

LIMERICK PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK CONSTITUTION

This Constitution is the set of rules that guide how Limerick PPN works. It is the document that brings together the [six principles of good governance](#) that Limerick PPN is committed to.

Constitution Version History

Version	Date Adopted	Notes
1.0	Feb 10 th 2020	<p>This Constitution comes into effect on 10th February 2020</p> <p><u>Except for the following sections:</u></p> <p>a) <i>Section 8.6.5 will not be implemented until after the Annual Members Meeting in 2020</i></p> <p>b) <i>To be decided upon at the next Plenary meeting: Section 6.2.2 Associate Membership: reference to organisations who may qualify for membership including religious organisations whose community activities complement the priorities or activities of PPN members.</i></p> <p><i>This Constitution is subject to changes based on the review of the national PPN’s User Guide and any possible direction from the Department of Rural and Community Development that may arise. Changes will be made in accordance with Section 11 (amendments to the constitution).</i></p>

Contents

INTRODUCTION 4

1. NAME OF NETWORK 5

2. WELLBEING STATEMENT..... 5

 3.1 Collective purpose..... 5

 3.2 Health 5

 3.3 Wellbeing 5

 3.4 Social Determinants of Health 5

3. FUNCTIONS 6

5. VISION AND PRINCIPLES 7

 5.1 Vision 7

 5.2 Principles 7

6. MEMBERSHIP 8

 6.1 Full Membership 8

 6.1.1 Full Membership Criteria 8

 6.1.2 Term of Membership 8

 6.1.3. Ending membership..... 8

 6.1.4 Registration Process 9

 6.2 Associate Membership 9

 6.2.1 Advantages of having Associate Members..... 9

 6.2.2 Associate Membership Criteria 10

 6.2.3 Associate Membership Registration Process and Term of Membership 10

 6.3 Membership Pillars or Electoral Colleges 10

 6.3.1 Social Inclusion..... 10

 6.3.2 Environmental 10

 6.3.3 Community and Voluntary..... 11

 6.4 Municipal Districts 11

7. STRUCTURE and MANAGEMENT11

 7.1 Plenary 11

 7.1.1 Extraordinary General Meetings 12

 7.1.2 Procedure at the Plenary or EGMs 12

 7.1.3 Qualification of Voter 13

 7.1.4 Record of Voting 13

 7.1.5 Tellers..... 13

 7.1.6 Suspension of Standing Orders..... 13

 7.2 Secretariat..... 13

 7.2.1 Responsibilities of the Secretariat 14

 7.2.2 Complaints Procedure 15

7.2.3	Complaints Appeals Process	15
7.2.4	Criteria for Secretariat Membership	15
7.2.5	Role of the Secretariat Facilitator	16
7.2.6	Role of PPN Staff	16
7.2.7	Secretariat meetings	17
7.2.8	Emergency and Other Meetings of the Secretariat	17
7.3	Linkage Groups	17
7.3.1	External committees Limerick PPN Linkage Groups are aligned to	18
7.3.2	Role of Linkage Groups	18
7.3.3	Membership of Linkage Groups	18
7.3.4	Responsibilities of the Linkage Group	19
7.3.5	Rights of the Linkage Group members	19
7.3.6	Role of Linkage Group Facilitator	19
8.	PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION	20
8.1	What is a PPN Representative	20
8.2	Principles Governing PPN Representation	20
8.3	Role of the PPN Representative	21
8.4	Responsibilities of the PPN Representative	21
8.5	Rights of the PPN Representative	22
8.6	Vacancies on Limerick City and County Council or other committees	22
8.6.1	Criteria for candidates for election to external committees	22
8.6.3	Nominations	23
8.6.4	Elections	23
8.6.5	Panels	23
8.7	When PPN Representatives do not fulfil their obligations	24
8.8	Code of Conduct for PPN Representatives	24
9.	FINANCIAL MATTERS	24
9.1	Financial Records	24
9.2	PPN Representative Expenses	24
10.	SERVICE OF NOTICES	25
11.	AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION	25
	Appendix 1: Limerick Public Participation Network Plenary Standing Orders	26
	Appendix 2: Rights and responsibilities of a committee with PPN Representation	28
	Appendix 3: Process for electing Secretariat members	29
	Appendix 4: Code of Conduct	31
	Appendix 5: Limerick PPN Travel and Subsistence Policy	34

INTRODUCTION

Limerick Public Participation Network is a countywide network that facilitates people from the community, social inclusion and environmental pillars to participate in local decision-making and policy-development structures. It is part of the framework for public participation in local government and it has a statutory basis in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Section 46).

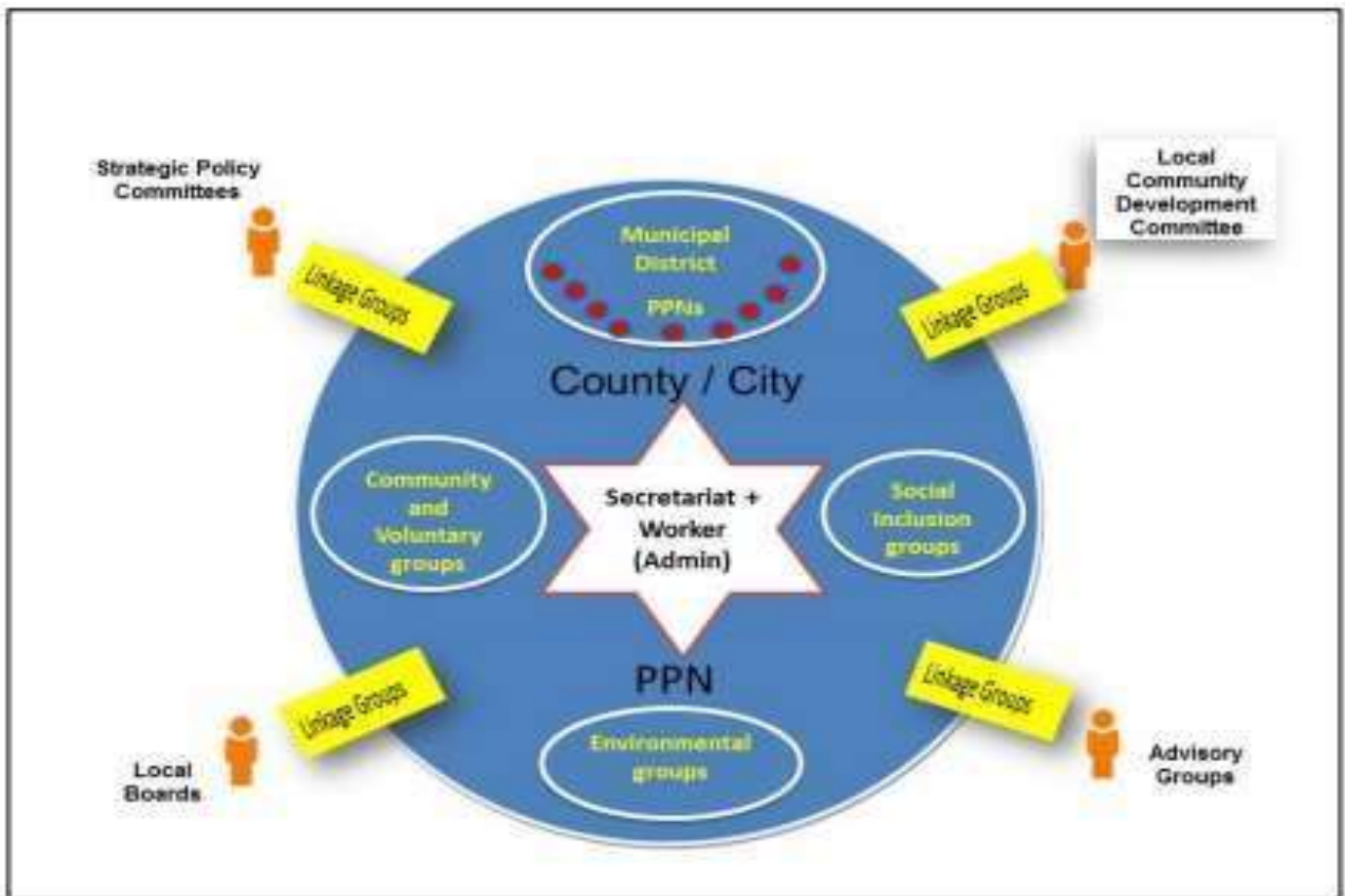
The PPN facilitates community participation and engagement in:

- a) Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's)
- b) Limerick Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- c) Joint Policing Committee (JPC)
- d) Other Council committees
- e) Other committees outside of the Local Authority remit where a request for Limerick PPN representation has been requested and agreed to by the PPN

The PPN is made up of a number of interconnected structures, which are:

- a) Plenary (all registered member groups/organisations)
- b) Pillars
- c) Municipal Districts
- d) Secretariat
- e) Linkage Groups

The structure the PPN is shown in the following graphic and explained later in this document.



