

FINGAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

SECTION 127, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001

AS AMENDED BY

SECTION 46 - CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT 2014

CONSTITUTION

A Constitution is a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which an organisation is acknowledged to be governed.

Constitution Version History

Version	Date Adopted	Facilitator	Note
1.0	8 th May	John Melvin	Adopted by plenary under the proviso that section 10 is not activated and a steering group is setup to recommend changes at the November 2019 Plenary.
2.0	6 th November	Michael Walsh	Amendments proposed by Constitution Steering Group.
3.0	22 nd February 2022	Hanumantha Rao	Adopted at EGM called for this sole purpose.
4.0	14 th September 2023	Hanumantha Rao	Updated section 6.2 with the amendment accepted at the May 2023 Plenary

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1. PREAMBLE

Section 127 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 which came into effect on 1st June 2014 has restructured the relationship between Local Communities and Local Authorities and between Local Authorities and Local Communities.

Section 46 of the 2014 Act outlines the New “Framework for Public Participation at Local Government Level”.

The Public Participation Network is a formal network and is the main link through which the Local Authority engages with the Local Communities and the Local Communities with the Local Authority.

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

The purpose of the PPN is to enable citizens to take an active role in the policy making and oversight activities of the Local Authority’s areas of responsibilities. The PPN is the mechanism through which Community representation is provided on committees of the Local Authority, such as:

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

with the number of representatives to be elected onto each agreed with Fingal County Council or the receiving body.

Community groups or organisations who wish to participate must register with the PPN.

2. NAME

The name of the organisation shall be Fingal Public Participation Network otherwise referred to as Fingal PPN or the PPN.

3. AIMS

The aims of the Fingal PPN shall be to:

- Represent the Environmental, Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary Sector's interests of Fingal on Policy Making and Advisory Bodies of and for Fingal County Council (Core Function).
- Participate in and contribute to the Development of the Vision of Fingal County Council for the:
 - Well-being of this and future generations.
 - Social, Cultural, Technological and Economic Development of the Fingal Area.
- Proactively promote the benefits and advantages of Community Representation on Boards and Committees.
- Ensure that all community-based organisations and groups in Fingal Area are aware of the work and existence of the PPN.
- Ensure that all community-based organisations and groups in Fingal are aware of the Nomination Process to structures within the PPN.
- Ensure that all Community Sector representation on all Fingal County Council sponsored Bodies are selected via the Fingal PPN.
- Facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and the sharing of information between the various segments of the Community (environmental, social inclusion community and voluntary groups) and between these groups and the Elected Members and Staff of Fingal County Council.
- Ensure that all relevant Information of Fingal County Council is circulated to the PPN.
- Identify issues both of individual and collective concern and advocate to influence policy locally and nationally in relation to these issues.
- Monitor and Evaluate existing Policies of Fingal County Council for impact, outcome and output on the Community.

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- Actively support the inclusion of socially excluded groups or communities experiencing high levels of poverty, discrimination or disadvantage and to facilitate their participation at local and county level and to clearly demonstrate same.
- Ensure that the Sectors both individually and collectively always act professionally and have a strong collective Voice within the Fingal Area and on relevant National Structures.
- Support the individual members of the Public Participation Network so that they can develop their own capacity and perform their work more effectively, participate effectively in the Public Participation Network activities, and ensure their voices and concerns are listened to and included in relevant Policy Proposals.
- Uphold this constitution.

4. MISSION, VISION, VALUES and PRINCIPLES

4.1 Mission

- The Mission of Fingal Public Participation Network is to enable the Community of Fingal to:
 - Take an active role in the policy making and oversight activities of Fingal County Council's areas of responsibilities.
 - Influence improved decision making in the county, and
 - To be the main link through which Fingal County Council engages with the Community and Voluntary Sector.

4.2 Vision

That Fingal PPN is an integral and respected local decision-making partner and network. It is engaged and pro-actively consulted in the development of all Fingal economic, social, community and infrastructural policies. Its members are well supported and aware of their ability to make a difference for their community.

4.3 Values

Fingal Public Participation Network is:

- **Inclusive:** We accept all volunteer-led organisations in Fingal. We actively seek to include groups who may feel that they are not usually welcomed or listened to.
- **Participatory:** We encourage our members to get involved in all aspects of the operation of the PPN. We welcome all feedback and ideas about how we can do better.
- **Independent:** We are independent of Fingal County Council and any vested interests. We have our own staff. We manage our own budget, and our opinions are not influenced by anyone other than our members.
- **Valuing of diversity:** We know that the Fingal PPN is made up of groups with many different opinions. We do not expect that all our members will agree on everything. But we will always feedback the diverse range of views our members have.
- **Transparent:** We are open about everything we do. We try to have fair and clear policies and procedures. We communicate our activity with all our members on a regular basis.

Respectful: We respect all individuals involved in the PPN. We value the dignity of each person. We treat people how we would like to be treated.

