

LIMERICK PPN POLICY AND PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

“The Voice of Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion Groups in Limerick”



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Constitution

Limerick Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in 2015 as the representative voice for all Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion groups in Limerick City and County.

The Public Participation Network will identify the issues that matter and try to influence policy in a way that improves the quality of life and opportunities for people within the city and county.

Membership of the Public Participation Network is open to all community and voluntary groups, clubs and organisations in Limerick, working on a voluntary, co-operative or not-for-profit basis for the benefit of the community.

The Public Participation Network is overseen by a Secretariat of up to 10 members elected by the members of the network.

The Public Participation Network elects representatives to committees and organisations to speak on behalf of all members of the PPN.

The Public Participation Network is the main link through which Limerick City and County Council and other decision-making bodies in the county, connect with the community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion sectors.

Limerick Public Participation Network is committed to working in an open, inclusive and transparent manner on behalf of all members.

Limerick Public Participation Network

1 NAME

The name of the organisation is Limerick Public Participation Network (PPN).

2 MISSION STATEMENT

Limerick Public Participation Network is the collective voice for all community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion organisations in Limerick City and County, its purpose is to improve people's well-being by involving the community in local decision-making.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF LIMERICK PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

The aims and objectives are as follows:

1. To provide an open, inclusive and transparent representative structure for all community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups in Limerick;
2. To consult with the community so as to encourage and enable public participation in local decision-making and planning of services;
3. To facilitate the selection of community representatives onto decision-making bodies and to support those representatives to be effective in their roles;
4. To foster, in particular, the inclusion and empowerment of groups and organisations with a focus on tackling disadvantage and social exclusion including rural isolation;
5. To support the member groups of Limerick Public Participation Network so that: they can develop their capacity to do their work more effectively; they can participate effectively in PPN activities; they are included and their voices and concerns are heard;
6. To support a process that will feed a broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals from PPN member groups into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers;
7. To facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and efficient information exchange between environmental, community and voluntary and social inclusion groups and between these groups and Limerick City and County Council and other decision-making bodies;
8. To ensure that the views expressed by PPN representatives are mandated by Limerick Participation Network member organisations;
9. To promote and make known Limerick Public Participation Network and its aims and objectives, particularly to potential members;
10. To develop and promote the Public Participation Network so that the work of the PPN is clearly recognised, acknowledged and understood by local decision-making bodies and the PPN has a strong community voice within the city and county;
11. To contribute to Limerick City and County Council's development and to the achievement of a Limerick Vision for the well-being of this and future generations.

4. PRINCIPLES OF LIMERICK PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

Limerick Public Participation Network and its member organisations are committed to the following principles and practices:

- 4.1 Working with a community development approach to address issues of all our member groups and issues of social exclusion;
- 4.2 Maintaining open, inclusive and transparent organisational structures;
- 4.3 Being accountable to the members;
- 4.4 Acting as a vehicle to gather feedback and input into policies reflecting the diversity and range of views of members;
- 4.5 Implementing and abiding by best practice governance structures;
- 4.6 Working in a collective and supportive manner with all members.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF LIMERICK PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

Limerick Public Participation Network is made up of member groups and associate member groups. Membership of Limerick Public Participation Network is open to any community and voluntary group or club, environmental group and any organisation addressing issues of social exclusion, working on a voluntary, co-operative or not-for-profit basis for the benefit of the community within Limerick City and County, subject to the conditions set out in the membership policy:

The following are not eligible for membership of Limerick Public Participation Network:

- State or semi-state bodies;
- Local development agencies;
- Elected representatives, people who have declared to run for elected office, or those who have served as councillors, TDs, senators or MEPs within the previous two years;
- Groups who have representation through other pillars of social partnership e.g. trade unions, farming and business organisations.

Further information is available within the membership policy.

6. PLENARY MEETINGS

The Secretariat of Limerick Public Participation Network will call at least two Plenary Meetings, open to all members, each year. This should be not later than 15 months from the preceding Plenary. The Plenary is the main decision-making body of the Public Participation Network.

- 6.1 Member Organisations must be given at least 21 days' notice of a Plenary Meeting.
- 6.2 Notice of a Plenary Meeting should include details of any elections that will be taking place.

- 6.3 The quorum for a Plenary Meeting shall be 10% of the total number of member organisations. Up to 4 Secretariat members can count towards the quorum.
- 6.4 An Extraordinary Plenary Meeting (EPM) may be called at the request of the Secretariat, the majority of elected Secretariat members or by notice in writing from 10 Member Organisations. At least 14 days' notice shall be given of an Extraordinary Plenary and the notice must contain a specification of the business to be discussed at the meeting.
- 6.5 As the Public Participation Network develops, Plenary meetings may be arranged at a Municipal District level. The notice period for a Municipal District Plenary shall be the same, however the quorum shall be 6 (i.e. a minimum of 6 persons representing 6 separate Member Organisations).
- 6.6 Each organisation represented at Plenary will be entitled to one vote on any issue being decided at Plenary.
- 6.7 Each individual at Plenary will only be entitled to represent one organisation, (if an attendee is a member of more than one organisation they must select one to represent and will only be able to vote on behalf of the selected organisation).
- 6.8 Plenary meetings may not direct the Secretariat or Coordinator to implement a decision which is in breach of any legislation.

7. SECRETARIAT

Limerick Public Participation Network will be overseen by a Secretariat of up to 10 members elected by member organisations at a Plenary meeting. The Secretariat is a flat structure (i.e. there are no elected officers). A facilitator will chair the meetings and the facilitator will be selected on a rotational basis every three months.