Structure of the PPN

1. NAME OF NETWORK

The name of the network is Limerick Public Participation Network otherwise referred to as Limerick PPN or the PPN.

2. WELLBEING STATEMENT

3.1 Collective purpose

Limerick PPN and all its members collectively aim to improve quality of life and wellbeing of all citizens and communities in Limerick. Limerick PPN is committed to supporting Healthy Ireland, the national framework for improved health and wellbeing and understands health and its determinants in terms of this national policy.

3.2 Health

Health is much more than an absence of disease or disability, and individual health, and that of the population of the city and county of Limerick, affects the quality of everyone's lived experience. Health is an essential resource for everyday life, a public good, and an asset for health and human development.

3.3 Wellbeing

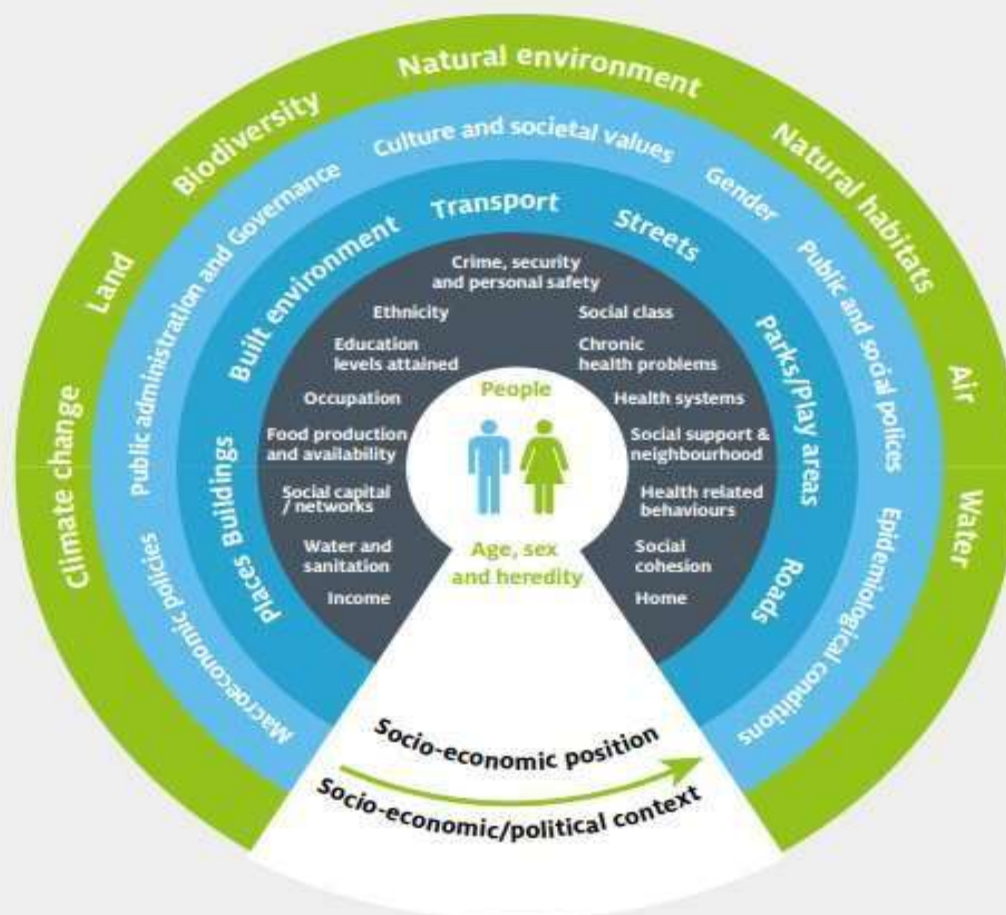
Wellbeing is an integral part of this definition of health. It reflects the quality of life and the various factors which can influence it over the course of a person's life. Wellbeing also reflects the concept of positive mental health, in which a person can realise his or her own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and be able to make a contribution to his or her community. Consideration of health and wellbeing requires a shift in focus from what can go wrong in people's lives, to focusing on what makes their lives go well.

3.4 Social Determinants of Health

Limerick PPN fully endorses the social determinants approach to health. The social determinants of health are the range of factors that impact upon health and wellbeing. These include the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age. These factors, illustrated in the graphic below are not usually the direct causes of illness but are described as "the causes of the causes". This approach to health means focusing on the social, physical and economic environment rather than simply on people's individual behaviours.

Determinants of Health

(Adapted from Dalgren and Whitehead, 1991 and Grant and Barton, 2006)



Social determinants of health and wellbeing (from *Healthy Ireland*)

3. FUNCTIONS

The aims of the Limerick PPN are:

1. To provide an open, inclusive and transparent representative structure for all community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups in Limerick
2. To consult with the community so as to encourage and enable public participation in local decision-making and planning of services
3. To facilitate the selection of community representatives onto decision-making bodies and to support those representatives to be effective in their roles
4. To foster, in particular, the inclusion and empowerment of groups and organisations with a focus on tackling disadvantage and social exclusion including rural isolation
5. To support the member groups of Limerick PPN so that:
 - a) they can develop their capacity to do their work more effectively
 - b) they can participate effectively in PPN activities
 - c) they are included and their voices and concerns are heard
6. To support a process that will feed a broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals from PPN member groups into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers

7. To facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and efficient information exchange between environmental, community and voluntary and social inclusion groups and between these groups and Limerick City and County Council and other decision-making bodies
8. To ensure that the views expressed by PPN representatives are mandated by the Limerick PPN membership
9. To promote and make known Limerick PPN and its aims and objectives, particularly to potential members
10. To develop and promote Limerick PPN so that the work of the PPN is clearly recognised, acknowledged and understood by local decision-making bodies and the PPN has a strong community voice within the city and county
11. To contribute to Limerick City and County Council's sustainable development and to the achievement of a Limerick vision for the well-being of this and future generations

5. VISION AND PRINCIPLES

5.1 Vision

The Vision of the Limerick Public Participation Network is that it will be an effective:

1. Link through which Limerick City and County Council connects with the community and voluntary sector and the community and voluntary sector connects with the Limerick City and County Council.
2. Link through which key stakeholders of the *Limerick Local Economic Plan (LECP)* may be able to engage with the community and voluntary sector in Limerick and vice versa.

5.2 Principles

Limerick Public Participation Network is underpinned by the following principles:

1. **Good governance:** implementing the Charities Governance Code as far as possible and applicable to Limerick PPN, including compliance with all relevant legislation (e.g. GDPR).
2. **Inclusive:** of volunteer-led organisations in Limerick, and actively seeking the inclusion of groups which may traditionally be marginalised. The Limerick PPN recognises that it relies on volunteers and seeks to accommodate this diverse and active population in how it organises its business and activities.
3. **Participatory,** open, welcoming, respectful, collaborative and facilitory. Some of the ways this is actioned are:
 - a) The PPN encourages participation by members in all aspects of its operations and is a flat structure.
 - b) Using methods in meetings which encourage everyone to participate equally and equitably.
 - c) Clear and agreed communications to and from members using a variety of traditional and new mechanisms are used.
 - d) The PPN supports new or inexperienced representatives of PPN member groups/organisations to develop their skills and capacity
 - e) The PPN is committed to having its meetings and events as accessible as possible for its membership (including: accessible meeting venues with suitable facilities for people with disabilities; option of large-print written materials; presentations sent out in advance to people with visual impairment; option of ISL interpretation services (subject to availability); location(s) to suit city and county membership).
 - f) Holding meetings at different times and in rotating or central locations so that a variety of people can attend.

