

# **DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT (NO 1) 2014**

**PART 7- LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**SECTION 46- CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY**

## **CONSTITUTION**

**A Constitution is a body of fundamental principles or established precedents by which an organisation is governed.**

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## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. NAME</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. AIMS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. VISION, VALUES and PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1. Vision	6
4.2. Values	6
4.3. Principles	7
4.4. Full Membership	7
4.4.1 Full Membership Criteria	7
4.4.2 Term of Membership	8
1. Registration Process	7
4.5 Associate Membership	8
4.5.1 Advantages of having Associate Members in PPN	8
1. Advantages of attaining Associate Membership	8
2. Associate Membership Criteria	8
4.5.4 Associate Membership Registration Process	8
4.6 Membership Electoral Colleges	8
4.6.1 Social Inclusion	9
4.6.2 Environmental	9
1. Community and Voluntary	9
<b>5. STRUCTURE and MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1. Plenary	10
5.1.1 Extraordinary General Meetings	11
5.1.2 Procedure at the Plenary or EGMs	12
5.1.3 Qualification of Voter	12
5.1.4 Record of Voting	12

5.1.5 Tellers	13
5.1.6 Adjournment of Meeting	13
5.1.7 Suspension of Standing Orders	13
5.2. Secretariat	13
5.2.1 Emergency and Other Meetings of the Secretariat	14
5.2.2 Responsibilities of the Secretariat	14
5.2.3 General Purposes Subcommittee	15
5.2.4 Role of the Secretariat Facilitator	15
5.2.5 Role of PPN Staff	16
5.3. Linkage Groups	17
5.3.1 Aim	17
5.3.2 Membership	18
5.3.3 Current Linkage Groups	18
5.3.4 Role of Linkage Groups	18
5.3.5 Rights of the Linkage Group members are to: -	19
5.3.6 Role of Linkage Group Facilitator	19
<b>6.PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION</b>	
Principles Governing PPN Representation	20
6.1. Role of the PPN Representative	21
6.2. Responsibilities of the PPN Representative	21
6.3. Rights of the PPN Representative	22
6.4. Vacancies	22
6.5.1 Nominations	23
1. Election	23
6.6 Removal of Representatives	23
6.6.1 Removal Appeals Process	24
6.5. Complaints Procedure	
1. Complaints Appeals Process	25

<b>2. CODE OF CONDUCT</b>	<b>25</b>
1. Amendments to Code of Conduct	25
<b>8.FINANCIAL MATTERS</b>	<b>26</b>
1. Financial Records	26
2. PPN Representative Expenses	26
<b>9.SERVICE OF NOTICES</b>	
<b>10.AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION</b>	
<b>11. Appendix 1: Dublin City PPN Plenary Standing Orders</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>12. Appendix 2: Rights / Responsibilities of a Board/Committee with PPN Representation</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>13. Appendix 3: Electoral Process</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>14. Appendix 4: Code of Conduct</b>	<b>34</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The Public Participation Network (PPN) is the main link through which the local authority connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors.

The Secretariat is the serving administrating body of the Public Participation Network. It is open to all members from the three pillars of the PPN who are then elected at a plenary to serve the PPN.

This Constitution is a segment of the work that the Secretariat has undertaken on behalf of the PPN. It is hoped it will enable a harmonious, independent and productive structure of Dublin City Public Participation Network to function more cohesively

Putting People First – An Action Programme for Effective Local Government (October 2012) sets out a vision for Local Government in Ireland.

“Local government will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level - leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably.”

Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 enables local authorities to take all appropriate steps to consult with and promote effective participation of local communities in local government. Citizens and communities will be encouraged and supported to participate in the decision-making processes of the local authority.

The new mechanism for public engagement and participation is called The Public Participation Network (PPN). Its primary objective is to enable the public to take an active formal role in the policy making and oversight activities of the Local Authority's areas of responsibility.

The participation of all citizens in public life and discourse and their right to influence decisions that affect their lives and communities are at the centre of democracy.

The PPN facilitates access to participation in the decision making process at local government level and their active role in the policy making and oversight activities of Dublin City Council.

This is achieved by means of:

- Strategic Policy Committees
- Local Community Development Committee
- Joint Policing Committee
- Other committees outside of the Local Authority remit

Dublin City Council determines the number of representatives to be elected.

Community Groups and Organisations that wish to participate must register with Dublin City PPN.

## **2. NAME**

Dublin City Participation Network otherwise referred to as Dublin City PPN or the PPN.

## **1. AIMS**

The aims of Dublin City PPN are:

- To actively promote and facilitate the representation of the member organisation groups comprising of Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary and Environmental Pillars.
- Evaluate existing Policies of Dublin City to ascertain their impact on the Community.
- Actively support the inclusion of groups such as those socially excluded or marginalized.
- To be an information hub for the member organisations.
- To offer opportunities for training that practically benefit the organisations.
- To enable peer to peer and group to group networking.

## **4. VISION, VALUES and PRINCIPLES**

### **4.1. Vision**

The Vision of the Dublin City Public Participation Network is:

- To influence and advance decision making in Dublin City Council;
- Be the primary connection between the local authority and the community organisations.

