



**IRISH PLANNING
INSTITUTE**

Institiúid Pleanála Na hÉireann

Your Role As A Council Member

Council Handbook

October 2021

Introduction

Being a Council member is a job to be taken seriously. However, it does bring the opportunity for you to give something back to the profession and to meet and work with interesting people across the planning profession, and other allied sectors, in Ireland. Council is responsible for determining the strategic direction of the Institute so you will be able to shape your Institute, and profession, for years to come. They also act as the Directors of the Institute as a company limited by guarantee.

All members serve on Council in an individual capacity and have a duty to act in the best interests of the IPI. They do not represent their employer, the particular sector of employment, or any other specific constituency in their role but having a mix of backgrounds and experiences on Council that reflect the breadth of membership is desirable.

In addition to attending Council, all Council Members are asked to serve in some other capacity. This may be by sitting on one of the Institute's committees or taking on a wider role leading some aspect of the Institute's work. Each of the Institute's Executive Committees is convened by a Council member. Council members may also have the opportunity to attend and represent the Institute at meetings, conferences and events.

Council Members serve for 2 consecutive years, after which time they must be re-elected in order to continue to serve and are subject to a 6 consecutive years term limit.

Corporate or Fellow Members interested in representing planning on the Council are asked to familiarise themselves with the Institute's Constitution, recent Annual Reports and the organisational structure. These documents are available from www.ipi.ie or can be requested from the Executive Director Orla Purcell email: o.purcell@ipi.ie.

Incoming Council members will benefit from an induction process as well as ongoing training and development opportunities to help them carry out their strategic governance role and also to meet their legal obligations as directors under the Companies Acts.

Council convenes on at least **6** occasions in each Council year. Meetings are generally held on the first Thursday and it is anticipated these are normally every second month.

Council Composition

The composition of the Council is provided for in the Institute's Constitution/Articles of Association. The Council comprises of 12 members inclusive of 4 no. Officers (with potentially a 13th co-opted member).

The Executive Director attends Council meetings, in an ex officio capacity, but does not have voting rights. Other members of staff may be asked to attend Council meetings or part of them, from time to time, to provide greater detail on specific operational, policy or agenda items. Staff of the Institute may not become Council members.

Role and Responsibilities of Council Members

These are set out in the Code of Conduct Council members are asked to sign at the beginning of each Council term as follows:

- I will support the mission, values, aims, objectives and strategy of the organisation and I will abide by the organisation's constitution, code of ethics and professional conduct and its policies and procedures (including disciplinary policy, dignity and respect policy, grievance policy and data protection requirements).
- I will always strive to act in the best interests of the organisation as a whole.
- I understand my responsibility to act as a champion for the organisation by promoting its work and reputation.
- I will declare any conflict of interest or any circumstance that might be viewed by others as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises and I will submit to the judgment of the Council and do as it may require regarding potential conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest arises, I will absent myself from any discussion or vote taken on the matter by the other Directors.
- I will pay my subscription fees promptly and remain in Good Standing with the Institute through out my period on Council.
- I will promptly provide all necessary compliance documentation as may be required by the Institute's Auditors and Solicitors.
- I will strive to establish open, respectful, supportive and courteous relationships with all those I come into contact with in my role as Director and to cultivate a positive atmosphere at meetings.
- I will not speak purporting to represent this organisation to the media or in a public forum without the prior knowledge and approval of the President and Executive Director. When I am speaking publicly as a Director of this organisation, my comments will reflect current organisational policy even if this does not agree with my personal views.

