



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

Strategic Policy Committees

Standing Orders

Purpose and Role

The Strategic Policy Committees as established by Clare County Council are statutory Committees charged with the task of assisting and advising the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. They will not be concerned with individual representational or operational issues. Final policy decisions will rest with the full Council acting as a body.

Each of the five Strategic Policy Committees has responsibility in the formulation, development and review of policy in specific areas of the Council's functions and shall confine themselves to discussion on policy issues relevant to their particular Strategic Policy Committee.

Each SPC should adopt a multi-annual work programme linked to the local authorities Corporate Plan which may be updated as necessary.

A key contact person (other than the Director of Services) will be provided for all SPC members and sectoral representatives to deal with SPC matters.

1. Meetings

Meetings should generally be held a minimum of twice yearly at suitable times for all SPC members. However, each SPC may choose to meet with a greater frequency, depending on the demands of their work. Times, dates and duration of meetings to be decided by the Committee.

To enhance inclusivity and accessibility in attendance, remote attendance may be facilitated by agreement of the committee, in accordance with the rules regarding remote attendance for council meetings.

Meetings of each Strategic Policy Committee shall be held in the Council Offices, Ennis or at such other place within the County as the Committee shall decide provided that a decision to alter the venue shall require the approval of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total membership of the particular Strategic Policy Committee.

2. Notice of Meeting

The Agenda should be circulated to all members in advance of meetings, a minimum two weeks in advance. The minutes and documentation concerning SPC meetings should be sent well in advance of the meetings. Want of service of notice of any member of the committee shall not affect the validity of a meeting.

3. Quorum

The quorum for each of the Strategic Policy Committees shall be **five** members and shall include at least two non-elected members and three elected members. If a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes of the time fixed for the meeting, or at any time during the meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a day to be named by the Chairperson.

4. Chairperson

In accordance with the Strategic Policy Committee Scheme adopted by Clare County Council, the Chairperson shall be appointed by the Council. 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.

5. Attendance

The names of those in attendance at a meeting of the committee shall be recorded in an attendance register provided for that purpose.

Attendance of substitute members shall not be permitted at meetings.

Any elected member who has a motion referred either by full council or municipal district to a strategic policy committee for consideration should attend the meeting if the matter is to be discussed.

6. Order of Business

The order of business at meetings of the committee shall be as follows:

- (i) Confirmation of minutes.
- (ii) Consideration of policy issues.
- (iii) Consideration of policy position papers/reports prepared for the committee.
- (iv) Correspondence.

7. Minutes & Documentation

The minutes of every meeting of each Strategic Policy Committee shall be prepared and then signed by the chair of the relevant SPC and the relevant Director of Service. The minutes shall contain a record of those present at the meeting and of the decisions taken on the various matters discussed including, where appropriate, details of voting. Abstention on any vote by the member, shall be recorded in the minutes. Reference to the quorum should also be noted in the minutes of each meeting.

Minutes should include action points which assign responsibility to a specific party or parties in respect of each action.

Where the Committee is of the opinion that the absence of members of the public and representatives of the media from a particular meeting is desirable because of the special nature of the meeting, the Committee may, by 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.

8. Adjournment

The full adjournment of meetings shall take place only in the case of death of sitting members of the committee, members of the Oireachtas from the county, local bishops, heads of state or on the death of an official who normally attends meetings of the committee. A short adjournment of a maximum of fifteen minutes may take place with the consent of a majority of the full membership of the Committee on the occasion of a death of a person other than the above mentioned.

9. Deputations

Deputations may be received by any committee with the consent of a majority of the members of that committee. Not more than two persons shall be entitled to address the committee on behalf of any deputation. No deputation

shall exceed five persons in number and the maximum deputation of the addresses shall be twenty minutes. The notice convening a meeting at which a deputation is to be heard shall contain details of the subject to be addressed by the deputation.

10. Special Meetings

The Cathaoirleach of the Strategic Policy Committee shall have the authority to call a special meeting of the Committee. If the Cathaoirleach of the committee is requested by four members (to include two elected and two non-elected members) to call a special meeting and refuses to comply, the four members shall have the power to call the Special meeting. The notice convening such meeting shall be furnished to each member in the manner set out at Clause 2 of these Standing Orders.

11. Rules for Debate

- (i) Matters for discussion shall relate to the policy or strategy and not to individual cases except as an example of policy or strategy issues.
- (ii) Each member of the committee shall have the right to speak on any relevant issue and shall have equality in making their views known.
- (iii) The committee shall, as far as possible, arrive at all decisions and recommendations by consensus
- (iv) Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and inclusiveness.
- (v) The ruling of the Chairperson on a point of order shall be final.

12. Confidential Material

Matters arising for discussion at a meeting of the committee may, in some instances, be considered confidential. It shall be a matter for the committee to declare that confidentiality be maintained on the issue.

13. Ethics

Members of the committee shall at all times comply with the provisions of law relating to their conduct in public office and especially with all of Part 5 of the Local Government Act 2001 and with any guidelines on ethics and any codes of conduct issued by or on behalf of the government.

Members of the committee shall comply in all respects with Section 177 of Local Government Act 2001; and any member having a pecuniary or beneficial interest in a matter before a meeting of the committee, or having knowledge that a connected person, as defined in the act, has any such interest, shall declare the interest and withdraw from the meeting for so long as the matter is being discussed or considered and shall have no part in the proceedings relating thereto and shall refrain from voting in relation to it. The onus is on the member of the committee to declare the interest and leave the chamber.

14. Recommendations & Feedback

SPC chairs should introduce SPC recommendations for full approval by the council.

The SPC sectoral representatives should provide feedback to their nominating organisation on the activity of the SPC.

Members of SPCs should be provided with automatic feedback on the outcome of the council's decisions on SPC recommendations.

15. Suspension of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders or any of them shall not be suspended except in circumstances which in the sole discretion of the Cathaoirleach shall be deemed to be exceptional circumstances. Standing Orders may be suspended only at a meeting of the Committee whilst not less than one half of the total membership of the Committee is present and then only with the consent of at least two thirds of the members present and voting. Standing Orders may be suspended only once at any meeting of the Committee.

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