4.4 Principles

Fingal Public Participation Network is:

- **Accountable:** to its members by implementing and abiding by good Governance structures, policies and procedures.
- **Democratic:** in its process.
- **Committed:** through its participation and engagement to attend all meetings and report back to its membership.
- **Communicative:** In a clear, concise, simple and timely manner utilising modern technology as appropriate with all members.
- **Supportive:** of new and inexperienced members to develop their skills and capacity.
- **Proactive: In circulating** all relevant information to the PPN membership.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Full Membership

5.1.1 Full Membership Criteria

Full membership of Fingal PPN is open to community groups and organisations who:

- Have an address in Fingal and are volunteer led (i.e. voluntary Board or Committee who are directly responsible for the organisation or group).
- Are not for profit, non-political and non-sectarian organisation.
- Are independent.
- Have at least five (5) members and are open to new members.
- Are in existence for at least six (6) months.
- Have an appropriate governance structure (formal structure) with an agreed:
 - Set of rules/financial procedures.
 - Meet regularly at least quarterly.
- Are National Organisations if they are headquartered in Fingal or through their Local Fingal Branch (the local branch shall be eligible to vote and hold the representative position).
- Complete the Fingal Community County Register Registration Form.

The PPN may seek copies of relevant documentation to validate membership.

5.1.2 Term of Membership

Once an organisation has become a member of the PPN they shall be required to reaffirm their membership details every two years prior to the Annual General Plenary Meeting in that year.

5.1.3 Registration Process

- Prospective members register through filling out the Fingal Community County Register form. The Fingal Community County Register is a partnership between and co-managed by the PPN Secretariat and the Fingal County Council Community Development Office.
- The County Register form can be filled out on the PPN website or a hard copy may be requested from the PPN or Fingal County Council.

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- The County Register form is used to register groups for the purpose of membership of the PPN and for the purposes of accessing supports and funding from Fingal County Council.
- County Register Forms are processed by the PPN Secretariat through its staff who assess eligibility for membership and ensure the appropriate Electoral College has been chosen (i.e. Community, Environment and Social Inclusion).

5.2 Associate Membership

Associate Membership provides a pathway and a link between key community groups and organisations and services in Fingal who are excluded from Full Membership, to have a voice on matters of interest.

5.2.1 Rights of Associate Membership

Associate members can:

- Attend the PPN training and events.
- Attend Linkage Groups and Plenary and contribute to discussion; however voting rights are not extended to Associate members.
- Receive information – newsletters, meeting minutes, etc.

5.2.2 Associate Membership Criteria

Associate membership of Fingal PPN is open to groups and organisations not eligible for full membership but who:

- Engage with or support the PPN.
- Are a valid community group, organisation or service.
- Work is related, supportive or similar fields to that of the PPN or its members.
- Agree to comply with PPN policies and constitution.
- Have a Branch, Group, Association, etc. established in Fingal for at least one year.

Organisations who may qualify for Associate Membership include but not limited to:

- Local Development Companies.
- University Departments or research centres, colleges, other third level groups or associations.
- Charitable trusts and Foundations.

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- Other Civil society, voluntary and community organisations.
- Other NGOs.

5.2.3 Associate Membership Registration Process

The process of registering for associate membership is the same as that outlined in section 5.1.3 above.

5.3 Membership Electoral Colleges

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

5.3.1 Social Inclusion

The main aim or activity of our social inclusion members is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are:

- marginalised in society;
- living in poverty; or
- living with unemployment.

Social inclusion members work to develop and build sustainable communities. They aim to build communities that promote the values of equality and inclusion and that have respect for human rights.

They focus on working with the most marginalised, including but not limited to: disadvantaged young people, ethnic minorities, homeless people, older adults, Travellers, people with disabilities, substance misusers, or women.

5.3.2 Environmental

The main aim of environment members is to protect or sustain the environment. The national environmental pillar decides what type of groups can be members of the Fingal environmental pillar.

Environment members work on building sustainable communities and achieving a sustainable future. Their work can include: developing organic horticulture, environmental education, preventing the spread of invasive species, protecting wildlife, recycling, resource efficiency, and sustainable planning.

5.3.3 Community and Voluntary

The main aim or activity of community and voluntary members is to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of their community. The community and voluntary pillar is the largest and most diverse of the three PPN pillars.

Volunteers are essential to the sustainability of community and voluntary member groups. The types of groups in this college may include: active citizenship, arts, community safety, drama, emergency services, festivals, heritage leisure, residents' associations, sports or youth.

6. STRUCTURE and MANAGEMENT

The PPN structure is “flat” which means all members of the PPN have an equal voice and an equal input into decision making in accordance with Government Policy. The structure is composed of:

- Plenary Group
- Secretariat
- Linkage Groups

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.

6.1 Plenary

- The full Membership (excluding Associate Members) is referred to as the Plenary which is the Governing Body with overall responsibility for the Network and shall meet at least twice (2) a year in Plenary Session. The first session of the year includes the Annual General Meeting of the Membership.
- The Plenary at its Annual General Meeting elects a Secretariat which through the diversity of its membership is representative of the three (3) colleges, where vacancies have risen.
- The Plenary at its Annual General Meeting elects representatives to the Local Community Development Committee, where vacancies have risen.
- At least one (1) member from each registered group or organisation holding Full Membership shall be entitled to attend and shall have one (1) vote on behalf of their organisation.
- 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 one month 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 10 days prior to the meeting.
- All Plenary Sessions shall be conducted under Standing Orders Procedures – in consultation with members. See Appendix 1 for Standing Orders (page XX).

6.1.1 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 of not more than one (1) A4 page signed by 30 full Members (excluding Associated Members) to convene such a meeting. Instructions on supports available to gather signatures are available in Appendix 2.

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 or 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 voting paddles or Ballot by simple majority vote. Only votes or eligible members attending are permitted.

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 or proposal.