### **4.2. Values**

Dublin City Public Participation Network is underpinned by the values of:

- Inclusivity
- Participation
- Independence
- Diversity

- Openness , Transparency and accountability
- Respect

### **4.3 Principles**

The above values reflect the Charity Regulator's six (6) core principles:

1. Advance the purpose of the organisation
2. Behave with integrity
3. Lead people
4. Exercise control
5. Work effectively
6. Be accountable and transparent

A fuller explanation is available from [www.charitiesregulator.ie](http://www.charitiesregulator.ie)

## **Full Membership**

### **4.4.1 Full Membership Criteria**

Full membership of Dublin City PPN is open to community groups and organisations whose members:

- Have an address in Dublin City and are volunteer led (i.e. voluntary Board or Committee directly responsible for the organisation/group)
- Are not for profit, non-political, non-sectarian
- Have at least five (5) members/Service users
- Are established for at least three (3) months.
- Have an appropriate structure or are in the process of establishing one; the Secretariat is aware and keen to involve start up and vulnerable groups who may not have the resources to fully comply with circulars regarding governance from the Department of Rural & Community Development.



- Are in agreement with and comply with PPN constitution and adhere to PPN Code of Conduct.
- Have members/service users in the Dublin City area

It is desirable from a coordination point of view that groups fill out the simple registration form on the Dublin City Council website in order to be registered with both the PPN & DCC.

#### **4.4.2 Term of Membership**

Once an organisation has become a member of the PPN it will be required under GDPR to reaffirm its membership details to cater for any changes since initial registration and prior to the Annual General Plenary Meeting.

#### **4.4.3 Registration Process**

- Prospective members register by completing the Dublin City PPN Registration process online or manually. This is processed by the PPN Secretariat.

### **5. Associate Membership**

Associate Membership caters for those, such as centres of learning/research, corporate bodies, foundations, NGOs, etc. interested in contributing/participating on a consultative basis with the PPN.

#### **4.5.1 Advantages of having Associate Members in PPN**

Associate Membership enhances and enriches the PPN as:

- Membership is extended to groups that do not meet PPN eligibility criteria;
- Associate members contribute to discussions at Linkage Group level and contribute to broadening and the development of the Dublin City PPN perspective;
- Associated members expand the PPN reach into the wider community and support base.

#### **4.5.2 Associate Membership Registration Process**

The process of registering for associate membership is the same as that outlined in section 4.4.3 above.

#### 4.6 Membership Electoral Colleges

The PPN Membership is divided into three (3) Colleges/Pillars. Each organisation/group must decide to participate in the “college” which represents its **primary** interest:

##### **4.6.1 Social Inclusion Pillar**

This includes Organisations/Groups whose main activity centres on working to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society. This is done by using community development approaches to build and sustain communities where the values of equality, social justice, inclusion and human rights are promoted.

Example of groups that may be included in this college: disability, ethnic minority, family support, youth, senior citizens, Traveller, literacy, social justice, equality promotion, LGBT QI, community development, children and youth service and those availing of addiction services.

##### **4.6.2 Environmental**

Organisation/groups whose primary objectives and activities are Environmental protection, (ecological) and /or environmental sustainability and promoting the overall environmental well-being of their community.

Examples of groups that may be included in this college: those dealing with the protection of wildlife, organic horticultural and education groups, environmental sustainability groups.

Organisations wishing to join this College must be verified by the National Environmental Pillar as this is the validating body for membership of the environment electoral college. The PPN Secretariat forwards verification details of Environment members to the National Environmental Pillar.

##### **4.6.3 Community and Voluntary**

Community and Voluntary organisations/groups cover the multiplicity of facets /segments of community life involving development approaches to build sustainable communities and promote the overall wellbeing of their community.

Example of the myriad of groups that may be included in this college: residents/tenants associations, sports and recreation groups, community associations, youth groups, community councils, arts groups, active retirement groups, self-help groups.

## **5. STRUCTURE and MANAGEMENT**

**The current structure is “flat”, i.e., open, transparent and accountable, in accordance with Government Policy and composed of:**

- Member organisations are the backbone of the PPN. The organisations collectively are known as the Plenary (see 6.1). The organisations meet in plenary session at least twice a year;
- Representatives of member organisation nominate a primary voting representative and an alternative whose responsibility it is to a) disseminate information to their members; b) represent the views of their respective organisations to the PPN and c) vote at plenary sessions;
- Ordinary members from member organisations who can attend Plenary, Linkage groups and other events at the request of the organization representatives. They do not have voting rights;
- Linkage Groups – as defined in section 5.3
- Representatives – as defined in section 6
- Secretariat – as defined in section 5.2

It is therefore imperative that strong and clear governance procedures are in place that respect the flat structure and provide the environment for the PPN to conduct its business in an efficient, effective, and accountable manner.