- I will not engage with or meet with other Institutes, agencies, bodies or organisations purporting to represent this organisation without the prior knowledge and approval of the President and Executive Director.
- I will strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation and those who work in it, I will take an active interest in the organisation's public image and I understand that I have a duty not to do anything that may damage the reputation of the organisation.
- I will respect organisational, Council and individual confidentiality.
- I will not gain materially or financially from my role as Director, beyond seeking reimbursement of expenses.
- I will strive to punctually attend all Council meetings (and other relevant meetings), giving apologies ahead of time to the Secretary if unable to attend.
- I will study the agenda and other information sent to me in good time prior to the meeting and be prepared to engage in debate, and if necessary vote, on agenda items during the meeting.
- I understand that Council minutes will only show as present for those who have attended at least 50 per cent of the meeting. The President may require a written explanation from Council members who are absent from three consecutive meetings.
- I will respect the authority of the President.
- I will accept a majority Council vote on an issue as decisive and final.
- I will take an active involvement in the organisation, including contributing to committees and working groups as required and I will promptly undertake actions that I have agreed to take on during meetings.
- I will support the Executive Director in his/her executive role but will not interfere with his or her work or undermine his/her authority. The same applies to other staff.
- I understand that substantial breach of any part of this code may result in my removal from the Council.
- Breaches of this Code will be considered by the Officers and action taken as appropriate.
- Should I resign from the Council, I will inform the President, Honorary Secretary and copy the Executive Director in advance in writing, stating my reasons for resigning.

Role of Officers

Four Officers of the Council are elected (President, Vice-President, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer) from Council for the duration of the Council. Where necessary, due to time constraints key decisions and sign off on policy submissions is done by the Officers of the Institute.

Role of the President

General

- Represent the Institute at events;
- Liaise with key stakeholders and influencers;
- Lead Institute delegations to Government Departments and Ministers;
- Be a general advocate for the Institute and the profession;
- Be available for media and public relations activities;
- Oversee the media and communications strategy;
- Ensure the Institute complies generally with its Constitution and this manual;
- Appraise the role and performance of the Executive Director annually with the Honorary Treasurer;
- Set annual performance targets with Executive Director, in conjunction with the Honorary Treasurer;
- Jointly meet regularly with the Executive Director with the Honorary Treasurer to review their performance against agreed key performance indicators.

Regarding the Membership

- Lead the Institute and profession for the term of Presidency;
- Listen to and reflect members' concerns and represent the **collective interests** of the membership;
- Address members at key Institute events;
- Act as advocate for the Institute and Institute policies;
- Ensure the efficient conduct of business at the Institute's General meetings.

Regarding Council

- Lead Council for term of Presidency;
- Chair Council meetings to agreed agenda to achieve efficient meeting outcomes;
- Ensure Institute committee Chairs and Convenors are in place at start of the Council term and are fully briefed on objectives and expected outcomes;
- Ensure Council committee Convenors report at timely intervals to Council meetings;
- Encourage Council members compliance with their role;
- Propose replacement Council Members to fill casual vacancies arising, in accordance with the Constitution, for the approval of Council;
- In consultation with Council, appoint Institute representatives to external bodies.

Role of the Vice President

The role of the Vice President of the Institute is to:

- Support the President in the performance of his or her role;
- Assist the President in creating, communicating, and implementing the IPI's Corporate Plan;
- Deputise for the President at IPI Events, Media Engagement or Council Meetings as appropriate;
- Represent the Institute at other Events.

Role of the Honorary Treasurer

The key functions of the Honorary Treasurer are:

- Financial Control and Monitoring, including remuneration for IPI Staff;
- Support the Executive Director and staff in their financial management and control functions;
- Set annual performance targets with Executive Director, in conjunction with the President;

- Jointly meet regularly with the Executive Director with the President to review their performance against agreed key performance indicators;
- Review regular breakdowns of membership subscriptions and propose for consideration and action by the Council or Finance Committee remedial action/s required;
- Convene the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- Report to Council on a bi monthly basis with a summary financial statement of affairs and balance sheet;
- Reporting Procedures and Accounting Policies;
- Devise, in consultation with the Executive Director and Staff, an accurate forecast report of the year end outcome at the end of each quarter;
- Review financial control procedures operating within the Institute in accordance with best accountancy practice;
- Reviewing current accounting policies of the Institute in advance of the year end audit and proposing any relevant and useful changes;
- To ensure that advice and guidance is provided to Council on obligations arising under the Institute's Constitution, company law, and other laws and regulations, including health and safety requirements;
- To ensure, along with Council and the Honorary Secretary that the requirements of the Companies Acts 1963 – 2014 are complied with by the Institute;
- To advise the Council annually on the availability of D&O liability insurance and the level of cover afforded by such policy;
- To collaborate with the Honorary Secretary and Executive Director and ensure that all statutory forms, including the annual return, the director and auditor reports are filed promptly with the CRO.

