

The Heritage Council An Chomhairle Oidhreachta

Business Policies and Procedures



October 2005

MISSION STATEMENT

The Heritage Council seeks to protect and enhance the richness, quality and diversity of our national heritage for everyone. It works with its partners, particularly at local level, to increase awareness of our national heritage and to highlight its importance to public policy and everyday life.

KEY AREAS

Heritage Information - collection and dissemination

To advise on and contribute to the development of a comprehensive heritage database, and to ensure the effective use of heritage data in policy formulation and decision-making.

Advice to the Minister

To propose high quality advice to the Minister on policies and priorities relating to the national heritage.

Placing heritage in the heart of public life

To influence the shaping of public policy, ensuring that it is fully informed and takes full account of heritage issues.

Local authorities and heritage management

To support local authorities, as the Council's key partners, in the integration of heritage conservation into their activities, and the enhancement of heritage at the local level.

Raising awareness and appreciation of our heritage

To facilitate and build on increased awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the heritage among the community.

Best practice in heritage conservation and management

To promote and advise on best practice standards for heritage conservation and management among practitioners.

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CODE OF PRACTICE FOR GOVERNANCE IN STATE BODIES

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF STATE BODIES

INTRODUCTION

The Heritage Council has accepted and welcomed the provision by Government for the Code of practice for the governance in State Bodies. In compliance with the requirements of the code Council has adopted its:

1. Framework for code of Business conduct
2. Customer Charter
3. Adhered to Guidelines on payment of fees to Chairpersons and Directors of State Bodies
4. Complies with the format for the Report from the chairman regarding the assessment of internal financial controls of a State body

STANDING ORDERS

The Heritage Council



Standing Orders

18th July 2002

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PREAMBLE

The Heritage Council is established under the Heritage Act 1995. The functions of the Heritage Council are clearly stated in the Heritage Act (1995). This Act is prescriptive both in terms of the functions of Council and in terms of its operations and the structures it is required to put in place to assist it in exercising its functions under the Act. The most relevant sections of the Act are annexed to these standing orders. Any prescriptive requirement contained in the Heritage Act 1995 and which would normally be considered for inclusion in standing orders is not repeated. Reference is made to the relevant section of the Act.

Section 8 of the schedule of the Heritage Act (1995) stipulates that subject to the provisions of the schedule, the Council may regulate its own procedures and business. These standing orders are in accordance with that provision and other legislation as appropriate. In particular compliance with the ethics in public office legislation, the data protection legislation and the freedom of information legislation is of relevance to the Council. No part of these standing orders takes precedence over any legislative requirement placed on Council

STANDING ORDERS FOR COUNCIL

These standing orders are in compliance with and additional to the requirements of the Heritage Act (1995). They incorporate aspects of the recently published Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies (2002).

Their purpose is to assist Council in exercising its responsibilities in the most constructive and effective manner

Quorum

Refer to section 6(ii) of the schedule of the Heritage Act (1995)

No business will be transacted unless a quorum is present.

Where during a Council meeting the Chairperson finds the numbers of members in attendance has fallen below a quorum the business will be suspended at that point.

If a member intends leaving a meeting prior to its completion they should inform the Chairperson

Council Agenda

The Chairperson and the Chief Executive, having taken account of any suggestions from Council members shall agree the agenda for each Council meeting. The agenda will be finalised so as to allow the papers to be circulated electronically and where necessary in hard copy at least one week in advance of the meeting.

Council Papers

Council papers are normally considered by the Chief Executive prior to their inclusion in the Council agenda for circulation to Council members.

A Council member may also, following consultation with the Chairperson, submit a paper for consideration for inclusion on the Council agenda. Any such paper must be submitted to the Chairperson at least 2 weeks before the date for circulation of papers to Council.

Delegation

The Council may delegate powers to Committees, working groups and staff as it regards necessary. The Council shall determine all aspects of any such delegation. Any work carried out under such delegated responsibility will be directly reported to Council.

A schedule of reserved functions will be prepared

Schedule of Meetings

The Council shall approve in advance of each calendar year dates of meetings for the following year. These can only be altered with the agreement of a majority of Council members.

Council will normally meet on six occasions in each calendar year and will hold at least one of these meetings outside Kilkenny. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. a further outbreak of foot and mouth disease or a matter of similar magnitude) the Chair in association with the Chief Executive will have responsibility to vary this schedule

The Chairperson may convene a special meeting of Council where it appears an item requires urgent consideration. The Chairperson may call a special meeting if requested to do so by an individual member of Council. The Chairperson shall call a special meeting within two weeks of receipt of a written request to do so signed by 5 members of Council.

Staff Attendance at Meetings

The Chief Executive shall have the right to attend all Council, Committee and working group meetings except those where the Chief Executive's remuneration or performance is being discussed as part of a formal agenda. The Chief Executive shall determine what other staff may attend meetings of Council, Committees and working groups. A Council member may request attendance of a staff member at a particular meeting.

The Chairperson may request the Chief Executive and/or other staff to withdraw from a Council meeting or part thereof.

Members Questions

Any member may put a question to the Chairperson concerning any relevant business arising from the agenda. The Chairperson shall decide the relevance and competence of questions. Members may notify the Chairperson in writing of any questions which they wish to raise other than those relevant to the agenda items. Such questions should normally be submitted one week before the date of the meeting at which the member wishes the question to be raised.

Order of Business

The business of Council shall proceed in accordance with the agenda for that meeting, including items under AOB, unless otherwise directed by the Chairperson.

Chairmanship of meetings

The Chairperson will preside at all Council meetings. If absent, members present will proceed in accordance with section 7 of the schedule of the Heritage Act (1995).

In Chairing meetings the Chairperson will;

- determine all matters of order, competency and relevancy
- preserve order and ensure that members of the Council have sufficient opportunity to express their views on any matter under discussion.
- determine in which order members wishing to speak should so do
- where possible facilitate reaching decisions by consensus, in an atmosphere of open debate
- determine whether a conflict of interest requires a member to withdraw
- determine whether a vote is required and how it is to be conducted

Should a matter relating to the interests of the Chairperson be declared, the Chairperson should depute another member to chair the meeting and should absent himself/herself when the Council is deciding on a matter in which the Chairperson, or a person or body connected with the Chairperson has an interest.

Council Decisions

Refer to Section 6(iv) of the schedule of the Heritage Acts (1995). Decisions of Council will normally be by consensus. A member who leaves early will be treated as a non-attending member for the purpose of any decision taken after his/her departure. Exceptionally when a Council decision is required urgently and it is not feasible to convene a meeting, the matter will be dealt with by correspondence. Any views of members must be sent to the Chairperson in writing and any decision is subject to ratification at the next Council meeting.

Decisions will be taken by vote where

- the Chairperson detects no clear consensus has emerged
- where at the Chairperson's discretion it is felt a decision should be preceded by a vote where a member requests a vote and this request is supported by 3 other members in attendance

The minutes will record the outcome of the vote.

Council Minutes

Taken in conjunction with the Council papers the minutes should provide a correct record to enable an audit trail of issues discussed and decisions taken. Draft minutes will be proof read by the Chairperson and Chief Executive prior to circulation to members. Members may suggest amendments in writing or raise these at the following Council meeting. Any matters of dissent will ultimately be decided on by the Council. The draft minutes will normally be discussed, amended as necessary and adopted at the meeting immediately following the meeting to which they refer.

Amendments and Suspension of standing orders

Standing orders may be suspended for a stated reason and period of time at a meeting of Council on the basis of a proposer and seconder from Council and with the support of at least 7 members of Council present.

These standing orders can be suspended, amended or revoked by the Heritage Council. Any such suspension amendment or revocation will require the consent of the majority of members present at a meeting.

The Heritage Council will from time to time review its standing orders and their effectiveness in assisting to conduct its business.

