



Down District Council

Committee System

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Council's Committee System provides an effective framework for policy formulation, monitoring and review. It is a positive attempt to address the future requirements of a demanding service environment and place the Council in a stronger position to play a key role in the development of the district.

2.0 COUNCIL MISSION

The Council's stated mission is to improve the quality of life for all its people. It therefore accepts an overriding responsibility for those who live, work and invest in the area to ensure their needs are recognised and, as far as possible, met by the most appropriate means. The Council must set up structures to discharge that responsibility. An efficient and effective Committee System is pivotal to achieving such objectives.

3.0 COUNCIL ROLES

The Council has a number of roles. Some of these are statutory and others lie at the discretion of the Council. The main roles are:

- Statutory and regulatory role for the protection and wellbeing of citizens
- Providing services and facilities to those who live, work and visit the district.
- The sustainable economic and environmental development of the district.
- Responding to consultation documents in the best interest of the district.
- Representing local citizens and advocacy on their behalf.

3.1 The Role Of Providing Services

Council services are essential to the welfare and prosperity of the community. They are not carried out for their own sake, but to provide a

service to the public. These must be delivered in the most efficient and effective manner and at all times ensure value for money. To achieve this aim, the Council and its officers must give priority to:

- Quality of service within the resources available.
- Putting value on the public as customers and citizens.
- A high level of responsiveness to the public.

Resources are becoming increasingly scarce and it is essential at the "sharp end" of the Council's activities, the major policy aims are clearly identified, prioritised and addressed within the principles of good planning, programming and budgeting.

3.2 Consultative Role

The Council fulfils this role through consultation with Government Departments and other Public Agencies. This is best exemplified in the development control planning process, Housing Executive and DOE Roads and Water programmes. It is essential that the Council's considered views are expressed within a framework that accommodates monitoring and implementation of the agreed decisions and policies.

3.3 Representative And Advocacy Roles

The Council presently undertakes a representative role in a number of ways. It has Councillors appointed to Statutory Boards and Committees. In this way the Council's views may be expressed from time to time. In a similar way, Council opinion can be made known to various voluntary bodies and groups.

If the Council is to exercise an effective concern, it must be capable of influencing the multiplicity of organisations (statutory and non-statutory) and stakeholders whose activities affect Down District.

Consequently, the Advocacy role is very important. It needs to be pursued constructively and with conviction if the other agencies are to be persuaded of the Council's aims and objectives. To be effective a "proactive" rather than a "reactive" role must be adopted.

3.4 Development Role

This role relates to all important environmental development within the District of a socio-economic nature, including initiating projects, lobbying Government Departments, reflecting public opinion, channelling grant aid etc. The Council should be in a position to advise and represent its views on a wide range of matters, including regional and area planning, major infrastructural proposals, European Community policies and the development of trade, industry and commerce - where these impinge on the District. Regular liaison and contact with Government Departments and other Agencies at as is required.

4.0 THE COMMITTEES

The Council's Corporate Strategy is developed and implemented through an agreed Committee System taking particular cognisance of the main roles, established administrative procedures and focusing on "families" of activities.

4.1 Purpose Of Committees

- The purpose of Committee meetings is to help the Council to manage its affairs better and to enable informed decision making.
- By using Committees the Council is able to break down its responsibilities into manageable units.
- Committees are considered important devices for analysing information, cross fertilising ideas and focusing on problems.
- As members learn to work together as a team, the Committee becomes more and more efficient.

4.2 Committee Procedures

- ***Power to Appoint***

The Council has power to appoint Committees under Section 18 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972. The Council has power to, at any time, dissolve a Committee or alter its membership.

A Committee appointed under Section 18 may include persons who are not Councillors but at least two-thirds of every Committee shall be Councillors (Sub-Section (3))

Paragraph 19.2 of the Council's Standing Orders states:-

"The Council shall at the Annual Meeting appoint such committees as it is required to appoint by or under any statute and may appoint at any time such other committees, including standing committees, as are necessary to carry out the work of the Council. Subject to any statutory provision in that behalf:

- (a) The Council shall not appoint any member of a committee so as to hold office later than the next Annual Meeting of the Council; with the exception of the Audit Committee where members are appointed for the life of the Council (e.g. four years)
- (b) The Council may at any time dissolve a committee or alter its membership;

- ***Frequency of Meetings***

Standing Committee meetings shall normally be held on a monthly / bimonthly basis. Additional Committees and other Sub-Committees, which may be appointed from time to time, shall meet as and when required.

- ***Committee Reports***

- (i) The Council, if it so wishes, shall delegate its power to a Committee, but this shall only be done in exceptional circumstances.
- (ii) Copies of the Committee reports shall be made available to members of the Press after adoption by the Council.

4.3 Committees Established

In pursuit of the Council's mission the following Committees have been established:

Standing Committees:

- ***Strategic Policy and Resources Committee***

9 members to meet on the first Monday in each month.

- ***Recreation & Community Services Committee***

9 members to meet bi-monthly.

- ***Environment Committee***

9 members to meet bi-monthly.