The Secretariat will be guided in their duties by the Secretariat Terms of Reference.

As Limerick PPN develops it may establish a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Board of Directors will be made up from the Secretariat. If a Secretariat member chooses not to be a Director a replacement will be selected using an election process organised in the same manner as a Secretariat election.

8. REPRESENTATIVES - CRITERIA AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Limerick Public Participation Network elects representatives to sit on committees and organisations on behalf of all members of the network. To be eligible for election as a representative of Limerick Public Participation Network a person must be:

- 8.1 An active member of a Limerick Public Participation Network Member Organisation;

- 8.2 Nominated by their Member Organisation;
- 8.3 Committed to the aims, objectives and principles of Limerick Public Participation Network;
- 8.4 Willing and able to attend meetings of the relevant body that he/she is to sit on;
- 8.5 Willing to be representative of all member organisations of Limerick Public Participation Network, effectively acting in the interest of the PPN as a whole;
- 8.6 Willing to uphold, support and defend the policies, decisions and position of Limerick Public Participation Network;
- 8.7 Able to articulate, discuss, debate and negotiate on behalf of Limerick Public Participation Network;
- 8.8 Readily contactable by other member organisations.

Representatives of Limerick Public Participation Network will seek to:

- 8.9 Promote understanding of the issues and difficulties facing the community sector;
- 8.10 Present the views and policies of Limerick Public Participation Network to the meeting and ensure that they are taken into account in the decision-making process;
- 8.11 Bring issues of relevance to the community sector back to Limerick Public Participation Network for the information of all;
- 8.12 Advise Limerick Public Participation Network of issues which require a response, formulation of policy or other action;
- 8.13 Receive instruction from Limerick Public Participation Network (through a Linkage Group, Plenary meetings, or the Secretariat) as to how the PPN should be represented;
- 8.14 Attend relevant Linkage Group meetings and joint meetings between the Secretariat and PPN representatives;

91. ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS AND VOTING

The election process is set out within the Limerick Public Participation Network Policies and Procedures documents.

10.FINANCES

The Limerick Public Participation Network has a Financial Policy and Procedure document in place.

11. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

- 11.1 Any Member Organisation may put forward a motion to amend the Constitution.
- 11.2 Motions to amend the Constitution must be made in writing to the Secretariat 14 days in advance of a Plenary Meeting.

11.3 Member Organisations must be informed of any motions to amend the Constitution at least 7 days in advance of a Plenary.

11.4 Motions to amend the Constitution must be discussed at a Plenary Meeting and shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote; This does not eliminate the need for a quorum at the Plenary meeting,

11.5 The Secretariat will ensure that a formal review of the Limerick Public Participation Network Constitution will take place at least every 3 years.

Membership Policy

To qualify for membership of Limerick PPN your group/organisation must:

Be active in Limerick City and / or County;

Have more than five (5) members;

Be non-party political and non-sectarian;

Be a minimum of six months in existence;

If a company limited by guarantee, the organisation must be not for profit.

If requested, be able to establish your bona fides as a community or voluntary group /organisation (for example, does your group/organisation have a set of rules, a constitution or terms of reference. If not, maybe you have minutes of meetings, a website or a brochure / leaflet about your group/organisation)

Groups/organisations registering under the Environment Sector must be validated by the Environmental Pillar at a national level. (In general Tidy Town Committees are not regarded as eligible to join the Environment Sector and should join the Community & Voluntary Sector instead)

Please note groups formed around specific local issues are not eligible for PPN membership, for example, groups formed around opposition to a particular local planning application. In the event of a dispute regarding eligibility, the PPN Secretariat will determine eligibility for membership.

Individuals represent their member organisations in all of their interactions within the PPN.

Member organisations / groups agree to attend at least one Plenary per year. Non-attendance may result in membership being revoked. The decision to revoke membership based on non-attendance will be made by the member organisations in attendance at the first Plenary of each year and will be based on attendance at the previous year's Plenary meetings. This rule comes into effect from the first Plenary of 2018.

By virtue of being a member of the Limerick PPN your organisation, and individual representatives, agree to be bound by these policies and procedures.

Membership is renewable on an annual basis.

By virtue of being a member of the Limerick PPN your group and individual members agree to be bound by decisions made by the PPN using a majority vote.

In circumstances where an individual, or group, is in breach of these policies and procedures the following steps may be taken by the Secretariat;

- Meet with the individual or group concerned and explain what actions are believed to be in contravention with the policies and procedures;
- Request that the actions cease and if necessary provide alternative actions;
- If the individual or group continue to breach the policies and procedures the Secretariat will issue a formal request for the actions to cease in writing;
- If the formal request does not result in the actions ceasing the Secretariat may decide to bring the issue to the next Plenary with the proposal that membership be revoked.

Individuals and organisations will be provided with a fair hearing through all of the above stages and may ask for another member to attend any meetings as a support. If the individual or group concerned do not agree with the actions of the Secretariat in addressing breaches of policies and procedures or in fact believe no breach occurred, they may appeal the Secretariat action at the next plenary meeting.

If a resolution cannot be found to the satisfaction of all concerned an appeal panel, consisting of external individuals may be used to determine the final outcome.

