

# **Cork City Public Participation Network**

Terms of Reference for PPN  
Secretariat **(DRAFT)**

February 2024

# Cork City Public Participation Network

The Public Participation Network represents and empowers community and voluntary groups, clubs and organisations in Cork City that work in a voluntary, cooperative or not-for-profit basis for the benefit of the community.

The day-to-day running of the PPN is administered by a Secretariat of members and implemented by PPN Staff who report to the Secretariat to implement the decisions of the membership and assist membership groups and individuals to be effective in their roles.

Cork City PPN operates transparently; actively seeking regular engagement with all members in the decision making process and empowering members to achieve the aims of the PPN by protecting the process of meaningful and effective participatory democracy.

## Structure of Secretariat

A Secretariat of nine members is elected by full Member Organisations at a Plenary meeting. 3 members are elected from each of the three Electoral Pillars – Community and Voluntary; Environmental; and Social Inclusion. The Secretariat runs as a flat structure without elected officers. Meetings are chaired on a rotational basis, as agreed by the Secretariat Members

## Role of the Secretariat

- To represent and implement the decisions of the Plenary.
- To administer the day to day running of the CCPPN between Plenary meetings.
- To inform Member Groups and Representatives of developments relevant to their groups.
- To develop CCPPN as a collective voice for community groups in the area.
- To support and engage with CCPPN Representatives to develop the goals of the PPN to be achieved and laid out in the Work Plan.
- To ensure that decisions are administered with the mandate of the membership by regularly and consistently seeking membership consultation on decisions and by maintaining transparent process.
- To seek regular input and guidance from the Membership and pursue and report on meaningful achieved goals and outcomes for the PPN.
- To facilitate guide and support the Resource Workers / Staff to achieve the objectives of CCPPN.

- To implement the Annual Work Plan objectives and demonstrate achievements and outcomes of the previous year.
- To develop and implement a Strategic Plan and promote the PPN and Membership.
- To maintain a Flat Structure in the Cork City Public Participation Network and fair representation for Members.

## Role of the Facilitator

The Secretariat has a Facilitator who is appointed to conduct meetings on a six-monthly rotating basis. The role of the Facilitator is to:

Actively chair/facilitate meetings.

Sign relevant documentation on behalf of Secretariat.

Support CCPPN workers in fulfilling their role and support the implementation of the Workplan.

Ensure that agreed actions from meetings held during their term are put into practice on behalf of CCPPN.

- The Facilitator is not the sole or main representative of the Secretariat, as all Secretariat members have equal representative status.
- In urgent situations, the Facilitator assumes the role of Secretariat spokesperson.
- To undertake any other duties, as necessary.

## Meetings of the Secretariat

- The Secretariat meets a minimum of six times per year or as deemed necessary. The quorum for Secretariat meetings is half or more of the current members.
- If after 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time, a quorum is not present the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date to be determined by the Secretariat.
- If at a subsequent meeting (following the adjourned meeting) a quorum is not present within 30 minutes from the appointed start time, the members present shall be a quorum.
- The Secretariat strives to make decisions by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, those present will make decisions by way of a simple majority vote as long as there is a sufficient quorum in attendance (i.e. half of the

membership of the Secretariat). In the event of a tied vote the rotating Facilitator of the Secretariat has the casting vote.

- All reports to be considered at Secretariat meetings and general meetings should be written and circulated in advance.
- The appropriate method of reporting for some meetings may be verbal.

## Elections to the Secretariat

There are 9 seats on the Secretariat, which must be filled as follows:

- Nominations for CCPPN Representative roles and seats on the Secretariat are invited by communication with Member Organisations.
- Member Organisations from each of three Electoral Colleges (Community and Voluntary; Environmental; and Social Inclusion) elect three Secretariat Members each.
- Election is for a maximum term of six years (the Plenary may decide on a shorter term).
- CCPPN will strive to achieve a gender balance on the Secretariat.
- To help prevent loss of experience and institutional memory from the Secretariat at any one time, elections to the Secretariat should be incremental and there should be a gradual and regular process for new members to join.
- Members of the Secretariat who are standing down are eligible for re-election - however no person is eligible to serve more than two consecutive three-year terms on the Secretariat.
- Should a member of the Secretariat be required to resign, or otherwise be unable to continue in their role, member groups of the relevant Electoral College will be contacted seeking nominations for a new Representative.
- When the Secretariat is being refreshed, the longest-serving members should step down first to allow new voices to join.

## Circumstances where a Secretariat Member would be required to resign their position.

Secretariat Members would be required to resign their position if they:

- Are no longer a member of the CCPPN member organisation that nominated them.
- The group/organisation which nominated them dissolves and is no longer in existence.

- No longer have the formal support of their nominating member organisation.
- Are a nominee of a group that is no longer a member group of CCPPN.
- Fail to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation.
- Declare as a candidate for Local, General, or European elections.
- Are found to be in breach of the CCPPN Code of Conduct.