4. **Independence:** from the Local Authority and of any vested interests. Open, flat and participatory working structures support this.
5. **Valuing of Diversity:** and recognising that the pillars (see Section 6.3) are broad and made up of people with many different opinions. It is not expected that the PPN will come up with a 'one voice response' but that it will feedback the issues and suggestions raised by a broad range of environmental, social inclusion and community and voluntary groups.
6. **Accountable and transparent:** in its processes, procedures and in its dealings with member groups, PPN representatives, Limerick City and County Council, the Department of Rural and Community Development and other stakeholders.
7. **Clarity of purpose:** Limerick PPN is focused on its core functions and does not duplicate the work of other organisations in Limerick. Limerick PPN, however, encourages and signposts members to engage with relevant opportunities delivered by members, Associate Members and other organisations whose ethos is compatible with that of Limerick PPN.
8. **Committed to the Sustainable Development Goals:** Limerick PPN is committed in its practices to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Full Membership

6.1.1 Full Membership Criteria

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

1. Have an address in Limerick and are volunteer led (i.e. voluntary board/committee who are directly responsible for the organisation/group).
2. Are not-for-profit and non-political.
3. Are independent (i.e. their own Constitution/set of rules) and not a subgroup/subsidiary of another group.
4. Have at least five (5) members and are open to new members.
5. Are in existence for at least six (6) months.
6. Have an appropriate governance structure (formal structure):
 - a) With a set of rules/financial procedures
 - b) Meeting regularly and at least six (6) times a year
7. Are National Organisations if they are headquartered in Limerick or through their Local Limerick Branch (the local branch will be eligible to vote and hold the representative position).

6.1.2 Term of Membership

Membership is renewed every two (2) years. It runs from initial registration to the Annual General Plenary Meeting during the second 24 months of membership (i.e. Once a group/organisation has become a member of the PPN it will need to reregister after 24 months membership, but if the Annual General Plenary Meeting in that year is before the 24 months membership is reached, reregistration needs to be done before this meeting.)

6.1.3. Ending membership

1. Withdrawal: Member groups/organisations can withdraw their membership at any time by written notification from their governing body to the Secretariat

2. Lapse: Membership will lapse if members do not reregister when required.
3. Expulsion: A proposal to expel a PPN member organisation may be made in the event of a member group/organisation acting in a manner contrary to the ethos and purpose of Limerick PPN or otherwise failing to comply with this Constitution.

In the event of it being necessary to expel a group/organisation from the PPN, the PPN will act in accordance with the following procedure:

- a) The proposal to expel a member group/organisation will be placed on the agenda for the next Plenary meeting, and the group/organisation concerned will be notified of the intention to raise the matter at least fourteen (14) days before the meeting at which the expulsion is to be considered
- b) The organisation will be given an opportunity to address the issue at the Plenary meeting
- c) The expulsion will be effective if passed by the majority of the members present at the Plenary meeting.
- d) While the expulsion process is being pursued, voting rights for the group/organisation will be suspended until the issue has been resolved

6.1.4 Registration Process

1. Prospective members register/reregister by completing and submitting the on-line Limerick PPN registration form.
2. Registration can happen at any time of the year.
3. The registration form is processed by the PPN Secretariat through its staff who, before confirming membership of a group/organisation, assess eligibility for membership and ensure the appropriate electoral college/pillar (i.e. Community, Environment and Social Inclusion) (see Section 6.3) and Municipal District have been chosen.
4. Where staff have any queries in relation to a registration, they endeavour to address the queries with representative(s) of the group/organisation who submitted the registration form. Where the staff remain unclear about the eligibility of a group/organisation, they refer the matter to the Secretariat who decide at their next scheduled meeting on the what course of action should be taken. The Secretariat has the final say on eligibility to be a PPN member.
5. Because of the separation of the functions of public representatives and the PPN, Councillors, TD'S, Senators and MEPS cannot be a contact person for PPN member groups/organisations.

6.2 Associate Membership

Associate Membership provides a link between the PPN and key community groups, organisations and services in Limerick who are not full members of Limerick PPN. Associate Members can attend PPN meetings, join Linkage Groups and receive information (such as newsletters, notices and minutes of meetings), but they do not have voting rights and they cannot represent or be elected to represent the PPN on external committees and they cannot sit on the Secretariat.

6.2.1 Advantages of having Associate Members

Associate Membership enhances and enriches the PPN because Associate Members:

1. Expand the PPN reach into the wider community and support base.
2. Provide an opportunity to engage with the professional community and voluntary sector.
3. May, as part of their remit, run initiatives that would be of benefit some or all of the wider PPN membership. Equally the participation of the wider PPN membership in the initiatives of Associate Members may be of benefit to Associate Members.

6.2.2 Associate Membership Criteria

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

1. Engage with or support the PPN.
2. Are an established community group, organisation or service with clear governance structures.
3. Work in related, supportive or similar fields to that of the PPN or its members.
4. Agree to comply with PPN Constitution.
5. Are established in Limerick for at least six months.

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

1. Local Development Companies.
2. University Departments or research centres, colleges, other third level groups or associations.
3. Charitable trusts and foundations.
4. Religious organisations whose community activities complement the priorities or activities of PPN members.
5. Youth-led community groups, including Limerick Comhairle na nÓg.

6.2.3 Associate Membership Registration Process and Term of Membership

The process of registering for associate membership is the same as that outlined in section 6.1.4 above.

Details on the term of and ending membership are in sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

6.3 Membership Pillars or Electoral Colleges

The PPN membership is divided into three (3) pillars or colleges. Each organisation/group belongs to a Pillar which represents their primary interest. In some cases, a group/organisation may 'fit' more than one pillar, but one (1) pillar must be chosen in line with the following descriptions:

6.3.1 Social Inclusion

1. Organisations/groups whose main activity centres on working to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or unemployment using community development approaches to build sustainable communities where the values of equality, social justice and inclusion are promoted, and human rights are respected and promoting the overall wellbeing of their community.
2. Examples of groups that may be included in this college: disability, ethnic minority, family support, urban and rural disadvantage, youth, Traveller, women, literacy, unemployment, social justice, equality promotion, LGBTQI, community development, children service, drugs and alcohol and older people.

6.3.2 Environmental

1. An organisation/group whose primary objectives and activities are environmental protection and /or environmental sustainability.
2. Examples of groups that may be included in this college: permanent protection of wildlife, water protection, organic horticultural and education, environmental education or protection, environmental sustainability, invasive alien species prevention/removal, rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife. Agreed

national organisations whose local groups will also be automatically eligible to join the environment electoral college.

3. All groups/organisations wishing to join this college must be verified by the National Environmental Pillar as this is the validating body for membership of the environment electoral college. The Secretariat, through the PPN staff, forwards verification details of Environment members to the National Environmental Pillar.¹

6.3.3 Community and Voluntary

1. Community and voluntary organisations/groups cover the multiplicity of facets /segments of community life using community development approaches to build sustainable communities, focus on responses to local issues and concerns, where the values of equality and inclusion are promoted, and human rights are respected and promoting the overall wellbeing of their community.
2. Examples of the range of groups that may be included in this college: residents/tenants associations, sports and recreation groups, community associations, youth groups, community councils, arts groups, active retirement groups, self-help groups.

6.4 Municipal Districts

The City and County of Limerick has four (4) Municipal Districts: Limerick Metropolitan, Adare-Rathkeale, Cappamore-Kilmallock and Newcastle West. A PPN member's Municipal District is determined by where they primarily operate or their official address.

7. STRUCTURE and MANAGEMENT

The current structure is “flat” (i.e. everyone is equal) and is made up of:

- Plenary
- Secretariat
- Linkage Groups

7.1 Plenary

1. The full membership (excluding Associate Members) is referred to as the Plenary and it is the Governing Body with overall responsibility for the PPN. It meets at least twice (2) a year in Plenary session. One of the sessions includes the Annual General Meeting of the membership.
2. The Plenary, at its Annual General Meeting, elects a Secretariat which through the diversity of its membership is representative of the three (3) colleges and four (4) Municipal Districts, where vacancies have risen.
3. At least one (1) representative aged 18 years or over from each registered member group/organisation holding full membership will be entitled to attend and will have one (1) vote on behalf of their group/organisation. If an individual is a member of more than one group/organisation, they can only represent/vote on behalf of one (1) PPN member group/organisation.

¹ The Environmental Pillar is a national Social Partner and an advocacy coalition of twenty-seven national environmental NGOs. Between 2009 and 2014, as a Social Partner, it nominated local people to represent the environment on a range of local authority bodies. The Environmental Pillar gave up this nominating right, a right still maintained and exercised by other Social Partners, in order to ensure that the PPNs included an environmental dimension. Under the Public Participation Network (PPN) structures, these nominations are made by the members of the PPN. The Environmental Pillar is the validating body for membership of the Environmental Electoral College.