Policy on The Selection, Appointment, Induction and Monitoring of Reps Election Process for SPC's

Stage One: Nominations

- Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) will notify the Secretariat of the PPN of the fact that they are seeking representation on a specific committee(s) and the numbers of representatives required including any specific criteria attached.
- The Secretariat will issue to all PPN member organisations:
- A list of sectoral committee spaces requiring PPN representatives, including criteria associated with this/these positions.
- A Secretariat member may hold one council committee or SPC seat only.
- Priority will be given to nominations that will not lead to a dual role.
- All relevant forms and procedures will be posted on the PPN web pages with a link provided to all PPN member groups and organisations via email.
- The PPN Project Coordinator will oversee the nomination and election process.
- The Project Coordinator will check the validity of nominations received. Only the names of those validly nominated will appear on ballot papers. All member organisations registered with the PPN can nominate but only organisations registered before the date specified at each election / nomination process can vote.
- A list of all valid candidates and candidate information will be circulated to all the members of the PPN prior to the election taking place. The election process may

take place at a Plenary meeting or by any other method deemed acceptable by the Secretariat.

- A meeting will be called for the establishment of linkage group.

Stage 2: The Election

Formation of Linkage Groups

- Dates for linkage group meetings and elections will be circulated to all members of the PPN. Voting will take place on a designated date and time, by a method deemed acceptable by the Secretariat. Voting will be by way of private ballot.
- All members of the PPN will be invited to elect a member onto specific committees. Members need to be present on the date to have a vote.
- Each candidate will be given the opportunity to address the relevant linkage group for two minutes on their suitability for election prior to the election process.
- Each member organisation who registered to nominate and vote will be issued with one vote.
- Votes will be counted by the Coordinator and supervised by the Secretariat and if required a member of the relevant linkage group.
- In the event where two nominees have the same number of votes, a re-vote will take place.
- A sector may be represented on more than one SPC, however regard should be had, to ensure that each sector has a minimum representation of one person across a range of SPCs.

Criteria to guide choosing of PPN representatives to any bodies:

Representing the PPN on the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) is an important task. It is the task of the SPC's, as committees of the council, to advise and assist the council in its work. The SPC system is intended to give councillors and sectoral interests an opportunity for full involvement in the policymaking process from the early stages. Therefore, if the SPC system operates satisfactorily, much of the preliminary and background work, discussion and recommendation should be completed at SPC level for final consideration and ratification by the council.

In order to ensure that representation is informed and based on knowledge of the policy area and on commitment to the PPN, the following criteria for PPN representation will apply:

- An awareness of general policy in the area you are seeking to represent on
- The ability of the nominee to effectively represent the views of the entire PPN linkage group. They are not representing their own organisation.
- A knowledge of the relevant areas and plenary decisions and a commitment to policy development where necessary.
- A commitment to attending all meetings of the SPC
- Support new representatives should the need arise
- A commitment to convene, attend and report back to the linkage group relevant to the committee you are sitting on

- A commitment to issuing a report on each meeting for publication by the PPN Resource Worker
- It is desirable that sectoral nominees would retain membership of the SPC for the life of the Council.
- It is open to each nominating sector to deselect its nominee, if felt necessary, and to notify the Council accordingly whereupon the person would cease to be a member. In such cases the relevant sector will nominate a new representative

In addition to the above, the following generic requirements must be met:

- Elected representatives of Local Authorities cannot be nominated through this process.
- If anyone nominated through this process subsequently decides to enter electoral politics he/she must immediately resign their PPN representative role and the relevant nominating PPN Pillar or Linkage Group will choose a replacement.
- A person who has been an elected representative of any level of Government (local or national) should not be chosen to represent PPN in any representative role for one year after completing their term of office.
- All PPN representatives must meet the criteria laid down by the member organisations that they represent on the PPN.

Specifically the role of the representative is to:

- Bring issues of relevance from the linkage group that chose them to the policy making arena.
- Give feedback to their Linkage Group, Electoral Pillar and/or Plenary as appropriate on the outcomes of the policy meetings and the issues being raised.

Asset Register & Management Policy

Purpose

The objective of this policy is to maintain appropriate protection of organisational assets, and to avoid breaches of any criminal and civil law, statutory, regulatory or contractual obligations. This Policy provides a focus on the issues relating to the management of Limerick PPN's assets.

Scope

This policy covers the following elements:

Physical Assets

End user devices: Desktop personal computers, laptops etc

Other portable computing devices including PDAs and smartphones.

Software Assets

Software is included where it is installed on infrastructure components and is (or may be) separately licensed. This includes, but is not limited to, operating systems, middleware, database and application software.

Information Assets

Limerick PPN's information assets include data such as Member Organisation's data, employee data, financial data, and research data which are important to the PPN's daily and long term operation.

Asset Registers will be maintained locally by the PPN Project Coordinator.

All assets have a defined asset custodian. The custodian has overall responsibility for the integrity, availability and protection of the asset.

Limerick PPN retains overall responsibility and ownership for all assets, but individuals, are tasked as custodians, with creating and maintaining these assets.

Custodians of ICT assets are responsible for the protection, integrity and availability of those assets and for putting the appropriate controls and procedures in place.

Disposals and Recycling

All data and configuration setting (including User Ids and passwords) must be permanently deleted prior to disposal.

Computer Equipment must be disposed of in a safe and environmentally friendly manner, in accordance with local legal requirements (including copyright principles and licence terms). Purchasing documentation (including executed contracts) relating to software must be filed and retained in perpetuity to provide a historical record and evidence of prior licensing arrangements, including evidence of entitlement to current versions of software based on an upgrade path.

Software licence certificates must be retained in a secure environment with limited and managed access controls.