### **5.1 Plenary**

- The full Membership elects The Secretariat. Through the diversity of its membership the Secretariat is representative of the three (3) colleges/pillars;
- The Plenary elects representatives to the Strategic Policy Committees, Local Community Development Committee and the Secretariat;

- At least one (1) member from each Registered Group/Organisation holding Full Membership shall be entitled to attend the Plenary and shall have one (1) vote on behalf of their organization;
- The dates for convening Plenary Sessions shall be decided by the Plenary in session at the Annual General Meeting of the Plenary and in the absence of such decision, by the Secretariat.
- Notice of Plenary Sessions shall be circulated to all members not less than twenty one (21) days prior to the date of such Session;
- The Agenda shall be set by the Secretariat. Items and motions for discussion shall be forwarded by members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting;
- All Plenaries shall be conducted under Standing Orders Procedures – in consultation with members. See Appendix 1 for Standing Orders (page 33).
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### **5.1.1 Extraordinary General Meetings**

Extraordinary General Meeting of full Members shall be held at any time on the decision of the Secretariat or on receipt by the Secretariat of a concise request signed by 10% of full membership organisations (excluding Associated Members) to convene such a meeting.

The Secretariat shall decide within five (5) working days of receipt of such request the date, time, and place such a meeting shall be held which shall be not more than twenty-one (21) working days following receipt of the request by Secretariat.

The Notice to members shall state:

- Date, time and place of the meeting;
- Business to be transacted;
- Text of original request/proposal.

The Facilitator of the Secretariat for the time being shall act as the Facilitator of the Extraordinary General Meeting or where the Facilitator fails to act, the Secretariat shall appoint one of its Members to act as Facilitator. Where the Secretariat fails to appoint a Facilitator, the Extraordinary General meeting shall appoint a facilitator by show of hands or Ballot by simple majority vote.

Where the Secretariat fails or omits to comply with such request to hold a meeting or Secretariat has resigned in block, then the member organisation who initiated the request in the first instance shall convene such an Extraordinary meeting at a date, time, and place stipulated by them and only on the original request and such notice shall state the Business to be transacted and Text of original request/proposal.

A poll demanded regarding the election of a Facilitator for the meeting by any member shall be taken forthwith.

### **5.1.2 Procedure at Plenaries or EGMs**

The Facilitator shall put any Motion to the meeting when proposed and seconded provided it has been received at least 10 days prior to the meeting. The facilitator shall decide when or at what point during the meeting the motion is to be taken. The decision taken by Facilitator shall be final and the Motion shall then be placed before the Meeting for decision by simple majority – a ballot or show of hands.

In the event of equality of Votes the Facilitator shall have a second or casting vote (should that person choose to use such a vote).

Where a Motion is not carried, the same Motion shall not be placed before the membership for a period of six (6) months.

### **5.1.3 Qualification of Voter**

An objection in relation to the qualification of any voter must be raised prior to voting. Any such objection made in due time shall be referred to Facilitator of the meeting whose decision shall be final and conclusive.

### **5.1.4 Record of Voting**

In the case of a ballot, a clear record of voting result shall be signed by Tellers and countersigned by Facilitator of the meeting.

### **5.1.5 Tellers**

Tellers, from staff of Dublin City Council, or other individuals considered reliable shall be appointed to the Plenary / EGM by the Secretariat

### **5.1.6 Adjournment of Meeting**

Where a proposal is made by a member to adjourn the meeting and such proposal is seconded then that proposal shall be taken forthwith without further debate and placed before the meeting for resolution by simple majority.

Where such a proposal is carried, the meeting shall by simple majority decide when (date /time/place) the meeting as adjourned is reconvened.

### **5.1.7 Suspension of Standing Orders**

Standing orders as regards any meeting may be suspended by simple majority of members present to address urgent item of business.

## **1. Secretariat**

- From the adoption of any new Constitution, the Secretariat shall consist of nine (9) members and
- A member may not serve on the Secretariat for more than two terms of three years and having so served shall not be entitled to offer themselves for Election for a further one (1) year. In total, a member shall not serve more than a total of nine (9) years;
- The quorum for Secretariat meetings shall be one third plus one (1) of the existing members;
- For membership of the Secretariat, an individual must be attached to and nominated by a PPN member organisation of a relevant electoral college/pillar. The Electorate for that position is comprised of the members of the Electoral College/Pillar;
- Secretariat shall meet at least nine (9) times per annum;
- Secretariat Members shall attend the two (2) Plenary Sessions in the year;
- Any Member elected to the Secretariat who fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the Secretariat without acceptable / provable reason or excuse shall automatically remove themselves from that position and the Vacancy arising shall be filled at the next plenary session;
- The Secretariat shall have authority to co-opt a member(s) on a consultative basis to temporarily fill vacancies until the following Plenary, arising from a member(s) being absent on – Leave of Absence, Study Leave, Maternity Leave, etc. limited to a maximum time of 6 months.

### **5.2.1 Emergency and Other Meetings of the Secretariat**

Emergency meetings of the Secretariat shall be held where not less than five (5) members of the Secretariat sign a request that the Secretariat be convened setting out clearly the reasons for such a meeting. Such a request shall be delivered / sent to the Facilitator responsible for the operation of Secretariat. On receipt of such request the Facilitator shall immediately arrange for the holding of the meeting within seven (7) days of the date of such receipt.