4. At least one (1) representative from each registered Associate Member group/organisation will be entitled to attend and have speaking rights only. If an individual is a member of more than one group/organisation, they can only represent one (1) PPN member group/organisation.
5. The dates for convening Plenary meetings will be decided at the Annual General Meeting of the Plenary and in the absence of such decision, by the Secretariat.
6. Member groups/organisations must receive at least 21 days' notice of a Plenary meeting.
7. The Agenda will be set by the Secretariat.
8. Items and motions for discussion will be forwarded to the Secretariat, through the PPN staff, by members at least eighteen (18) days prior to the meeting.
9. The Agenda with motions for discussion will be circulated to all members at least seven (7) days before a Plenary meeting.
10. All Plenaries will be conducted under Standing Orders Procedures – in consultation with members. See Appendix 1 for Standing Orders.
11. The Quorum for a Plenary meeting is 10% of the PPN membership. Secretariat members do not count toward the Quorum but at least six (6) must be present at a Plenary for it to be valid.

7.1.1 Extraordinary General Meetings

1. An Extraordinary General Meeting of Full Members will 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 10 full members (excluding Associated Members) to convene such a meeting.
2. The Secretariat will decide within five (5) working days of receipt of such request the date, time, and place such a meeting will be held which will be not more than twenty-one (21) working days following receipt of the request by Secretariat.
3. At least fourteen (14) days' notice will be given to members of the Extraordinary General Meeting.
4. The Notice to members will state:
 - a) Date, time and place of the meeting
 - b) Business to be transacted
 - c) Text of original request/proposal
5. The Facilitator of the Secretariat (see Section 7.2.5) will act as the Facilitator of the Extraordinary General Meeting or where the Facilitator fails to /cannot act, the Secretariat will appoint one of its members to act as Facilitator. Where the Secretariat fails to appoint a Facilitator, the Extraordinary General meeting will appoint a Facilitator by a show of hands or ballot by simple majority vote.
6. Where the Secretariat fails or omits to comply with such request to hold a meeting or Secretariat has resigned in block, then the member group/organisation who initiated the request in the first instance will convene such an Extraordinary Meeting at a date, time, and place stipulated by them and only on the original request and such notice will state the business to be transacted and text of original request/proposal. All communications in this instance will go through the PPN staff who have access to the Limerick PPN database.

7.1.2 Procedure at the Plenary or EGMs

1. Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible, or otherwise by majority vote.
2. In the event of equality of votes, the Facilitator will have a second or casting vote (should that person choose to use such a vote).

3. Where a motion is not carried due to an equality of votes or is lost, the same motion will not be placed before the membership for a period of at least six (6) months.

7.1.3 Qualification of Voter

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

7.1.4 Record of Voting

A clear record of the voting result will be signed by Tellers and countersigned by Facilitator of the meeting.

7.1.5 Tellers

Tellers will be appointed from those attending the meeting to count votes. Anyone seeking to be elected to a position will be disqualified from being appointed a teller.

7.1.6 Suspension of Standing Orders

Standing orders as regards any meeting may be suspended by simple majority of members present to address an urgent item of business.

7.2 Secretariat

1. The membership of the Secretariat is made up of ten (10) people:
 - a) 2 from each of the 3 pillars
 - b) 1 from each of the Municipal Districts
2. For membership of the Secretariat, an individual must be attached to and nominated by a PPN member group/organisation of a relevant electoral college (Pillar or Municipal District). The Electorate for that position is comprised of the members of the PPN electoral college.
3. At each Annual General Meeting – three (3) members or the number nearest to one-third of the membership will step down. Length of service in their current term on the Secretariat determines who will step down. The longest serving members step down each year. Members who have stepped down may offer themselves for re-election. In the event that all/most members have the same length of time on the Secretariat, voluntary resignations will be invited and if there are none/not enough, a lot will be drawn to select the members to step down.
4. Any vacancy arising on the Secretariat between Annual General Meetings will be filled by election from the relevant Pillar or Municipal District.
5. A member may not serve on the Secretariat for more than six (6) consecutive years and having so served will not be entitled to offer themselves for election for a further three (3) years. In total, a member will not serve more than a total of nine (9) years.
6. The quorum for Secretariat meetings will be one half plus one (1) (i.e. six (6) Secretariat members)
7. The Secretariat meets at least nine (9) times per year with no meetings in July and August
8. Secretariat members attend the two (2) Plenary Sessions in the year.
9. The Secretariat will hold ordinary meetings at location and at a time to be decided by the Secretariat.
10. Any Member elected to the Secretariat who fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings of the Secretariat without reasonable / provable reason or excuse will automatically remove themselves from

that position and the vacancy arising will be filled by the next available member on the panel as set out in Section 7.6.3.

11. The Secretariat will fill any temporary vacancy of three (3) months or more arising from a member being absent for a period (e.g. for study leave, extended travel or illness)
12. The Secretariat operates as a flat structure with no officers. Instead a Facilitator is selected by the Secretariat (see Section 7.2.5).
13. All Secretariat members must sign the Code of Conduct (Appendix 4)

7.2.1 Responsibilities of the Secretariat

All Secretariat members are equal, with no offices held by anyone. The Facilitator role rotates at least quarterly and is agreed by consensus within the Secretariat.

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

1. Manages the PPN in accordance with national guidelines, to the highest possible standard and according to Plenary-approved governance processes and procedures
2. Drafts an annual work plan, for review and approval by the Plenary, covering:
 - a. Participation in decision-making and representation
 - b. Capacity building
 - c. Information sharing and communication
 - d. Other activities as agreed
3. Facilitates the implementation of decisions of the Plenary
4. Supports the strategic development of the Limerick PPN
5. Manages the work of the PPN staff member(s), who acts as the secretary of the Secretariat and who maintains the minutes and correspondence regarding all Secretariat meetings and Plenaries
6. Is fully involved in the staff recruitment processes, where independent staff recruitment takes place
7. Appoints a Facilitator of Secretariat meetings with a term agreed by the Secretariat, but of no more than four (4) months
8. Monitors on an ongoing basis the activities of the PPN and proposes remedial action where necessary
9. Monitors the correct functioning of Linkage Groups
10. Communicates, via agreed communications processes, with all PPN members and disseminates information concerning all PPN activities or opportunities that may be of benefit to PPN members
11. Works closely with all stakeholders – including Limerick City and County Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development – to enable the PPN to deliver on its vision and aims
12. Cooperates with any National Advisory Body/Group established for monitoring and evaluation of PPN's nationally and implementing recommendations or guidelines issued by any such bodies/groups
13. Establishes subgroups to address in detail certain defined matters/issues that arise from time to time and/or as agreed by the Secretariat. These subgroups, consisting of a minimum three (3) Secretariat members, may include communications/PR, staff liaison and finance
14. Following the Annual General Meeting of the Plenary, elects a General Purposes Subcommittee from within its members consisting of three (3) representatives to hear any appeal or complaint regarding processes and procedures of the PPN.
15. In circumstances where a PPN representative is in breach of this Constitution, the Secretariat will follow the procedure given in section 8.7.

7.2.2 Complaints Procedure

1. All complaints will be in writing addressed to the Facilitator of the Secretariat in the first instance who will immediately refer the matter to the General Purposes Sub-committee.
2. Any complaint will set out clearly in a rational, logical and coherent manner the substance of the grievance and will identify what process(s) and or procedure(s) are the subject of the complaint.
3. All complaints will be signed both in original hand signature and block capitals by the person(s) making the complaint.
4. The General Purposes Sub-committee will convene within seven (7) working days beginning on the day of receipt of the complaint to consider the matter.
5. The General Purposes Sub-Committee will process the complaint as efficiently and effectively as is possible to come to a decision within a reasonable period of time.

7.2.3 Complaints Appeals Process

1. Where the person(s) who made the complaint is or are not satisfied with the decision of the General Purposes Sub-Committee may appeal within ten (10) working days to the Secretariat excluding those members of the General Purposes Sub-Committee.
2. The Secretariat will convene within seven (7) working days beginning on the day of receipt of the Appeal to consider the matter.
3. The Secretariat will process the appeal as efficiently and effectively as is possible to come to a decision within a reasonable period of time.
4. The Decision of the Secretariat is final and against which there is no appeal.