2 Standing orders for Committees, November 2000

Background

These standing orders are provided to assist Committees in carrying out their work in the most efficient and effective manner. Council has established the following Committees

Archaeology*

Architecture*

Audit and Finance

Education and Awareness

Inland Waterways*

Museum and Archives

Wildlife*

Marine and Coastal

For the purpose of its business Council does not differentiate between those Committees established under paragraph 9(2) of the Schedule of the Heritage Act, 1995, (the standing committees marked* above) and other committees, all of them established to perform functions allocated to them by Council (paragraph 9(1))

Chairs

A committee must be chaired by a member of Council [paragraph 9(3)]. The position of Chair will rotate amongst Council members on an annual basis with effect from 1st January. Should in exceptional circumstances a Council member not be available to chair a particular meeting, a committee member may be nominated by the other members to chair the meeting for that day.

Members

Members appointed by Council to Committees will be appointed for the period of the appointment of the existing Council (July 2005). Members appointed by the Minister to the standing Committees will be appointed for the period specified by the Minister. Council members have been identified with, and appointed to particular committees. Council members have the flexibility to attend other Committees on occasions where they have a particular interest in a specified agenda item. They are on such occasions asked to inform the appropriate Chairperson of their intention

Quorum

Committees require three people, including one Council member, to form a quorum. However, should a quorum not be met, it is possible to record discussions which take place for validation at the next meeting of the full committee.

Co-option

Committees may co-opt a new member should additional expertise be required. The nomination must be recommended to Council for approval.

Minutes

A minute of each committee meeting must be taken which records the decisions taken by the committee. A standard format for agenda and minutes and papers to Committees has been agreed. Because of the cycle of Committee and Council meetings it will be normal for the minute to be circulated in draft form to Council prior to the next committee meeting. At this next Committee meeting the minutes must be agreed by the Committee, and signed and dated by the Chairperson.

Agendas and other documentation

The agenda, minutes and information on agenda items will be circulated in advance to committees. Items may not be tabled on the day of a meeting unless previously agreed with the chairperson of the committee in question.

Declarations of Interest

Should a member be involved in any way (personal or professional) with an item on the agenda, this declaration must be stated at the meeting, and recorded in the minutes. If the item involves financial assistance, the member will not take part in any of the discussion or decision making process, and will be expected to leave the room.

Reference to particular committee members

Should a member be approached by a member of the public on a particular issue, the member should refer that individual to the relevant professional officer, either in writing or by telephone.

Representation on behalf of a committee

When a Council or Committee member is nominated to represent Council on any other body, this nomination will be recommended to Council for approval.

Where a Council or Committee member is asked by the Committee to attend a particular meeting or event, a written report of the meeting or event will be prepared for circulation in time for discussion at the next Committee or Council meeting.

Canvassing

Members are reminded that canvassing on behalf of a grant application will automatically disqualify. This applies equally to individuals petitioning council members, or council/committee members petitioning a committee.

Note re terminology

“Council member” refers to an individual appointed to the Heritage Council.

“Committee member” refers to an individual appointed to a specific committee of the Heritage Council.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

July 2002

Appendix ONE

Sections of the Heritage Act (1995)

Section 6. (i) The functions of the Council shall be to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage, including monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways.

(ii) References to the National Monuments Advisory Council, the Historic Monuments Council or the Wildlife Advisory Council in any enactment or instrument made there under shall, where appropriate, be construed as references to the Council.

(iii) The Council shall in particular-

- (a) promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage,
- (b) co-operate with public authorities, educational bodies and other organisations and persons in the promotion of the functions of the Council,
- (c) promote the co-ordination of all activities relating to the functions of the Council.

Section 7 (i) The Council may make recommendations to the Minister on any matter relating to the Council's functions, and may make such recommendations public.

(ii) The Minister shall respond to a recommendation referred to in *subsection (i)* within six months of receipt thereof.

Section 8 The Council shall, if the Minister so requests, furnish the Minister with advice on any matter relating to the functions of the Council and with information regarding the performance of its functions.

Schedule

AN CHOMHAIRLE OIDHREACHTA

Section 1. (i) The Council shall consist of a chairperson and not fewer than 14 or more than 16 ordinary members.

(ii) The Chairperson and the ordinary members shall be appointed by the Minister.

(iii) The period of office of the chairperson or an ordinary member shall be such period, not exceeding five years, as the Minister, on that appointment, may determine.

(iv) Where a member of the Council or a person appointed by the Minister to be a member of a committee of the Council, dies, resigns, becomes disqualified or is removed from office, the Minister may appoint a person to be a member of the Council or the relevant committee, as the case may be, to fill the casual vacancy so occasioned.

Section 2. (i) Of the members of the Council not fewer than seven shall be men, and not fewer than seven shall be women.

(ii) Each member of the Council shall be a person who, in the opinion of the Minister, has an interest in or knowledge or experience of or in relation to the national heritage.

Section 3. A member of the Council shall not be eligible for reappointment where that person has served two consecutive terms.

Section 4. (i) The chairperson or any member of the Council or any person appointed by the Minister to a committee of the Council may, at any time, resign office by letter addressed to the Minister and the resignation shall take effect from the date of receipt thereof by the Minister.

(ii) A chairperson of the Council who ceases to be a member of the Council while holding such office, shall cease to be chairperson of the Council.

Section 5. The Minister may, at any time, remove from office the chairperson or any member of the Council, or any person appointed by the Minister to a committee of the Council, where-

- (a) such chairperson, member or person has become incapable through ill health of effectively performing his or her duties,
- (b) such chairperson, member or person has committed stated misbehaviour, or
- (c) such removal appears necessary for the effective performance by the Council (or committee) of its functions.

Section 6. (i) The Council may hold such and so many meetings as are necessary for the performance of its functions.

(ii) The quorum for a meeting of the Council shall be seven members, including the chairperson, of the Council.

(iii) The Chairperson and each member of the Council present at a meeting thereof shall have a vote.

(iv) Every question at a meeting of the Council shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting on the question and, in the case of an equal division of votes, the chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

(v) The Council may act notwithstanding one or more vacancies among its members (including one or more vacancies that result in *paragraph 2 (1)* not being complied with).

Section 7. Where, at any meeting of the Council, the chairperson is not present, or the office of chairperson is vacant; the members of the Council who are present shall choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.

Section 8. Subject to the provisions of this Schedule, the Council may regulate its own procedures and business.

Section 9. (i) The Council may appoint such and so many committees to perform functions allocated to them by the Council or to advise the Council on any matter related to its functions.

(ii) The Council shall establish standing committees on-

- (a) wildlife
- (b) archaeology
- (c) architectural heritage
- (d) inland waterways

and the Minister may appoint three persons who are not members of the Council to each standing committee.

(iii) A committee established by the Council shall be chaired by a member of the Council but may include members who are not members of the Council.

CODE OF BUSINESS CONDUCT

The Heritage Council



Code of Business Conduct for Members and Employees

April 2005

INTRODUCTION

The need to formulate a Code of Business Conduct for Council members and its employees arises from the approval by Government in 2001 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The effective date of this provision was 31st December 2002.

Council welcomes the Code of Practice as a means to re-emphasise its own commitment to good corporate governance, commitment it has sought to demonstrate since its establishment in 1996.

All of the steps taken to date by Council are kept under review, seeking to improve its standards of not only business conduct but also best professional practice in the exercise of its functions.

These functions are of course determined in the first instance by the Heritage Act (1995) and translated in the specific and measurable policy and activities through Council's 5 year strategic planning system. This rolling 5 year plan is reviewed on an annual basis to assist in securing funding and the allocation of funding to priority areas.

On appointment of each new council (every 5 years) a new vision and strategic plan for the organisation is agreed, building on achievements of the past and seeking to maintain Council's creative and constructive contribution to the well-being and understanding of our national heritage.

THE CODE OF BUSINESS CONDUCT

This code complements Council's compliance with legislative requirements contained in the

- Ethics in Public Office Act (1995)
- Data Protection Act
- Freedom of Information Act
- Employment and Equality Acts

It also complements Council's existing Standing Orders and established HR Policies. It applies to all Council Members and all Council employees.

