

18th March, 2015.

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To: The Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES – STANDING ORDERS

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

I attach herewith Draft Standing Orders for Meetings of Strategic Policy Committees for your consideration. The Draft Standing Orders broadly cover the proceedings of Meetings of SPCs but are not as comprehensive as those required for Meetings of the Full Council.

The Guidelines received in relation to the formulation of the SPCs state that the Standing Orders for SPCs are required to be approved by the Full Council. Also, in accordance with Section 54(2) of the Local Government Act, 2001, the Council is obliged to comply with these Guidelines.

It was agreed at meeting of the Corporate Policy Group on Monday, 16th March, 2015, that the Draft Standing Orders would be placed before the Council for approval. The Standing Orders can then be considered by the SPCs at their next Meeting and suggested amendments, if any, would then be brought back to Full Council for consideration.

A resolution of the Council is now required to adopt the Standing Orders.

Is mise le meas,



Eugene Griffin,
Meetings Administrator.

LIMERICK CITY & COUNTY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

DRAFT STANDING ORDERS

1. Arrangements for Meetings

- (a) Meetings should normally be held four times each year at a time and location to be decided by the committee.
- (b) A special meeting of the committee can be called by the chairperson or by at least five members of the committee.

2. Notice of Meetings

Three clear days notice will be given for ordinary meetings of the committee and where possible, there will be an agreed schedule of meetings. Want of service of notice on any member or members of the committee shall not affect the validity of the meeting. Meeting documentation should be circulated up to 4 weeks in advance of a meeting to allow sectoral representatives an opportunity to consult within their sector in relation to same.

3. Quorum

The quorum for meetings shall be one third of the membership (rounded up to the next whole number). If after twenty minutes from the agreed starting time of a meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the chairperson.

4. Chairperson

- (a) In accordance with the SPC Scheme adopted by Limerick City & County Council, the chairperson shall be appointed by the Council.
- (b) 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. Order of Business

- (a) Confirmation of Minutes.
- (b) Progress report by the Director of Services.
- (c) Consideration of policy issues as submitted by committee members and Director of Services.
- (d) Position papers prepared for consideration by committee.
- (e) Correspondence.
- (f) Any other business.

6. Minutes

- (a) Minutes of all committee meetings shall contain particulars of the names of the persons present, apologies received, together with particulars of all decisions arrived at or recommendations made.
- (b) The minutes of every committee meeting shall be signed by the chairperson or acting chairperson following confirmation by the committee.

7. Duration of Meeting

Meetings shall commence at the appointed time and conclude within two hours.

8. Rules of Debate

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

9. Confidential Material

Certain matters which may arise for discussion by the Strategic Policy Committee may be confidential and it shall be a matter for the meeting to declare that confidentiality be maintained on the issue.

10. Attendance of Public and Media

- (a) The right of the public and representatives of the media to attend SPC meetings is subject to the following:
Where the SPC Members are of the opinion that the absence of members of the public and representatives of the media from the whole or part of a particular Meeting is desirable because of the special nature of the Meeting or of an item of business to be or about to be considered at the Meeting or for other special reasons, the SPC Members may, by Resolution in respect of which 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. The Resolution in this instance shall indicate in a general way the reasons for the Resolution and those reasons shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- (b) Members of the public and representatives of the media will occupy the parts of the meeting room allotted to their use.
- (c) Members of the public shall be seated and maintain silence and observe any directions given by the Chairperson or by any employee in attendance. Such employees are responsible for the execution of all measures necessary for the maintenance of order and decorum in and about the meeting room.
- (d) If a member of the public interrupts a Meeting at any time or endeavours, without the permission of the SPC Members, to address a Meeting the Chairperson shall warn him or her and if the interruption continues shall order that person's removal.
- (e) In the case of a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairperson shall order that part to be cleared.
- (f) The SPC Members may, taking account of available space, limit the number of persons to be admitted to Meetings.
- (g) No cameras of any kind or sound recording or communication equipment may be used at Meetings of the SPC without the prior approval of the SPC Members.

11. Disclosure of Pecuniary or Other Beneficial Interests.

- (a) Where a matter is listed for discussion or otherwise arises at a meeting and an SPC member present at the meeting has actual knowledge that she or he or a connected person (as referred to in Local Government Act 2001, Section 166) has a pecuniary or other beneficial interest in, or which is material to that matter, that SPC member shall

- (i) disclose the nature of his or her interest, or the fact of a connected person's interest at the meeting before discussion or consideration of the matter commences;
 - (ii) withdraw from the meeting for so long as the matter is being discussed or considered;
 - (iii) take no part in the discussion or consideration of the matter and refrain from voting in relation to it;
- (b) Where an SPC member has actual knowledge that a matter is likely to arise at a meeting at which that SPC member will not be present and which, if she or he were present, a disclosure would be required to be made under (i) above, that SPC member shall, in advance of such meeting, make such disclosure in writing and furnish it to the Ethics Registrar and the Chairperson of the SPC.
- (c) The minutes of the meeting shall contain a record of any disclosure made under (a) or (b) above and any withdrawal from the meeting.

12. Recommendations

Recommendations/Reports of the committee shall be submitted for consideration to the Council by the Chairperson of the committee / meeting.

13. Support Structures

The Committee shall be entitled to establish Sub-Committees or Working Groups to examine specific policy issues.

14. Substitute Membership

Attendance of substitute members shall not be permitted at meetings.

15. Non Attendance

In the event of a member failing to attend three consecutive meetings without adequate reason the appropriate nominating body will be formally requested to review the situation.

16. Suspension Of Standing Orders

Standing Orders may at any time by consent of not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members present at the meeting of the committee 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.

17. Interpretation of Standing Orders

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