Outsourcing and Third Parties

Controls must be in place to ensure that the third party outsourcer complies with Limerick PPN's asset management policies. Controls must be in place to ensure that third parties, outsourcers and service providers do not put Limerick PPN at risk by not providing sufficient licence rights for software used by PPN staff and representatives.

Controls must be in place to ensure that third parties, outsourcers and service providers comply with the restrictions and requirements set out in Limerick PPN licence agreements where applicable.

On termination of an outsourcing or services agreement, Limerick PPN must provide for sufficient licence rights to continue using computer software previously provided by the outsourcer.

Controls and reporting processes must be in place to verify the efficient use of assets employed in the delivery of services to Limerick PPN to ensure that Limerick PPN's investment is maximised.

Asset Register

All assets covered under the scope above (owned and leased), excluding end user devices, must be captured on the appropriate Security Asset Register.

All such assets must have an identified custodian, captured in the asset register, and be tracked throughout its lifecycle.

Periodic checks of the hardware and software installed may take place to ensure that the asset register is an accurate reflection of the physical installations.

Assets owned by the PPN may only be disposed of with the agreement of the Secretariat.

When such assets are disposed of, the Security Asset Register must be updated to show that IT equipment / hardware has been decommissioned and the method of its disposal (the asset must not simply be deleted from the register).

Document Change Management

Limerick PPN believes that it is important to keep this Asset Management Policy current in order to ensure that it addresses security issues accurately and is up-to-date with evolving business issues and technologies.

This policy is a living document that will be reviewed annually and/or updated as needed.

Secretariat Terms of Reference

Background & Overview of the PPN:

The origins of the PPN are in the Working Group on Citizen Engagement, established in 2013. The role of that Group was to make recommendations on more extensive and diverse input by citizens into decision making at local government level. Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 gives legal effect to the Framework for Public Participation;

“for the purposes of promoting, developing and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to participation in decision making processes of the local authority by the local community”.

The PPN is the main link through which Limerick City & County Council connects with the community & voluntary, social inclusion & environmental sectors, without prejudice to other consultation processes.

The aim of the PPN is to facilitate and enable member organisations to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system. A parallel and equally important aim is to facilitate the Council in making better and more timely decisions.

The role of the PPN is:

- To contribute to the Council’s development plans and develop a vision for the well-being of present and future generations.
- To facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and the sharing of information between the Council and the community & voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors, as well as other agencies/organisations.
- To identify issues of collective concern and work to influence local policy relating to these issues.
- To actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of disadvantage, discrimination & inequality, and to enable their participation at local level.
- To facilitate the selection of representatives from the community & voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors onto Council policy-making bodies
- To feed a broad range of ideas, experiences, suggestions and proposals of the PPN into policies and plans being developed by policy makers in areas of interest and relevance to the PPN.

1. Structure of the Secretariat

1.1 There are up to 10 members elected to the Limerick PPN Secretariat, comprising:

- 1 representative from each of the 4 Municipal Districts.
- 2 representatives from each of the 3 Electoral Colleges.

1.2 All members on the Secretariat have equal status.

1.3 There is no Chairperson or Secretary of the Secretariat. Instead, a Facilitator is appointed for the purpose of conducting meetings, and to facilitate communication with the Resource Worker.

1.4 The role of the facilitator will be rotated between Secretariat members on a quarterly basis in alphabetical order.

1.5 A Secretariat member may hold one seat on a council committee or SPC.

2. Role of the Secretariat:

The role of the Secretariat is to:

- a) Facilitate the implementation of decisions of the PPN.
- b) Ensure the proper functioning of the PPN and co-ordinate its activities.
- c) Communicate extensively and regularly with all PPN members and disseminate information concerning PPN activities as widely as possible.

- d) Work closely with the Project Coordinator to support him/her to deliver PPN objectives. The Secretariat will guide the project Coordinator and work in partnership to deliver the aims and objectives of the PPN. While the Project Coordinator reports to the Secretariat it is important that the Secretariat remain cognisant that the Project Coordinator is employed on behalf of the whole PPN.
- e) Ensure that PPN representatives represent the views, interests and priorities of their Linkage Group/Municipal District/Electoral College and not those of their own group/organisation.
- f) The Secretariat members represent the best interest of the PPN in all Secretariat decisions and interactions and not the member organisation they were nominated from. They may represent their member organisation at Plenary meetings but not at Secretariat meetings.
- g) The Secretariat, by virtue of being elected, have been granted the authorisation to make decisions as required to facilitate the running of the PPN organisation. This may include decisions being made between Plenary meetings if required.
- h) The Secretariat will only make decisions that it feels are for the benefit of the PPN as a whole and its future development and sustainability.
- i) Ensure that the PPN's activities are based on a commitment to the following principles:
 - Empowerment: increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities.
 - Participation: supporting people to take part in decision making.
 - Inclusion, Equality of Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination: recognising that some people may need additional support to overcome barriers they face.
 - Self-determination: supporting the right of people to make their own choices.
 - Partnership: recognising that many agencies contribute to the development of communities

3. Role of the Facilitator

3.1 The role of the Facilitator is to:

- act as the point of contact for the Secretariat. The Facilitator can be contacted via email. All other Secretariat members must be included in emails.
- actively chair meetings.
- on urgent matters, act as the key point of contact for Project Coordinator.

