

General procedural guidance for Council Sponsors Groups

Procedural guidance for Council Sponsors Groups includes the following recommendations from the Office of the City Clerk (updated June 2023):

Establishment

1. A Council Sponsors Group shall be established by Standing Committee and/or Council.
2. The Office of the City Clerk also recommends:
 - a. That a Council Sponsors Group include Members of Council and City staff.
 - b. That a Council Sponsors Group not form a quorum of the Standing Committee with jurisdiction regarding the subject matter for which the Sponsors Group was formed.
 - c. That the number of staff on a Council Sponsors Group be greater than the number of Members of Council on the Council Sponsors Group to mitigate the risk of any issues arising with respect to statutory open meeting requirements.
 - d. That the Mayor or designate, and Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee with jurisdiction regarding the subject matter for which the Sponsors Group was formed, shall recommend to Council the membership of the Council Sponsors Group following a circulation for expressions of interest from Members of Council by the relevant department in consultation with the Office of the City Clerk.
 - e. That any Council Sponsors Group established by Committee/Council incorporate the term "Sponsors Group" in the body's name to provide clarity regarding the type of advisory body.
3. Unless otherwise determined by Council, the mandate of a Council Sponsors Group shall expire at the end of the term of Council.

Roles and responsibilities

4. A Council Sponsors Group may receive information from City staff and provide advice to City staff in accordance with the mandate established by Standing Committee and/or Council.
5. A Council Sponsors Group shall ensure compliance with any relevant legislation.

6. A Council Sponsors Group should recognize and respect Council's statutory decision-making role, along with staff's statutory role regarding matters such as conducting research and providing advice to Council.

Public information

7. General information about the Council Sponsors Group shall be posted to ottawa.ca, including but not limited to the Council Sponsors Group's mandate, membership, a staff contact, link(s) to the relevant Committee/Council meeting minutes with respect to the Sponsors Group's establishment, and link(s) to relevant reports to Committee/Council as described in sections 10 and 11 of this guidance document.

Meetings

8. Open meeting provisions of the *Municipal Act, 2001* do not apply to Council Sponsors Groups. However, the Chair in consultation with the Council Sponsors Group and the City Clerk may decide if they wish to hold all or part of a meeting in a manner that is open to the public.

Records

9. Records of the Council Sponsors Group shall be kept in accordance with the City of Ottawa's *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* and Records Management Policy.

Reporting

10. Staff shall ensure that reports to Committee and Council regarding the subject matter of the Council Sponsors Group include information regarding relevant activities of the Sponsors Group and how its advice informed any recommendations in the report.
11. Links to any Committee/Council report described in Section 10 shall be provided on ottawa.ca as part of the public information about the Council Sponsors Group.

Accountability and transparency

12. Members of a Council Sponsors Group may be subject to an existing code of conduct by virtue of their position (i.e., Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Employee Code of Conduct).
13. The oversight role of the City's Auditor General applies to each Council Sponsors Group.

Access to information and confidentiality

14. The *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* may apply to all records relating to a Council Sponsors Group.
15. Members of a Council Sponsors Group may acquire confidential information from a variety of different sources in the course of their work with the advisory body, and are expected to manage such confidential information in accordance with the relevant code of conduct.

Review

16. This procedural guidance shall be regularly reviewed through the City's governance review process.