Other meetings of the Secretariat shall be held where the Facilitator is of the opinion that a situation has arisen for the holding of such a meeting.

### **5.2.2 Responsibilities of the Secretariat**

The Secretariat is the key day-to-day administrative body within the PPN Structure. It shall ensure the proper management of all PPN matters, including as follows:

- Ensure the proper functioning of the PPN between Plenary meetings and in accordance with the constitution;
- Manage the PPN budget including on-going financial matters and decisions;
- Ensure that PPN processes work, as far as possible / practicable, in accordance with this Constitution and in an efficient and effective manner;
- Monitor on an on-going basis the activities of the PPN network and taking remediate action should these activities become problematic as they arise in accordance with the Constitution, with reference to the Constitution, the common good and reputation of the PPN network as a whole;
- Monitor the correct functioning of Linkage groups;
- Manage the development and implementation of the PPN's strategic plan;
- Establish sub-groups to address in detail certain defined matters/issues that arise from time to time;
- Facilitate the implementation of decisions of the Plenary;
- Ensure appropriate administrative support is available for the efficient functioning of the PPN;
- Determine the time and place of AGM (Plenary) unless otherwise directed by Plenary;

- Cooperate with any National Advisory Body/Group established for Monitoring and Evaluation of PPNs;
- Agree an Annual Work Plan with the Local Authority namely:
  - Participation in Decision Making and Representation;
  - Capacity building;
  - Information Sharing and Communication;
  - Other activities as agreed.
- Engage with Dublin City Council Community Development Department regarding the Council's oversight responsibility;
- Appoint a Facilitator of Secretariat Meetings. As far as possible, the position of Facilitator should rotate regularly to ensure Secretariat members acquire relevant experience of this function. If however, a qualified majority (two thirds +1) of the Secretariat votes in favor a Facilitator for a number of months, then this is acceptable;
- Manage the work of the PPN manager and assist the secretary of the Secretariat who maintains the minutes, correspondence regarding all Secretariat meetings and Plenaries. The Secretariat appoints a Liaison person from their members who meets on a regular basis with the PPN Manager to ensure the efficient and effective running of the PPN.
- Review and approve the minutes of each previous meeting ;
- Any other additional tasks which the secretariat may consider appropriate and reasonable in the context of the evolving work of the PPN.

### **5.2.3 General Purposes Subcommittee**

Following the annual general meeting of the Plenary, the Secretariat shall elect a General Purposes Subcommittee from within its members consisting of three (3) representatives, one from each of the Collages / Pillars, to hear any appeal or complaint regarding processes and procedures of the PPN.

### **5.2.4 Role of the Secretariat Facilitator and Liaison Person**

The Liaison person meets regularly with the PPN Manager to ensure the effective and efficient running of the PPN between Secretariat meetings.

As Facilitator of the Secretariat, the Facilitator shall:



- Agree the framework/ environment with the Liaison Person and PPN manager (e.g. timeframe, location, facilities etc.) to allow for the efficient running of the Secretariat;
- Agree the agenda with the Liaison Person;
- Manage the progression of agenda items of each Secretariat meeting in terms of the items under discussion, the reaching of decisions and the time allocation;
- Review, agree and ensure the distribution in a timely fashion of draft minutes in conjunction with the minute taker;
- Ensure that approved minutes are available as appropriate to the relevant parties;
- The facilitator or liaison person normally acts as the primary representative of the PPN network to external bodies or in emergency situations. This role may be delegated in given circumstances;
- Sign off on official PPN correspondence;
- Facilitate the Plenary meeting.

If the Secretariat is dissatisfied with the conduct or performance of the Facilitator, or liaison person they may be voted out of their roles during the course of a scheduled Secretariat meeting, as per agenda item.

#### **5.2.4 Role of PPN Staff**

The PPN Staff consists of the PPN Manager and any other staff member as provided for by the Department of Rural and Community Development or Dublin City Council. The PPN manager and staff are the core members of the PPN and as such services the Secretariat. Under the direction of the Secretariat, the PPN Staff shall:

- Be employed by the Local Authority in accordance with Local Government requirements;
- Manage the Membership Database including annual re-registration of Groups/Organisations;
- Maintain accurate records of PPN Business including keeping minutes of meetings and associated correspondence;
- Prepare and circulate agendas for meetings of the Secretariat and Plenary;
- Verify nominees to ensure they meet the criteria and circulate to the Secretariat;
- Act as a point of contact on behalf of the PPN;

- Process all the correspondence of the PPN through distributing copies and drafting agreed responses;
- Support and monitor the work of Network Representatives;
- Communicate regularly with the PPN membership and disseminate information on PPN activities;
- Maintain records of the length of service of each of the nine (9) members of the Secretariat;
- Undertake any other tasks and responsibilities deemed both reasonable and appropriate by the secretariat in the context of the involving nature of the public participation network.

### 3. **Linkage Groups**

Linkage Groups are an essential component of the work of the PPN.

