

Communications Policy

Version history

Version	Date Adopted	Facilitator	Note
1.0			

Document controls

Action	Responsibility
Approval of document	Secretariat and Plenary
Implementation	Secretariat, Plenary, Staff and Supervisory Working Group, Members
Review	Secretariat
Date of next review	September 2027

1. About This Policy

This Communications Policy sets out how South Dublin County Public Participation Network (SDC PPN) communicates with its member groups, public bodies, the media, and the wider public.

The policy supports clear, respectful, inclusive, and lawful communication and helps everyone understand:

- who communicates on behalf of SDC PPN
- how information is shared
- how we protect people's rights and privacy

This policy applies to:

- SDC PPN staff
- the Secretariat
- PPN representatives
- member groups
- anyone communicating on behalf of, or engaging with, SDC PPN

2. What is SDC PPN?

The Public Participation Network (PPN) is a network of community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups. It provides a structured way for communities to engage with local authorities and decision-making processes.

SDC PPN works to:

- share information between communities and local decision-makers
- support participation in consultations and policy development
- help ensure community voices are heard

3. Principles of Communication

All SDC PPN communications are guided by the following principles:

- Clear and accessible – information is shared in plain language, with explanations of jargon or abbreviations where possible
- Inclusive – communication aims to reach and support all communities
- Respectful – diverse views are acknowledged and treated with respect

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- Transparent – information about participation opportunities and processes is shared openly
- Lawful and ethical – communication complies with data protection and other legal requirements

4. Authority to Communicate on Behalf of SDC PPN

Official communications on behalf of SDC PPN may only be issued by authorised persons.

These include:

- the PPN Coordinator or designated staff member, and
- any other person explicitly agreed by the Secretariat for a specific purpose or period of time

Individual members, representatives, or Secretariat members may share information and engage in discussion in their own capacity. However, personal views must not be presented as representing SDC PPN unless formal authorisation has been given.

5. Internal Communications

SDC PPN communicates with member groups and representatives through:

- Plenary meetings
- linkage group meetings
- emails and e-newsletters
- the SDC PPN website
- official SDC PPN social media channels

We aim to ensure communications are timely, accurate, and easy to understand. Member groups are encouraged to engage with communications and share relevant information within their own communities.

6. Social Media

SDC PPN uses social media to:

- share information and updates
- promote participation opportunities
- support engagement with community issues

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Official SDC PPN social media accounts are managed by staff only.

We aim to maintain respectful and inclusive online spaces. Content or comments that are offensive, discriminatory, misleading, or inappropriate may be moderated or removed.

Social media must not be used to share confidential information or personal data.

7. Media and Public Statements

All media enquiries or requests for comment on behalf of SDC PPN should be directed to the PPN Coordinator.

Only authorised spokespersons may issue statements or comments representing SDC PPN.

Members, representatives, and Secretariat members may engage with the media in their own capacity but must not present personal views as the official position of SDC PPN unless this has been agreed in advance.

8. Email Communications and Mailing Lists

SDC PPN uses email to share information, updates, and participation opportunities with member groups.

Mailing lists are:

- managed by staff, and
- used only for PPN-related communications

Email addresses and contact details are handled in line with data protection law, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

PPN mailing lists must not be used for unrelated communications or forwarded without permission.

9. Sensitive or Urgent Communications

Where an issue is sensitive, complex, or urgent, communications will be coordinated by the PPN Coordinator, with consultation with the Secretariat where appropriate.

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This helps ensure that information shared publicly is accurate, consistent, and respectful of the role and responsibilities of SDC PPN.

10. Personal Views and SDC PPN Positions

SDC PPN represents a wide range of member groups and perspectives.

Views expressed by individual members, representatives, or Secretariat members do not necessarily reflect the views of SDC PPN unless they have been formally agreed and communicated as an official position.

11. Data Protection and Respect

All communications must:

- respect people's privacy
- comply with data protection law
- avoid discriminatory, offensive, or harmful language

More detail on how personal data is handled is set out in the SDC PPN Data Protection Policy.

12. Feedback, Complaints and Review

Feedback on communications is welcome and helps improve how SDC PPN works.

Concerns or complaints about communication practices can be raised through the SDC PPN complaints process.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and aligned with best practice.

Policy Status

This Communications Policy was approved by South Dublin County Public Participation Network and is published on the SDC PPN website.