

# **Terms of Reference for Working Group for the review of local authority Strategic Policy Committees**

A Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) shall be convened to oversee, advise and guide an independent review of local authority Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), to be carried out by an external consultant.

The review will evaluate the operation of SPCs, including the legislative provisions and the Department-issued guidelines which provide for SPCs, with a view to:

- enhancing the effectiveness of the operation, role and impact of SPCs;
- enhancing the effectiveness of the interaction of SPCs with Corporate Policy Groups;
- further strengthening and empowering elected members of local authorities in their policy-making role;
- ensuring that communities and stakeholders have appropriate input in an inclusive manner, via SPCs, to policy-making processes at local level
- making SPCs and SPC processes more inclusive, including facilitating attendance where this is a challenge for members.

## The membership of the SWG:

The SWG shall be composed of nominees representing:

- The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG)
- The Local Authority Members Association (LAMA)
- The County and City Management Association (CCMA)
- Representatives from the national pillars of SPCs and the Public Participation Networks: Farming, Business, Trade Unions, Environmental, Social Inclusion, and Community and Voluntary
- The Public Participation Network National Advisory Group
- The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)
- The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

- The Department of Rural and Community Development
- The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
- The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Local Government Governance and Elected Members Section, Local Government Structures and Modernisation Section, and Planning Division)

Meetings of the Group will be chaired by a representative of Local Government Governance and Elected Members Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, which will also provide secretariat support.

The work of the Stakeholder Working Group:

The main tasks of the SWG shall be to frame the SPC review through these Terms of Reference and the tender specifications document referred to below. To this end, the SWG shall:

- Agree Terms of Reference for the SWG;
- Adopt a work plan to complete its work and make its final submission to the Minister during 2023;
- Advise and agree on the framework, including selection criteria, for the independent review, for tendering for an external consultant to carry out the review;
- Oversee and advise the external consultant's review of Strategic Policy Committees in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference;
- Meet with the consultant at appropriate intervals to consider progress made, and provide feedback and advice on any issues raised by the consultant;
- Provide feedback, corrections, and advice on additions to a draft report submitted by the consultant to the SWG, prior to the submission of the final report;
- Once the external consultant has completed its work, the SWG shall consider the consultant's final report, consider comments on the report, and make a submission with the report and the SWG's commentary to the Minister for Local Government and Planning. This will complete the work of the SWG.

Furthermore:

- The SWG shall normally have as the first item on its meeting agenda the agreement of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- The SWG shall, as far as is possible, operate by consensus among the membership of the SWG.