Broad Principle of the Code

Everyone involved with The Heritage Council will adhere to the highest standards in all their business and professional activities

They will do so in a manner which promotes and maintains confidence and trust with Council's internal and external work environment.

As the Heritage Council comes within the terms of a small body as laid-down in the Code of Practice for the governance of State Bodies it has less formal means and less extensive structures than larger bodies to oversee and review its overall adherence to the code.

The Heritage Council does however espouse all the principles in the Code and in particular respects the division of responsibility between Council members and its employees.

The fundamental principles guiding adherence to the code cover:

- Integrity
- Information
- Obligations
- Loyalty
- Fairness
- Work and External Environment
- Responsibility

1. Integrity

Members of Council will disclose outside employment/business interests in conflict or potential conflict with the business of The Heritage Council

Requirement

Particular attention will be drawn to the requirements of the Ethics in public Office Act, The Heritage Act and Council's own Standing Orders.

Employees of Council will not be involved in outside business/employment interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the Business of Council.

Requirement

If doubt arises in any circumstance employees will refer in the first instance to the Chief Executive. In the case of the Chief Executive that post holder will refer to the Chairperson of Council.

Members and employees will avoid giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions

Requirement

No such gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits will be accepted.

2. Information

Members of Council and its employees will operate in an open and accountable manner as regards the provision of information concerning the Council and its activities. In doing so all Council members and employees will respect the confidentiality of sensitive material.

Requirement

Conformity with data protection legislation and the freedom of Information Act will be complemented by the above open and accountable approach.

3. Obligations

Council members and employees will fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations required of them including the compliance with all tendering and purchasing procedures; controls to prevent fraud including those relating to the claiming of expenses. Council members will use reasonable endeavours to attend all Board meetings. The Council will also deal with the manner of post resignation/retirement employment and the potential conflict of interests which may arise for former members and employees working in the private sector through putting in place adequate procedures and monitoring and enforcing these procedures.

4. Loyalty

Council members and employees acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to the Heritage Council and the duty of all to conform to the highest standards of business ethics.

5. Fairness

Council members and employees comply fully with equality and equal status legislation and acknowledge the human resources policies introduced to ensure fairness and to protect the dignity of employees apply equally to members and employees.

6. Work/External Environment

Council and its employees will adhere fully to the existing Health and Safety legislation and comply fully with the Council's existing safety statement. Provisions for Health and Safety will be kept under review to ensure awareness of and compliance with legislative requirements. Council will take steps to minimise the impact of its activities on the external environment.

7. Responsibility

Copies of this code on completion will be circulated to all members and employees for their retention and an explanatory note providing guidance and direction on such areas as gifts and entertainment will be prepared.

HERITAGE COUNCIL POLICIES

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



RECRUITMENT POLICY

12 SEPTEMBER 2000

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Heritage Council is committed to a system of recruitment which ensures equity and accountability. Recruitment shall be transacted in a fair, equitable and transparent manner. The Heritage Council will at all times adhere to best personnel practice and comply with all relevant legislation including the Equality Acts and the Freedom of Information Act.

Recruitment Procedures

The following procedures will ensure that the above objectives are upheld at all times.

Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive shall be appointed on the recommendation of a duly appointed interview board. The interview board may employ other evaluation techniques in addition to an interview.

The interview board for the post of Chief Executive shall consist of the Chairperson of the Heritage Council in addition to a recruitment expert and at least one other independent person. The interview board may exceed this number at the discretion of the Chairperson. Council shall approve the composition of the board prior to the interview stage of the competition.

Professional Officers

A Professional Officer shall be appointed at the discretion of the Chief Executive on the recommendation of a duly appointed interview board. The interview board may employ other evaluation techniques in addition to an interview.

The interview board for the post of Professional Officer shall comprise of the Chief Executive, the HR Manager and another independent person. The interview board may exceed this number at the discretion of the Chief Executive. The composition of the board shall be approved by the Chief Executive and notified to the Chairperson of Council prior to the interview stage of the competition.

Clerical Support Staff

Members of the clerical support staff shall be appointed at the discretion of the Chief Executive on the recommendation of a duly appointed interview board. The interview board may employ other evaluation techniques in addition to an interview.

The interview board for the post of Clerical Officer shall comprise of the HR Manager, at least one other Professional Officer or the Chief Executive and one other person. The interview board may exceed this number at the discretion of the Chief Executive. The composition of the board shall be approved by the Chief Executive and notified to the Chairperson of Council prior to the interview stage of the competition.

When determining the composition of interview boards best practice shall be followed by giving preference to those who have undergone formal interview training

Notification to Council

Members shall be notified of all recruitment competition results at the succeeding Council meeting. This provision relates to appointments that are for a period in excess of three months.

Conduct of Interview

The interview shall be conducted in an equitable, objective and transparent manner. Competencies shall be identified on the basis of the qualities, qualifications and skills identified in the job specification. Each competency and qualification shall be prioritised and marks allocated accordingly. Each candidate shall be judged on the basis of their abilities in relation to these competencies as determined by the interview board.

Panels

A panel may be formed for any post where more than one candidate is deemed to be suitably qualified for the post by the interview board. Where additional vacancies exist at the relevant grade appointments shall be made in the same order as the candidates have been placed on the panel. A panel shall be valid for a one-year period.

This section is subject to the discretion of the Chief Executive.

Advertising

All contract posts in respect of periods in excess of six months shall be advertised nationally and locally. Posts may be advertised internationally at the discretion of the Chief Executive.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Heritage Council is committed to providing equal opportunities for all its employees. It also endeavors to facilitate employees reaching their full potential and consequently enhancing the effectiveness of the organisation.

The Heritage Council wishes to create a climate in which equality is a reality both in attitudes and in the practice of employment.

Scope

The Heritage Council undertakes to treat all employees and job applicants fairly and to guard against discrimination on grounds of gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, disability, race, age, religion, or membership of the Traveller Community.

The Heritage Council agrees to meet its legal obligations in this regard and to promote equal opportunity throughout the organisation. The Employment Equality Act, 1977 made it unlawful to discriminate either directly or indirectly on grounds of sex or marital status. These grounds for discrimination have been extended and consolidated in the Equality Act, 1998 to include: disability, race, family status, membership of the Travelling Community, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

The Heritage Council acknowledges the rights of dignity and respect and will ensure that merit is the only differential criterion used.

Direct discrimination generally occurs where two individuals in comparable situations have not been treated equally. Direct discrimination is always unlawful.

Indirect discrimination occurs where two groups, for example full time and part-time workers, receive different treatment. If a rule, practice or requirement impacts more heavily on one group, it will be deemed to be indirectly discriminatory unless it can be shown that the practice or rule can be objectively justified. Comparisons with similar employment or positions can also be used to identify indirect discrimination.

The legislation also makes it an offence to penalise an employee for exercising their right to equal treatment.

Equality in Practice

All employees have a role to play in ensuring the effective implementation of the equality policy. Management accepts ultimate responsibility in this regard. Management will ensure that all staff reporting to them are aware of the policy and of their responsibilities under this policy.

Recruitment and Selection

All positions in the company are open to suitably qualified people. Applicants will be given details of job requirements to enable them determine their suitability for positions. Job requirements will relate to the actual duties of the post. Recruitment and promotional material will indicate the organisation's commitment to equal opportunity.

Individuals will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of merit and according to the essential requirements of the job. It shall be mandatory to provide mixed gender interview boards.

Training in good interview practice and in the prevention of discrimination will also be a priority.

Training

The Heritage Council is committed to facilitating the development of its employees, in accordance with the Council needs, and will inform them of all suitable training and educational opportunities.

Consideration will also be given to training and development proposals initiated by staff.

Equal Pay

The Heritage Council is committed to ensuring equal pay for work of equal value and accordingly pay levels will be determined with reference to work of equal value.