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

All Extraordinary General Meetings shall be conducted under Standing Orders Procedures – in consultation with members. See Appendix 1 for Standing Orders (page XX).

6.2 Secretariat

- The Secretariat consists of twelve (12) members. The twelve (12) seats of the Secretariat will be allocated as follows:
 - 3 Community pillar
 - 3 Environment pillar
 - 3 Social Inclusion pillar
 - 1 Blanchardstown-Mulhuddart/Castleknock/Ongar Area
 - 1 Howth/Malahide Area
 - 1 Balbriggan/Rush-Lusk/Swords Area

Note: The above area seats are as set out in Fingal County Council's 2022 Area Committee Meeting Structure.

- At each Annual General Meeting - secretariat members who have served 3 years are required to step down. Members having stepped down may offer themselves for re-election. In addition, no Secretariat member should serve more than two consecutive terms. (PPN Handbook recommendation)
- A member may not serve on the Secretariat for more than six (6) consecutive Years and having so served shall not be entitled to offer themselves for Election for a further three (3) years. 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).
- For membership of the Secretariat, an individual must be attached to and nominated by a PPN member organisation of a relevant electoral college. The Electorate for that position is comprised of the members of the Electoral College.
- A panel shall be compiled from the next highest candidates for the purpose of filling vacancies which may occur in the Secretariat in respect of that college between Annual General Meetings of the PPN.
- Any Vacancy arising on the Secretariat between the Annual Electoral Process shall be filled by the next highest candidate on the aforementioned panel willing to serve on the Secretariat.
- Secretariat shall meet at least nine (9) times per annum – monthly – with no meetings in June, July and December.
- Secretariat Members shall attend the two (2) Plenary Sessions in the year.
- The Secretariat shall hold ordinary meetings at location around the county to be decided by the Secretariat.

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- Any member elected to the Secretariat who fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the Secretariat shall automatically remove themselves from that position and the Vacancy arising shall be filled forthwith by the next available member on the panel as set out above.
- The Secretariat shall have authority to fill any temporary vacancy being 3 months or more arising from a member being absent on – Leave of Absence, Study Leave, Maternity Leave, etc.

6.2.1 Emergency and Other Meetings of the Secretariat

Emergency meetings of the Secretariat shall be held where not less than seven (7) 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 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.

6.2.2 Responsibilities of the Secretariat

The Secretariat is the key day-to-day administrative body within the PPN Structure. It:

- Ensures the proper functioning of the PPN between Plenary meetings and in accordance with the constitution.
- Manages the PPN budget including on-going financial matters and decisions.
- Ensures that PPN processes work, as far as practicable, in accordance with this Constitution and in an efficient and effective manner.
- Manages the development and implementation of the PPN's strategic plan.
- Establishes sub-groups to address in detail certain defined matters that arise from time to time.
- Facilitates the implementation of decisions of the Plenary.
- Ensures appropriate administrative support is available for the efficient functioning of the PPN, including considering recruiting support through work placement schemes funded by public monies.
- Determines the time and place of AGM (Plenary) unless otherwise directed by Plenary.
- Cooperates with any National Advisory Group established for Monitoring and Evaluation of PPN's recommendations or guidelines issued by such groups.

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- Agrees 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.
- Engages with the Fingal County Council Community Development Office regarding the Council's oversight responsibility.
- Appoints a Facilitator of Secretariat Meetings with a term of 6 months (i.e. Plenary to Plenary). The position of Facilitator should rotate to ensure Secretariat members acquire relevant experience of this function. The Facilitator's successor should be selected prior to the Plenary meeting at which the facilitator steps down.
- Manages the work of the Resource Worker, who acts as the secretary of the Secretariat, and who maintains the minutes, correspondence regarding all Secretariat meetings and Plenaries.
- Reviews and approves the minutes of each previous meeting as the first item of the agenda of each Secretariat meeting.
- Promotes the Network amongst its Members and in the wider community.
- Administers the PPN in accordance with best practice and to the highest possible standard (to be agreed between the members, and if necessary approved by the Plenary) as outlined in the PPN Guidelines and the Charities Governance Code.
- Manages the work of the Resource Worker and appoints a member to monitor this.
- Is fully involved in the Recruitment process of the Resource Worker.

6.2.3 Secretariat Subgroups

Subgroups of the Secretariat may be established at a Secretariat meeting for a specific project or purpose.

- A minimum of 3 Secretariat members are required to sit on a subgroup, with at least one member of each gender represented.
- The subgroup must submit a written report at each Secretariat meeting.
- The term of a subgroup is from the Secretariat meeting where it is established to the next scheduled Secretariat meeting. The Secretariat may decide to extend the subgroups term until the next Secretariat meeting. This request must be included in the aforementioned written report.
- The Secretariat will set the terms of reference of the Subgroup at the time of establishment. This will be agreed and included in the minutes. The terms of reference

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of the subgroup will state the membership, purpose and the decision-making capacity of the subgroup in carrying out its work.

- The Secretariat may decide to invite non-Secretariat members to sit on a subgroup if they feel the addition would be appropriate. Any non-Secretariat members invited to sit on the subgroup must be in addition to the minimum of 3 Secretariat members.
- A short report on the activity of any Secretariat subgroups will be included in the PPN Activity Report published at each Plenary meeting.
- The quorum for a meeting is 2 members of the subgroup.
- The subgroup may meet virtually as well as physically.