3.2 The Facilitator role rotates quarterly, in line with annual quarters, as agreed in 1.4 above.

3.3 The Facilitator is not the sole / main representative Secretariat, as all Secretariat members have equal representative status

4. Meeting Agenda

- 4.1 For all meetings, the Project Coordinator invites agenda items from Secretariat members and PPN member organisations at least 7 working days before Secretariat meetings.
- 4.2 The Project Coordinator and Facilitator agree the final agenda at least 3 days in advance of meetings.
- 4.3 The agenda and minutes are distributed by the Project Coordinator at least 3 days before meetings.
- 4.4 Agenda items are:
 - for information
 - for discussion
 - for decision /ratification
- 4.5 The standard Secretariat agenda is:
 - Apologies
 - Minutes and Matters Arising
 - Correspondence
 - Reports and Updates
 - Finance and Budget Update
 - AOB

5. Minutes

- 5.1 Minutes are taken by the Project Coordinator, or by a nominated Secretariat member on a rotating basis.
- 5.2 Minutes are proposed and seconded at meetings and signed by the Facilitator.
- 5.3 Minutes reflect decisions taken and actions agreed, together with a brief synopsis of the meeting discussion.
- 5.4 Minutes are published on the PPN website within 10 days of being adopted by the Secretariat using a standard template.

6. Meetings

6.1 Location and Timing

- a) In the interest of cost savings, meetings are held in the PPN office, where possible.
- b) Other meetings will be held in community facilities across the City & County.
- c) Generally, Secretariat meetings will be held in late afternoons or evenings to accommodate participation by all members.

6.2 Meeting Refreshments

- a) Tea/coffee/biscuits are provided at meetings, except where meetings are held at mealtimes, when light refreshments will be provided.
- b) The provision of refreshments has regard to dietary requirements and budgetary restrictions.

6.4 Frequency of Meetings

- a) Meeting are held as required to meet the programme of work.

6.5 Meeting Attendance

- a) If a member misses three or more consecutive meetings, and/or attends less than two-thirds of meetings annually, he/she will be asked to step down from the Secretariat.

6.6 Quorum

- a) A Secretariat meeting is deemed to have a quorum when attendance of Secretariat members includes one-half plus one of the filled seats. This quorum will be rounded down to the nearest whole number.
- b) Proxy voting at Secretariat meetings is not acceptable. Members must attend the meeting if they would like to vote on an issue being discussed. This does not remove the Secretariat's ability to make decisions between meetings via email if required and in order to reduce the burden of additional meetings.

7. Decision-making

7.1 The ruling body of the PPN is the Plenary. As such, the Secretariat's decision-making functions relate to operational, administrative and procedural matters. In this regard, the following will apply:

- a) Decisions will be made by consensus where possible, or otherwise by majority vote.
- b) The Facilitator does not have a casting vote.
- c) The Secretariat may be required to make decisions between plenaries or of an operational nature. These may be made via email communication to reduce the burden of additional meetings. If the Secretariat feel it is necessary to make a decision between Plenary meetings they will provide a background and analysis of that decision at the next available Plenary.
- d) The PPN will embrace technology in order to ensure as high a participation from members as possible. This may include virtual attendance at meetings via video conferencing.

7.2 The Secretariat will facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the Plenary in relation to strategic, policy and budgetary matters.

8. Membership

8.1 Term

- a) The term of the Secretariat members coincides with the term of the Council.
- b) A Secretariat member can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- c) A Secretariat member who has served two terms cannot serve a third consecutive term.

- d) An outgoing Secretariat member can serve a third time after first taking a one term break.

To allow for continuity it is recommended that a minimum of one quarter of sitting Secretariat members are nominated for election at the end of each term. This should only be facilitated if in doing so does not result in any member holding a term longer than above outlined.

8.2 Resignation

- Resignations must be in writing (by letter or email).

8.3 Refilling of Seats

- Vacant seats will be filled, within 3 months, by election from relevant Sector/Municipal District.
- Where possible, exit interviews will be carried out with the member vacating the seat.

8.4 Gender

- There is a commitment to equality, non-discrimination and strive for gender balance in terms of Secretariat membership.

8.5 Code of Conduct

- Members are required to comply with the PPN Code of Conduct.
- If a member brings the Secretariat or the PPN into disrepute or undermines it, a process will be put in place to address the issue in line with the PPN's agreed disciplinary procedures.
- All members of the PPN are expected to act in accordance with the ethos and spirit of the PPN. Any failure to do so may result in the member being asked to step down from the Secretariat.
- Secretariat members are required to work in the best interest of Limerick PPN, rather than in the interest of their Municipal District, Sector or Nominating Body

Communications Policy

Internal Communications Policy

Purpose: This policy relates to communication within Limerick PPN

Scope: PPN membership groups, PPN staff

Policy and Procedures:

- All members of the PPN are encouraged to communicate with other members of the PPN, through the PPN Project Coordinator and plenary meetings.

- Groups can use the PPN social media platforms to publicise their information to support their position as influencers of public policy, information can be submitted to these platforms through the PPN Project Coordinator via the official email address.
- The PPN Project Coordinator will manage the PPN Social Media platforms. Member organisations can share their news on these platforms by submitting to the PPN Project Coordinator through the official PPN email address.
- Linkage Group and Electoral College representatives and members should be guided by the representatives' charter in how they communicate with each other.
- While the PPN encourages the use of online communication, the Secretariat and all members should make specific efforts to communicate with members who are not online (including the provision of training to support online communication)
- In all communications members should not disclose any personal or confidential information or information that could be considered inappropriate, offensive or defamatory.
- Email addresses and contact details of PPN members should not be shared by any member with people outside of the PPN.
- In order to comply with Data Protection legislation the Project Coordinator will blind copy members email addresses when sending bulk emails. Please see the Data Protection policy for further information and the Data Protection website for legislative details.
- Internal communications are not to be shared with external agencies.
- Members are reminded to be mindful of the tone and content of their communications and to be cognisant of the potential legal ramifications of any content.
- The PPN will not stand over an email sent by an individual member if that email content is not in line with policies and procedures.
- Members partaking in actions that have a detrimental effect on the identity of the PPN may be asked to forfeit their membership in line with the Membership policy.