Role of the Honorary Secretary

The Honorary Secretary of the Institute is appointed by the Council and reports directly to the President on Council business. The role of the Secretary is:

- To ensure meeting documents are available in good time and record the minutes of Council meetings;

- To distribute draft minutes to Council for consideration within two weeks of each Council meeting;
- To ensure the Institute's AGM is held within the time limits specified and prepare the Annual Report;
- Running Council elections;
- Coordinating motions and the AGM;
- Ensure compliance with the Institute's requirements as a nominating body to An Bord Pleanála and Seanad Eireann;
- Work with the Executive Director and Treasurer to ensure all legal requirements are met acting as Company Secretary liaising with the Company Solicitor and Auditor as required.

Role of Convenor of the Policy and Research Committee

- To Convene the Policy and Research Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To oversee IPI Submissions on major public consultations with preparation for sign off by IPI Council or IPI Officers;
- To represent the views of the Policy and Research Committee to the Council of the IPI.

Role of Convenor of the Membership and Professional Practice Committee

- To Convene the Membership and Professional Practice Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To present lists of applicants for Membership with recommendations for Council;
- To promote IPI Membership amongst the Planning Community;
- To enforce the Code of Conduct and oversee investigations of complaints against Members.

Role of Convenor of the Technical and Education Committee

- To Convene the Technical and Education Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To advise Council on Learning and Development, Planning Education Guidelines and recommended CPD;
- To oversee the accreditation process for accredited Planning Schools.

Role of Convenor of the Private Sector Committee

- To Convene the Private Sector Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To represent the views of IPI Members working in Private Sector to the Council and Officers;
- To oversee the delivery of online CPD Law Briefings and make recommendations for additional CPD.

Role of Convenor of the Public Sector Committee

- To Convene the Public Sector Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To represent the views of IPI Members working in the Public Sector to the Council and the Officers;
- To support the Executive in the preparation and execution of major IPI Conferences;
- To monitor overall resourcing of Planning Departments nationwide;
- To advise on particular CPD requirements for Planning Authorities including An Bord Pleanála.

Role of Branches Convenor

- To monitor activity of individual branches and report to Council;
- To promote regional IPI Events through the branches;
- To monitor and request budgetary support for IPI Branches as required.

Role of Convenor of the Marine Spatial Planning Committee

- To Convene the Marine Spatial Planning Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To prepare submissions and correspondence in relation to Marine Spatial Planning for consideration by Council or the Officers;
- To promote the specialism of Marine Spatial Planning within the Planning Profession;
- To monitor and make recommendations for Training and Education in relation to Marine Spatial Planning for Planning Professionals;
- To monitor resourcing of Marine Spatial Planning functions within Local Authorities and An Bord Pleanála.

Role of Convenor of the Urban Design Committee

- To Convene the Urban Design Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To promote the specialism of Urban Design within the Planning Profession;
- To monitor and make recommendations for Training and Education in relation to Urban Design for Planning Professionals;
- To monitor resourcing of Urban Design Specialists across the Planning System;

- To input into IPI Policy Submissions and liaise with the Policy and Research Committee as required.

Role of Convenor of the Transport Committee

- To Convene the Transport Planning Committee and appoint a Chair;
- To promote the specialism of Transport Planning within the Planning Profession;
- To monitor and make recommendations for Training and Education in relation to Transport Planning for Planning Professionals;
- To monitor resourcing of Transport Planning Specialists across the Planning System;
- To prepare IPI submissions in relation to Transport Planning for consideration by Council or the Officers.



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