



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



LG 07/2014

29 May 2014

Establishment of New Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

Dear Manager

I am directed by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to refer to circular letter LG 06/2014 of 28 May 2014 to county and city managers regarding certain matters to which local authorities are required to attend following the local elections. The circular letter indicated, *inter alia*, that a further communication may be issued in relation to Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs). This circular provides guidance in relation to the establishment and operation of SPCs following this month's local elections.

A copy of this circular, which is available on the SharePoint system, should be given to each elected member.

Establishment of New SPCs

The statutory basis for SPCs is set out in section 48 of the Local Government Act 2001 (the 2001 Act). Furthermore, section 48(1A) of the 2001 Act, as inserted by section 41(a) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, requires that at least one of the SPCs that is established shall be to consider matters which relate to the functions of the local authority in relation to economic development and enterprise support. Accordingly, each local authority shall form an SPC entitled the "SPC for Economic Development and Enterprise".

Following the local elections, it is necessary for each county and city council to establish new SPCs in line with the revised guidelines published by the Department in June 2014 entitled: Corporate Policy Groups and Strategic Policy Committees: Guidelines for establishment and operation and which accompany this Circular.

As a first step, each council should, at the earliest opportunity, select the Chairs-designate for each SPC. These together with the Cathaoirleach will assist the Chief Executive in drafting the SPC scheme and to advance the process of establishing the SPCs. In this regard, it is important that every effort is made to have an SPC scheme that ensures participation and support from all political representatives as required by the guidelines. The chairs are appointed by the full council for a minimum period of three years and the overall spread of SPC chairs must, in accordance with the guidelines, reflect the political representational spread on the full council. Paragraph 6.2 of the revised 2014 guidelines refers.

The role of the SPC Chairs is regarded as pivotal to the success of both the SPCs and the Corporate Policy Group (CPG). Accordingly, local authorities are asked to ensure that SPC Chairs are selected on the basis that –

- they have an interest in the work of the SPCs,
- they are fully aware of the leadership role of SPC Chairs,
- they appreciate the need to work with the relevant Director of Service to facilitate the smooth and effective operation of the SPCs and the CPG (which comprises the SPC Chairs along with the Mayor/Cathaoirleach supported by the Chief Executive).

Local authorities are required to engage in public consultation on the draft scheme. However, it is not envisaged that the same level of public consultation in relation to the drafting of the scheme for the new SPCs as outlined in paragraph 5.5 of the revised 2014 guidelines will be needed in cases where the previous scheme is not being substantially altered. Local authorities are free, however, to engage in this more intensive consultation process where they feel it is appropriate.

Local authorities should take the necessary steps to seek new nominations from the Business and Employers', Farming and Agricultural and Trade Unions', Pillars and the Community and Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental Sectors in accordance with paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of the Revised 2014 Guidelines. Details of the national contact points for the Business and Employers', Farming and Agricultural and Trade Unions' Pillars and the Environmental Sector are attached at **Appendix A**.

All necessary action for the establishment and commencement of SPC operations at an early date should now proceed.

Any queries may be directed to Sean O'Suilleabhain (Tel. 01 888 2888 or email sean.osuilleabhain@environ.ie).

Yours sincerely



Donal Enright
Local Government Policy and
Motor Tax Section

To each County / City Manager

Copy for information to: AILG and LAMA

National Contact Points of Key Stakeholders

Pillar	Name & Address	Telephone and e-mail
Farming	Gerry Gunning	01-4500266
	Irish Farmers Association (IFA) Irish Farm Centre Bluebell Dublin 12	gerrygunning@ifa.ie
Business	Kim Mulligan	01-4004300
	Chambers Ireland 22-24 Lower Mount Street Dublin 2	kim.mulligan@chambers.ie
Trade Unions	Fergus Whelan	01-8897777
	Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Head Office 31-32 Parnell Square Dublin 1	fergus.whelan@ictu.ie
Environment	Michael Ewing	071-9667373
	Environment Pillar – Coordinator Knockvicar Boyle Co Roscommon	michael@environmentalpillar.ie