External Communications Policy

Purpose: This policy relates to communication between Limerick PPN and other bodies

Scope: PPN membership groups, PPN staff

Policy and Procedures:

- All structures within the PPN are encouraged to use channels open to them to communicate their message to the public.
- When speaking as members of the PPN, all communication should go first to the Secretariat or linkage groups, through the PPN Project Coordinator, for approval, to maintain the public identity of the organisation.
- If required, press releases are to be organised through the PPN Project Coordinator on behalf of the PPN.
- Groups are encouraged to use the PPN social media platforms to publicise their information and support their position as influencers in public policy, information can be submitted to these platforms through the PPN Project Coordinator via the official PPN email address.
- The PPN Project Coordinator will manage the PPN Social Media platforms. Member organisations can share their news on these platforms by submitting to the PPN Project Coordinator through the official PPN email address.
- Queries in relation to the PPN are, in the first instances, to be directed through the PPN Project Coordinator. If required they will be forwarded to the Secretariat members. Member organisations should not direct PPN queries to outside agencies.
- Members are asked to be mindful of the impression they present of the PPN in their interactions and communications.
- Internal communications should not be shared with external bodies / agencies / non PPN members. Please see the Data Protection policy for further information and the Data Protection website for legislative details.
- Members partaking in actions that have a detrimental effect on the identity of the PPN may be asked to forfeit their membership in line with the membership policy.

Internal Structure / Meetings

Plenary Meetings

The Limerick PPN will hold at least two Plenary meetings each year. The purpose of these Plenary meetings is to decide the overall direction of the PPN. Feedback in relation to the work-plan, linkage groups and policies will be provided by the Secretariat to all members in attendance.

Each member organisation is entitled to one vote on any matters being decided at Plenary and each individual person is only entitled to represent one organisation at Plenary.

Plenary voting is only available to the primary or secondary contact for a member organisation. If the primary or secondary member cannot attend notice can be given to the Project Coordinator authorising a different member to attend and represent the organisation. This notification must be via email to the official PPN Project Coordinator email address, must be received 48 hours before the Plenary meeting and must contain the full name of the person who will be representing the organisation.

Secretariat members are entitled to vote on behalf of their member organisation should there be no other member entitled to vote in attendance.

Linkage Group Meetings

Linkage group meetings will be arranged approximately two weeks ahead of each SPC, LCDC and JPC committee meeting. These linkage group meetings will allow elected PPN Reps to participate in two way communication with member organisations. Elected Rep's will agree to abide by the Rep's Charter.

Working Group / Policy Meetings

Limerick PPN aims to take part in as many policy consultations with Limerick City & County Council as possible. Consultation documents are usually relevant to more than one SPC of council committee.

To ensure full participation a working group will be formed for each consultation piece. Member organisations can choose to form part of the working group depending on their interest in the topic.

These working groups will be responsible for considering the policy / consultation and feeding submission information to the PPN Project Coordinator to form a PPN submission.

In order to ensure that your organisation is afforded the opportunity to form part of the PPN submission participation in the working group is essential.

For a full consultation process to be undertaken ideally the PPN would be allowed an 8 week period for each consultation. Time periods shorter than this will be considered on an individual basis by the Secretariat.

Wellbeing Statement

Everyone is entitled to well-being and everyone has a responsibility for their own well-being, but some people need extra help in order to achieve this. When a community come together as a whole, the benefits are spread throughout the whole of that community;

- Individuals benefit holistically from being connected to the people and environment around them;
- Communities benefit through increased the levels of support for local services and amenities that comes from an active and engaged population;
- The most vulnerable members of a community benefit from the support and care that comes from within their own community.

Communities are held together by the connections with people and the small daily interactions with each other. A strong community is a caring community, one which cares about each other, their environment and the future of their area. It is a community where people get involved. It is one where people support each other to become involved, to access supports and services.

Limerick City and County communities participate in the decisions which affect them, and seek to participate in decisions about issues facing their communities in an inclusive and

sustainable manner. The Limerick PPN aims to facilitate the continued development of communities that promote wellness for all.

Financial Policy and Procedures, inc. Payment Policy

Background

Volunteers should not be out of pocket for their participation on Boards or Committees. This policy has been put together in line with standard practice across the community and public sector.

Eligibility

Who can claim expenses?

This expenses policy applies to PPN representatives who have been elected to represent the PPN on committees such as the Secretariat, PPN Rep Meetings, Strategic Policy Committees, the Local Community Development Committee and the Joint Policing Committees, etc.

Expenses should only be claimed by volunteers who incur them. If a PPN Rep participates in the PPN as part of their professional work, they should only claim expenses from the PPN if they cannot claim them from their employer.

What expenses can be claimed?