Combining work and family responsibilities

The Heritage Council recognises that a variation or reduction in working hours can greatly assist employees with caring responsibilities in combining their work and personal roles. The Heritage Council accordingly will actively consider requests for flexible working arrangements as they arise. The Heritage Council, in consultation with employees, will develop a policy on flexible working and other options.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Heritage Council wishes to advise its employees that all employment rights are protected by law during pregnancy. In particular employees should be aware of their entitlement to 18 weeks' maternity leave with a right to return to their job. Employees should further be aware that the Heritage Council will take appropriate measures to ensure the health and safety of pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Harassment

The Heritage Council recognises that employees are entitled to have their dignity respected while at work and that freedom from sexual harassment is a legal right. All employees will receive a copy of the company's anti-harassment policy and can be assured that harassment complaints will be investigated sensitively and confidentially in accordance with the agreed procedures.

Grievances

Breaches of the equality policy will be investigated internally through the normal grievance procedure. Complaints may be directed to the Human Resources Manager and, if appropriate, on appeal to the Chief Executive.

Monitoring and implementation of the Policy

Management is primarily responsible for implementing the policy. The Personnel Officer shall be the designated Equality Officer. The policy will be reviewed regularly to assess its effectiveness.

Monitoring shall be conducted in conjunction with the Partnership Committee.

The Human Resources Manager shall be the designated Equality Officer and will consider all opinions and suggestions pertaining to the Equal Opportunities Policy on an ongoing basis.

It is appropriate for consensus, within the legal framework, to be reached on all aspects of the policy.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

The Heritage Council is committed to promoting a harassment free working environment. Harassment in any shape or form, be it verbal, physical or visual will not be condoned or tolerated by the Council.

Harassment is defined as any act or conduct which is unwelcome to the recipient and could reasonably be regarded, in relation to the relative characteristic of the person subjected to the treatment, as offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

This policy covers harassment of any form and includes:

- Harassment on grounds of gender
- Harassment on grounds of sexual orientation
- Harassment on grounds of disability
- Harassment on grounds of age
- Harassment on grounds of race/ethnic origin
- Harassment on grounds of membership of the Traveller Community
- Harassment on grounds of religion
- Harassment on grounds of family or marital status
- General harassment/bullying

The Heritage Council recognises the right of dignity at work. Harassment adversely affects the dignity of people in the workplace and undermines them as human beings. Harassment can cause physiological, psychological and behavioural harm to victims.

A harassment free environment is fundamental to the concept of equality and respect for others. Harassment of employees by any person in any form will not be tolerated and this policy and its procedures will be applied to any reported instances. Any person subjected to harassment is encouraged to utilise the procedures.

The principle of a harassment free work environment shall extend to Council and Committee members in addition to staff. All staff and members shall enjoy the protection of this policy and must also adhere to the personal standard of behaviour implied therein.

SECTION A

Undertaking by management

Any complaint involving harassment will be immediately, seriously and sympathetically investigated. Full information on harassment will be provided for all staff at the launch of this policy. All future employees will be supplied with a copy of this policy during their induction process. It is recognized that harassment is very difficult to deal with for all concerned. If there are grounds for the complaint the perpetrator will be subject to disciplinary action. Malicious harassment claims are a form of harassment and will also be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures.

Location

Harassment can take place:

In the workplace

At functions, such as social functions, taking place under the aegis of the Heritage Council

At any other place where employees of the Heritage Council are present on company business, such as council, committee or business meetings away from the company's workplace, training courses, etc.

Customers or clients on or off site can perpetrate harassment.

Responsibility

All employees are responsible for ensuring that harassment does not occur in the Heritage Council.

However, the Heritage Council accepts that ultimate responsibility rests with management.

Management will ensure that staff reporting to them are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and, further, that any harassment or intimidation of which they are aware is eliminated. Complaints of

harassment confer an onus on management to pursue a matter once it has been brought to their attention. Action must be pursued unless the complaint is withdrawn. Any failure to do so will be considered a failure to fulfil the responsibilities attached to their position.

SECTION B

Procedures

A staff member who feels that s/he has been harassed should immediately ask the person harassing them to stop. If they feel they cannot do so directly, they should communicate through a third party, e.g. a friend, sympathetic colleague, line manager, or union representative. Complaints will be resolved informally where possible.

If the behaviour complained of does not cease (or if in the first instance it is of a nature that the recipient feels it should be reported) the alleged act should be reported to the designated manager as soon as possible. The designated manager shall be the Human Resources Manager. The Education and Communications Officer shall also be a designated manager where it may not be appropriate to contact the Human Resources Manager, e.g. due to gender. The two designated managers shall be of opposite gender.

It may be necessary to put the complaint in writing at this stage. The designated manager shall record details of dates, incidents and any witnesses.

The alleged perpetrator will be given details of the allegation and an opportunity to reply.

Malicious complaints will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

The complainant will be kept informed of progress during the investigation. The facts of the allegation will be checked as discreetly as possible, where this is appropriate, and an effort will be made to establish if any other staff have experienced similar problems.

All complaints will be dealt with promptly and sympathetically. The complaint will be investigated confidentially as far as possible. All those concerned are guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing.

Where a union member is involved any party may be represented by their trade union. A non-union member is also entitled to a representative of their choice.

If, after investigation, it appears that the complaint was well founded, disciplinary action will be taken to stop the harassment immediately and prevent its recurrence.

Where perpetrators are not Council employees it may be necessary to initiate legal proceedings.

Possible sanctions may range from verbal warning to transfer or dismissal. Management will discuss with the complainant what action s/he wishes to be taken; however, the decision as to what action is appropriate will be a matter for management. In some instances, an apology and assurance of no recurrence will suffice. If a transfer is necessary, every effort will be made to relocate the harasser, not the victim.

Staff will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination resulting from their alleging harassment or assisting with an investigation. It should be noted that any victimisation of an employee for reporting an incident, or assisting with an investigation, of alleged harassment is, in itself, a breach of equality legislation.

SECTION C

Definitions

Sexual harassment is defined under the Employment Equality Act, 1998 as including “all unwelcome and sexually, or otherwise on the gender ground, offensive, humiliating or intimidating actions involving acts of physical intimacy, spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of

written material or pictures, or requests for sexual favours.” While sexual harassment is usually directed at women, it can also be directed at men.

Sexual harassment is illegal and is an attack on the dignity of the individual.

Sexual harassment takes various forms, for example:

Verbal, e.g., joking, innuendo, requests for sexual favours, persisting in attempts to continue a relationship from which the consent of one party has been withdrawn, etc.

Visual, e.g., display of or sending offensive pictures, slogans, etc.

Physical, e.g., unwanted physical contact, from ‘groping’ to rape.

However behaviour which is welcome to the individual does not constitute sexual harassment.

Harassment on grounds of sexual orientation may take several forms, from jokes and innuendo to serious physical assault and may include a person’s perceived rather than actual sexual orientation.

Harassment on grounds of disability may include:

Verbal harassment, e.g. jokes about the person’s condition

Visual harassment, e.g. display of offensive pictures or imitation of a disabled person’s gait

Physical harassment, e.g., unwanted contact, removal of essential aids or equipment out of reach, physical assault

Harassment on grounds of race/ethnic origin may include:

Verbal harassment, e.g., offensive jokes or remarks about a person’s race or ethnic origin (which includes membership of the travelling community)

Visual harassment, e.g., display of material offensive to a particular racial or ethnic group, such as cartoons, racial propaganda material, etc.,

Physical harassment, e.g., physical assault.

Harassment on grounds of membership of the Traveller Community may include:

Verbal harassment, e.g., offensive jokes or remarks about a person’s race or ethnic origin (which includes membership of the travelling community)

Visual harassment, e.g., display of material offensive to a particular racial or ethnic group, such as cartoons, racial propaganda material, etc.,

Physical harassment, e.g., physical assault.

Harassment on grounds of religion may include:

Verbal harassment, e.g., offensive jokes or remarks about a person’s religious affiliation or practices

Visual harassment, e.g. the display or circulation of material offensive to a particular religion

Physical harassment, e.g. physical assault.

Harassment on grounds of family or marital status may include:

Verbal harassment, e.g., offensive jokes or remarks about a person’s family or marital status

Visual harassment, e.g. the display or circulation of material offensive to a particular family status

Physical harassment, e.g. physical assault.

