

TERMS OF REFERENCE LONGFORD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN) SECRETARIAT

1. Longford Public Participation Network and Secretariat

Public Participation Networks (PPN) are being developed within each local authority area (engaging in and within municipal districts and at the County/City level) to enable the public to take an active formal role in policy making and oversight activities of the Local Authority's areas of responsibility. The Co. Longford PPN will be the main link through which Longford County Council connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors. The PPN Secretariat will be the working group whose role will be to facilitate and communicate to all involved in the structure.

2. The Purpose of the Longford PPN Secretariat

The purpose of Longford PPN Secretariat is to administer the day to day running of the PPN, facilitate decisions and coordinate activities of the PPN between County Plenary Meetings.

3. Membership of the Longford Public Participation Network in relation to the PPN Secretariat

The Secretariat will be made up of one representative from each of the Municipal Districts and an equal number (minimum of 2) of representatives from each of the electoral colleges of the PPN.

- 2 Community & Voluntary Representatives
- 2 Social Inclusion Representatives
- 2 Environmental Representatives
- 1 Area Representative from the Longford Municipal District
- 1 Area Representative from the Granard Municipal District
- 1 Area Representative from the Ballymahon Municipal

Although the new framework does not allow for a Committee structure there is the option for the Secretariat to appoint a "convenor" or "facilitator" or some such title.

4. The Role of the Longford PPN Secretariat

The role of the PPN Secretariat is to:

- Facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the Plenary
- Ensure proper functioning of the PPN in between Plenaries
- Coordinate activities of PPN
- Communicate extensively and regularly with all PPN Members and in the process disseminate information concerning all PPN activities as widely as possible.

- Manage the resource worker who will be provided to the PPN at a county level to enable them in delivering their objectives.
- Oversee the registration of organisations

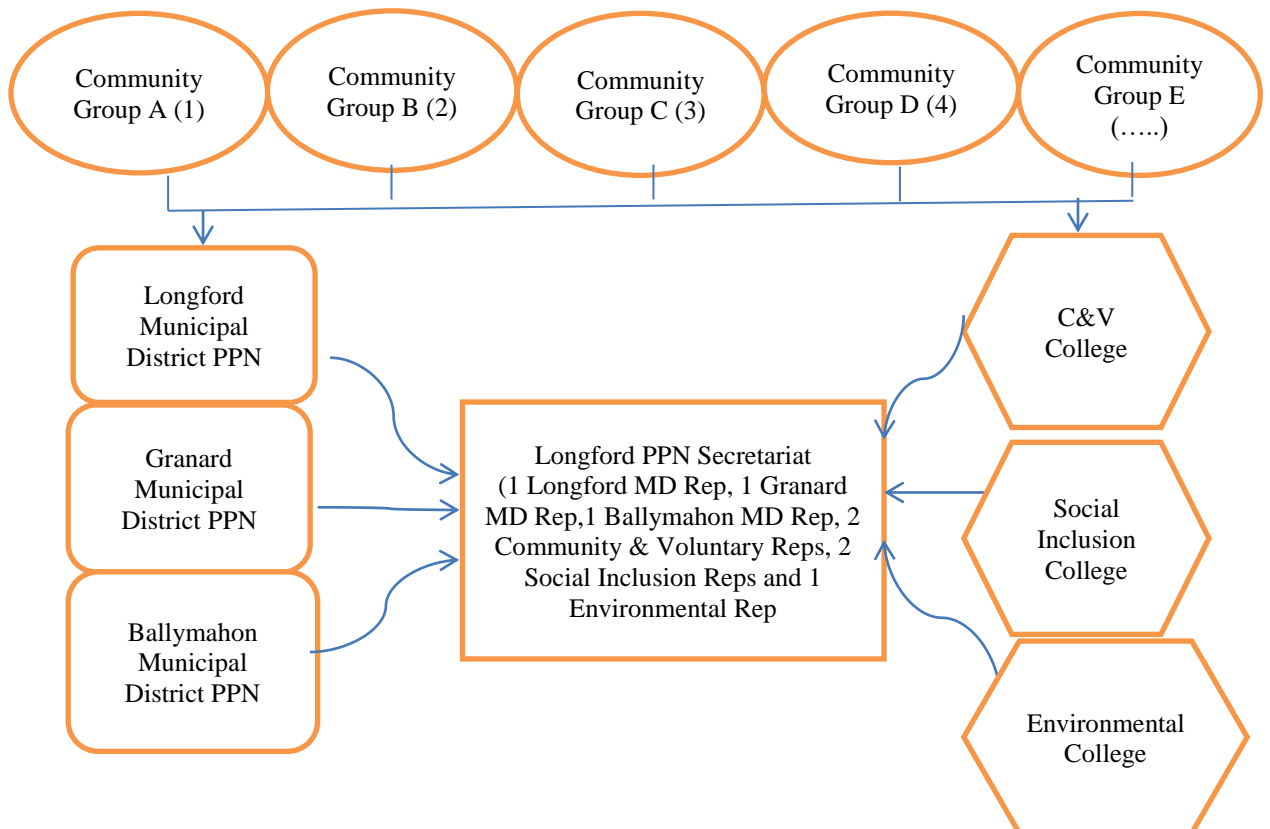
5. The role of the Secretariat in relation to Linkage groups

When Longford County Council/ Outside bodies have community representative seats to fill on any of its committees/ structures they will notify the PPN Secretariat and request that the representatives to fill these seats be chosen by the PPN.

