

Conflict of Interest 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	

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Conflict-of-Interest Policy is to ensure that all decisions and actions taken on behalf of South Dublin County Public Participation Network (SDC PPN) are made in the best interests of the organisation and its members.

This policy aims to:

- Protect the integrity, credibility and reputation of SDC PPN
- Promote transparency, accountability and good governance
- Provide clear guidance on identifying, declaring and managing conflicts of interest
- Support fair and objective decision-making

2. Scope

This policy applies to individuals acting on behalf of SDC PPN in decision-making or representative roles, including:

- Secretariat members
- PPN Representatives
- Staff
- Volunteers

This policy applies to conflicts of interest arising in the course of SDC PPN activities, meetings, decisions and representations.

3. Definition of a Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises where an individual's personal, professional, organisational or financial interests could influence, or be perceived to influence, their judgment or actions in their role within SDC PPN.

Conflicts of interest may be:

- Actual – a real conflict exists
- Potential – a conflict could arise in the future
- Perceived – a reasonable person could perceive a conflict, even if none exists

Non-financial conflicts, including conflicts of loyalty or role, are recognised as equally important.

4. Guiding Principles

Conflicts of interest will be managed in line with the following principles:

- Transparency and openness
- Fairness and impartiality
- Proportionality
- Protection of the integrity of decision-making
- Accountability to members and stakeholders

Having a conflict of interest is not, in itself, improper. Failure to declare or appropriately manage a conflict may be.

5. Declaration of Interests

Individuals covered by this policy are required to declare conflicts of interest:

- On appointment to a role
- Through an annual written declaration
- At meetings where a relevant agenda item arises
- As soon as a conflict arises or circumstances change

Declarations should be made promptly and in good faith.

6. Recording of Conflicts of Interest

Declared conflicts of interest will be:

- Recorded in the minutes of meetings where they arise, and
- Maintained in a central Register of Interests held by staff

The action taken to manage a conflict will also be recorded in the meeting minutes, where applicable.

7. Management of Conflicts of Interest

Once a conflict of interest has been declared, it will be managed in a clear and proportionate manner.

Management actions may include:

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- Withdrawal from discussion on the relevant item
- Withdrawal from decision-making or voting
- Leaving the meeting for the duration of the relevant agenda item

The appropriate action will depend on the nature and extent of the conflict and will be recorded in the minutes.

8. Quorum and Voting

Where an individual withdraws from an agenda item due to a conflict of interest:

- They will not be counted towards the quorum for that item
- If quorum is not met, the item will be deferred or referred onward in line with governance procedures

All such actions will be clearly recorded in the meeting minutes.

9. Breach of this Policy

Failure to declare or appropriately manage a conflict of interest may be treated as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct.

Any such breach will be addressed in line with the Code of Conduct and related procedures, ensuring fairness and due process.

10. Confidentiality

Information relating to declared conflicts of interest will be handled sensitively and in accordance with data protection requirements.

Transparency in decision-making will be balanced with respect for individual privacy.

11. Review and Publication

This policy has been approved by the Secretariat of SDC PPN.

It will be:

- Reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate and effective
- Reviewed where there is a significant change in governance structures or roles

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- Published on the SDC PPN website