6.2.4 Role of the Secretariat Facilitator

As Facilitator of the Secretariat, the Facilitator shall:

- Agree the framework with the resource worker for Secretariat meetings (e.g. timeframe, location, facilities etc.).
- Agree the agenda of each Secretariat meeting.
- Manage the progression of agenda items of each Secretariat meeting in terms of the items under discussion, the reaching of decisions and the time allocated.
- Review, agree and ensure the distribution in a timely fashion draft minutes in conjunction with the resource worker.
- Ensure that approved minutes are available.
- Normally act 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 that takes at the end of their term.

If the Secretariat is dissatisfied with the conduct or performance of the facilitator, the facilitator may be voted out of that role during the course of a scheduled Secretariat meeting, by notification in writing prior to such meeting.

6.3 Linkage Groups

Linkage Groups bring together stakeholder organisations and groups who are members of the PPN with a common interest to discuss their diverse views and interests in a specific policy area.

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This is a pathway for such organisations and groups to have a real input into policy in their respective area of operation. 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 who are interested in a common theme such as Arts, Community, Environment, Heritage, Housing, Planning, Social Inclusion, Transport or Tourism (and more).

Linkage Groups work to influence change in their thematic area. They do this through advocating for policy changes on behalf of the community through engaging with Fingal County Council and other bodies appropriate to the issue or subject matter of advocacy.

6.3.1 Principal Linkage Groups

There are five (5) principal Linkage Groups operating at a county level:

1. Housing, Planning and Transport.
2. Arts, Community, Heritage and Sports.
3. Climate Change, Water and Environment.
4. Social Inclusion, Rural Development, Youth and Enterprise (including Economic Development and Tourism).
5. Community Safety.

The Secretariat may decide to establish new Linkage Groups, subdivide current Linkage Groups or establish issue based Linkage Groups in consultation with the Linkage Groups. Linkage Groups may also be established on an issue basis or as requested. Membership records must note the areas of interest of members.

6.3.2 Membership

- Organisations registered with the PPN are entitled to become a member of any Linkage Groups.
- On completion of the Registration Form, organisations shall specify which Linkage Group their organisation may wish to be a member of.
- Linkage Group membership is open to all members, year-round.
- The Secretariat shall encourage members to participate in Linkage Groups at least once annually.
- PPN Member groups are encouraged to send different representatives to multiple Linkage Groups (i.e. The PPN member does not have to be the same person from the same organisation representing that organisation at all Linkage Groups).

6.3.4 Aim and Role of Linkage Groups

The aim and role of Linkage Groups is to:

- Act as the representative, collective voice of community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion organisations in Fingal under the relevant thematic area.
- Engage as an equal and independent partner and assert the rights of the sector to organise and structure its own participation in relevant arenas.
- Co-ordinate, enable and support the representation of the community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion sectors in Fingal on various public and private structures through the nomination of Linkage Group members to relevant decision-making structures as PPN Representatives.
- Support the PPN Representative on the decision-making structure through debating relevant issues, forming policy positions and priorities, giving direction on the position they are to take on issues and discussing feedback on activity.
- Agree and implement a way of communicating with the representative(s) and with each other, which is effective and realistic.
- Provide PPN Members with similar interests the opportunity to meet, network, share ideas on issues and feed into policies that affect them.
- Use, review and update the PPN Community Issues Paper on an on-going basis, at least annually, providing PPN Members with the opportunity to develop and promote positions on policies relevant to the work of Linkage Groups.
- Develop a work-plan to include specific projects that can be achieved at a local level, and which benefit the local community.
- Apply to the PPN Linkage Group fund for specific action-based projects.
- Facilitate engagement with relevant state agencies such as Fingal County Council, Irish Rail, the OPW, Dublin Bus, the HSE and other relevant Government Departments and bodies.
- To work collaboratively with other Linkage Groups and representatives in furtherance of the aims of the PPN.
- Facilitate the sharing of information with interested PPN members from decision making structures.
- Work with and report on Linkage Group activity to the Secretariat, Plenary, and to other interested parties when required.
- Facilitate and enable PPN Members to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the Local Government System and not to reduce or homogenise this diversity

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- Facilitate member organisation and groups to gain a deeper understanding of the Local Policy Process
- Facilitate any other action or engagement which the Linkage Group considers appropriate to its remit.

6.3.5 Responsibilities of the Linkage Group

Responsibilities of the Linkage Groups members are to:

- To operate in accordance with the principles and values of PPN.
- Make themselves aware of what the Board or Committee they are linked to can and cannot do, having realistic expectations of what a representative can achieve, and understanding confidentiality issues which may arise.
- Be open to new organisations joining the Linkage Group, and to actively seek the input of all groups who have an interest in the area, particularly those who are traditionally socially excluded.
- Communicate and engage clearly and openly with the representative and other Linkage Group members, recognising that there may be differing views expressed on issues, and that the representative must bring the diversity of views to the Board or Committee.
- Take the time to read, absorb and understand communications that are received.
- Feed back to their member groups on the work of the Linkage Group and Board or Committee.
- Inform the wider PPN of key issues and policy positions.
- Keep records of dates, attendance, outputs etc. for meetings (virtual or face to face).
- Minutes of meetings shall be approved at the next meeting and signed and dated by the Facilitator.