- Expenses can only be claimed by PPN Reps for meetings, training, events, etc. while in their official capacity. Travel costs for attendance at SPC's and other Local Authority committees by Rep's are to be reclaimed from the Limerick City & County Council.
- In the context of Linkage Group meetings, expenses can only be claimed by the PPN Rep attached to that Linkage Group.
- PPN Reps that attend other PPN organised events or meetings not specifically organised for their attendance, cannot claim expenses.
- Expenses can only be claimed by Secretariat members while in their official capacity.
- Associated costs (i.e. Meals for day long events where refreshments are not provided) may only be claimed with pre-approval from the PPN Project Coordinator, who will seek approval from the Secretariat.
- Overnight costs will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and where it is absolutely necessary. Childcare, carer costs and loss of earnings are not covered by this expenses policy. Please see the exception to this in the additional policy related to the Rep training course only (appendix 1).
- There is a separate paragraph related to expenses incurred by the Project Coordinator.

Who pays the expenses?

Expense claims should, where possible, be borne by the organisation that requested representation from the PPN, where that organisation operates independently of the local authority. Otherwise, expenses are covered by the PPN operating budget.

Public Transport

Expenses for public transport tickets will be reimbursed at face value provided the original tickets (or online Leap Card statements) are provided.

Mileage Rates

Where public transport is not a realistic option, mileage will be paid to claimants for the use of their car. These will be paid out at the standard rates allowable by Revenue and based on local authority rates. Mileage is available on round trips of 5km or more.

Upon submission of a claim, distance is calculated by the shortest possible route from the claimant's home/workplace to the meeting venue. Distance is calculated to the closest kilometre.

Motor mileage rates – based on Local Authority Rates

Distance Bands		Engine Capacity up to 1200cc	Engine Capacity 1201cc to 1500cc	Engine Capacity 1501cc and over
Band 1	0-1,500 km	37.95 cents	39.86 cent	44.79 cent
Band 2	1,501- 5,000 km	70.00 cent	73.21 cent	83.53 cent
Band 3	5,001 - 25,000 km	27.55 cent	29.03 cent	32.21 cent
Band 4	25,001 km and over	21.36 cent	22.23 cent	25.85 cent

Public transport and / or carpooling must be the first option where feasible.

Payment and Claim Notes

PPN Reps and Secretariat members must submit claims quarterly.

All expenses must be claimed by December 14th of the current year. Meetings planned for after the 14th December can be pre claimed and if the claimant does not attend the claimed amount will be refunded through the Project Coordinator by 31st January the following year.

All expense claims must be submitted on the official expenses form provided by the PPN Project Coordinator.

Reimbursement of expenses can take up to 4 weeks from date of receipt.

Claimants will be required to submit a receipt following repayment being received.

PPN Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator may incur out of pocket expenses, these will require approval from the Secretariat.

PPN expenses not directly related to the Project Coordinator should be approved by the Secretariat for payment from the PPN Operating Budget. These may include;

- Meeting Venue Bookings
- Contractors / Consultants
- Advertising and Promotion
- Information Technology
- Insurance
- Legal Advice

Exceptional expenses will be forwarded by the Project Coordinator to the Secretariat for approval. General running costs and petty cash purchases below €200 in value can be agreed for payment by the Coordinator.

Procurement

Funding available to the PPN will be discharged honestly, fairly and in a manner that secures best value for money.

It is a basic principle of public procurement that a competitive process should be used unless there are justifiably exceptional circumstances. The type of competitive process can vary depending on the size and characteristics of the contract to be awarded.

Requirements

Supplies or services less than €1,001 in value might be purchased on the basis of verbal quotes from one or more competitive suppliers. The Secretariat will agree these supplies or services on the basis of value for money and PPN requirements.

For supplies or services between €1,001 and €5,000 three quotations will be sought.

For supplies or services between €5,001 and €25,000 a brief specification of the goods or services will be documented and sent in writing or via email to at least 3 competitive suppliers. There is no requirement to adhere to tender receipt and opening guidelines.

Supplies or services contracts between €25,001 and to €50,000 in value will be subject to an advertised tendering process, resulting in at least three quotations.

Values and procedures outlined above are indicative only and should be adapted as appropriate to suit the type of contract and the nature and scale of the project. Reasons for procedures adopted, including procedures where a competitive process was not deemed appropriate, should be clearly recorded. All contract award procedures should include a verifiable audit trail.

The Project Coordinator will complete tendering processes and forward results to the Secretariat for approval.

Financial Planning

The PPN Project Coordinator, along with the Secretariat, will provide a draft budget for discussion, amendment and approval at the first plenary of each year.

Amendments may be required as needs arise during the year and the Project Coordinator will manage the budget to ensure that all financial requirements are met.

Minor amendments are a standard operating procedure when managing a budget however, if major amendments are required the Project Coordinator will seek approval from the Secretariat members.

Payments Policy

Payment Procedures

Payments not related to the PPN Project Coordinator's employment will be reclaimed as outlined above.

Payments may include;

- Meeting related costs
- Secretariat and Rep travel expenses
- Insurance
- I.T.
- Community engagement
- Publicity
- Consultants / contractors
- Training
- Advertising and Promotion
- Legal Advice

Expenses will be approved by the PPN Project Coordinator, in line with the expenses policy. Original invoices will be held by the PPN and will be made available to LCCC on request.

This approval process will include all tendering, quote requests and pre- approval by secretariat before sending for payment.

PPN bank accounts will require two authorisations for each transaction. The PPN Project Coordinator will set up payments for authorisation and Secretariat members will authorise.

Data Protection Policy

Introduction

Data protection rights are very important to the Limerick PPN.