Linkage Groups operate under the auspices of the PPN Plenary, and report to the PPN Secretariat. Linkage Groups are independent networks of community groups that are interested in a common theme such as Arts, Community, Environment, Housing, Planning, Social Inclusion, Transport or Tourism (and more). There are two types of Linkage Groups: Linkage Groups which report to a specific SPC representative and Secretariat or Linkage groups commonly called Thematic groups which report to a number of SPC representatives and to the Secretariat, e.g., Disability group, Traveller group, New community group.

Linkage Groups bring together stakeholder organisations/Groups who are members of the PPN with a common interest to discuss their diverse views and interests in a specific policy area. This is a pathway for such organisations/groups to have a real input into policy in their respective area of operation.

### **3. Linkage Groups work to bring about change through their SPC representatives, the Secretariat and through engaging with Dublin City Council and other bodies appropriate to the issue or subject- matter of advocacy.**

#### **5.3.1 Aim**

The aim of the Linkage Group is to:

6. Act as the collective voice of community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion organisations as far as practicable in the relevant area;
7. As far as possible co-ordinate, enable and support the representation of the community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups in Dublin City on various public and private structures.
8. To give community organisations with similar interests the opportunity to meet/network, share ideas and issues and feed into policies that affect them.
  - Guide the work of the Linkage Group;
  - Be responsible for the functioning of their particular Linkage Group;

### 5.3.2 Membership

1. Organisations registered with the PPN are entitled to become a member of any Linkage Groups:
2. Linkage Group membership is open, by invitation or by request of the primary contact/voting member of any organization. Although Linkage Groups are open to all interested organisations, the Secretariat is aware that, in rare circumstances, a member group may not be a genuine stakeholder or may join for a purpose other than furthering the aim of the group. The Secretariat will keep a watching brief and will take remedial action if such a situation arises.

### 5.3.3 Current Linkage Groups

The Secretariat may decide to establish new Linkage Groups. Linkage Groups may also be established on an issue basis or as requested.

### 5.3.4 Role of Linkage Groups

1. Report on Linkage Group progress to the SPC representatives, Secretariat, Plenary, and to other interested parties when required;
2. Facilitate two-way feedback between PPN representatives and the linkage group;
3. Facilitate and enable organisations/groups to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the Local Government System so as not to reduce or homogenise this diversity;
4. Facilitate debate among common interest groups and develop positions on policies relevant to the work of Linkage group.

5. Operate as a reference group on all the issues relating to the group.

6. Facilitate engagement with relevant state agencies such as Dublin City Council, Irish Rail, the OPW, Dublin Bus, the HSE and other relevant Government Departments and bodies.

## **6. PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION**

All Community and Voluntary Sector Representatives on Decision and Policy Making Bodies of external agencies must come through the PPN Electoral Process.

As per guidelines from the Department of Rural and Community Development, the PPN is the “go to body for all Bodies who wish to benefit from the Community and Voluntary Sector experience and expertise”. The PPN shall actively seek compliance on this with relevant agencies and bodies.

A PPN Representative is any member of the PPN elected to office on behalf of the PPN, including but not limited to: the Secretariat, a Representative to an external Committee or any other PPN Representative role.

### **6.1 Principles Governing PPN Representation**

- All PPN representatives on Boards or Committees of Policy Making and Advisory Bodies of and for Dublin Council shall report to and take direction from the Secretariat and their respective Linkage Group;
- Representatives shall not exclusively promote their own interests or views or those of their own organization;
- Representation should be spread widely, as far as practicable, in terms of gender, geography, and type of organization;
- A member shall only represent the PPN on one (1) Board or Committee not including the Secretariat;
- A representative is elected for a fixed term of 3 years to represent the issues of PPN members on a Board or Committee;

## **6.2. Role of the PPN Representative**

- Attend and participate fully in Board or Committee meetings, including any subgroups to which they may be appointed;
- Bring forward the issues of the Secretariat / Linkage Group to the board for their consideration, including placing items on the Agenda; asking questions for reply and proposing motions;
- Work collaboratively with the Secretariat / Linkage Group to identify issues, research, policy proposals etc.;
- Communicate regularly with the Secretariat / Linkage Group on matters such as:
  - Dates of Board meetings;
  - Agendas for Board of meetings;
  - Reports and Feedback from Board meetings;
  - Items which require their input or are of interest.
- Network and work strategically with other Board members for the benefit of the Secretariat /Linkage Group and of PPN, including being able to compromise while retaining the core objective;
- Attend and participate fully in the Plenary and Representative Training.

## **6.3 Responsibilities of the PPN Representative**

- Assist in the organisation of and preparation of Linkage Group Meetings and effectively promote two-way communications with the Secretariat / Linkage Group members;
- Be able to use basic electronic communications effectively (i.e. email and internet browsing);
- Prepare thoroughly for, attend and participate actively in Linkage Group and Board or Committee;
- Participate in meetings solely on behalf of PPN, leaving any personal, business or political interests outside;
- Put forward opinions / views of Linkage Group to The Board or Committee and feedback clearly using plain English to the Linkage Group;
- Attend relevant training or networking events organised by PPN or the Committee;

- Be open and honest in dealings with all stakeholders;
- Build positive relationships with other committee members for the benefit of the PPN;
- Portray the PPN and the Linkage Group in a positive and constructive way.

