



Submission to Corporate Services, Galway City Council on The Draft GCC SPC Scheme 2024-2029

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Section 3 – Strategic Policy Committees

In relation to the second bullet point (at the bottom of page 5), suggest that the Committee agree what the Chair will report to the Council in relation to the proceedings of the Committee. This could be a standing agenda item at each SPC meeting.

Quorum – for clarity, the Scheme should specify the number of representatives needed for an SPC meeting to be quorate, and if a quorum requires a specific number of representatives from elected members and elected sectoral representatives.

Membership and Attendance – suggest that if a representative does not attend for a specified number of meetings, the Chair can propose to the Committee to remove the representative from the Committee and seek another nomination. Suggest also that a minimum length of time at a meeting be required for a representative to be considered present ie if a representative joins a meeting for a few minutes only and is absent for the majority of the meeting and the substantive discussions, then they are not deemed to be present for the meeting. (This point could also be considered under Section 7).

Final paragraph on page 6 – Climate Action and Climate Impacts. There would be merit in seeking that the UN Sustainable Development Goals are referenced here in addition to climate impacts.

Section 5 – Strategic Policy Committee Functions

There may be merit in revisiting the naming of some of the SPCs; for example; as the areas of focus on the 'Social Development' SPC predominantly relate to housing perhaps "housing" could be included in the title? Similarly, the name "Urban Development" doesn't necessarily reflect the areas of work in our reading of it.

We note the remit of the proposed Social Development SPC, relative to the Housing and Social Inclusion SPC under the previous 2019-2024 Scheme. (See Appendix 1)

We welcome the inclusion of the new categories Social Inclusion, Ukrainian Services and Integration.

We would ask that Housing Strategy and the Provision of Local Authority Housing would both be covered under Housing Capital (and perhaps that is the intention, we weren't fully clear on reading the draft scheme). It is critically important that this SPC is focused on the strategy for delivering Local Authority Housing for Galway City.

Galway City Council has a Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026, which is aligned to the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2026. Housing and Disability Steering Groups are required under Housing for All to report to their SPCs on a quarterly basis on the progress of all aspects of the Local Strategic Plan. We propose that Housing People with a Disability is added to the remit of the Social Development SPC.

In relation to Traveller Accommodation, it might be considered if Traveller Accommodation - Young Adults (18-24) would be considered as a separate category in line with Action 21 of the Youth Homelessness Strategy which specifically references the need for local authorities to be well positioned to work with young Travellers at risk of homelessness

We would also ask that the Homeless Strategy would be reinstated as a specific category. As outlined in Housing for All, Ireland has signed up to the Lisbon Declaration on Ending Homelessness by 2030. The SPC needs to focus on Galway City's Homeless Strategy to make significant progress against achieving that goal in line with National Policy over the period of its term up to 2029, in addition to focusing on Homelessness Services. The Homeless Strategy will include the Regional

Homeless Action Plan, the City's Homeless Action Plan and alignment with National Policy, including Housing for All, the National Housing First Implementation Plan and the Youth Homelessness Strategy.

With social housing delivery continuing to fall well below targets, there is an increasing reliance on HAP tenancies. Given the number of HAP tenancies that Galway City Council is supporting, it might be considered if 'Private rented dwellings, housing standards and building control' should also be reinstated into the remit of the 2024-2029 SPC.

SPC Meetings

More specifics in terms of the minimum number of meetings per year and how far in advance agendas, minutes and documentation are required to be provided would be useful.

It may also be helpful to consider the scheduling of meetings to optimise inputs from other relevant Committees to the SPC meetings. For example, in the case of the Social Development SPC, if meetings of the Homeless Steering Committee, Disability Steering Group and Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee were scheduled in the month prior to an SPC, the minutes/inputs from those meetings may assist the SPC in its work.

In relation to the final paragraph in Section 5 on page 10;

'Prior to finalising and bringing a completed policy to a SPC meeting, there should be a number of policy options be considered and each policy option should be reviewed by the members of the SPC. A consensus should be reached on the overall policy before it is submitted at a meeting of the SPC'

we suggest that draft policies should be prepared reflecting legislative and regulatory requirements and with the input of the SPC. These should then be considered by the SPC members and consensus should be sought on a final draft policy to bring forward to the full Council for adoption.

We note that there have been very few policies brought to/discussed/agreed on at the Housing SPC in recent years. The greater part of the meetings related to updates in relation to the Homelessness Report, Capital Update, Update on the TAP etc

Section 7 Membership

We are unsure what bullet point 5 in the second part of this section means and how it will work in practice;

'The need for a comprehensive audit of groups within the local authority area to facilitate the fullest possible consultation with each sector'.

Perhaps this could be clarified.

SPC configuration

We suggest that the Community/Voluntary sector should be among the proposed representation for SPC 1: Social Development. We believe it would make more sense to have Community/Voluntary rather than Culture representation on this SPC.

Separately, we cannot see the process for nominating a Culture nominee in Section 8.

Appendix 1 - Social Development SPC Draft remit 2024-2029 and Housing and Social Inclusion SPC 2019-2024

SPC 1. Social Development 2024-2029

Proposed strategic remit:

- Housing Services
- Housing Capital
- Housing Maintenance
- Traveller Accommodation
- Homelessness Services
- Social Inclusion
- Ukrainian Services
- Integration

SPC 1: Housing & Social Inclusion 2019-2024

Remit

- Housing Strategy
- Provision of Local Authority Housing
- Management of housing stock
- Voluntary housing schemes
- Traveller accommodation plans
- Homeless Strategy & Accommodation for Homeless people
- Private rented dwellings, housing standards and building control
- Tenant Participation and Residents' supports
- Housing loans and grants
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Allocations / Accessibility / Priority
- Housing Construction / Refurbishment Programme