6.3.6 Rights of the Linkage Group members are to:

- Receive relevant information about the work of the Board or Committee to help them to participate fully.
- Receive regular communications (at least as frequently as Board or Committee meetings are held) from the representative on matters such as:
 - Dates of Board or Committee meetings.
 - Agendas for Board or Committee meetings.

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- Reports from Board or Committee meetings.
- Items which require their input.
- Have regular discussions by an agreed mechanism (face to face, Skype conference call, email, social media groups, etc.).
- Have relevant issues pursued in partnership with the Linkage Group Facilitator and Linkage Group Representatives.
- Have Linkage Group discussions facilitated in an open inclusive way, and the views of all members accommodated.

6.3.7 Role of Linkage Group Facilitator

During a meeting of the Linkage Group, the facilitator ensures that:

- The agenda for each meeting is followed.
- Focus is maintained on the relevant agenda item.
- Time boundaries are assigned to each agenda item.
- Business is progressed in an efficient manner.

The wider role of the facilitator of the Linkage Group is to:

- Guide the work of the Linkage Group (including ensuring follow up and progress between meetings).
- Be the point of contact for the PPN for that Linkage Group.
- Plan the work of the Linkage Group to achieve its objectives.
- Be responsible for the functioning of their particular Linkage Group.
- Assist the Linkage Group members to understand their common goal.
- Provide leadership without taking over and remain neutral in all discussions.
- Encourage members of the group to take on tasks and get involved in progressing issues.
- Support elected PPN Representatives who have been elected to represent the PPN on policy committees.

In the event of the facilitator not being in attendance at a Linkage Group meeting, the Facilitator shall nominate an alternative prior to the meeting or where alternative is not nominated, the meeting shall appoint a Facilitator either by a show of voting paddles or ballot.

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Linkage Group Facilitators are considered PPN Representatives and shall be selected in accordance with the procedures as outlined in section seven (7) of this constitution.

7. 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, a Linkage Group Facilitator and any other PPN Representative role.

7.1 Principles Governing PPN Representation

- All PPN representatives on Boards or Committees of Policy Making and Advisory Bodies of and for Fingal County Council shall report to and take direction from their respective Linkage Group.
- All contributions and views expressed by PPN Representatives shall be in line with the guidance or mandate from the Linkage Group.
- Representation should be spread widely in terms of gender, geography, and type of organisation.
- 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.

7.2 Role of the PPN Representative

- Attend and participate fully in meetings of the Linkage Group and Board or Committee, including any subgroups to which they may be appointed.
- Bring forward the issues of the Linkage Group to the Board or Committee for their consideration, including placing items on the Agenda.
- Work openly and collaboratively with the Linkage Group to identify issues, research, policy proposals etc.
- Communicate regularly (at least as frequently as meetings are held) with the Linkage Group on matters such as:

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- Dates of Board or Committee meetings.
- Agendas for Board or Committee meetings.
- Reports and Feedback from Board or Committee meetings.
- Items which require their input or are of interest.
- Network and work strategically with other Board or Committee members for the benefit of the Linkage Group and of PPN, including being able to compromise while retaining the core objective.
- Attend and participate fully in the Plenary, Representatives Forum and Representative Training.

7.3 Responsibilities of the PPN Representative

- Assist in the organisation of and preparation of Linkage Group Meetings and effective two-way communications with Linkage Group members (with the support of the resource worker).
- 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.
- Work openly and collaboratively with all Linkage Group members to identify issues, research, policy proposals etc., respecting the diversity of views expressed.
- Put forward opinions and 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.

7.4 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 both the Linkage Group and Board or Committee, with an appreciation that they are a volunteer.
- Be supported by both 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 immediately 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.
- Have at least some PPN meetings held at a time and location which facilitates them.
- Receive an induction pack for the Board or Committee on taking up appointment to include:
 - Terms of reference.
 - Standing orders and procedures.
 - Meeting schedules, locations and times.
 - Contact details for all Board or Committee members.
 - Access to technical support where required.
- Receive the as much notice as possible of meetings (dates and venues) and associated documentation (agenda, documents and reports to be read) in advance-as permitted by the relevant standing orders of the committee or board.
- Have meetings conducted in a way that facilitates participation, open discussion and transparent decision making.

7.5 Vacancies

Representatives are elected to the Joint Policing Committee (JPC), Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), among others – on a three-year basis – in the event of vacancies arising. See Appendix 3 (page

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36) for Expectations 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 if no panel to fill vacancies exists.

7.5.1 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.

7.5.2 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 or positions then an election shall take place.

Should an election take place, it shall take place in accordance with the election process in Appendix 4 (page 38).

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.

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 vacancies occurring on the Local Community Development Committee and the Secretariat elections shall take place at the Annual General Meeting of the Plenary.

The Secretariat shall decide (where a panel does not exist) to hold a postal vote or online vote to fill positions arising between Plenaries.

7.5.3 Panel

Where an election takes place, candidates who do not attain a high enough number of votes to attain a seat are transferred to a panel.

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Any Vacancy so arising on a board or committee between the normal Annual Electoral Process shall be filled by the next highest candidate willing to serve that particular vacancy.

7.6 Removal of Representatives

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

- Undertake their role, as laid down by this Constitution, in an appropriate manner.
- Consistently attend the relevant meetings.
- Report back to the Membership or Linkage Group.
- Represent the relevant Linkage Group members appropriately.
- Comply with any written instruction.

or where a Representative represents their own interests or views or lobby on behalf of their own organisation, a formal complaint may be submitted. The complaints procedure is available in Appendix 5. A Linkage Group, or a Linkage Group member, responsible for that representative may submit a formal complaint about that representative as per the Complaints Procedure in Appendix 5.