General harassment/bullying of any kind will not be tolerated by the Heritage Council.

Inappropriate aggressive behaviour which is systematic and ongoing is regarded as bullying. It involves repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. Bullying can also be once-off behaviour.

Bullying can be classified as follows:

Manipulation of the victim’s personal or professional reputation by rumour, gossip or ridicule

Preventing the victim from speaking by making loud voiced

Criticisms or obscenities

Social exclusion or isolation

Manipulating the ability of the victim to perform their work duty

Undermining of ability to perform work duties.

Physical abuse or threats of abuse.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



NO SMOKING POLICY

The Heritage Council is committed to providing a smoke free environment in the workplace.

Smoking shall be prohibited at all business meetings including council meetings, committee meetings and dinner or lunch events analogous to such meetings.

Smoking is prohibited in all areas of the workplace. For the purpose of this policy the workplace is defined as any location where the business of The Heritage Council is being transacted.

This policy is devised in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of members, customers and staff.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

The Heritage Council is obliged under legislation and good practice to maintain records of attendance. Deviations from official work-duty times must be notified to the Human Resources Manager. It is imperative that all absences are recorded accurately in the Register of Leaves. If due to sickness or other reasons an employee cannot attend work on a particular day they must phone the office on that day and preferably before 9:30am. If it is not possible for an individual to call, a partner, relative or another identified individual may make the call.

ANNUAL LEAVE

All employees must apply for annual leave to the Human Resources Manager. Details will be transferred to the Register of Leaves and acknowledged by both the employee and the Human Resources Manager.

SICK LEAVE

A Sickness Absence Certificate must be completed for all absences due to illness and signed by both the employee and the Human Resources Manager.

Employees will be required to complete the self-certification element of the Sickness Absence Certificate for up to a maximum of three days consecutive illness.

A medical certificate will be required for any absence exceeding three days.

A medical certificate will also be required for any absence which would bring the number of self-certified sick days to more than seven.

Where social welfare benefit is payable to an employee, said employee shall reimburse the Heritage Council.

OTHER LEAVES

Other leaves should be applied for in a similar manner to annual leave although the period of notice required differs in many instances. Other leaves include maternity, paternity, parental, adoptive, force-majeure, compassionate and study leave.

TIME IN LIEU

Employees are entitled to take time in lieu for duty worked in excess of their contracted obligation. Time in lieu should be taken by agreement with the Human Resources Manager. A record will be kept of all such arrangements.

APPEAL

In the event of refusal an appeal shall lie to the Chief Executive.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Heritage Council is committed to a caring and professional approach to resolving the difficulties which staff may encounter in their working lives. Concern for the individual is paramount while the needs of other members of the team must also be acknowledged.

A balanced approach which can address personal needs, including stress, and employment requirements, including teamwork responsibilities, must always be utilised.

When an employee believes that counselling would be of benefit to them in a professional context then, where the Heritage Council is in agreement, a counsellor shall be made available to that employee.

Recognised local counsellors include:

ÁINE CASSIDY 056-7762332/087-6736776

JANE MOUNTAIN 056-7723573/086-2377617

BERNIE HACKETT 055-21591

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

This policy is intended to enable Heritage Council staff realise their full potential and achieve the highest standard of performance. Both training and development shall be provided in accordance with the Heritage Council's Equality Policy.

Training:

The Heritage Council will provide training relevant to the performance of each person's job. Management, in conjunction with staff, shall endeavour to identify appropriate training and any specific requests from staff will also receive full consideration.

Exchange programmes with similar institutions abroad are included in this provision. All staff must receive the approval of the Human Resources Manager prior to committing themselves to a training course. Generally training will be provided wholly from Council funds.

Development:

The Heritage Council actively promotes staff development and will provide educational opportunities subject to its own requirements and financial considerations.

Third level educational courses, which are relevant to the Heritage Council, will be considered for sponsorship.

Levels of sponsorship:

Financial:

Fees – 100%

Expenses – 20%

Leave:

Compulsory course days – 100%

Exams – 100%

Study – Max. of 5 days for a degree standard course

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



ANNUAL LEAVE: POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It is in the common interest of the Heritage Council and Heritage Council staff that the annual leave system is operated in a progressive fashion. The granting of annual leave is at the discretion of management but every effort will be made to facilitate employees.

- All employees must apply for annual leave, in writing, on their official leave sheet to the Human Resources Manager.
- The Human Resources Manager shall deliberate on the request based on the requirements of the service.
- In the event of the refusal of a leave request an appeal shall lie to the Chief Executive.
- In exceptional circumstances leave approval may be withdrawn due to changed demands on the service.
- Leave approval may be cancelled by agreement between the employee and the Human Resources Manager.
- Details of all leave shall be maintained in the Register of Leaves. The employee and Human Resources Manager shall both initial the Register of Leaves.
- The leave-sheet shall be retained by the employee and shall be initialled by both parties.
- Leave is generally only granted when this procedure has been exhausted. However flexibility will be entertained in relation to single day requests or in appropriate exceptional circumstances.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



MATERNITY LEAVE POLICY

Policy

Employees (including part-time and temporary workers) are entitled to eighteen weeks Maternity Leave and if the employee wishes, she may take up to 8 consecutive weeks additional unpaid leave. Where a mother dies within fourteen weeks of the birth, the father of the child has certain leave entitlements.

Main Provisions

1. The employees right to take Maternity Leave under the Act is conditional on her having **notified her employer in writing** of her intention to take Maternity Leave **at least 4-weeks before she intends to go on leave**. A medical certificate confirming her pregnancy and specifying the expected week of confinement must accompany this notification. If she does not comply with this procedure, the employee loses her rights under the Act, and also loses her entitlement to a maternity Allowance from the Department of Social Welfare.

2. If for some reason the employee wishes to revoke or amend her notification, for instance if she suffers a miscarriage before 28 weeks of pregnancy, or if she discovers an error in calculating the expected date of her confinement, she may do so by means of a further notification in writing to her employer.

The employee must notify her employer in writing of her intention to take additional Maternity Leave, not less than four weeks before the end of her normal Maternity Leave.

3. Absence through illness which occurs outside the specified 14-week period is treated as absence or sick leave, provided it conforms with normal sick leave arrangements.

4. During Maternity Leave, including any extension of it on account of a late birth, employees who satisfy the contribution conditions, are entitled to a pay-related maternity allowance scheme administered by the Department of Social Welfare.

Permanent staff will be paid full basic salary inclusive of all public holidays to cover the 18-weeks maternity leave only. The Heritage Council will finance this.

5. The employees right to return to their own position, or equivalent is conditional on the employee having carried out the requisite written notification procedures at all appropriate stages. In addition to those already mentioned, she must give prior notification in writing not later than four weeks before the expected return to work date, that she intends to return to work.

6. The Act provides for female employees to take time off from work without loss of pay for the purpose of pre-natal and post-natal care.

7. Employment rights e.g. annual leave, public holiday entitlement, increments, seniority - whether they are conferred by law, under the terms of the contract of employment or otherwise, are preserved and continue to build up as if the employee was not absent from work.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



ADOPTIVE LEAVE POLICY

Policy

An adopting mother or sole male adopter who is in employment is entitled to a minimum of 10-weeks consecutive weeks of adoptive leave from work beginning on the day of placement of the child, and up to 4 weeks additional adoptive leave. The 10-week period of adoptive leave will attract a social welfare benefit in the majority of cases.

There are mandatory notification procedures and evidence of placement requirement.

Main Provisions

1. The leave is available to:

An employed adopting mother: that is any female employee in whose care a child (of whom she is not the natural mother) has been placed or is to be placed with a view to making of an adoption order, or to the effecting of a foreign adoption or following such adoption.

A sole male adopter

2. An employee must give adequate notice, in writing to the employer of the intention to take adoptive leave. The **minimum advance notice of such intention is 4-weeks before the expected placement** of the child.

An employee must inform her employer in writing, of the expected date of placement of the child as soon as is reasonably practicable.

