



Secretariat

Terms of Reference

Reference	Approved	Ratified	For Review	Amended
Ref: S 0001	November 2018	November 2018	April 2021	April 2021
Ref: S 0002	April 2021	June 15 <sup>th</sup> 2021	May 2023	



## **Kildare Public Participation Network**

The Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in 2014 as the representative voice for all Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion groups.

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 Local Authority area.

Membership of the Public Participation Network is open to all community and voluntary groups, clubs, and organisations, 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, elected by full member groups of the network. The Network elects representatives to committees and organisations to speak on behalf of all member groups. The Public Participation Network is the main link through which the Local Authority and other decision-making bodies connect with the Community and Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion sectors.

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

### **Structure**

The Secretariat is made up of 11 members and is ratified by full member organisations at a Plenary meeting. Two members will be elected from each of the three Electoral Pillars and the remaining five members, one each from the five Municipal Districts. Consideration should be given towards achieving gender balance. The Secretariat is a flat structure (i.e. there are not elected officers). Meetings will be chaired on a rotational basis, as agreed by the Secretariat.

### **Role of the Secretariat**

- To ensure the aims and objectives of the Kildare Public Participation Network are met.
- To ensure that member groups are informed of developments relevant to their groups.
- To represent member group's interests.
- To ensure the proper functioning of the PPN between Plenary meetings.
- To facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the Plenary.
- To support the Coordinator to achieve the PPN's objectives through the implementation of the Annual Workplan.
- To review and sign off on documentation in a timely fashion (by email if required to facilitate tight time frames).
- To develop Kildare Public Participation Network into an effective collective voice for community groups in Kildare.
- To engage with and support the PPN Representatives.
- To operate as defined under Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.
- The Secretariat may establish working-groups, subcommittees, or task-groups as necessary.

- To attend Secretariat induction training which is mandatory. The PPN will endeavour to provide this induction training as soon as possible after the appointment of new Secretariat members.

### **Role of the Chairperson**

The Secretariat has a Chairperson who is appointed to conduct meetings on a rotating basis or as agreed by the Secretariat. The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Actively chair or facilitate meetings.
- Sign relevant documentation on behalf of the Secretariat.
- Support the Coordinator in fulfilling his/her role and support the implementation of the work plan.
- Ensure that agreed actions from meetings held during their term are put into practice on behalf of the PPN.
- Exercise deciding votes.
- The Chairperson is not the sole or main representative of the Secretariat, as all Secretariat members have equal representative status.
- In urgent situations, the Chairperson assumes the role of Secretariat spokesperson.
- The Secretariat has a vice Chairperson who acts in the Chairperson's absence. Where both are absent, the Secretariat will appoint a temporary Chairperson / Facilitator for the duration of the absence.
- To undertake any other duties, as necessary.

### **Staff Liaison Committee**

The Secretariat are responsible for forming the Staff Liaison Committee. This committee should be made up of three members of the Secretariat. Their role is to directly engage with staff about the day-to-day activities, so quick decisions can be made, however all decisions must be brought to the secretariat for ratification.

As soon as possible all members should attend HR and Management training before taking up their roles on this committee.

### **Meetings**

- To attend Secretariat meetings 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 an adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within 30 minutes from the appointed start time, the members present shall be a quorum.
- The Secretariat will strive to make decisions by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, those present will make decisions by way of a simple majority vote.
- If a majority vote is not reached, the Chair will have the deciding vote.
- Where possible all reports given 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 11 seats on the Secretariat, which must be filled as follows:
- Full Member Organisations from each of the municipal districts of the Local Authority area elects a representative from their area (the municipal districts in Kildare are Clane-Maynooth, Newbridge-Kildare, Naas, Athy and Leixlip-Celbridge).
- Full Member Organisations from each of three electoral colleges: Community and Voluntary; Environmental and Social Inclusion elects two representatives.
- Election is for a maximum term of five years.
- Kildare Public Participation Network will strive to achieve a gender balance on the Secretariat.
- To help prevent loss of all experience from the group at one time, elections to the Secretariat must be staggered in line with Section 6 of the PPN Handbook.
- Members of the Secretariat who are standing down are eligible for re-election, however no person is eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms on the Secretariat.
- Should a member of the Secretariat be required to resign, or otherwise be unable to continue in their role, full member groups of the relevant Municipal District or College will be contacted seeking nominations for a new representative.

### **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 Kildare Public Participation Network Member Organisation that nominated them.
- No longer have the formal support of their nominating Member Organisation.
- Fail to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation.
- Declare as a candidate for local, general, or European elections.
- Are in breach of the Kildare PPN Code of Conduct.

## **Key Notes**

- When the Secretariat is being refreshed, the longest-serving members must step down first to allow new voices to join. In addition, no Secretariat member should serve more than two consecutive terms.