#### **6.4. Rights of the PPN Representative**

- Have active engagement from the Secretariat, Linkage Group and Plenary, including timely responses to issues;
- Be heard and respected at Secretariat / Linkage Group and Board or Committee, with an appreciation that they are a volunteer;
- Be supported by Secretariat / Linkage Group and Board or Committee members, understanding that PPN is a new and evolving process;
- Have access to an agreed outcome statement from meetings which can be circulated afterwards;
- Receive relevant training to enable them to participate effectively on the Board or Committee;
- Receive expenses for attending Board or Committee meetings including any subgroups and relevant training;
- Receive an induction pack for the Board or Committee on taking up appointment to include:
  - Terms of reference;
  - Standing orders /procedures;
  - Meeting schedules, locations and times;
  - Contact details for all Board or Committee members;
  - Access to technical support where required.
- Receive as much notice as possible of meetings (dates and venues) and associated documentation (agenda and documents/reports to be read) in advance-as permitted by the relevant standing orders of the committee / board;
- Have meetings conducted in a way that facilitates participation, open discussion and transparent decision making.

#### **6.5. Vacancies**

Representatives are elected to 1) Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs); 2) Joint Policing Committee (JPC) and 3) the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), among others – on a three-year basis – in the event of vacancies arising. See Appendix 2 (page 36) for rights and responsibilities of a Board or Committee with PPN Representation.

In the event of a PPN vacancy occurring, an election shall be called by the Secretariat at the next Plenary.

### **6.5.1 Nominations**

There shall be a call for nominations with any eligibility criteria (as determined by the body requesting the representation) for PPN Members to put forward a candidate at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the elections.

The closing date for nomination shall be not less than seven (7) days prior to the date of the election. The nominating group must complete a nomination form which includes a short biography of the candidate.

### **6.5.2 Election**

Should there be an equal number of nominations for the positions available, then a vote shall not be necessary, and the candidates so nominated shall be declared elected.

Should the number of persons nominated exceed the number of vacancies/positions then an election shall take place.

Should an election take place, it shall take place in accordance with the election process in Appendix 3 (page 38).

For vacancies occurring on all Committees / Boards and the Secretariat, elections shall take place at the Plenary.

## **1. Removal of Representatives**

If a representative on any of the committees or boards fails or otherwise omits to:

- Undertake his/her role, as laid down by this Constitution, in an appropriate manner;
- Attend the relevant meetings without reasonable verifiable excuse/cause;
- Report back to the Secretariat / Linkage Group without reasonable cause;
- Represent the relevant Linkage Group members appropriately;
- Comply with any written instruction;

and where a Representative solely represents their own interests or views or those of their own organisation, that representative shall automatically and immediately be self-disqualifying themselves. They shall be immediately removed and notice served on Body or Committee of the details of the Replacement Representative.

Where a disqualified representative sits on more than one committee or board on behalf of the PPN (including the Secretariat), they shall be removed from all such roles.

### **6.6.1 Removal Appeals Process**

The representative in question may appeal the disqualification within seven (7) days beginning on the day on which notification of the disqualification is received by the Secretariat and may request a personal hearing.

The General Purposes Subcommittee shall convene within seven (7) working days beginning on the day of receipt of the appeal to consider the Appeal.

The General Purposes Sub-Committee shall process the appeal as efficiently and effectively as is possible to come to a decision within a reasonable period of time.

The Representative, if then not satisfied with the Sub-Committee's decision, may appeal to the Secretariat excluding those members who heard the appeal.

The Secretariat shall process the appeal as efficiently and effectively as possible to come to a decision within a reasonable period of time.

The Decision of the Secretariat is final and there is no appeal.

### **6.7 Complaints Procedure**

All complaints shall be in written form, addressed to the Facilitator of the Secretariat in the first instance, which shall immediately refer the matter to The General Purposes Sub-committee.

Any complaint shall set out clearly in a rational, logical and coherent manner the substance of the grievance and shall identify what process(s) and or procedure(s) are the subject of the complaint.

All complaints shall be signed both in original hand signature and block capitals or by another appropriate method which may better facilitate the person in question and is acceptable to the Secretariat, by the person(s) making the complaint.

The General Purposes Sub-committee shall convene within seven (7) working days beginning on the day of receipt of the complaint to consider the matter.



The General Purposes Sub-Committee shall process the complaint as efficiently and effectively as is possible to come to a decision within a reasonable period of time.

### **6.7.1 Complaints Appeals Process**

Where the person(s) who made the complaint is or are not satisfied with the decision of the General Purposes Sub-Committee, they may appeal within ten (10) working days to the Secretariat, excluding those members of the General Purposes Sub-Committee.

The Secretariat shall convene within seven (7) working days beginning on the day of receipt of the Appeal to consider the matter.

The Secretariat shall process the appeal as efficiently and effectively as is possible to come to a decision within a reasonable period of time.

The Decision of the Secretariat is final and there is no appeal.

## **7. Code of Conduct for PPN Representatives**

### **All members are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct**

All members of the PPN, in whatever capacity, shall always conduct themselves in a professional harmonious manner and in accordance with the values of the PPN and the provisions of this constitution and Code of Conduct adopted thereunder. See Appendix 4 for Code of Conduct (page 39).