Separately, if the Secretariat identify through normal monitoring of PPN activity, that a PPN representative may not be fulfilling their role as outlined above, they may choose to refer the matter to the relevant Linkage Group facilitator for discussion at a Linkage Group meeting.

Where the nominating organisation of a PPN Representative ceases to exist, or the PPN Representative is no longer associated with the organisation, they shall immediately cease to be a PPN Representative. The vacancy shall be filled as per provision provided for in section 7.5.2

7.7 Code of Conduct for PPN Representatives

Members and Member Representatives of the PPN shall always conduct themselves in a professional manner and in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and the Code of Conduct adopted thereunder. See Appendix 6 for Code of Conduct (page 39).

The Code of Conduct shall be signed by every Member of the PPN elected to a representative position on the various committees and boards where the PPN has such representation and by the members of the Secretariat and by every member who acts as a Facilitator.

7.8.1 Amendments to the Code of Conduct

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

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A. By the Secretariat.

B. By not less than 30 active members within 10 days of the date the Plenary.

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. COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Fingal Public Participation Network's complaints policy is available in Appendix 5.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

9.1 Financial Records

Financial Records shall comply with accounting standards and processes and the directions of funders

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

9.2 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 7 (page 43).

10. SERVICE OF NOTICES

A notice may be given to any member either through handing it to the member or by personal delivery or sending it by prepaid registered post or sending it 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.

11. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

A proposal to amend the Constitution may be made:

- A. By the Secretariat.
- B. By not less than 30 active members within 10 days of the date the Plenary.

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.

12. ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION

This Constitution was adopted at a Fingal Public Participation Network Plenary held on

Signed on behalf of Fingal Public Participation Network:

_____.

Facilitator

Date:

Appendix 1: Fingal Public Participation Network Plenary Standing Orders

The purpose of these standing orders is to ensure the orderly and effective conduct of Plenary meetings of the Fingal Public Participation Network.

1. Frequency of Meetings

The Plenary shall meet twice a year or as requested in accordance with the Constitution.

2. Voting Rights and Decisions

2.1 Only matters on the Agenda shall be the business of the meeting in accordance with the constitution.

2.2 All decisions taken shall be in accordance with procedures set out in the constitution.

2.3 Each named Fingal PPN Member Organisation shall have one vote.

2.4 Voting shall be by show of voting paddles or secret ballot where requested and in accordance with the constitution.

2.5 Decisions shall be by simple majority.

2.6 Voting for election to the Secretariat and Local Community Development Committee shall be by secret ballot.

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

2.8 A clear record of voting result shall be signed by tellers and countersigned by Facilitator of the meeting.

2.9 Tellers shall be appointed by the facilitator to count votes. Anyone seeking to be elected to a position shall be disqualified from being appointed a teller.

3. Attendance at Plenaries

3.1 All named Fingal PPN Organisations are entitled to attend the Plenary.

3.2 Fingal PPN member organisations can send more than one Representative to the Plenary. Only one of those Representatives shall have voting and speaking rights. Other representatives shall have speaking rights only.

3.3 The Secretariat may invite guest speakers to attend the Plenary.

3.4 The Secretariat may invite strategic partner organisations to attend the Plenary in an observer capacity.

4. Agenda

4.1 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. Adopting Plenary Standing Orders
4. Approval of Minutes of last Plenary and Matters Arising
5. PPN Activity Report by Secretariat Member
6. Finance and Budget Update
7. Ratification of Linkage Group Elections.
8. Election to fill any Vacancies arising on the Secretariat and Local Community Development Committee (Annual General Meeting only).
9. Items and Motions submitted for Discussion and Decision.
10. Workshop / Information Session / Guest Speaker as requested by previous Plenary and / or as organised by the Secretariat.
11. Date of Next Meeting

4.2 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.

4.3 The Plenary meeting shall be facilitated by a member 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 Fingal PPN Staff.

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

6. Conduct at Plenary Meetings

6.1 Members always shall observe accepted practice while taking part in the Plenary business, including:

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- Be courteous and speak by addressing the Facilitator;
- Only address the meeting in order and as directed by Facilitator;
- Always Comply immediately with directions of Facilitator;
- No cross talk or interruption of any speaker addressing the meeting;
- Follow the agenda and strive to reach effective decisions;
- Represent the views of your member organisation;
- Turn off your mobile phones as you enter the room of debate (where you have an emergency call please leave the room);
- Be prepared for the Plenary by reading relevant documents etc. received before the meeting;
- Business shall be conducted by the facilitator of the Plenary in keeping with Standing Orders.

6.2 Discrimination

All members attending the Plenary have the right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, age, sexuality, religion or any other matter which causes people to be treated with injustice.

7. Process of Motions and Resolutions

Any motion proposed and seconded **at the meeting** becomes a resolution and shall take precedence in the discussion and shall be immediately placed before the meeting for discussion and resolution.

The facilitator shall put the resolution to a vote when of the view that such is the appropriate procedure at that point and such decision taken by facilitator shall be final and the resolution shall then be placed before the meeting for decision by simple majority – a ballot or show of voting paddles.

Where a member proposes that the “Resolution be now put before the meeting” and such a proposal is seconded then that resolution takes precedence at that point of the meeting and such resolution placed before the meeting for decision by simple majority – a ballot or show of voting paddles.