3. An employee **must inform his/her employer in writing at least 4 weeks beforehand of the date on which she intends to return to work** after adoptive leave or additional adoptive leave.

Absence from work on adoptive leave will not affect any right of an employee relating to employment, except the right to remuneration. During an absence from work and additional adoptive leave the period of employment before the absence will be regarded as continuous with the period of employment after the absence.

4. The 10-week period of adoptive leave will attract a social welfare benefit in the majority of cases. Permanent staff will be paid full salary to cover the 10-weeks adoptive leave only. The Heritage Council will finance this. Up to four weeks additional leave may be taken provided they are taken immediately following the first period of adoptive leave.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



PATERNITY LEAVE POLICY

A male employee will be entitled to three days extra annual leave on the birth or adoption of his child. This leave will be organised between the employee and the Chief Executive/HR Manager, and must be taken within nine months of the birth or adoption.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

In accordance with the Parental Leave Act, 1998.

Female and male employees are entitled to avail of a continuous block of 14-weeks unpaid leave from employment.

Main provisions

Parents of children born on or after 3 June 1996, or adopted on or after that date, are entitled to parental leave. Each parent is entitled to 14-weeks parental leave for each child born or adopted on or after that date. The leave must be taken before the child reaches 5 years of age, except in certain circumstances when the child is adopted.

Minimum Service Requirement

An employee must have at least one year's continuous service with the employer before being entitled to take parental leave. However, where the employee has more than three months but less and than one years service and where the child is approaching the age threshold, the employee will be entitled to one week's leave for every month of continuous employment completed with the employer.

Transfer of Leave

Each parent has a separate entitlement to parental leave from his or her job. The leave may not be transferred between the parents

Manner in Which Leave may be taken

The leave may be taken as a continuous block of 14 weeks or by agreement be broken up over a period of time into individual days, weeks or hours (to be discussed).

Suspension of Probation

A period of probation will be suspended while the employee is on parental leave.

Annual leave and public holidays

Annual leave and any public holidays that fall during a period of parental leave will be added to the end of the period of parental leave.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



SICK LEAVE POLICY

Objective

The Sick Pay Scheme is designed to alleviate financial hardship for employees who are absent due to illness or injury.

Eligibility

All permanent full-time employees of the Heritage Council who have completed 12 months service qualify for the scheme which is applied at the discretion of the Chief Executive.

Funding

The scheme will be funded by the company and will be non-contributory for employees.

Benefit Period

Benefit will be paid from the first day of illness in the case of absence.
Total annual benefit will be 6 weeks in any one-year.

Benefit Level

The Scheme is designed to provide 100% of take home pay. Social Welfare Entitlements and income tax rebates, where applicable, will be taken into account in calculating the 100%.

Certification

The employee will be required to complete a self-certification form for up to three days consecutive illness. A medical certificate will be required for an absence exceeding three days.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



JURY DUTY

In accordance with the Juries Act 1976, employees will be paid when they are called for jury duty.

A copy of the Jury Summons must be forwarded to the Human Resources Manager.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The disciplinary policy is to help the individual, whose competence or conduct falls below the Heritage Council's requirements, so as to achieve the necessary improvement. If however, an employee's conduct, attendance or performance fails to meet the company's required standards and as such warrants disciplinary action, the following disciplinary procedures will generally apply.

More serious indiscretions may warrant immediate movement to a higher stage in the process while cases of gross misconduct may attract summary dismissal.

Stage 1: Verbal Warning/Counselling

The employee will initially be given a verbal warning and counselling by his or her immediate supervisor which will be recorded on that employee's personnel record. If the required improvement is achieved, the warning is erased after six months.

Stage 2: Formal Warning

In the event of a further breach of conduct, poor attendance, or lapse from performance, the employee will be given a formal verbal warning by the Chief Executive. This warning will be recorded on the employee's personnel file and a copy will be given to the employee. A copy will be given or sent to the employee concerned. If the required improvement is achieved, the warning is erased after six months.

Stage 3: First Written Warning

In the event of a further breach, the employee will be issued with a formal written warning. This warning will be recorded on the employee's personnel file and a copy of which will be given to the employee.

Stage 4: Final Written Warning/Suspension

In the event of yet a further breach, the employee will be given a final formal written warning. This warning will be recorded on the employee's personnel file and a copy of which will be given to the employee.

At this stage the employee may also be suspended, with or without pay depending on the breach of regulations governing competence/misconduct. If the required improvement is achieved, the warning is erased after twelve months.

Stage 5. Dismissal

If, following a period of suspension, the employee is guilty of further breaches, the employee may be dismissed. Copies of the dismissal details will be given or sent to the employee and their union representative.

Stage 6. Summary Dismissal

In cases of gross misconduct warranting summary dismissal, the following procedures apply:

- The employee is either summarily dismissed or suspended with pay normally for not more than three working days, whilst the facts surrounding the serious misconduct are investigated and examined. In all cases, the employee can be accompanied by a fellow employee and /or their union representative. The employee will be given ample opportunity to review the case against him/her and to state their side of the case.
- Serious charges of misconduct will be investigated in a prompt manner having regard to the resources and contingencies of the organisation. External assistance may be assigned to the investigation if appropriate. The person bringing the serious misconduct charge will be excluded from this team if possible.
- If, following review of the case hearing, the facts substantiate that serious misconduct has occurred, the employee will be summarily dismissed.
- If serious misconduct has not occurred then a decision will be reached as to whether the charge is dismissed or a more appropriate stage of the Disciplinary Procedure should be applied.
- It is difficult to draw up a complete list of behaviour which constitutes serious misconduct, however such a list would include assault, theft, wilful damage to company property, reporting for work under the influence of alcohol, breaches of trust etc.

Right of Appeal

An appeal by an employee against disciplinary action shall follow the specified grievance procedure. Unless an appeal is lodged by the employee or his/her representative with the Personnel Officer or the Chief Executive within five days, it will be automatically assumed that the employee accepts the decision as final.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



GRIEVANCE POLICY

The Heritage Council aims to provide and maintain a stress-free open work environment for all staff. However, as with any organisation, staff may have a particular grievance, which should be discussed and resolved as efficiently as possible to maintain a positive working environment.

If any of the administration staff have a particular grievance it is recommended that they discuss this with the HR Manager, who will make every effort to resolve the problem at this stage.

If the matter is not resolved at this stage the staff member may refer the matter to the Chief Executive. Professional officers may have grievances which they can relate to the HR Manager, in which case they should do so. However, they may also have grievances which can only be resolved by the Chief Executive (e.g. relating to their committees) and as such they should approach the Chief Executive in the first instance in such cases.

When appealing an issue to the Chief Executive the staff member has the right to be accompanied by a union or other representative, should they so wish.

If the issue cannot be resolved internally, then it will be referred to the Labour Relations Commission for a conciliation conference or to a Rights Commissioner as appropriate. Appeals against a Rights Commissioner decision shall take place in accordance with Section 13(2) of the Industrial Relations Act, 1969.

If the matter is not resolved at conciliation, it will be referred to the Labour Court for investigation.

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

CUSTOMER CHARTER



NOVEMBER 2004

1 Our Mission Statement

The Heritage Council seeks to protect and enhance the richness, quality and diversity of our national heritage for everyone. It works with its partners, particularly at local level, to increase awareness of our national heritage and to highlight its importance to public policy and everyday life.

Key Performance Areas identified in Heritage Council Plan 2001-2005:

- 1) *Heritage Information – collection & dissemination*
- 2) *Advice to the Minister*
- 3) *Placing Heritage at the Heart of Public Life*
- 4) *Local Authorities & Heritage Management*
- 5) *Raising Awareness & Appreciation of our Heritage*
- 6) *Best Practice in Heritage Conservation & Management*

We at the Heritage Council are committed to providing you, our clients with an excellent customer service. In carrying out its functions under its six key performance areas, the Council will maintain a high standard of service to all its partners and to all those looking to the Council for advice, guidance or support

2 Delivering Quality Service

We are committed to providing an efficient and courteous service to all our clients. This document sets out clearly the type of service you can expect from the Heritage Council. Our adherence to these standards will be monitored and we will constantly strive to improve our services over time.