Data Protection is the safeguarding of the privacy rights of individuals in relation to the processing of personal data, in both paper and electronic format. The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (the "Data Protection Acts") lay down strict rules about the way in which personal data and sensitive personal data are collected, accessed, used and disclosed. The

Data Protection Acts also permit individuals to access their personal data on request, and confer on individuals the right to have their personal data amended if found to be incorrect.

This document outlines Limerick PPN's policy to help ensure that we comply with the Data Protection Acts.

Purpose of this policy

This policy is a statement of Limerick PPN's commitment to protect the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

Collecting information

We collect and use information in order to facilitate the continued running of the Limerick Public Participation Network. As an organisation that is not established or conducted for profit and processes data in relation to members in order to support their activities, we are not required to register as data controllers.

Data Protection Principles

We shall perform our responsibilities under the Data Protection Acts in accordance with the following Data Protection principles:

- **Obtain and process information fairly**

We shall obtain and process personal data fairly and in accordance with statutory and other legal obligations.

- **Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes**

We shall keep personal data for purposes that are specific, lawful and clearly stated.

Personal data will only be processed in a manner compatible with these purposes.

- **Use and disclose only in ways compatible with these purposes**

We shall use and disclose personal data only in circumstances that are necessary for the purposes for which we collected the data. We will blind copy email addresses when sending bulk emails and do not encourage member organisations to send emails to bulk email addresses without blind copying email addresses.

- **Keep it safe and secure**

We shall take appropriate security measures against unauthorised access to, or alteration, disclosure or destruction of personal data and against its accidental loss or destruction.

- **Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date**

We adopt procedures that ensure high levels of data accuracy, completeness and that data is up-to-date.

- **Ensure it is adequate, relevant and not excessive**

We shall only hold personal data to the extent that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.

- **Give a copy of his/ her personal data to that individual, on request**

We adopt procedures to ensure that data subjects can exercise their rights under the Data Protection legislation to access their data.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with Data Protection Acts rests with the Limerick Public Participation Network. All employees and contractors of the Limerick PPN who separately collect, control or process the content and use of personal data are individually responsible for compliance with the Data Protection Acts.

Review

This Data Protection Policy will be reviewed regularly in light of any legislative or other relevant developments.

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

The Limerick PPN does not work directly with children however we are committed to ensuring that Member Organisations working with children can access the correct guidance required to develop and implement a child protection policy.

Public Complaints & Grievance Policy

Limerick PPN is an independent organisation committed to the promotion, development and support of volunteer participation in the local area.

Limerick PPN recognises that we may make mistakes from time to time, and that people may feel that the service they receive from us, or tried to receive from us is unsatisfactory. In order to improve our services we actively encourage feedback, both positive and negative, on all aspects of our policies and operations. If an individual or organisation chooses to make a formal complaint, we will deal with this as quickly and fairly as possible and put things right where appropriate.

PROCEDURES, GENERAL PRINCIPLES & SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to set out for all parties concerned the Limerick PPN code of practice for dealing with formal complaints.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Limerick PPN Secretariat are responsible for ensuring that the policies and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All staff, volunteers and members are expected to facilitate this process.

ELIGIBILITY

Anyone using or trying to use the Limerick PPN services can make a complaint. This includes potential, current and past volunteers, and member organisations or anyone interacting with the service in any capacity. Limerick PPN does not respond to anonymous or abusive complaints.

TREATMENT OF COMPLAINTS

Limerick PPN takes all complaints seriously. Each complaint is treated equally, sensitively and in confidence. All complaints are handled with an open mind and investigated without prejudice. Complaints are dealt with promptly in an attempt to resolve them as quickly as possible. All complainants will receive a written explanation of the Limerick PPN's response to their criticism.

COMPLAINTS METHOD

FIRST STEP

Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to **The Limerick PPN Secretariat, c/o coordinator@limerickppn.ie**. An initial response to the complaint will be made within five working days of its receipt. If the complaint requires further investigation, the complainant will be made aware of this.

SECOND STEP

If the complainant is unhappy with the reply they receive, or if the original complaint is actually about the behaviour or conduct of the Limerick PPN Secretariat or a member of the Secretariat, an appeal can be made in writing at the next scheduled Plenary meeting.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Limerick PPN monitors and evaluates any complaints about the organisation on a regular basis and seeks to make on-going improvements.

FEEDBACK

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome and will be considered by the PPN.

REVIEW

This document will be reviewed by the Secretariat and approved at Plenary on an annual basis.

Employment Policies

Please see the separate Employee Handbook for employment related policies and procedures.

Appendix One

Representative Training Course

The representative training course places an additional financial strain on volunteers. In order to address this the PPN will cover the cost of childcare / carer costs in order to facilitate rep attendance. Travel time to and from the training will be included in these carer costs.

In addition to this travel costs will be paid for attendance at 6 sessions in November. If costs are covered for a session that a rep was then unable to attend they will be expected to refund the amount for that session following the conclusion of the training course.

The PPN project coordinator will make contact with each rep individually to discuss mileage, travel options and carer costs in advance of the training course. Each rep will then be expected to return a 'Training Cost Reimbursement Form' (appendix 2) and Bank Details Form.

Representative reimbursement in relation to the training course was completed in January 2017.

Appendix Two

LIMERICK PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

Training Course Reimbursement Form

I certify that I have incurred the following expenses in respect of attending the Representative Training Course

Name: _____

Date: _____

No of Sessions expected to attend /6: _____

Return trip distance if driving: _____

Public transport costs: _____

Childcare / carer costs per session: _____

Total Travel costs: _____

Total carer costs: _____

Total claimed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PPN project coordinator