Should the resolution be carried by simple majority either by show of voting paddles or ballot then the original resolution or as amended by the meeting shall be placed before the meeting for decision by simple majority without any further debate – a ballot or show of voting paddles.

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Should a secret ballot (poll) be called for by three (3) or more members then a ballot shall precede with tellers being appointed with the process being overseen by the Secretariat, or where the Secretariat is not available, through the election of a Standing Orders Committee for that meeting only.

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 resolution is not carried due to an equality of votes or is lost, the same resolution shall not be placed before the membership for a period of six (6) months.

A demand for a secret ballot may be withdrawn by the person or persons who made the demand.

8. 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 and place) the meeting as adjourned is reconvened.

9. 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.

Appendix 2: Gathering Signatures

PPN Members who wish to gather signatures of other PPN members can do so through:

- Attendance at PPN Activities such as Linkage Groups, Training, and other open meeting types.
- Making use of the online directory of PPN members, available at www.fingalppn.ie/members.
- Submitting a news item for the PPN Newsletter with relevant contact information.
- Using the contact emails for all PPN Representatives, Facilitators and Linkage Groups on the PPN website.
- Cooperating with other PPN members in their local area.
- Templates for gathering signatures are available on the PPN website, available at: www.fingalppn.ie.

Appendix 3: Expectations and Responsibilities of a Board and 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 expectations and responsibilities are generally within the remit of the Chair or Chief Officer (or equivalent). The majority are likely to be already in place.

Where a board or committee has PPN representation, the PPN expects it to:

- Have and communicate clear terms of reference, 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 a 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 fosters 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 potential conflicts of interest are clearly stated and dealt with appropriately.
- Offer relevant training to all members and to 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.
- Set the agenda in consultation with members and to enable members to put items on the agenda.
- Pay travel and other expenses to members (where possible).
- Include all points of discussion within the minutes, and not to dismiss those which may be considered "only relevant to a few".

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- To produce an agreed “meeting outcome” document at the end of each meeting that can be shared with the Linkage Group.

What a board or committee can expect from a PPN Representative:

- Attend meetings, or send their alternate (where possible);
- Prepare thoroughly for meetings, and be able to contribute fully;
- Feedback to their PPN Linkage Group and take direction from them;
- Take a full part in the workings of the Board or Committee including participation in subgroups, consultations, etc.;
- Be open and honest in their dealings with the Board or Committee, declaring any potential conflicts of interest.

Appendix 4: Electoral Process

The process of Election is Proportional Representation Single Transferable Vote (PRSTV).

- All Elections shall be by secret ballot.
- Each member group or organisation shall be entitling 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” (*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 must be maintained including details of each Count.
- Verification of Nominees to ensure they meet the criteria.
- Circulation of details of Nominees to Linkage Groups to consider them prior to the Election.

Appendix 5: Complaints Policy

Fingal Public Participation Network is committed to dealing effectively with any complaints you may have about our service.

If we got something wrong, we will apologise and where possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

When to use this policy

When you complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us (for example services provided by Fingal County Council, Dublin Airport, the Health Service Executive, etc.) and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

Informal resolution

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things as soon as possible and in the easiest and most direct way. If you have a complaint, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. However, they may need time, up to 5 work days, to look into it.

If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your complaint, the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for your complaint to be formally investigated.

How to complain formally

You can make a complaint in any of the ways below:

- You can ask for a copy of our complaint form from the person with whom you are already in contact.

- You can use the form on our website at www.fingalppn.ie.
- You can e mail us at complaints@fingalppn.ie.
- You can write a letter to us at the following address: Complaints, Fingal Public Participation Network, Civic Offices, Grove Road, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 W638.

Copies of this policy and the complaint form are available on our website www.fingalppn.ie.

Physical copies of this policy and the complaint form are available upon request from info@fingalppn.ie.

What should you include in your complaint

- Remember to state your name, address and telephone number (and email, if applicable) and whether you are acting on behalf of someone else
- Briefly describe what your complaint is about stating relevant dates and times, if applicable
- List your specific concerns starting with the most important concern
- Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (for example an apology, explanation, etc.)
- State your preferred method of communication

It will assist the Complaints Officer if extra information and/or copies of relevant documents are attached to your complaint.

Dealing with your complaint

We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.

We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you

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have any particular requirements for example, if you have language difficulties.

We will deal with your complaint in an open and honest way.

We will make sure that your interactions with us in the future do not suffer just because you have made a complaint.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to investigate your complaint. If your complaint is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody from the service to look into it and get back to you. In some cases, if the complaint is serious, we may ask someone from outside the organisation to investigate.

We will set out to you our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we have got it right. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for.

The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it is important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 30 working days of the Secretariat meeting that directly follows the receipt of the complaint. .

If your complaint is more complex we will:

- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate

- tell you how long we expect it to take.
- give you regular updates every 20 working days on any progress made

The person who is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are.

In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

When investigating your complaint, we will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your complaint.

If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any guidance.

Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or email, for example.

If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

Putting things right

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If we didn't do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

Appeal

If we formally investigate your complaint and you are not satisfied with the outcome you may request an optional local appeal which will be dealt with by persons not involved in the original handling of your complaint.

Department of Rural and Community Development

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD). The DRCD is the Government Department responsible for the oversight of Public Participation Networks and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on our part.

