



**Public Participation  
Network Cork City**

## **Election Policy & Procedures**

Policy Approval	Secretariat & Plenary
Implementation Responsibility	RW, Secretariat, Host (SJCA)
Date of Adoption by Secretariat	13 October 2022
Date of Adoption by Plenary	
Date of Review*	October 2024

\*Policies may need ad hoc changes made to comply with DRCD Circulars, etc. These changes may need to be implemented between Plenaries. These changes should be done with the approval of the Secretariat and approved at the next Plenary.

\*Reviews may happen sooner than the stated date by request of members. Members should write a brief request to the Secretariat, noting the concerns or issues they have. Requests should be as specific as possible. Secretariat will then consider the request and bring forward the date for review if they feel a review is necessary.

## **1. Introduction**

The Cork City Public Participation Network is a network of community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations and we are active in the Cork City area. Our members are people who work in the community. Our members' involvement in our activities makes us strong and effective.

This Election Procedure outlines the process undertaken by Cork City PPN in dealing with requests from boards, committees, forums, etc., and the processes that accompany this.

## **2. Requests for Representation Process**

Any board, committee, forum, etc. (requesting body), can make a request for representation from the PPN. The requesting body must fill out the "PPN Representation Request Form".

The body requesting PPN membership outlines:

- The number of Representatives requested.
- To which Pillar the Representatives should belong.
- Any additional criteria for potential nominees.

The request is reviewed by the Secretariat of the PPN and the Secretariat initiate the election process via the relevant forum. The Secretariat may request clarification details from the requesting body. The format and process for the nomination of PPN Representation is determined by the PPN as per this procedure.

For PPN vacancies on committees and bodies (excluding the Local Community Development Committee and Secretariat) election shall take place at the Linkage Group for the relevant committee. In exceptional circumstances, the Secretariat may deem it necessary to hold elections for these positions via the Plenary at the twice-yearly meetings. Reps elected via plenaries take their mandate from their linkage groups and are answerable to the linkage group and its terms of reference.

For PPN vacancies on committees and bodies which have not had PPN Representation previously, the Secretariat shall determine the most appropriate Linkage Group to nominate that representation responsibility to.

For PPN vacancies occurring on the Local Community Development Committee and the Secretariat elections shall take place at the twice-yearly meeting of the Plenary.

### **3. Nomination Process**

#### **3.1 Timeline**

When a request for representation has been accepted, a nomination process is initiated.

The PPN shall:

- Issue notice of a vacancy at least 21 days before the Linkage Group or Plenary meeting.
- Open a nomination period at least 21 days before the Linkage Group or Plenary meeting.
- Close the nomination period at least 10 days before the Linkage Group or Plenary meeting.
- Confirm eligibility of nominees and circulate eligible nominations to PPN members at least 7 days before the Linkage Group or Plenary meeting.

The notice and nomination period must be advertised on the PPN website, through email to the full membership and in the PPN e-newsletter.

Potential nominees must fill out the relevant “PPN Representative Nomination Form” and return it to the PPN by the deadline. Nominees must fulfil the criteria set out for the body requesting the Representative.

- A member group shall only represent the PPN on one (1) Board or Committee not including the Secretariat/Linkage Group Facilitators.
- A PPN Committee Representative cannot serve as the linkage group facilitator of their relevant linkage group.

Any potential conflict of interest or loyalty should be noted in the nomination application.

This might include but is not limited to:

- Working for Cork City Council in a related position to the relevant committee,
- Being a director, active volunteer, steering group member, or paid staff of an organisation that already has a deciding body representative position or has nominated one of the above for the current elections.
- Working for or being a director of the hosting organization of the PPN in relation to Secretariat nominations.

Any potential conflict will be discussed by the secretariat (or election subgroup) and a decision taken on its relevancy. Any undisclosed conflicts may result in the suspension or removal of the representative from their position later, so full disclosure of any conflicts is best practice.

#### **3.2 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 at the relevant meeting.

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

### **3.3 Re-election of Incumbents LCDC Representatives**

Local Community Development Committee representatives serve for a three (3) year period. An additional three (3) year second term can be applied. Where it is agreeable to both the Representative and the LCDC, incumbents may have their second term approved by a Secretariat vote and this is brought forward to the plenary and full council for ratification. Representatives serving a 2nd term should make themselves available for induction training as a form of refresher training. LCDC Representatives serving a second term should continue to engage with PPN Plenary, Secretariat, staff and appropriate linkage group as is expected of any serving PPN Representative. They, like all other representatives, take their mandate from the Plenary.

### **3.4 Ratification of PPN Representatives**

Following the filling of a vacancy at Linkage Group level, the PPN Representative is nominated to the committee of the organisation requesting the representation on an interim basis until the next Plenary meeting, where the Plenary ratifies the election. Where elections for the LCDC and Secretariat take place at the Plenary, these are ratified immediately.

## **4. Voting Process**

### **4.1 Format**

The PPN can facilitate the following election formats:

- Traditional First-past-the-post voting (Default option)
- Online Voting / E-Voting (In exceptional circumstances, such as a pandemic. Post vote provided for those without access to email)
- Single Transferable Vote (Optional for elections with multiple seats within a Pillar)

### **4.2 Voting Rights**

Every full PPN member organisation has one vote regardless of the number of members of that organisation who are active within the PPN.

For people who represent more than one PPN member organisation, they can exercise at a maximum two votes. This is to encourage greater participation by a wider range of member groups within the PPN and minimise unfair block voting.

(i.e. if Joe Murphy represents 1 residents' association and 1 community association and the 1 local soccer team, they can only exercise a maximum of two votes).

Associate members of the PPN cannot vote in elections.

#### **4.2.1 Elections and Votes for Secretariat and LCDC Members**

Secretariat and LCDC elections can only take place at Plenary meetings. Secretariat and LCDC positions can only be filled through a vote by members of that specific pillar. (i.e. An Environment Secretariat position can only be filled through a vote by Environmental Pillar members of the PPN).

#### **4.2.2 Other Bodies**

For all other bodies, a linkage group is called to vote at election. Any member group of the PPN can be a member of any linkage group, regardless of pillar. Every member of a linkage group can vote, regardless of their pillar and the pillar of the seat being filled.

(i.e. If Board X requests a Community Rep, the election is held at a Linkage Group X meeting. Social Inclusion Group X is a member of Linkage Group X and can vote in the election for Board X.)

### **5. On Election**

On election, representatives will be expected to attend PPN Induction Training. They will be asked to read and sign the PPN Code of Conduct and adhere to its guidance in all their operations. Representatives are expected to adhere to the relevant linkage group terms of reference. They are expected to complete any training or induction as required by the relevant committee they are serving on.

### **6. Amendments**

A **proposal** to amend this Election Procedure may be made by:

- a. The Secretariat;
- b. The Representatives Forum;
- c. A PPN Linkage Group

The proposal will be discussed by the Secretariat who shall make a recommendation in relation to the proposal and shall place it on the agenda for the next plenary meeting. The amendment will be effective if passed by a majority of the members present at the Plenary meeting.