/Voluntary 1 Social Inclusion 1 Environmental Pillar or Comhairle na nÓg	19

11. Nomination process for Sectoral Representatives

The nomination process for the national pillar organisations will be 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 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 will be determined on the basis of the local nomination process through the Public Participation Network (PPN). Member Organisations when joining the PPN at a county level must opt to be a part of one of three electoral colleges within the PPN:

- Environment
- Social Inclusion
- Community and 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. Membership of this Electoral College will be validated by the environmental pillar at a national level.

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.

The Council will provide sufficient time, information and facilities to the PPN, if required, to enable the nomination of representatives. Following the adoption of the SPC Scheme by the Council, each Sector will be given 1 month in which to provide details of their nominations to the Council.

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

- Groups/associations should be active in the area or an area of the authority and have a county wide impact or, at a minimum, relevance in a locality or number of localities in the area.
- Groups/associations should be open to new members, hold AGMs and regular meetings, and should be broadly representative and accountable.
- Single interest groups should be eligible, e.g. campaign groups focused on the disabled or elderly. Single issue groups should not be considered for inclusion in the sectors.
- 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.

12. Knowledge/Expertise Required by Sectoral Representatives Review

The nomination of sectoral representatives is the sole responsibility of each particular sector. However, the Council recommends that some nominee(s) to specific SPCs have broad knowledge (or expertise) in the following areas:

Agriculture / Farming

Climate Action SPC (1)

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC (1) – **1 representative with experience/expertise in rural development**

Environment / Conservation

Transportation & Marine SPC (2) – **1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to cycling and pedestrian issues and 1**

expertise/experience in relation to environment traffic planning and placemaking.

Community, Culture & Wellbeing SPC (1) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to environment/heritage.***

Housing SPC (1) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to the environment***

Planning & Citizen Engagement SPC (2) - ***1 representative with experience/expertise in relation to conservation of the built environment, and 1 representative with experience of energy standards***

Climate Action SPC (1) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to the energy***

Development / Construction

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC (1)

Transportation & Marine SPC (2) - ***1 representative with experience/expertise in relation to road safety issues, and 1 with experience/expertise in relation to public transport issues***

Housing SPC (1) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to Social Housing,***

Planning & Citizen Engagement SPC (2) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to the Construction Industry and 1 representative from a professional organisation with expertise/experience in relation to Physical Planning,***

Climate Action SPC (1) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to energy issues and standards***

Business / Commercial

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC (2) - ***1 representative with experience/expertise of entrepreneurship in any of retail/ commercial/ manufacturing sectors and one representative from the tourism sector.***

Transportation & Marine SPC (1)

Community, Culture & Wellbeing SPC (1) - ***1 representative with experience/expertise in creative/culture enterprise***

Housing SPC (1) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in architecture and the design of social housing***

Planning & Citizen Engagement SPC (1) - ***1 representative from a professional organisation with experience in urban design/renewal***

Climate Action SPC (1)

Trade Union

Housing SPC (1)

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC (1)

Community/Voluntary

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC (1) - ***1 representative with experience/expertise of entrepreneurship in generating enterprise at local community level***

Transportation & Marine SPC (1)

Community, Culture & Wellbeing SPC (2) - ***1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to community development and 1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to children and young persons issues***

Housing SPC (1)

Planning & Citizen Engagement SPC (1)

Climate Action SPC (1)

Social Inclusion

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC (1)

Transportation & Marine SPC (1) - **1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to disability issues**

Community, Culture & Wellbeing SPC (2) **1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to ageing issues and 1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to disability issues**

Housing SPC (2) **1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to disability issues and 1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to traveller issues**

Planning & Citizen Engagement SPC (1) - **1 representative with expertise/experience in relation to disability issues**

Climate Action SPC (1)

13. Training

As part of the development of a Training Programme for Councillors the Council will include provision for training for all SPC members in relation to the following:

- Workshops on policy to cover the various areas within the remit of the SPCs;
- Briefings on the role and functions of local government;
- Briefings on the role and functions of the Strategic Policy Committees
- Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 and Transparency Code;
- Standing Orders and the regulating of SPC meetings;
- Effective meeting skills for SPC Chairs;

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) will be 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 will be published in the local newspaper and on the dlr website. 6 weeks from date of publication of notice will be given for the making of submissions on the draft.

16. Adoption of Scheme

Following receipt of submissions, the draft scheme will go to the Council. The council will then adopt the revised scheme as presented or amended for the implementation of the SPC Scheme.