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COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LIATROMA

Áras an Chontae,
Cora Droma Ruisc.

16th June 2009

Cathaoirleach agus gach Ball
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LIATROMA

RE: Review of Leitrim County Council SPC Scheme 2009

Dear Councillor,

As you will be aware the statutory basis for Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's) is set out in the Local Government Act 2001. Circular Letter LG 10/09 dated 10th June 2009 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government (copy circulated with Annual Meeting Agenda) outlines the requirement for each county and city council, following the local elections, to establish new SPC's in line with the guidelines set out in the circular and the guidelines published by the Department in October 1999.

Each Strategic Policy Committee has a chairperson who is a member of Leitrim County Council. The SPC Chairs will be appointed by the Council at the Annual Meeting of Leitrim County Council to be held on 19th June 2009. The SPC Chairs should have an interest in the work of the SPC and provide leadership in working with the Director of Service to facilitate the smooth and effective operation of the SPC.

As a first step in the review of the SPC Scheme each County Council is requested to select the Chairs-designate for each SPC. These, together with the Cathaoirleach, will assist me in drafting the SPC Scheme and to advance the process of establishing the new SPC's. I have attached broad details of the process involved in the review of the SPC Scheme for your further information at Appendix 1.

While the guidelines allow a measure of discretion to local authorities in establishing an SPC structure which takes account of local circumstances and which best meets local needs, there is a requirement that Strategic Policy Committees will:

- Assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy
- Reflect the major functions or services of a local authority within a broader context
- Be tailored to size, membership and administrative resources of the local authority but generally be four in number, and
- Have a minimum one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the committee's work

The factors to be taken into account in determining the overall framework of SPC's for a particular local authority include the total number of elected members on the Council, the range of sectoral and other interests to be represented, the organisational arrangement of service groupings within the authority and the remit envisaged for each SPC and the need to ensure that the organisational and financial resources of the particular local authority are not over-stretched. The Guidelines recommend that where possible, taking account of resource implications, local authorities will normally have four SPCs. (The guidelines

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all Cllrs
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[Signature]

indicate however that in the very largest authorities individual local circumstances may perhaps warrant additional SPCs).

In accordance with revised SPC Scheme adopted by Leitrim County Council in 2004, following the last Local Elections, five strategic policy committees were established comprising two-thirds membership of Elected Members and one-third membership from "sectoral representatives" as follows:

- Community, Cultural and Enterprise Development SPC
- Housing and Corporate Services SPC
- Planning SPC
- Transportation SPC
- Water, Environment and Emergency Services SPC

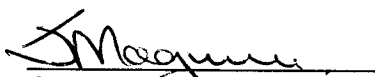
The SPC Scheme as adopted reflected the Directorate Structure as it existed in 2004 with one Directorate - the Roads & Planning Directorate - having two SPC's. As there are twenty two (22) members of Leitrim County Council it was necessary for eight (8) members to serve on two committees each with the remaining fourteen (14) members serving on one SPC each.

The remit of the Strategic Policy Committees is to deal only with policy matters and as such they are strategic in nature. The SPC's do not deal with routine operational matters in relation to delivery of services. During the term of the last Council the internal Directorate structure was reviewed and streamlined to achieve greater efficiencies. A revised SPC structure, configured to mirror the current Directorate structure, and anchored in the main local government functions/services, is strongly recommended. It is no longer considered necessary or appropriate to have 2 SPC's for any individual Directorate - the justification for an additional SPC in the past was on the basis that the Roads and Water Services (Infrastructural) functions were based in two separate Directorates under two Directors of Service. These services have now been combined within the Infrastructural Directorate under one Director of Services. In the interests of equity and efficiency, from the perspective of the members, the sectoral representatives and the executive, I am recommending that a revised SPC Scheme based on 4 SPC's, aligned to the 4 Service Directorates, be operated as follows:

- Community, Cultural and Enterprise Development SPC
- Housing and Corporate Services SPC
- Planning, Environment & Emergency Services SPC
- Infrastructure SPC

This is considered to be in the best interests of efficient policy development and its implementation, which will ultimately reflect itself in improved service delivery and will facilitate the Council adequately responding to the emerging challenges ahead.

Yours sincerely,


Jackie Maguire,
County Manager.
AMcG.

Appendix 1 – Process of Review of SPC Scheme

1. The Manager, in consultation with the Cathaoirleach and the Chairs-designate of the SPC's, to prepare a draft scheme.
2. The draft scheme to be forwarded to the Council for initial consideration, any amendment deemed necessary, and approval.
3. Advertise/Publicise the draft scheme.
4. The draft scheme to be circulated to the following and allow a month to six weeks for responses, if any:
 - a. the known organisations in the county/city as previously identified from the earlier process and from the ongoing audit;
 - b. responses received to the public advertisements;
 - c. the National Pillars
5. Council to consider submissions on the draft scheme.
6. Council to adopt scheme with / without amendment.
7. The local authority to write to the contact persons of the three National Pillars, as set out in Appendix 6, enclosing a copy of the adopted scheme and seeking nominations (see also para 5.12). Organisations seeking representation and whose nomination process falls under each of the 3 identified National Pillars in 5.12 should be forwarded to the relevant National Pillar for consideration in the context of its providing nominations to the local authority in line with the adopted scheme.
8. The local authority to write to organisations identified in the community/voluntary/disadvantaged sector and the environment/conservation/cultural sector enclosing a copy of the adopted scheme and seeking to facilitate their nomination of representatives in line with the adopted scheme. (See paras 5.13-5.15).
9. The local authority to write to town local authorities seeking The local authority to write to town local authorities seeking nominations. (See para 5.16).
10. The local authority to allow sectors one month for the receipt of nominations
11. Receive nominations for each of the six sectors.
12. Advise Council of nominations from sectors to SPCs and Council to adopt the membership as put forward.
13. First meetings of SPCs.

Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations & Expenditure) Act, 1999 as amended by the Electoral Amendment (No. 2) Act 2009

The Statement of Donation and Election Expenses at the Local Elections on 5th June 2009 in accordance with Section 13 of the Local Elections (Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure) Act 1999, as amended, must be returned within 90 days following polling day i.e. by Thursday 3rd September 2009.

The relevant period for expenditure is from April 7th 2009 to Polling Day i.e. 5th June 2009. Spending limit of €9,750 applies (10% deemed to be assigned to political party - €8,775)

Successful candidates are only required to make an expenditure return – regular provisions re the submission of a donations statement annually by 31st January thereafter. Unsuccessful candidates must provide both Statement of Donations and statement of Election Expenses within 90 days after polling day.