3 Principles of Quality Customer Service

The Heritage Council has adopted the following principles of quality service to help us deliver a quality service to our clients. We are committed to: -

- Providing high quality standards of service by publishing a customer charter and displaying it prominently at our service delivery points.
- Providing clean, accessible public offices by complying with occupational and safety standards, and by facilitating access for people with disabilities and other specific needs
- Promoting equality and diversity for all by implementing equality legislation and eliminating all barriers to service access for those experiencing poverty, social exclusion and those facing geographic barriers
- Proactively providing information by ensuring that the potential offered by today's information and communications technology is fully availed of and is in keeping with the guidelines of web publications. We will also continue the drive for simplicity in all information available from the Heritage Council.
- Delivering a service to the public in a timely and courteous way by providing contact names to ensure ease of communication, and by delivering a quality service enable us to foster a climate of mutual respect between the Heritage Council and its clients.
- Ensuring that the needs of the public are met by providing a structured approach to consultation, participation and evaluation in which the public can participate; and by providing choices with regard to our service delivery times, location and language used.
- Providing choice, where feasible in service delivery by using available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, along with quality of delivery
Providing quality services bilingually – Irish and English and other languages – where possible.
- Ensuring that our staff are recognised as internal customers, and in doing so ensure that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues

4 Telephone Enquiries

- When you telephone us, we will be available where possible to answer your calls during normal office hours (9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday excluding public holidays). Our aim is to process all telephone enquiries within 24 hours. An answering machine will be available when all operators are busy.
- We will answer your telephone enquiries promptly and politely
- We will identify ourselves and our area of work when you contact us.
- We also aim to be courteous, helpful, and to provide you with clear and accurate information
- If we cannot provide an immediate answer, we will take details and call you back within 24 hours or at an agreed time
- If we need to transfer you to another staff member we will give you their name and /or contact details if they are unavailable to take your call
- If we have to redirect you to another Department/Agency etc we will do so with an alternate contact number
- We will not put you on hold without explanation, nor keep you on hold without regular updates
- Whilst currently a majority of staff do not speak Irish fluently we will make every effort to accommodate you if you wish to conduct your business through Irish.

5 Written Communications

- We will acknowledge all written communications – emails, faxes and letters – within five working days, and provide a definitive reply or answer within fifteen working days. Where an “out of office” reply is received we will give alternative contact details for written communications
- If correspondence is received by us which is meant for another Department, Agency, etc. we will forward this correspondence on to them immediately and request that they contact you directly

6 Meetings

- We will be available to meet you punctually and by appointment during our normal office hours
- We will endeavour to be flexible in our arrangement for meeting you outside our office hours
- We will receive you courteously, be helpful and fair in our dealings with you, and attempt to deal with your enquiry as soon as possible
- We will provide appropriate facilities for meetings and ensure that our offices are clean, accessible and safe for all our clients
- We will continuously review access to our offices for all our clients in accordance with the National Disability Association guidelines

7 The Provision of Information

- We will ensure that all our generally available information is accessible to all our clients
- We will provide accurate information, using clear and simple language that is relevant to your query

8 Grants

To ensure that all relevant bodies and individuals receive the information they require to apply for this funding, the Heritage Council will aim to: -

- Supply all prospective grant applicants with eligibility criteria, terms, conditions and other relevant information in advance.
- Explain exactly what is required in application forms and ask only relevant questions.
- Applications will be acknowledged within 14 working days of receipt.
- We will also aim to use technology to facilitate a more efficient grant process.
- Communicate the decision to the grant applicants within two weeks following the date of decision.
- Issue payments under grant schemes within 14 days of the receipt of confirmation that grant scheme conditions have been met.

9 Help Us to Help You

- To assist us in reaching our service standards, we would appreciate it if you could ensure that all application forms are fully, accurately and legibly completed by the specified deadline (where applicable)
- Please quote a reference number when contacting us about an existing grant application.
- If you wish to meet with a member of our staff, you can make an appointment in advance.
- Please provide a daytime telephone number or email address in your correspondence if available.

10 Our Website

- We will ensure that our website is kept up to date, complies with disability access requirements and contains information relevant to our client base
- We welcome your views on the quality of our website which you can provide through an online feedback facility
- Our website address is www.heritagecouncil.ie

11 Equal Status Policy

- We are fully committed to providing a service that is accessible and relevant to all our clients
- We are fully committed to providing a service that accommodates the specific needs and aspirations of particular client groups, and that seeks an equality of outcome
- We will consult with our clients to ensure that their access needs are addressed
- We will provide appropriate staff training to support the equal status policy

12 How can a Freedom of Information request be made?

If you are considering an FOI request it may first be appropriate to speak to the designated officer, Liam Scott.

Should you wish to make a request under FOI, you should make the request as follows: -

- In writing, by fax or email, and addressed to the FOI Officer
- State clearly that the request is being made under the FOI Acts
- Identify clearly the records/information sought
- Specify the manner of access sought
- Proof of identity will be sought before access to personnel information is granted
- Assistance for members of the public with special needs can be provided on request

13 Séirbhís Trí Ghaeilge

- The Heritage Council aims to provide a quality service through English, Irish, or English and Irish
- Customers have the right to choose which language they prefer to be dealt with in
- We also hope to ensure that a sufficient number of our staff are proficient in the Irish and language
- A limited amount of information issued by the Heritage Council will be in both English and Irish

- Tabharfar freagra as gaeilge ar chomhfreagas a gheofar i ngaeilge
- Déanfar gach iarracht freastal ar fhiafraithe teileafóin i ngaeilge agus freastal ar dhaoine a thagann i láthair ar mian leo a ngnó a dhéanamh trí ghaeilge

14 Complaints

- The Heritage Council is committed to providing a high quality service to all its clients. We work hard to achieve this, however, if you feel that you did not receive as good a service as you expected please make it known to us immediately. A complaints procedure has been established to deal with any failure to meet the standards set for our service. You should, therefore, as an initial step, contact the person who provided the service. If you do not receive a satisfactory response, a written account of the complaint should be forwarded to the Chief Executive who will thoroughly investigate the complaint and respond in writing within twenty-one working days.

15 Contact Details

Our headquarters is located in Kilkenny, Ireland. All correspondence and requests for information should be addressed to:

The Heritage Council, Rothe House, Kilkenny

Tel: 00353 56 7770777

Fax: 00353 56 7770788

<mailto:mail@heritagecouncil.com>

www.heritagecouncil.ie

Chief Executive:

Michael Starrett;
michael@heritagecouncil.com
Anne Barcoe, P.A. to C.E. and Chairperson
anne@heritagecouncil.com

Professional Officers:

Alison Harvey, Planning;
alison@heritagecouncil.com
Colm Murray, Architecture;
colm@heritagecouncil.com
Liam Lysaght, Ecology;
liam@heritageccil.com
Beatrice Kelly, Inland Waterways/Marine;
beatrice@heritagecouncil.com
Liam Scott, Human Resources & Office Management;
liams@heritagecouncil.com
Ian Doyle, Archaeology;
ian@heritagecouncil.com
Paula Drohan, Finance & IT;
Paula@heritagecouncil.com
Hugh Maguire, Museums & Archives;
hugh@heritagecouncil.com
Isabell Smyth, Communications and Education
isabell@heritagecouncil.com
Amanda Ryan, Grants Administration
Amanda@heritagecouncil.com

Support Staff:

Martina Malone, *martina@heritagecouncil.com*
Maria Reilly, *maria@heritagecouncil.com*
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An
Chomhairle
Oidhreachta



The
Heritage
Council

CUSTOMER CHARTER

- The Heritage Council is committed to delivering the highest possible quality or service to all its customers, clients and partners.
- Council seeks to protect and enhance the richness, quality and diversity of our national heritage and to assist it in delivering its service has adopted a customer charter.
- This charter will underpin its service provision at all levels, internally and externally. Copies of the charter are available from the national headquarters, Rothe House, Kilkenny and the website www.heritagecouncil.ie