### **7.1.1 Amendments to the Code of Conduct**

A proposal to amend the Code of Conduct may be made:

- A. By the Secretariat.
- B. By not less than 10% of representative members of organisations in good standing within 10 days of the date the Plenary AGM.

Amendments to the Code of Conduct may also be carried out through the process of an EGM.

The proposal shall be circulated to the membership and placed on the Agenda for the next Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Plenary convened for that purpose.

The amendment shall be effective forthwith if passed by simple majority of those present at the Annual General Meeting of the Plenary or Extraordinary General Meeting.

## **8. FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **8.1. Financial Records**

PPN Financial Records shall be in accordance with acceptable practices, in accordance with directions of funders or in compliance with accounting standards and processes.

A copy of the PPN Financial Statement approved by Secretariat shall be circulated to all members prior to AGM.

### **8.2. PPN Representative Expenses**

Expenses of PPN Representatives in the carrying out of their duties are covered as laid out in the PPN Expenses policy. See Appendix 5 (page 43).

## **9. SERVICE OF NOTICES**

A notice may be given to any member /group/organisation either through handing it to the member/named representative of group/organisation or by personal delivery or sending it by prepaid registered post or by electronic means to the registered address or email address of that member as per the records of the PPN.

The Failure of any Member to receive notice of meeting shall not invalidate the proceedings at or of the meeting.

## **10 AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

A proposal to amend the Constitution may be made:

- A. By the Secretariat.
- B. By not less than 10% of representative members of organisations in good standing within 10 days of the date the Plenary AGM.

The proposal shall be circulated to the membership and placed on the Agenda for the next Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Plenary convened for that purpose.

The amendment shall be effective forthwith if passed by simple majority of those present at the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Plenary

This Constitution was adapted at a Dublin City Public Participation Network Annual General Meeting of Plenary held on.....

Signed on behalf of Dublin Public Participation Network:

\_\_\_\_\_.

Facilitator

Date:

8.3.

## 9. Agenda

9.1. The Agenda shall be prepared by the Secretariat. The order of business shall be:

1. Welcome address by Facilitator;
2. Housekeeping Duties, Health and Safety;
3. Conflict of Interest declarations;
4. Adopting Plenary Standing Orders;
5. Approval of minutes of last Plenary and matters arising;
6. PPN Activity Report by Secretariat Member;
7. Finance/Budget Update;
8. Election to fill any vacancies arising on the Secretariat and Local Community Development Committee or JPC or other Committees;
9. Items and Motions submitted for decision and open discussion;
10. Workshop / Information Session / Guest Speaker as requested by previous Plenary and / or as organised by the Secretariat;
11. Date of Next Meeting.

11.2. Items that member organisations want included on the Agenda shall be presented to the Secretariat at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. Similar items shall be taken as a composite item or motion as directed by Secretariat.

11.3. The Plenary meeting shall be facilitated by a member/s of the Secretariat or as set out in the constitution.

## 5. Minutes of the Plenary

5.1. The minutes of the Plenary shall be taken by a member of the Secretariat or Dublin City PPN Staff.

5.2.The minutes shall include a record of those attending, actions arising, and decisions made.

## **Appendix 2: Rights and Responsibilities of a Board/Committee with PPN Representation**

The way in which the Committee conducts its business has a huge impact on the effectiveness of PPN representation. An overformal and rigid process can make participation difficult. An open facilitative style can make it easy for all members to participate and contribute. The following rights and responsibilities are generally within the remit of the Chair or Chief Officer (or equivalent). The majority are likely to be already in place.

While the PPN advocates for the following, it acknowledges that it has limited control in its implementation.

### **Responsibilities of the Board or Committee are to:**

- Have and communicate clear terms of reference and procedures / standing orders and a vision for the Board or Committee;
- Hold regular meetings at times, dates and locations that facilitate the participation of volunteers. Ideally these dates should be set annually;
- Hold an induction meeting and have an induction pack for new members to explain the processes and procedures of the Board or Committee;
- Give one month's notice of meetings and to circulate the agenda and any documentation for reading at absolute minimum one week in advance. This is to facilitate PPN members to consult with their Linkage Group before the meeting and to ensure that members have adequate information with which to make comments and decisions;
- Chair the meeting in an open and transparent way as to enable and value the contribution of all members and foster a culture of active listening. This should include giving enough time for discussion and deliberation of items, and if required setting up subgroups to bring recommendations to the main Board or Committee. Decisions should be made in an open and transparent way;
- Ensure that any conflicts of interest are clearly stated and dealt with appropriately;
- Offer relevant training to all members and provide support to members in interpreting technical documents;
- Review the workings of the Board or Committee on a regular basis and to take on board any recommendations.

- **Where possible :**

The Board / Committee shall

- Set the agenda in consultation with members and to enable members to put items on the agenda;
- Pay travel and other expenses to members;
- Include all points of discussion within the minutes, and not to dismiss those which may be considered “only relevant to a few”.