7.2.4 Criteria for Secretariat Membership

Persons being nominated to the Secretariat should have some or all of the following skills and attributes:

1. Have a keen interest and awareness of general issues in the pillar s/he represents and be willing to gather and present the views and opinions of the members the pillar/Municipal District that s/he represents
2. Be working, on a voluntary or paid basis, in the community or voluntary group that nominated her/him
3. Have good organisational skills and a willingness to learn
4. Be willing to participate fully to ensure the Secretariat fulfils its role and functions

In addition to the above, the following generic requirements must be met:

1. The group or organisation nominating a candidate must be a current member of Limerick PPN and continue to:
 - 1) meet PPN membership criteria and
 - 2) be a PPN member

AND

2. A person who has put themselves forward for nomination to be elected, stood for election or who has been an elected representative on any level of government (local or national) may not be chosen to be a member of the Secretariat for a period of twelve (12) months:
 - 1) after the date on which they were advised that their bid for nomination was unsuccessful
 - 2) from the date of the Election if their nomination bid was successful
 - 3) after completing their Term of Office if they are elected to office

7.2.5 Role of the Secretariat Facilitator

The Facilitator's primary role is to act as the convenor of meetings. As Facilitator of the Secretariat, the Facilitator will:

1. Agree the framework/ environment with the Resource Worker (who acts as secretary) for Secretariat meetings (e.g. timeframe, location, facilities etc.).
2. Agree the agenda (with the secretary) of each Secretariat meeting.
3. 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.
4. Review, agree and ensure the distribution in a timely fashion draft minutes in conjunction with the secretary.
5. Ensure that approved minutes are available as appropriate to the relevant parties.
6. 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.
7. Sign off on official PPN correspondence.
8. Facilitate any Plenary meetings during their tenure.

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.

7.2.6 Role of PPN Staff

The PPN Staff consists of the PPN Resource Worker, PPN Clerical Support Worker and/or any other staff member as provided for by the Department of Rural and Community Development, Limerick City and County Council or through any publicly-funded work-placement or employment scheme. The PPN staff, although employed and hosted by Limerick City and County Council, are managed by and answerable to Limerick PPN through the Secretariat. Under the direction of the Secretariat, the core PPN staff:

1. Are employed by the Local Authority. This is subject to agreement between Limerick PPN and Limerick City and County Council.
2. Manage the membership database including the re-registration of groups/organisations.
3. Maintain accurate records of PPN business including minutes of meetings and associated correspondence.
4. Prepare and circulate agendas for meetings of the Secretariat and Plenary.
5. Verify nominees for any elections to ensure they meet the criteria and circulate to the Secretariat.
6. Circulate the details of nominees to Linkage Groups to consider them prior to election.
7. Act as a point of contact on behalf of the PPN.
8. Process all the correspondence of the PPN through distributing copies and drafting agreed responses.
9. Support the work of PPN representatives sitting on various committees.
10. Communicate regularly with the PPN membership and disseminate information on PPN activities on behalf of the Secretariat.
11. Maintain records of the length of service of each of the ten (10) members of the Secretariat.

The Resource Worker is the core full-time staff member of the PPN and as such services the Secretariat. While funding is available for same, a Support Worker is also employed to provide clerical support for the PPN.

7.2.7 Secretariat meetings

1. For all Secretariat meetings, the Resource Worker invites agenda items from the Secretariat members and PPN member groups/organisations up to seven (7) working days before Secretariat meetings.
2. The Facilitator and Resource Worker finalise the agenda at least four (4) days in advance of Secretariat meetings.
3. The agenda, minutes of previous meeting and any supporting documentation is distributed via email to the Secretariat members at least three (3) days in advance of Secretariat meetings.
4. Agenda items are for:
 - a) Discussion
 - b) Information
 - c) Decision/ratification
5. The standard Secretariat meeting agenda is:
 - a) Apologies
 - b) Minutes of last meeting
 - c) Matters arising
 - d) Correspondence
 - e) Governance
 - f) Finance
 - g) Participation in decision-making and representation (including Linkage Groups)
 - h) Information sharing and communications
 - i) Membership/registrations
 - j) AOB
6. Within five (5) working days after a Secretariat meeting, the Resource Worker circulates to the Secretariat the draft minutes of the meeting for noting/comment/amendment. This is particularly useful where there are agreed actions to be progressed between meetings and people are responsible for these actions.
7. Minutes of a Secretariat meeting are proposed and seconded at the next scheduled meeting and signed by the Facilitator.
8. Minutes are published on the PPN website within ten (10) working days of being adopted by the Secretariat.

7.2.8 Emergency and Other Meetings of the Secretariat

1. Emergency meetings of the Secretariat will be held where not less than six (6) members of the Secretariat sign a written request that the Secretariat be convened setting out clearly the reasons for such a meeting. Such a request will be delivered / sent to the Facilitator or the Facilitator responsible for the next scheduled meeting. On receipt of such request the Facilitator will immediately arrange for the holding of the meeting within seven (7) days of the date of such receipt.
2. Other meetings of the Secretariat will be held where the Facilitator is of the opinion that a situation has arisen for the holding of such a meeting.

7.3 Linkage Groups

1. A Linkage Group for an external committee is a collection of PPN member groups/organisations who are stakeholders or have a particular interest or expertise in the issues being discussed by that committee. The Secretariat will invite all PPN member groups/organisations to join a Linkage Group, and all who wish to join can do so, nominating individuals to attend on their behalf.

2. Linkage Groups operate under the auspices of the PPN Plenary and report to the PPN via the Secretariat. Linkage Groups are networks of member groups/organisations who are interested in a common theme such as housing, transport, tourism, planning, sport and recreation, culture, environment, social inclusion, rural development and so on.
3. There is one Linkage Group created for each Council (or other) committee which has seats allocated to Limerick PPN representatives.
4. Linkage Groups are established by the Secretariat following a formal request from Limerick City and County Council or other agreed external body to the Secretariat seeking PPN representation on a specific committee(s) and the numbers of representatives required including any specific criteria attached.

7.3.1 External committees Limerick PPN Linkage Groups are aligned to

There are at least seven (7) Linkage Groups operating at a county level: five (5) are aligned to each of the Strategic Policy Committees, one (1) for the Joint Policing Committee and one (1) the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC):

1. Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment
2. Community, Leisure and Culture
3. Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning
4. Home and Social Development
5. Travel and Transportation
6. Community Safety and Policing
7. Urban and Rural Community Development and Social Inclusion

New Linkage Groups may be established by the Secretariat on an issue basis or as requested. A Linkage Group lasts the lifetime of the committee it is aligned to (e.g. when the SPC Scheme closes, the Linkage Group closes) or a Linkage Group formed to feed into a specific public consultation will close when this consultation process is finished.

7.3.2 Role of Linkage Groups

1. Elect representative(s) to a given committee
2. Discuss and debate the matters being discussed by the committee, to inform the representative(s), and where relevant to prioritise and develop policy positions
3. To mandate the representative(s) to bring forward the diversity of views within the Linkage Group to the committee
4. Agree and implement a way of communicating with the representative(s) and with each other, which is effective and realistic
5. With the Secretariat and in accordance with the Limerick PPN Constitution (to be ratified in 2020) effectively address the situation of any PPN Representative who is not fulfilling their obligations.
6. To work with the PPN Secretariat and report to the Plenary as relevant
7. To work collaboratively with other Linkage Groups and PPN representatives to support the purpose, objectives and ethos of Limerick PPN

7.3.3 Membership of Linkage Groups

1. Each group/organisation registered with the PPN is entitled to become a member of any Linkage Group.
2. Linkage Group membership is open to new members on a year-round basis.
3. The Secretariat will encourage members to participate in Linkage Groups at least once annually.

4. PPN member groups/organisations are encouraged to send different representatives to multiple Linkage Groups (i.e. The representative of the PPN member group/organisation does not have to be the same person representing that group/organisation on all Linkage Groups).

7.3.4 Responsibilities of the Linkage Group

1. Operate in accordance with the Limerick PPN Constitution (to be ratified in 2020)
2. Make themselves aware of what the committee they are linked to can and cannot do, having realistic expectations of what their elected PPN representative(s) can achieve, and understanding confidentiality issues which may arise.
3. Be open to new groups/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 excluded.
4. Communicate and engage clearly and openly with their elected PPN representative(s) and other Linkage Group members, recognising that there may be differing views expressed on issues, and that the representative(s) must bring the diversity of views to the committee.
5. Take the time to read / absorb / understand communications that are received.
6. Seek to develop realistic policy proposals to address issues raised and support their elected representative(s) to bring views forward, by providing relevant facts and research where possible.
7. Feed back to their member groups on the work of the Linkage Group and committee.
8. Inform the wider PPN membership of key issues and policy positions.
9. Keep records of dates, attendance, outputs etc. for meetings (virtual or face to face).
10. Ensure minutes of meetings are approved at the next meeting and signed and dated by the nominated Facilitator.