The Secretariat will then ensure that all member organisations in the County are notified of the situation. A time and a place for all those organisations with an interest/involvement in the issue(s) being addressed by the particular committee will be arranged and a meeting called.

This group will constitute a PPN “Linkage Group” for this particular committee and the topic(s) being addressed. The Linkage Group will choose their representatives for the committee. The Secretariat will ensure that this is done in a fair and transparent manner.

6. Structure of the PPN and how the Secretariat fits in:



7. Term of Office

The term of office for each member of the Secretariat is 2 years. This term is renewable once the appropriate re-nomination procedures are considered by the PPN Plenary. Each registered member organisation will be contacted by the PPN resource worker after the 2 year period, requesting the name of the person(s) they wish to represent their Electoral College and Municipal District on the Secretariat. If a Secretariat member reigns before the term of office is up then re-election will be sought through the PPN.

8. Support for Newly elected Secretariat

Each newly elected member will be given the following induction support to enable them to become familiar with the Secretariat policies and practices:

- ❖ Provided with a copy of the PPN Secretariat Terms of Reference and schedule of meetings
- ❖ Offered induction training with the PPN Resource worker
- ❖ The Resource worker will make themselves available to offer support if required
- ❖ Be provided with additional training that will enable them to carry out their duties as an elected representative for their college/ municipal district

9. Meeting Structure

Quorum

For a Secretariat meeting to occur a quorum of 2/3 is required to conduct the business of the Secretariat.

Frequency of Meetings

The PPN Secretariat will meet at least 2 times a year. The schedule and venue of meetings for each calendar year will be agreed at the first meeting held each year.

Meeting attendance

Absence from (2/3) meetings in a row without prior apologies will assume resignation of the representative(s). Attendance at meetings will be recorded by the resource worker.

Agendas

Agendas will be drawn up by the resource worker in conjunction with the Secretariat. Members who wish to place an item on the agenda must submit it to the resource worker at least one week prior to the Secretariat meeting. This is to facilitate the circulation of an agenda to all members before the date of the meeting for which the agenda is drawn up. Important items that require inclusion at a meeting after the drafting of the formal agenda can only be dealt with under “any other business”. These items must be submitted to the resource worker in advance of the meeting.

Minutes

Minutes must be documented for all Secretariat meetings. Minutes must be typed, proposed and seconded at the next meeting. The resource worker will have the responsibility of ensuring that an accurate record is kept of all the meetings.

Minutes recorded will be action based. Minutes of previous meeting will be circulated by the resource worker to the Secretariat within ten days of the meeting.

Other meetings:

The County Plenary will meet formally at least twice a year. A plenary meeting will only be deemed valid if at least 15% of all member organisations are represented and also only if at least 4 of those present are members of the Secretariat.

10. Voting at Secretariat meetings

All decisions will be reached by discussion and consensus. If voting is required to resolve or to decide on a particular issue, each member of the Secretariat present at the meeting will have a vote. Where a consensus cannot be reached on a particular issue a majority rule will apply.

10. Expenses

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11. Ethos of the PPN Secretariat

The ethos of the PPN Secretariat is based on principles of equality and democracy of process, flexibility, collaboration and non-territoriality of approach of its members, and actions which are evidence and needs based. Members recognise that building a successful partnership requires trust, honesty and a generous sharing of skills, knowledge and resources.

The PPN Secretariat aspires to ensure the views of all PPN member organisations on promoting the well-being of present and future generations in their locality/college are being effectively communicated by PPN representatives in all arenas in which they participate.

Members of the PPN Secretariat cannot use their position to influence member groups for political, financial or any kind of gain that would be deemed as personal advancement. (Need to expand???)

11. Work-plan of the PPN Secretariat

Each year the PPN Secretariat will develop a work-plan for the forthcoming year. The annual work-plan will be needs-based and will be guided by the principles and aims as detailed in the terms of reference of the Secretariat. The work-plan will also include a specific work-plan for the PPN resource worker. Work-plan activities will

be discussed and agreed by Secretariat Members at the quarterly workplan review meetings.

12. Confidentiality

The PPN Secretariat is committed to the principle of confidentiality as a core right of every citizen, and to safeguard the confidentiality of all data/information provided to, and by, registered PPN members and Longford County Council/ Outside Bodies. Confidential or privileged material discussed at Secretariat meetings should only be discussed outside the Secretariat with the agreement of all members of the Secretariat.

13. Media Queries

All media queries in relation to the Secretariat must be agreed upon by all Secretariat members.

14. Amendments to Terms of Reference

Proposed amendments to terms of reference require notification to all Secretariat members two(?) weeks in advance of a Secretariat meeting. This is to ensure that all members have an adequate time to be informed of any proposed changes / amendments. A 50% + 1 majority of the Secretariat is required to amend the terms of reference.

15. Guiding Documents

1. Working Group Report on Citizen Engagement with Local Government
2. PPN Guidelines effective 10 April 2014 Guidelines for Public Participation Networks
3. PPN User guide VI May 16