



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council

Strategic Policy Committees

2024-2029

Standing orders

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Table of Contents

1. Adoption of Standing Orders.....	3
2. Work Programme	3
3. Arrangements for Meetings	3
4. Notice of Meetings.....	3
5. Quorum.....	3
6. Chairperson	3
7. Director of Services	4
8. Ethical Framework	4
9. Order of Business	4
10. Minutes	4
11. Rules of Debate	5
12. Confidential Material	5
13. Views of Elected Members expressed at SPC.....	5
14. Recommendations.....	5
15. Support Structures.....	6
16. Assistance from Public Authorities.....	6
17. Requirement to have regard to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.....	7
18. Non-Attendance	7
19. Suspension of Standing Orders.....	7
20. Interpretation of Standing Orders.....	7
Appendix 1 - Hybrid & Online meetings	8
A. Management of Hybrid or online meetings	8
B. Meeting Procedures	8
C. Leaving a Remote Meeting.....	8
D. Declaration of Interests.....	8

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

STANDING ORDERS

1. Adoption of Standing Orders

- Standing Orders will be adopted by the Council following recommendation from the SPC.

2. Work Programme

- The SPC shall adopt an annual work programme linked to the local authority's Corporate Plan and updated as necessary. The work of the SPC should also integrate with statutory plans where relevant, link realistically to financial resources and be responsive to sectoral consultations.
- The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) will monitor/oversee the work programme of the SPC and recommend issues to be considered by the SPC.

3. Arrangements for Meetings

- A minimum of four ordinary meetings will be held each year at a time and location decided by the Committee. Meetings should not normally exceed 2 hours duration.
- A special meeting of the Committee can be called by the Chairperson or by at least five members of the committee.
- Hybrid or fully online meetings will be facilitated where possible.

4. Notice of Meetings

- A provisional calendar of meetings will be agreed at the start of each year.
- Agenda, minutes and other documentation will be circulated 7 days in advance of the meeting in so far as possible/appropriate. Three clear days' notice will be given for special meetings of the committee.

5. Quorum

- The quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be four (4) members, three of whom shall be members of the Council. If after 20 minutes from the agreed starting time of an ordinary or special meeting, a quorum is not present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the Chairperson.

6. Chairperson

- In accordance with the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, the Chairperson shall be elected by the County Council and remain in office for a minimum period of three years, which can be renewed by the Council. Subsequent Chairs should be appointed from among the existing Councillor members of the SPC.

- At a meeting of the Committee the Chairperson shall preside. In the absence of the Chairperson the Members present of the Committee shall choose a member to preside as Acting Chairperson.
- While it is expected that decisions of the Strategic Policy Committee will be arrived at by consensus, in the event of a vote resulting in an equality of numbers, the Chairperson, or Acting Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

7. Director of Services

- A Director of Services will attend meetings and provide support to each SPC. The Director will, subject to the Chief Executive's overall responsibility for staffing matters, work closely with the committee and be entitled to speak and participate at meetings.
- The SPC Chair and relevant Director of Service will communicate 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.

8. Ethical Framework

- The provisions of the Ethical Framework under Part 15 of the Local Government Act as amended apply to all members of the Committee. In carrying out their functions under this or any other enactment, it is the duty of every member to maintain proper standards of integrity, conduct and concern for the public interest.
- Any member of a SPC is prohibited from influencing or seeking to influence a decision of the SPC in respect of any matter in which he/she has actual knowledge that he/she or a connected person has a pecuniary or other beneficial interest.
- If such a matter arises at a meeting of the SPC the member must disclose the interest, withdraw and take no part in the proceedings. If the member has actual knowledge that such a matter will arise at a meeting at which he/she will not be present, he/she must make a disclosure in writing to the ethics registrar in advance of the meeting.

9. Order of Business

- Determination that a quorum is present
- Conflicts of Interest
- Confirmation of minutes & matters arising
- Feedback from Elected Council
- Position Papers prepared for consideration by Committee
- Policy Issues submitted by Members for consideration
- Correspondence
- A.O.B.
- Summary of issues for presentation to Corporate Policy Group and Council

10. Minutes

- Minutes of all committee meetings shall contain particulars of the names of the member's present, apologies received together with particulars of all decisions arrived at or

recommendations made and such decisions and/or recommendations to be put to the Council for adoption through the Corporate Policy Group.

- The minutes of every committee meeting shall be signed by the Chairperson or Acting Chairperson following confirmation by the Committee.

11. Rules of Debate

- Each Member of the Committee shall have the right to speak on an issue and be given equal opportunity in making their views known.
- The Committee shall, as far as possible, arrive at all decisions and recommendations by consensus.
- Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and inclusiveness.
- The ruling of the Chairperson on a point of order shall be final.
- Full participation in meetings of the SPC is confined to the members of the SPC. Where policy matters of particular interest to other Councillors or local interest groups arise (for example, proposals affecting a local area), the SPC could meet with the relevant municipal district members or groups.

12. Confidential Material

- Certain matters which arise for discussion by the Strategic Policy Committee may be confidential and it is a matter for the meeting to declare that confidentiality shall be maintained on the issue.
- The meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee will be in committee and its deliberations will not become policy until adopted by the Council.