- ***Cultural & Economic Development Committee***

9 members to meet bi-monthly.

- ***Building Control & Estates Committee***

9 members to meet bi-monthly

- ***External Affairs Committee***

9 members to meet bi-monthly

- ***Audit committee (For the life of current Council)***

8 members to meet quarterly

4.4 Committee Composition

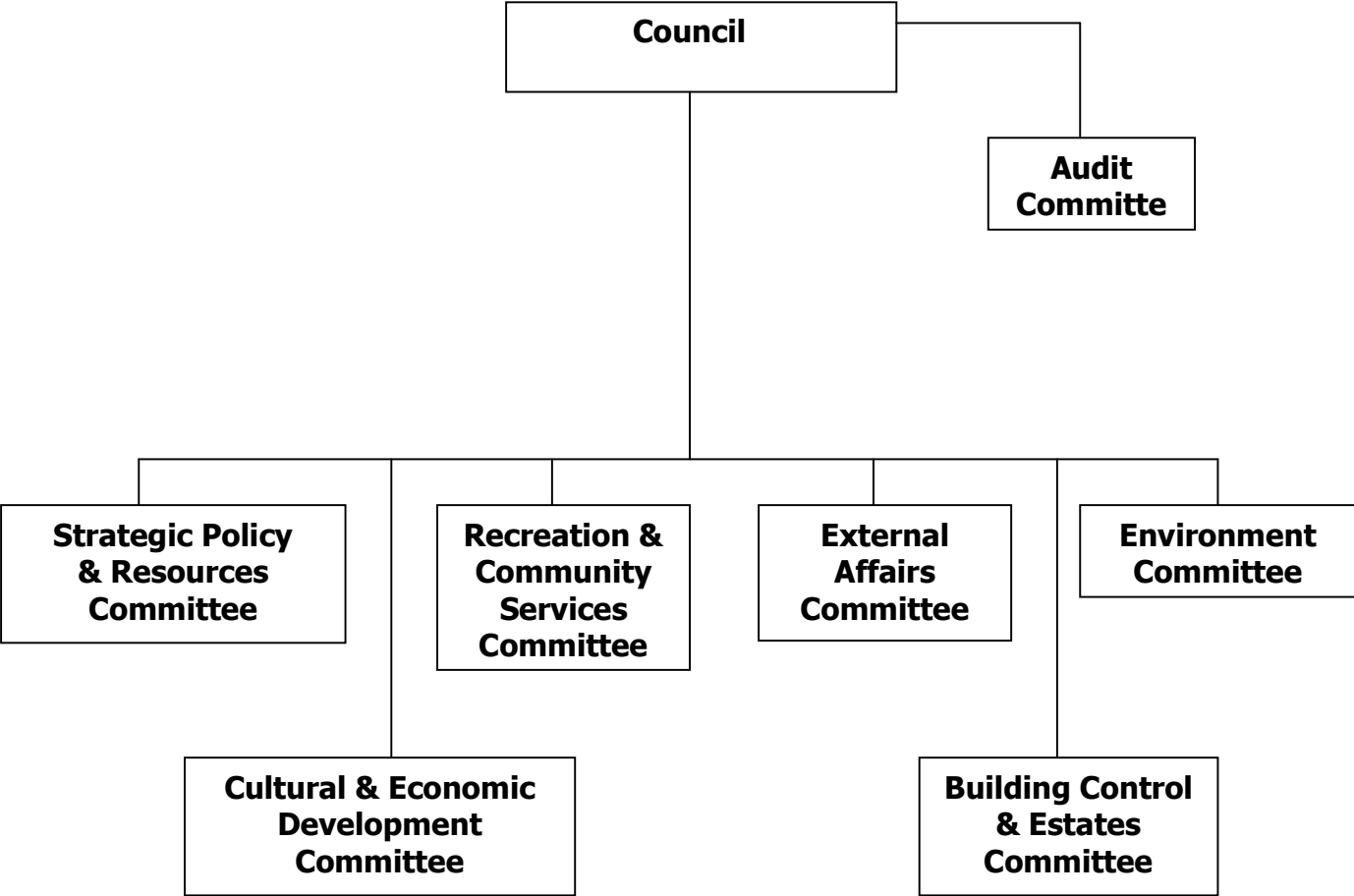
The Council applies the d'Hondt system for the appointment of Councillors to Committees.

Signed:

Clerk of the Council and Chief Executive

Date:

**Down District Council
Committee Structure**



COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

The Strategic P&R Committee will have overall responsibility for developing and recommending the Council's policy framework, allocating resources, determining the priority of issues, integrating activities and managing overall performance.