7.3.5 Rights of the Linkage Group members

1. Receive relevant information about the work of the committee to help them to participate fully.
2. Receive regular communications (at least as frequently as committee meetings are held) from their elected representative(s) on matters such as:
 - a) Dates of committee meetings.
 - b) Agendas for committee meetings.
 - c) Reports from committee meetings.
 - d) Items which require their input.
3. Have regular discussions by an agreed mechanism (face to face / on-line conference calls / email / Salesforce Group Chatter facility etc.).
4. Have relevant issues pursued in partnership with the Linkage Group Facilitator and Linkage Group Representative(s).
5. Have Linkage Group discussions facilitated in an open inclusive way, and the views of all members accommodated.
6. Have administrative support from the Limerick PPN staff.

7.3.6 Role of Linkage Group Facilitator

The Linkage Group Facilitator acts as convenor of Linkage Group meetings. During a meeting of the Linkage Group, the Facilitator ensures that:

1. The agenda for each meeting is followed.
2. Focus is maintained on the relevant agenda item.

3. Time boundaries are assigned to each agenda item.
4. Business is progressed in an efficient manner.
5. Agreed actions are progressed between meetings.

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

1. Guide the work of the Linkage Group.
2. Be the point of contact for the PPN for that Linkage Group.
3. Plan the work of the Linkage Group to achieve its objectives.
4. Be responsible for the functioning of their particular Linkage Group.
5. Assist the Linkage Group members to understand their common goal.
6. Provide leadership without taking over
7. Encourage members of the group to take on tasks and get involved in progressing issues.
8. Support elected PPN Representatives who have been elected to represent the PPN on policy committees.

8. PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

8.1 What is a PPN Representative

1. any person who is a member of a group/organisation who is a registered member of the PPN **and**
2. elected to office on behalf of the PPN, including but not limited to:
 - a) the Secretariat
 - b) an external committee
 - c) as a Linkage Group Facilitator

All PPN representatives on committees of external agencies, including Limerick City and County Council committees, must come through the PPN electoral process.

All PPN representatives must sign the Limerick PPN Code of Conduct (Appendix 4)

8.2 Principles Governing PPN Representation

1. All PPN representatives on external committees will report to and take direction from their respective Linkage Group.
2. Representatives will not represent their own interests or views or those of their own group/organisation.
3. Representation should be spread widely in terms of gender, geography, and type of group/organisation.
4. An individual will only represent the PPN on one (1) external committee.
5. A representative is elected for a term of up to five (5) years to represent the PPN membership on a committee. The term of PPN representatives on Council committees will generally coincide with local elections.
6. Limerick PPN acknowledges that committees with PPN representation have certain rights and responsibilities. These are given in Appendix 2.

7. In the event that the original nominating body no longer exists, or that the representative is no longer associated with that nominating body, the representative will be deemed to have stepped down from the role and an alternate will be selected in accordance with the Constitution.

8.3 Role of the PPN Representative

1. Attend and participate fully in meetings of the Linkage Group and committee, including any subgroups to which they may be appointed.
2. Bring forward the issues of the Linkage Group to the committee for their consideration, including placing items on the agenda.
3. Work collaboratively with the Linkage Group to identify issues, research, policy proposals etc.
4. Communicate regularly (at least as frequently as meetings are held) with the Linkage Group on matters such as:
 - a) Dates of committee meetings.
 - b) Agendas for committee meetings.
 - c) Reports and feedback from committee meetings.
 - d) Items which require their input or are of interest.
5. Network and work strategically with other committee members for the benefit of the Linkage Group and of PPN, including being able to compromise while retaining the core objective.
6. Attend and participate fully in relevant PPN activities and meetings, including Plenary meetings.

8.4 Responsibilities of the PPN Representative

1. Attend committee meetings which are generally held during office hours. The schedule of meetings for Council committees can be found on limerick.ie
2. 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 Linkage Group Facilitator and PPN staff).
3. Be able to use basic electronic communications effectively (i.e. email and internet browsing).
4. Prepare thoroughly for, attend and participate actively in Linkage Group and committee.
5. Participate in meetings solely on behalf of PPN, leaving any personal, business or political interests outside.
6. Work openly and collaboratively with all Linkage Group members to identify issues, research, policy proposals etc., respecting the diversity of views expressed.
7. Put forward opinions / views of Linkage Group to the committee and feedback clearly to the Linkage Group.
8. Attend relevant training or networking events organised by PPN or the committee.
9. Be open and honest in dealings with all stakeholders.
10. Build positive relationships with other committee members for the benefit of the PPN.
11. Portray the PPN and the Linkage Group in a positive and constructive way.
12. Prepare and sign a Statement of Outcomes for any meetings attended – this should be one statement per committee, rather than one per representative.

8.5 Rights of the PPN Representative

1. Have active engagement from the Secretariat, Linkage Group and Plenary, including timely responses to issues.
2. Be heard, respected and supported at both the Linkage Group and committee, with an appreciation that they are a volunteer.
3. Have access to an agreed Statement of Outcomes from meetings which can be circulated immediately afterwards.
4. Receive relevant training to enable them to participate effectively on the board/committee.
5. Receive expenses for attending committee meetings including any subgroups and relevant training.
6. Have at least some PPN meetings held at a time and location which facilitates them.
7. Receive an induction pack for the committee on taking up appointment to include:
 - a) Terms of reference.
 - b) Standing orders /procedures.
 - c) Meeting schedules, locations and times.
 - d) Contact details for all committee members.
8. Access to technical support where required.
9. Receive with as much notice as possible details of meetings (dates and venues) and associated documentation (agenda and documents/reports to be read) in advance —as permitted by the relevant standing orders of the committee/board.
10. Have meetings conducted in a way that facilitates participation, open discussion and transparent decision making.

8.6 Vacancies on Limerick City and County Council or other committees

1. Limerick City and County Council or other external body will formally notify the Secretariat that they are seeking representation on a specific committee(s) and the numbers of representatives required including any specific criteria attached.
2. In the event of a PPN vacancy occurring during the term of a committee, an election will be called by the Secretariat if there is no list to fill vacancies.
3. If no Linkage Group(s) exists for a given committee(s) which requires PPN representatives, the Secretariat will establish Linkage Group(s) and invite the PPN membership to join Linkage Group(s).

8.6.1 Criteria for candidates for election to external committees

1. Have a keen interest and awareness of general issues in the relevant Linkage Group and committee in question
2. Be willing to gather and present the views and opinions of the members the Linkage Group that elects him/her
3. Be working, on a voluntary or paid basis, in the community or voluntary group that nominated her/him
4. Have good organisational skills and a willingness to learn
5. Be willing to participate fully to ensure the PPN is effectively represented on the committee

In addition to the above, the following generic requirements must be met:

1. The group/organisation nominating the candidate must be a current member of Limerick PPN and continue to 1) meet PPN membership criteria and 2) be a member of Limerick PPN

2. A person who has put themselves forward for nomination to be elected, stood for election or who has been an elected representative at any level of government (local or national) may not be chosen to be a PPN Representative for a period of twelve (12) months:
 - a) after the date on which they were advised that their bid for nomination was unsuccessful
 - b) from the date of the Election if their nomination bid was successful
 - c) after completing their Term of Office if they are elected to office

8.6.3 Nominations

1. There will 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.
2. The closing date for nomination will be not less than seven (7) days prior to the date of the election.
3. The nominating group must complete a nomination form which includes a short biography of the candidate.
4. Details of the candidates will be circulated to members of the Linkage Group in advance of elections

8.6.4 Elections

1. All Elections are by secret ballot and take place within the Linkage Group on a designated date and time by a method deemed suitable by the Secretariat.
2. Each Linkage Group member group/organisation who is present for the election is entitled to one (1) vote and one (1) individual will vote on behalf of the member group/organisation.
3. Where there are specific seats for one or more PPN pillars (i.e. social inclusion, community, environment), all the Linkage Group members have a vote for each seat available. In this instance, the ballot paper will list the candidates under their respective pillar and one candidate only from each of the listed pillars is to be selected by each Linkage Group member group/organisation.
4. Each candidate will address the relevant Linkage Group for up to two minutes on their suitability for election prior to the voting.
5. Tellers will be appointed from those attending the election to count votes. Anyone seeking to be elected to a position will be disqualified from being appointed a teller.
6. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes are elected.
7. Where there is only one (1) candidate, this person is automatically elected.
8. In the event of a tie, a subsequent run-off election will take place between the tied candidates.
9. A clear record of the voting result will be signed by Tellers and countersigned by the Facilitator of the meeting.
10. Elections in each Linkage Group will be for the seats on the corresponding committee as defined in the formal request from the external body.