The DRCD expects you to bring your complaint to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the DRCD by:

- telephone: 076 106 4900
- email: ppn@drcd.gov.ie
- writing to: Department of Rural and Community Development, Trinity Point, 10-11 South Leinster Street, Dublin 2, D02 EF85

Learning Lessons

We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. The Secretariat considers a summary of all complaints

on a regular basis as well as details of any serious complaints.

Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

What if you need help

Our staff will aim to help you make your complaint known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact your local Citizens Information Centre who may be able to assist you.

What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

Everyone involved in a process under this policy are expected to respect the confidentiality of the matter and of everyone involved throughout the process.

Appendix 6: Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct shall be signed by every member of the PPN elected to a representative position on the various committees or boards where the PPN has such representation and by the members of the Secretariat and by every member who acts as a Facilitator.

This Code of Conduct details what each member shall commit to in their role as a representative of the PPN and in all areas relating to their interaction with, and on behalf of, the PPN.

All members and members with a representative role 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 and staff, beneficiaries and regulators and to promote strategic and operational effectiveness.

5. Governance

Members shall always support the ethos and 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 programmes;
- Support the Resource Worker in their executive role and the Facilitator in their leadership role.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Members shall always:

- Act in the best interests of the PPN;
- Declare any potential ‘Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Loyalty’ or any such circumstance as may be viewed by others as conflicting as soon as it arises;
- Abide by decisions of the Secretariat and comply with any requirements it requires regarding potential conflicts of interest or loyalty.

7. Guardian of the PPN’s reputation

Members shall:

- Not speak as a member to the media or any public forum without the prior knowledge and approval of the Facilitator of the Secretariat.
- Ensure that any comments made shall reflect current policy even if they do not agree with them.
- When speaking as a private citizen upholds the reputation of the PPN.
- Respect individual confidentiality.
- Take an active interest in the PPN’s public image.

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 Facilitator.
- Use PPN resources responsibly, when authorised in accordance with procedure.

9. In addition to the foregoing Members shall:

- Support the PPN’s vision, values, principles and aims and actively promote these;
- Always comply with PPN’s policy and procedure;
- Seek to maintain and promote integrity, good governance, effectiveness and efficiency for the delivery of the aims of PPN;
- Not break the law or act against any regulation in force that would bring the PPN into disrepute;

10. Plenary and other Meetings of PPN Members

Members attending Plenary and other meetings internal to or external to the PPN shall at all times conduct and behave in a professional manner keeping in mind at all times their conduct reflects on the integrity of the PPN and the sector and shall observe accepted practice while participating as a representative or member and shall:

- Be courteous and speak by addressing the Facilitator;
- Only address the meeting in order and as directed by Facilitator;
- Comply immediately with directions of Facilitator;
- Not cross talk or interruption of any speaker addressing the meeting;
- Follow the Agenda and strive to reach effective decisions;
- Represent the views of your member organisation;
- Turn off your mobile phones (where you have an emergency call please leave the room);
- Be prepared for all meetings by reading relevant documents that are received in reasonable time before the meeting.

11. 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 inability to attend, 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 unless authorised to speak on matters outside Secretariat meetings.

12. Leaving the Secretariat or Representative Role

Members shall:

- Understand that any breach of this code may result in that persons removal from the PPN or any of its constituent levels – Linkage Groups, Secretariat or any representative role.
- Inform the Facilitator of the Secretariat in writing, stating reasons for resigning from the Secretariat or representative role.

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- 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 Fingal Public Participation Network:

Date: _____

Facilitator

15. Signed by Representative / Secretariat Member / Facilitator:

Date: _____

16. Name of Committee / Board: _____

Appendix 7: Fingal PPN Travel and Subsistence Policy

Fingal PPN Travel & Subsistence Policy

In general, any reasonable expenses arising for a Fingal Public Participation Network Representative on a Decision-Making Committee (SPCs, LCDC JPC and the Secretariat) shall be met by FPPN.

The following key principles underpin this policy:

- FPPN Representatives on Decision Making Committees should be properly compensated for out of pocket expenses when contributing to any activities associated with that committee.
- The process of claiming for the reimbursement of expenses should be as straightforward as possible while following procedures that allow the FPPN to properly account for payments made
- The FPPN shall provide support to representatives who require help in submitting claims for the reimbursement of expenses
- Reimbursing Representatives for expenses whilst contributing their expertise and time to meetings, committees, training or other activities organised by the FPPN is best practice.
- Payment shall only be approved for meetings for which a report has been received by a PPN representative. In cases where there are multiple PPN representatives on one committee or at one event, one report on behalf of all shall suffice.

Expenses for Travelling to and from meetings:

- A mileage allowance of €44 per kilometre shall be paid for travelling to and from meetings. Travel costs do not require to be receipted.
- Claims to be made within three months of being accrued.
- All claims shall be reimbursed by electronic transfer – all Representatives in receipt of expenses are required to provide bank account details.
- Claims to be made on the official Travel and Subsistence Claims Form (attached).

Subsistence:

- FPPN Representatives can claim back the cost of food or drink that was bought on the day of the meeting, training etc., but only:
 - When the total time involved has been five hours or more; or

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- If no food or drink was provided at the meeting, training etc.
- Subsistence claims shall be paid on production of appropriate receipts and should be claimed on the Travel and Subsistence Claim Form.

Other Costs:

All other costs to the FPPN Representative shall be dealt with as they arise and according to available budgets.