13. Views of Elected Members expressed at SPC

- The Chief Executive is required to have regard to the views of the elected members in the discharge of the executive functions of the council, including as expressed at a meeting of an SPC. Where the views expressed at the SPC meeting require the particular attention of the Chief Executive, the SPC chair will identify these for the Director of Service for onward transmission to the Chief Executive and other colleagues on the local authority staff, as appropriate.
- (*“Having regard” to views expressed by the elected members requires the Chief Executive to take them into consideration, along with all the other matters that he or she is required by law to take into consideration and which for good governance, policy or other reasons he or she considers prudent to take into consideration.*)

14. Recommendations

- Recommendations of the Committee shall be submitted to the Council for approval and presented by the Chairperson of the Committee.

15. Support Structures

- Normally, when specific advice might be seen to be beneficial to the SPC, the SPC Chair should make arrangements with the Director of Services to have this advice available for the relevant meeting of the SPC.
- It is open to the SPC itself to request specific advice in relation to the performance of its functions, which the Chief Executive/Director of Services will make available to the members of the SPC, where possible and appropriate, as soon as it is available and in advance of the next SPC meeting.
- The SPC itself, or the SPC Chair may also request the Chief Executive to provide all information that may be in the possession of the local authority, or which the Chief Executive is in a position to procure, related to the business of the SPC. Normally this will be agreed between the Director of Service and the SPC Chair, with the possibility of the SPC itself requesting it. The information sought will be made available to the members of the SPC as soon as it is available, to assist in ensuring the effective and efficient transaction of the business of the SPC.
- The SPC must have regard to the advice or assistance of the Chief Executive in the exercise of the performance of the functions of the SPC.
- From time to time the Committee may establish sub-committees or working groups to examine particular policy issues.

16. Assistance from Public Authorities

- Section 48(3A) of the 2001 Act (inserted by section 41(d) of the 2014 Act) empowers a 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
- It is important to recognise that 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 provide an additional resource to the elected members in formulating policy and to strengthen linkages between local authorities and public bodies with wider responsibilities in the sectoral area that 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.
- Where a public authority indicates that it is unable to attend a meeting of a SPC, the SPC chair may report this fact to the local authority, providing the local authority with the public authority’s reasons for not attending. There is no requirement to report non-attendance to the council, for instance where dialogue has established that the public authority cannot add value to the discussions of the SPC, or where there is agreement that attendance would be possible at a future date.

- If non-attendance is reported to the council, the council has the option (not a requirement) to report the failure to the relevant Minister.

17. Requirement to have regard to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

- When Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) have been prepared by the Regional Assemblies, there is a requirement on the SPC to have regard to the RSES.

18. Non-Attendance

- For a member to be recorded as present at a meeting they must attend the meeting (in person or online) for a minimum duration of 30 minutes.
- In the event of a member failing to attend at least three consecutive ordinary meetings of the Committee in any year without valid reason, the nominating body shall be asked to nominate a replacement.
- In the event of a member being unable for any reason to continue to serve as a member of a Strategic Policy Committee, the nominating body shall be asked to nominate a replacement.

19. Suspension of Standing Orders

- Standing Orders may at any time be suspended with the consent of not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members present at the meeting of the Committee. Standing Orders may 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.

20. Interpretation of Standing Orders

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

Appendix 1 - Hybrid & Online meetings

A. Management of Hybrid or online meetings

- i. Members should notify their Meetings Administrator in advance if they intend to attend the meeting remotely.
- ii. Any member participating in a meeting remotely must be able to be heard, when speaking, and be seen by all other members in attendance.
- iii. Any member participating remotely should also confirm at the outset, and at any reconvening of the meeting, that they can hear and preferably see the proceedings.
- iv. The attendance of those members at the meeting, either in person or online, will be recorded in the minutes by the Meetings Administrator.
- v. The normal quorum requirements for hybrid or online meetings as set out at item 5 in the Standing Orders apply to a remote meeting.
- vi. Each member participating remotely has personal responsibility to ensure that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be either hearing or seeing consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings.

B. Meeting Procedures

- i. The Meetings Administrator will coordinate the facilitation of the meeting. An appropriate official will assume responsibility for controlling the conferencing technology employed for remote access and attendance, and to administer the member interaction, engagement and connections on the instruction of the Chairperson.
- ii. Members should allow sufficient time to establish a connection prior to the commencement of the meeting to allow themselves and the Meeting Administrator the opportunity to test the connection.
- iii. The Chairperson, at the beginning of the meeting, will explain the protocol for members' participation. The Chairperson's ruling during the debate will be final.
- iv. Members who wish to speak should use the notification process as directed by the Chairperson, and then speak when invited.
- v. The rules of debate as set out at item 11 in the Standing Orders will apply.

C. Leaving a Remote Meeting

- i. Members leaving the meeting should make every effort to inform the Chairperson by the appropriate means that they are exiting the meeting to ensure there is a Quorum remaining and so that it is not presumed to be a loss in connectivity.

D. Declaration of Interests

- i. Any Member participating in a remote meeting who declares a disclosable pecuniary or other beneficial interest, under Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001, in any item of business, must also leave the remote meeting, advising the Chairperson and

members at the time of departure and this shall be recorded in the minutes. Their departure will be confirmed by the Meetings Administrator, who will invite the relevant Member to re-join the meeting at the appropriate time.