8.6.5 Panels

1. 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/list.
2. Any vacancy arising on a committee between normal elections will be filled by the next highest candidate on the panel willing to serve that particular vacancy.
3. Panels will last for up to the next Annual Members Meeting.

8.7 When PPN Representatives do not fulfil their obligations

If a PPN representative on any of the committees fails or otherwise omits to:

1. Undertake his/her role, as laid down by this Constitution, in an appropriate manner.
2. Attend the relevant meetings without reasonable verifiable excuse/cause.
3. Report back to the membership/Linkage Group without reasonable cause.
4. Represent the relevant Linkage Group members appropriately.
5. Comply with any written instruction.

or

6. where a PPN Representative represents their own interests or views or those of their own group/organisation

The Secretariat will:

- 1) Meet with the individual or group concerned and explain what actions are believed to be in contravention with the Constitution and why
- 2) Request that the actions cease and if necessary provide alternative actions (for example, where a member, *acting as a PPN member*, is directly contacting Limerick City and County Council to advocate for a particular policy or action, this member could be invited to join the most relevant Linkage Group related to the matter of concern or where a PPN representative is not meeting their obligations, they may be offered mentoring or guidance)
- 3) If the individual or group continues to breach the Constitution, the Secretariat will issue a formal written request for the actions to cease
- 4) If the formal request does not result in the actions ceasing, the Secretariat may decide to bring the issue to the next Plenary with the proposal that PPN representative no longer hold their position
- 5) PPN representatives will be provided with a fair hearing through all of the above stages and individuals may ask for another representative of their group to attend any meetings as a support.

8.8 Code of Conduct for PPN Representatives

1. Members and member representatives of the PPN will always conduct themselves in a professional manner and in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the Limerick PPN Code of Conduct. See Appendix 4 for Code of Conduct.
2. The Code of Conduct will be signed by every PPN representative elected to a representative position on the various committees where the PPN has such representation, by the members of the Secretariat and by everyone who acts as a Facilitator.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

9.1 Financial Records

1. Financial Records will be in accordance with directions of funders and in compliance with accounting standards and processes.
2. A copy of the Financial Statement approved by Secretariat will 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 5.

10. SERVICE OF NOTICES

1. A notice may be given to any member group/organisation by sending it by electronic means to the email address(es) of the contact people for that member group/organisation as per the Limerick PPN membership database.
2. The failure of any member group/organisation to receive notice of meeting will not invalidate the proceedings at or of the meeting.

11. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

A proposal in writing to amend the Constitution may be made:

- 1) By the Secretariat.
- 2) By not less than 10 full members (of Limerick PPN) not less than eighteen (18) days prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting.

The proposal will 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 will be effective forthwith if passed by simple majority of those present at the Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

Appendix 1: Limerick Public Participation Network Plenary Standing Orders

The purpose of these standing orders is to ensure efficient and effective LPPN Plenary meetings which are aligned with the ethos and purpose of Limerick PPN.

1. Frequency of Meetings

The Plenary will meet twice a year or as requested in accordance with the Constitution (see section 7.1).

2. Voting Rights and Decisions

- 1) Only matters on the Agenda will be the business of the meeting in accordance with the Constitution.
- 2) All decisions taken will be in accordance with procedures set out in Constitution.
- 3) Each named Limerick PPN member group/organisation will have one vote.
- 4) Voting will be by show of hands and in accordance with Constitution.
- 5) Decisions will be by simple majority.
- 6) Voting for election to the Secretariat will be by secret ballot.

3. Attendance at Plenaries

- 1) All named Limerick PPN member group/organisations – both Full Members and Associate Members – are entitled to be represented at the Plenary.
- 2) Only Full Members have voting rights.
- 3) Limerick PPN member group/organisations can send up to three (3) representatives to the Plenary. Only one of those representatives will have voting and speaking rights. Other representatives will have speaking rights only.
- 4) The Secretariat may invite guest speakers to attend the Plenary.
- 5) The Secretariat may invite strategic partner organisations to attend the Plenary in an observer capacity.

4. Agenda

- 1) The Agenda will be prepared by the Secretariat. The order of business will be:
 - a) Welcome address by Facilitator
 - b) Housekeeping Duties, Health and Safety
 - c) Adopting Plenary Standing Orders
 - d) Approval of minutes of last Plenary and matters arising
 - e) PPN Activity Report by Secretariat Member
 - f) Finance/Budget Update
 - g) Ratification of Linkage Group elections
 - h) Election to fill any vacancies arising on the Secretariat (Annual General Meeting only).
 - i) Items and Motions submitted for discussion and decision.
 - j) Workshop / Information Session / Guest Speaker as requested by previous Plenary and / or as organised by the Secretariat.
 - k) Date of Next Meeting

- 2) Items that member group/organisations want included on the Agenda will be presented to the Secretariat at least eighteen (18) days prior to the date of the meeting. Similar items will be taken as a combined item or motion as directed by Secretariat.
- 3) The Plenary meeting will be facilitated by a member(s) of the Secretariat or as set out in the Constitution.

5. Minutes of the Plenary

- 1) The minutes of the Plenary will be taken by a member of the Secretariat or Limerick PPN staff.
- 2) The minutes will include a record of those attending, actions arising, and decisions made.

6. Conduct at Plenary Meetings

Members always will observe accepted practice while taking part in the Plenary business, including the following:

- 1) Be courteous and speak by addressing the Facilitator
- 2) Only address the meeting in order and as directed by Facilitator
- 3) Always comply immediately with directions of Facilitator
- 4) No cross talk or interruption of any speaker addressing the meeting
- 5) Follow the Agenda and strive to reach effective decisions
- 6) Represent the views of your member organisation
- 7) Put mobile phones on silent as you enter the room of debate (where you have an emergency call please leave the room)
- 8) Be prepared for the Plenary by reading relevant documents etc. received before the meeting
- 9) Business will be conducted by the facilitator/s of the Plenary in keeping with Standing Orders

Appendix 2: Rights and responsibilities of a committee with PPN Representation

The way in which the committee conducts its business has a significant 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 rights and responsibilities are generally within the remit of the Chair or Chief Officer (or equivalent) of a committee which has PPN-nominated representatives. The majority are likely to be already in place.

While Limerick PPN advocates for the following, it acknowledges that it has limited control in its implementation.

Responsibilities of the committee are to:

1. Have and communicate clear terms of reference and procedures / standing orders and a vision for the committee.
2. Hold regular meetings at times, dates and locations that facilitate the participation of volunteers. Ideally these dates should be set annually.
3. Hold an induction meeting and have an induction pack for new members to explain the processes and procedures of the committee.
4. Give one month's notice of meetings and to circulate the agenda and any documentation for reading at absolute 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.
5. 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 committee. Decisions should be made in an open and transparent way.
6. Ensure that any conflicts of interest are clearly stated and dealt with appropriately.
7. Offer relevant training to all members and to provide support to members in interpreting technical documents.
8. Review the workings of the committee on a regular basis and to take on board any recommendations.
9. Where possible:
 - a) Set the agenda in consultation with members and to enable members to put items on the agenda.
 - b) Pay travel and other legitimate expenses to members.
 - c) Include all points of discussion within the minutes, and not to dismiss those which may be considered "only relevant to a few".
 - d) Support the PPN representatives to produce an agreed Statement of Outcomes for each meeting which can be shared with the PPN Linkage Group and ultimately the wider PPN membership.

Rights of the committee:

PPN representatives will:

1. Attend meetings.
2. Prepare thoroughly for meetings, and be able to contribute fully.
3. Feed back to their PPN Linkage Groups and take direction from them.
4. Take a full part in the workings of the committee including participation in subgroups, consultations, etc.
5. Be open and honest in their dealings with the committee and declaring any conflicts of interest.

Appendix 3: Process for electing Secretariat members

Making a nomination

1. Each PPN member organisation may nominate one individual from its Municipal District and also nominate one individual from the Pillar to which its aligned depending on what seats are vacant. Nominations must be agreed by a member group/organisation's committee. Evidence of this may be requested (e.g. minutes of committee meeting).
2. A PPN member organisation may nominate the same individual from both its Municipal District and its Pillar if there are two such seats available. In the event that the individual is successfully elected in one voting process, his/her nomination will be withdrawn from the second voting process. There is no requirement on member groups/organisations to nominate an individual from both a Municipal District and a Pillar
3. Individuals may receive a maximum of two nominations, i.e.: one Municipal District nomination and one Sectoral nomination.
4. Please be mindful of gender representation when making your nomination(s).
5. Nominations will only be accepted before the given deadline on the official Limerick PPN nomination form. To be valid, all sections of the form must be completed in **type** or in CAPITAL LETTERS (except for signatures) and scanned/clearly photographed and returned to the PPN staff.
6. A member group/organisation can also submit the nomination by post.
7. It is the responsibility of the nominating group to ensure their nomination(s) are submitted by the deadline. The PPN, its Secretariat, its staff or Limerick City and County Council will not be responsible for lost or delayed nominations.

