



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council

**GALWAY CITY COUNCIL
DRAFT 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 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 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, 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.

- 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 The Mayor and the Chairpersons of the SPCs and will be attended by the Chief Executive or his nominees. The CPG will link the work of the different SPCs, act as a sort of cabinet and provide a forum where policy positions affecting the whole Council can be agreed for submission to the full Council. The 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 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

The number of SPCs in Galway City Council will be 5 SPCs including the SPC whose remit includes Economic Development and Enterprise which is required under the Local Government Reform Act 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.
- 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 Galway City Council will have 5 Strategic Policy Committees, which will meet quarterly and will be configured as follows:

- SPC1 - Housing & Social Inclusion
- SPC2 -Planning
- SPC3 - Economic, Community and Cultural Development
- SPC4 - Transportation

- SPC5 - Climate Action, Environment, Recreation & Amenity

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

8. Strategic Policy Committee Functions

The following section sets out details on the functions of each of the 5 SPCs.

SPC 1: Housing & Social Inclusion

Proposed strategic remit:

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- Housing Strategy
- Provision of Local Authority Housing
- Management of housing stock
- Voluntary housing schemes
- Traveller accommodation plans
- Homeless Strategy & Accommodation for Homeless people
- Private rented dwellings, housing standards and building control
- Tenant Participation and Residents' supports
- Housing loans and grants
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Allocations / Accessibility / Priority
- Housing Construction / Refurbishment Programme

SPC 2: Planning

Proposed strategic remit:

- City Development Plan
- Local Area Plans
- Regional, Spatial & Economic Strategy
- National Planning Framework
- Public Realm
- Heritage

SPC 3: Economic, Community and Cultural Development

Proposed strategic remit:

- Economic Development including local, regional, national and trans-national networks and partnerships.

- Enterprise development and support including the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).
- Implementation and review of the economic elements of the LECP
- Tourism, Promotion of the city and Twinning
- Community Development
- Cursaí Gaeilge sa Chathair Dhá Theangach
- Cultural Policy & Legacy
- The Arts and Libraries
- Theatres, Museum and Cultural Spaces

SPC 4: Transportation

Proposed strategic remit:

- Galway Transport Strategy
- City Centre Traffic Management Plan (*inc. BusConnects, Cycling infrastructure and Pedestrian enhancement*)
- Road Safety
- Traffic/Parking Bye-Laws
- Noise Action Plan (cross-over with Environment SPC)

SPC 5: Climate Action, Environment, Recreation & Amenity

Proposed strategic remit:

- Climate Mitigation & Adaptation Policy
- Biodiversity Policy
- Waste Management
- Litter Management
- Pollution control
- Agenda 21
- Burial Grounds
- Fire protection
- Derelict sites
- Casual Trading
- Dog Control
- Veterinary services

- Open space, Parks, Beaches and Playing fields
- Recreation centres and facilities

9. Chairpersons

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

Subsequent Chairpersons will be appointed by the 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.

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 a minimum of 2 SPCs and some may be members of 3;
- 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.
- A sectoral representative may not be a member of 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;
- 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;
- The need for a comprehensive audit of groups within the local authority area to facilitate the fullest possible consultation with each sector;
- 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;
- A commitment to have a pro-active information strategy to inform the public on the renewal of local government;
- The desirability of facilitating relevant organisations to be part of the nominating constituencies.

SPC Configuration

Each SPC will have a total of 12 members, comprising 8 Elected Members and 4 Sectoral Representatives. The following Sectors will be represented on the SPCs:

- Environment/Conservation/Culture
- Development/ Construction
- Business/Commercial
- Trade Union
- Community/Voluntary
- Social Inclusion

The proposed representation of the sectors on the Strategic Policy Committees is as follows:

SPC 1: Housing & Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/Voluntary • Social Inclusion • Development/Construction • Trade Union
SPC 2: Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/Voluntary • Business/Commercial • Environment/Conservation • Trade Union
SPC 3: Economic, Community & Cultural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/Voluntary • Business/Commercial • Trade Union • Culture
SPC 4: Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/Voluntary • Business/Commercial • Environment/Conservation • Trade Union
SPC 5: Climate Change, Environment, Recreation and Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/Voluntary • Social Inclusion • Environment/Conservation • Business/Commercial

11. Nomination process for Sectoral Representatives

The nomination process for the national pillar organisations will be as follows:

- The business/ commercial and development/ construction sectors will be facilitated by the business and employers organisations pillar. Locally this should be invited through Galway Chamber and the local business networks.

- The trade union sector will be facilitated by the trade union pillar through Galway Trades Council.

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) / Galway City Community Network (GCCN). Member Organisations when joining the Galway City Community Network 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 city-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. 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 City Council of the Draft Scheme (as amended), it will be forwarded for consideration to the GCCN/PPN and to the appropriate national and local 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 a local newspaper and on www.galwaycity.ie website and through social media for 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 revert to City Council for its September 2019 Ordinary Meeting. The Council should then adopt the revised scheme as presented or amended for the implementation of the SPC Scheme.