The Committee shall have responsibility for all matters relating to:

- Policy and Strategy
- Performance
- Democratic Services
- Communication / IT
- Resources
- Money including Procurement, Capital Expenditure and budget setting
- People including control of overall establishment figures
- Assets, acquisition and disposal of land and property including capital programme development and delivery
- Administration / Legal / Insurance / Health and Safety matters
- Dealing with matters relating to emergency planning
- Such other matters which cannot be dealt with by any other Committee or which may be referred to the Committee by Council

Cultural & Economic Development Committee

The Committee shall have responsibility for all matters relating to:

- Promotion and Development of the Arts
- Area Planning
- Local Business Development Programmes
- Corporate Marketing of the District
- Promotion and Development of Tourism
- Attracting and securing inward investment
- Liaison and partnership with statutory bodies and business community organisations
- European networking and developing overseas contacts.

- Considering and commenting on development proposals and strategies submitted by the Government and other bodies and monitoring the implementation of such proposals
- Museum Services
- Retail Development
- Town Twinning
- Rural Development
- Urban Regeneration

Recreation and Community Services Committee

The Committee shall have responsibility for all matters relating to:

- The initiation, planning, design, provision and management of facilities sponsored by the District Council, including recreational grounds, leisure and community centres, public parks and open spaces.
- Encouraging and co-operating with voluntary recreational clubs, sporting organisations, community associations and voluntary organisations, commercial bodies and private individuals to secure the provision of facilities, the training of leaders and the creation of opportunities for participation by local residents.
- The development of community services
- Access to the coast and countryside
- Community relations / development
- Community Safety
- District Policing Partnership

Environment Committee

The Committee shall have responsibility for all matters relating to:

- Collection and disposal of waste, waste management and re-cycling
- Street cleaning
- Pollution control
- Cleansing of Public conveniences
- Waste reception areas, amenity schemes etc
- Environmental health
- Business health and safety
- Consumer protection
- Food control
- Dog control
- Enforcement of Council by-laws

Building Control & Estates Committee

The Committee shall have responsibility for all matters relating to:

- Building Regulations
- Dangerous Buildings
- Inspection of places of entertainment
- Properties Certificates
- Mapping design and management of minor projects
- Maintenance of Council properties and facilities including
 - grounds maintenance,
 - harbours and beaches
- Estates Management
- Project Management Services
- Maintenance of municipal cemeteries
- Energy conservation
- Minor works including
 - bus shelters,
 - road signs,
 - litter bins
- Sustainability

External Affairs Committee

The Committee shall have responsibility for all matters relating to:

- Roads
- Housing
- Water and Sewerage
- Licensing including petroleum, dog, entertainment, street trading, markets and fairs
- Education issues
- Health issues
- Special issues

Representatives from NI Housing Executive, DRD Roads Service, DRD Water Service, Education and Health Boards, Health Trusts, Post Office, NI Electricity, Department of Agriculture, Ulsterbus Ltd and others will be in attendance as appropriate.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is an advisory body with no decision making powers.

The Committee shall have responsibility to:

- Consider the annual report and opinion of the Business Improvement Manager as Head of Internal Audit
- To consider internal audit reports
- To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of Internal Audit Services.
- To consider reports from Internal Audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale
- To consider the Local Government Auditor's annual letter, management letter and relevant reports
- To consider all recommendations, reports and declarations of the Local Government Auditor
- To scrutinise the Council's arrangements for ensuring value-for-money
- To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work
- To maintain an overview of the Council's governance framework in respect of financial regulations, contract procedure rules and codes of conduct and behaviour
- To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance in the Council
- To monitor Council policies on whistle-blowing and the anti-fraud and corruption strategy.
- To oversee the production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement and to recommend its adoption
- To consider the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and control

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Clerk of the Council and Chief Executive is Head of the Council's paid service, having authority over all other officers for the efficient management and execution of the Council's functions, and is Chief Financial Officer of the Council, pursuant to Section 54 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.

Main Responsibilities and Duties

- Securing the co-ordination of advice on the forward planning of objectives and services. Giving leadership to the Senior Officers of the Council to secure a corporate approach to the affairs of the Council and chairing the Senior Management Team.
- The efficient and effective implementation of the Council's programmes and policies and for ensuring that the resources of the Council are most effectively deployed towards those ends.
- Advising the Council and its Committees on all matters upon which his advice is necessary, and in this connection has the right of attendance at all meetings of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties of the Council.
- Advising or making suitable arrangements for advising the Chairman on all matters within the duties of that office and for the organisation and conduct of formal civic functions.
- Statutory responsibilities in respect of Local Government Elections.

Clerks Department Responsibilities

- Development of Councils corporate policies and initiatives
- Production of Councils Corporate Plan
- Respond to consultation documents
- Professional, effective and independent internal audit service for all Council activities and locations
- Audit the Councils controls, risk and governance process
- Develop and maintain the Councils Assurance Framework
- Develop, implement, maintain and improve the Risk management Framework

- Manage the administration of the Corporate Risk Register
- Conduct performance and value for money reviews of Councils operations
- Develop, monitor and review strategy, policies and procedures
- Develop and implementation of the Councils Equality Scheme
- Screening of policies
- Preparation of Equality Impact Assessment reports for Council
- Production of the Councils Annual Report
- Implementation of the Councils Emergency Plan
- Liaison with the public
- Council correspondence
- Service to Councillors