Election process

1. The election of Secretariat members will take place at a Plenary meeting. Each candidate will have a maximum of 2 minutes on the night to speak to Plenary outlining their suitability for membership of the Secretariat.
2. There may be two election processes required in order to establish the Secretariat:
 - 1) An election to fill any of the 4 seats allocated to the PPN Geographic Areas (Municipal Districts)
 - 2) An election to fill any of the 6 seats allocated to the PPN Pillars
3. The Geographic Area election has four districts:
 - 1) Adare / Rathkeale
 - 2) Cappamore / Kilmallock
 - 3) Limerick Metropolitan
 - 4) Newcastle West
4. Member organisations are permitted to vote only in the geographic area to which they are aligned with the PPN.
5. The Geographic Area elections will be held on a first-past-the-post system, i.e. the candidate with the most votes will be deemed successful
6. The Pillar election has three categories:
 - 1) Community and Voluntary
 - 2) Environment
 - 3) Social Inclusion

7. Member organisations are permitted to vote only in the Pillar to which they are aligned with the PPN.
8. The Pillar elections will be held on a first-past-the-post system, i.e. the candidate(s) with the most votes will be deemed successful
9. The Geographic Area election will take place first.
10. If a candidate is elected in the Geographic Area election, they will be removed from the Pillar election if they are also a candidate in this.
11. Each member organisation will have one non-transferable vote per election it is eligible to vote in.
12. If the number of candidates nominated in any election process is less than or equal to the number of seats available, the candidate(s) will be deemed to be elected without a ballot.
13. In the event of a tie, a subsequent run-off election will take place between the tied candidates
14. A report on the results of the election will be available after the election to PPN member groups/organisations.

Appendix 4: Code of Conduct

Introduction

1. All PPN representatives who are elected to represent the PPN have a duty of care and responsibility to act in the best interests of the PPN complying with the Code of Conduct and the provisions of the PPN Constitution or other updated PPN governance document(s) agreed by the Plenary.
2. The Code of Conduct must be signed by every PPN representative elected to a representative position on the various committees where the PPN has such representation, by the members of the Secretariat and by everyone who acts as a Facilitator.
3. Failure or refusal to sign this Code of Conduct will result in automatic removal from any representative role a person may hold. It is the responsibility of the PPN member to ensure that they sign this Code of Conduct.
4. This Code of Conduct details what each PPN representative will commit to in their role as a PPN representative and in all areas relating to their interaction with, and on behalf of, the PPN.
5. This Code of Conduct will be made available to all relevant stakeholders and will be available on the Limerick PPN website – so as to ensure that all PPN members, partners and stakeholders are aware of what conduct they can expect from Limerick PPN elected representatives.

1. Organisational Values

As a PPN representative, I commit to and agree to comply with the fundamental values that underpin all the activities of PPN.

2. Accountability

As a PPN representative, everything I do and every interaction I am involved in will be able to stand the test of scrutiny by members of the public, the media, members, beneficiaries, stakeholders and the regulatory authorities.

3. Integrity, Respect and Honesty

I will act with integrity, respect and honesty in my conduct within and on behalf of the PPN particularly when dealing with other PPN representatives, PPN staff, the PPN membership and external individuals and agencies.

4. Transparency

I will promote an atmosphere of openness throughout the PPN in order to foster confidence in the PPN of members of the public, Local Authority Elected Members and staff, members, funders and wider community and to promote strategic and operational effectiveness of Limerick PPN.

5. Governance

As a PPN representative, I will actively support the ethos of the PPN and ensure compliance with good governance.

6. Conflicts of Interest

I commit to:

1. Act in the best interests of the PPN
2. Declare any Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Loyalty, or any such circumstance as may be viewed by others as conflicting as soon as it arises
3. Submit to the decisions of the Secretariat and comply with any requirements it has regarding potential conflicts of interest/loyalty

7. Communications and PR relating to Limerick PPN

As a PPN representative, I will:

1. Not communicate as an elected PPN representative or a representative of a PPN member to external organisations, to the media, on social media or in any public forum without the prior knowledge and approval of the Secretariat.
2. Ensure that any comments made reflect current policy even if I do not agree with it.
3. Give due consideration for the reputation of the PPN and avoid any possible risks to the PPN's reputation whether communicating through either official and personal communications platforms.
4. Respect individual confidentiality.
5. Take an active interest in the PPN'S public image and reputation.

8. Personal Gain

As a PPN representative, I will:

1. Not personally gain from my role as a PPN representative nor permit others to do so as a result of actions or negligence.
2. Document expenses and seek reimbursement according to agreed procedure.
3. Not accept gifts or hospitality without the consent of the Facilitator.
4. Use PPN resources responsibly, when authorised in accordance with procedure.

9. In addition to the foregoing I will:

1. Not break the law or act against any regulation in force.
2. Support the PPN'S vision, principles and aims and actively promote these.
3. Always comply with and support compliance with Limerick PPN'S Constitution.
4. Seek to maintain and promote integrity, good governance, effectiveness and efficiency for the delivery of the aims of Limerick PPN.

10. Secretariat

If, as a PPN representative, I am a member of the Secretariat, I will also:

1. Embody the principles of good governance and proper procedure in all actions and live up to the trust placed on me by my election to the Secretariat.
2. Comply and abide by the PPN governance procedures and practice.
3. Commit to attend all Secretariat Meetings, and in the event of unavoidable inability to attend, will comply with provisions of the Constitution.

4. Strive to be familiar with all agenda items I receive and be prepared to contribute to discussion and decision making at meetings.
5. Maintain a respectful attitude to the opinions of others.
6. Understand that decisions will ideally be made by consensus but may be by vote, and I will consider any majority vote as the final decision and I will accept and support it.
7. Maintain confidentiality unless authorised to speak on matters outside Secretariat meetings.
8. Agree that any breach of this code may result in my removal from the PPN or any of its constituent levels – Linkage Groups, Secretariat or any other representative role.
9. If I resign, inform the Facilitator of the Secretariat in writing, stating reasons for resigning from the Secretariat.
10. Participate in an exit interview if requested.

Signed by PPN representative: _____

Date: _____

Representative role: _____

Appendix 5: Limerick PPN Travel and Subsistence Policy

Limerick PPN Travel & Subsistence Policy

In general, any reasonable expenses and fully-vouched expenses arising for a Limerick PPN representative on a committee will be met by the that committee.

In general, any reasonable and fully-vouched expenses arising for a PPN representative on the Secretariat who is undertaking agreed activities as part of their representative role will be met by the PPN.

The following key principles underpin this policy

1. The process of claiming for the reimbursement of expenses should be as straightforward as possible while following procedures that allow the PPN to properly account for payments made.
2. The PPN staff will provide support to PPN representatives who require help in submitting claims for the reimbursement of expenses
3. Reimbursing PPN representatives for expenses whilst contributing their expertise and time to meetings, committees, training or other activities organised by the PPN is best practice.
4. Where the PPN is covering expenses for PPN representatives on external committees, payment will only be approved for meetings for which a statement of outcomes has been received by the PPN representative(s) on a committee. In cases where there are multiple PPN representatives on one committee / at one event, one statement of outcomes on behalf of all will suffice.

Expenses for Travelling to and from meetings

1. A mileage allowance in line with Local Authority rates will be paid for travelling to and from approved meetings.
2. Claims to be made within three months of being accrued.
3. All claims will be reimbursed by electronic transfer – all PPN representatives being reimbursed expenses by the PPN are required to submit bank and contact details to be set up on the financial system. Claims to be made on the official Limerick PPN Travel and Subsistence Claims Form. This form must be signed by the claimant and signed by two (2) members of the Secretariat (neither of whom should be the claimant).

Subsistence

1. PPN representatives can claim back the reasonable cost of food or drink that was bought on the day of the meeting/ training etc., but only:
2. When the total time involved has been five hours or more.
3. If no food or drink was provided at the meeting/training etc.
4. Subsistence claims will be paid on production of appropriate receipts and should be claimed on the Travel and Subsistence Claim Form.

Other Costs

Any additional and reasonable cost on a PPN representative's private car insurance will be reimbursed by the PPN, subject to approval by the Secretariat. All other costs to the PPN Representative will be dealt with as they arise and according to available budgets.