### **Rights of the Board or Committee**

PPN Representatives shall:

- Attend meetings;
- Prepare thoroughly for meetings, and be able to contribute fully;
- Feed back to the Secretariat / PPN Linkage Groups and take direction from them;
- Take a full part in the workings of the Board or Committee including participation in sub-groups, consultations, etc.;
- Be open and honest in their dealings with the Board or Committee, declaring any conflicts of interest.

## **Appendix 3: Electoral Process**

In the election process a candidate with the highest vote will be deemed elected. This is commonly referred to as the first past the post system. If the number of candidates correspond to the number of posts available then no election is needed. If there is more than one post on offer then the candidates with the highest number of votes respectively are deemed elected.

- All Elections shall be by secret ballot;
  - Verification of Nominees to ensure they meet the criteria;
  - Circulation of details of Nominees to Dublin City PPN to consider them prior to the Election
- Each Group / Organisation shall be entitled to one (1) vote and an individual shall only vote on behalf of the group.
- The Candidates receiving the highest number of votes are elected.
- In the event of a “tie” then a draw by “lot” takes place *(Note: Where the process by deciding by “lot” (Lottery) occurs, those responsible must first decide which Candidate shall be declared elected following such process. Is it the Candidate first drawn out of the “hat” (traditional expression) or the Candidate remaining in the “hat”?)*.
- Records of each Election will be maintained including details of each Count.



## **Appendix 4: Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct sets out to create an harmonious positive environment within the PPN and all members are expected to abide by it.

This Code of Conduct details what each PPN Member shall commit to;

All Members have a duty of care and responsibility to act in the best interests of the PPN, complying with this Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Constitution.

### **1. Organisational Values**

All Members commit to and promise to comply with the fundamental values that underpin all the activities of PPN.

### **2. Accountability**

As a member everything you do and every interaction you are involved in shall be able to stand the test of scrutiny by members of the public, the media, members, beneficiaries, stakeholders and the regulatory authorities.

### **3. Integrity and Honesty**

These shall be the hallmarks of all conduct within and on behalf of the PPN particularly when dealing with fellow members and colleagues and external individuals and agencies.

### **4. Transparency**

Members shall promote an atmosphere of openness throughout the PPN in order to promote confidence to members of the public, Local Authority Elected Members, JPC and staff, beneficiaries and regulators and to promote strategic and operational effectiveness. This without prejudice to the confidentiality which applies to sensitive matters.

### **5. Governance**

Members shall always support the ethos values of PPN and ensure compliance with good Governance and shall: -

- Commit to supporting and advocating compliance with good Governance for the Community and Voluntary Sector and the myriad of groups and organisations within the sector;
- Participate in appropriate induction, training and development programs;
- Support the PPN Secretariat and staff in their responsibility for the governance of the PPN along with the facilitator in their role of service to the PPN.

## **6. Conflicts of Interest**

Members shall always:

- Declare any 'Conflict of Interest' or any such circumstance as may be viewed by others as conflicting as soon as it arises;
- Work with the Secretariat to agree with any requirements regarding potential conflicts of interest.

## **7. Guardian of the PPN'S reputation**

Members shall:

- Not speak to the media or any public forum when speaking as a representative of the PPN on behalf of the Public Participation Network without the prior knowledge and approval of the Secretariat;
- Respect individual confidentiality.

## **8. Personal Gain**

Members shall:

- Not personally gain from their role as a member nor permit others to do so as a result of actions or negligence;
- Document expenses and seek reimbursement according to agreed procedure;
- Not accept gifts or hospitality without the consent of the Secretariat;
- Use PPN resources responsibly and only when authorised in accordance with procedure.

## **9. In addition to the foregoing Members shall:**

;

- Support the PPN'S vision, values, principles and aims
- Act ethically and legally;
- Adhere to the PPN'S constitution;

## **10. Secretariat**

Members of the Secretariat shall:

- Embody the principles of good governance and proper procedure in all actions and live up to the trust placed on them by their election to the Secretariat.
- Comply and abide by the PPN governance procedures and practice.

- Commit to attend all Secretariat Meetings, and in the event of unavoidable absence, shall comply with provisions of the Constitution.
- Strive to be familiar with all agenda items received by them and be prepared to contribute to discussion and decision making at meetings.
- Respect the authority of the Facilitator.
- Maintain a respectful attitude to the opinions of others.
- Understand that decisions will ideally be made by consensus but may be by vote and shall consider any majority vote as a corporate decision and will accept and support it.
- Maintain confidentiality as it applies to sensitive matters unless authorised to speak on such matters outside Secretariat meetings.

**12. Leaving the Secretariat or Representative Role**

Members shall:

- Understand that any breach of this code may result in removal from the PPN or any of its constituent parts;
- Inform the Facilitator of the Secretariat in writing, stating reasons for resigning from the Secretariat or representative role;
- Participate in an exit interview if requested.

**13. This Code of Conduct was adopted at the Annual General Meeting of the PPN held on: \_\_\_\_\_.**

**14. Signed on behalf of Dublin City Public Participation Network:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facilitator**

**15. Signed by Representative / Secretariat Member / Facilitator:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**16. Name of Committee / Board:** \_\_\_\_\_