Michael Starrett
Chief Executive

**GUIDELINES ON THE PAYMENT OF FEES AND TRAVEL AND
SUBSISTENCE TO CHAIR AND MEMBERS**

The Heritage Council /An Comhairle Oidreachta: Guidelines on the payment of fees to the Chair and members

1. The members of The Heritage Council may receive fees under Section 23 of the Heritage Act, 1995 as determined from time to time by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
2. The Council will ensure that the fees paid to the Chair (and Council Members) are at the rate authorised by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government
3. The fee(s) paid to the Chair (or members of any subsidiary or associated body will not exceed the rates applying to the Chair or Members, respectively, of the Council and will, as a general rule, be significantly less
4. Only one fee will be payable to a person in respect of (a) service on the Council and Boards of Subsidiary or associated bodies or (b) service on subsidiary or associated Boards only
5. The Council will adhere strictly to the arrangements recommended by the Review body on Higher Remuneration in relation to the retention/surrender by the Chief Executive of fees for directorships payable to him/her – the arrangements would, for instance, allow the Chief Executive to retain the fee in respect of membership of his/her own main Board, prohibit retention of any fees paid in respect of subsidiary or associate bodies and, subject to Council approval, allow retention of not more than two fees in respect of other directorships
6. An executive other than the Chief Executive will subject to Council approval, be allowed to hold membership of the Boards of bodies which are not subsidiary to or associated with the main body and to retain not more than two fees in respect of such membership.
7. As part of the reporting arrangement put in place under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, the Chair of the Council will each year submit a report affirming that the above guidelines are being compiled with.
8. In cases where a member of the Council is requested to render a professional service to the Council and where the provision of such service will result in the loss of professional income to that member, the Director, after consultation with the Chair, may make payment to the member of an amount equal to the fee which would be appropriate to a non-member of the Council in the same circumstances.

**THE HERITAGE COUNCIL
PAYMENTS OF FEES, AND TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE TO COUNCIL
MEMBERS**

FEES

Members of Boards created by statute [i.e. statutory office holders]

Members of Boards created by statute are “office holders” and, payments to them in their capacity as office holders are chargeable to tax under what is known as Schedule E and subject to deductions (i.e. tax, PRSI and the Health Contribution as appropriate) at source under the PAYE system. In other words the gratuity is taxed in the same way as a salary earned by an employee.

Gross gratuity amounts are as follows:

	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Payable in June</i>	<i>Payable in December</i>
	€	€	€
<i>CHAIRMAN</i>	7618.42	3809.21	3809.21
<i>COUNCIL MEMBERS</i>	5078.96	2539.48	2539.48

The first payment to Chairman and Council Members will be December, 2005.

With this in mind could you please provide your PPS numbers on **Appendix A** and forward to Anne Barcoe.

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

Where Chairman or Council members use their private cars for Council business, reimbursement in respect of motor expenses will be made by way of flat-rate mileage allowances which are in line with the prevailing schedule of Civil Service rates. These are detailed hereunder:

Motor Travel Rates Effective from 1 July 2005

Rates per mile

Official Motor Travel in a calendar year	Engine Capacity up to 1200cc	Engine Capacity 1201cc to 1500cc	Engine Capacity 1501cc and over
Up to 4000 miles	83.92 cent	97.91 cent	124.23 cent
4001 and over	42.47 cent	48.77 cent	57.39 cent

Where the Chairman or Council members perform Council business while temporarily away from his/her place of residence and subsistence expenses (meals and accommodation) are incurred while performing the said duties and not paid for by The Heritage Council subsistence expenses will be re-imbursed on the basis of:

The prevailing Civil Service rates

Or

Actual expenses on submission of receipts

Current subsistence rates for expenses incurred within the Republic of Ireland are as follows:

Domestic Subsistence rates from 1st July 2005			
Class of Allowances	Overnight Rate (24 hour rate)	10 hours or more	5 hours but less than 10 hours
Subsistence	€138.41	€40.01	€16.32

It should be noted that the subsistence rates provided are Republic of Ireland rates. Rates for travel outside the Republic of Ireland are available on request.

Travel & Subsistence will be re-imbursed by The Heritage Council on submission of a signed and dated claim form. A sample of this is attached at Appendix B. Expense claims can be submitted on a monthly basis or on a quarterly basis whichever is more convenient.

In line with government policy, electronic funds transfer is the preferred method of payment of expenses. However expenses can be re-imbursed by way of cheque if you so wish. Please provide your bank details at Appendix A and return to Anne Barcoe. If bank details are not provided re-imburement will be made by cheque.

An example of how to complete the form is set out at **Appendix C**

For attendance at Council, Committee or other specific events organised by Council it is Council's practise that accommodation for members is pre-booked and paid for directly by Council. This service is designed to assist members and to remove the need for involvement in administrative tasks and/or the submission or claims for such events. Assistance in seeking accommodation can be provided through Council's support staff.

APPENDIX A

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PPS Number: _____

Bank Name : _____

Bank Address: _____

Sort Code: _____

Account No.: _____

APPENDIX B



Account of Travelling and Expenses

(a) the subsistence and other allowances claimed in this account are in strict accordance with the relevant regulation (b) the expenses charged have been actually and necessarily disbursed solely in relation to the public service (c) the particulars furnished herein are in all respects true and (d) no claim in respect of the same period has been or will be made against another Government Department or elsewhere.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Month of: _____

Address: _____

Position: _____

NB

(1) Date	(2) Time of Dep.	(3) Time of Return	(4) Particulars of Journey e.g. Kilkenny-Dublin	(5) Mode of Conveyance (Car/train/bus)	(6) CC of car	(7) Distance in miles if travelling by car	(8) Mileage rate used	(9) Nature of Service e.g. Wildlife Committee Meeting	Please tick which meals/ accommodation were provided by Council or others			(11) Travelling €	(12) Subsistence €	(13) Misc. €	
									Lunch	Dinner	Accommodation & breakfast				
TOTALS:															

Examined and passed: _____

Overall Total € _____

Paid Cheque/EFT no. _____ **Date** _____

(Parts 1-3) The Regulations must be strictly observed. Any neglect in this respect will cause correspondence and inconvenience, and will delay the allowance of the claim. Time of departure from and arrival at residence or headquarters should always be given. A return journey not made on the same day as an outward journey should be shown under its proper date. Return tickets should be taken if expense is thereby saved. Explanations should be given if two single tickets are taken at a greater cost. Cheap or short period tickets should, where practicable, be availed of.

Part (4) State the Particulars of your journey e.g Dublin to Kilkenny

Part (5) State mode of conveyance i.e. car/train etc

Part (6) State h.p./engine size of private car.

Part (7) State the distance in miles or kilometers. These details should be given only where a private or a hired vehicle is used.

Part (9) State what function/meeting you were attending

Part (10) State which subsistence expenses i.e. lunch/evening meal/accommodation were provided by Council or others

Part (11-12) Enter receipted travel costs in travelling column i.e train tickets, taxis etc. Normally the finance department will calculate out your mileage expenses for you once the total miles have been entered in column 7 and the subsistence rate due as per your details entered in columns 1-3 and column 10

Part (13) Include the cost of miscellaneous expenses in this column eg. Parking, if you paid for lunch at a meeting, etc

I. When submitting numerous receipts (over 3) Please mount on an A4 sheet

CURRENT RATES JULY 2005

MOTOR MILEAGE RATES

Official mileage in a calendar year	Engine Capacity Up to 1200cc	Engine Capacity 1201cc-1500cc	Engine Capacity 1501cc and over
	Cent	Cent	Cent
Up to 4000	83.92	97.91	124.23
4001 and over	42.47	48.77	57.39

DOMESTIC SUBSISTENCE RATES

5 hours less than 10 hours	10 hour or more	Overnight (24 hours)
€16.32	€40.01	€138.41

Please note that there are separate subsistence rates for travel outside the Republic of Ireland

