

## Secretariat Charter

### 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 of the Secretariat

The Secretariat is the governance and coordination body of South Dublin County Public Participation Network (SDC PPN) between Plenary meetings.

Its purpose is to:

- Support the effective operation of the PPN
- Act on behalf of the Plenary within agreed limits
- Provide collective leadership, oversight and coordination
- Uphold the values, principles and integrity of the PPN

The Secretariat does not replace the role of the Plenary, which remains the ultimate decision-making body of SDC PPN.

## 2. Role and Functions

The Secretariat has a governance, coordination and limited operational role.

In carrying out its role, the Secretariat:

- Acts between Plenary meetings within the Constitution, Standing Orders and agreed policies
- Works within the approved Annual Work Plan and budget
- Supports the implementation of decisions agreed by Plenary
- Provides oversight of governance, compliance and good practice
- Supports and works constructively with staff

The Secretariat does not take on day-to-day operational delivery, which is the responsibility of staff.

## 3. Authority and Decision-Making Boundaries

The Secretariat may make decisions between Plenary meetings where those decisions:

- Are within the scope of the Constitution and Standing Orders
- Are consistent with the approved Annual Work Plan
- Are within agreed budgets and policies

Any matter that falls outside these boundaries, or is of significant strategic importance, must be referred to the Plenary.

## 4. Collective Responsibility

The Secretariat operates on the basis of collective responsibility.

This means that:

- Secretariat members are encouraged to engage in open and constructive discussion
- Decisions are made collectively
- Once a decision is agreed, it is treated as a collective Secretariat decision
- All members support and uphold agreed decisions when acting on behalf of the PPN

## 5. Relationship with Staff

The Secretariat and staff work together in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

Staff:

- Are responsible for the day-to-day operation and implementation of PPN activities
- Work within their role and responsibilities

The Secretariat:

- Provides governance oversight and strategic direction within agreed boundaries
- Does not act as a line manager or direct staff on day-to-day tasks
- Supports staff in delivering the agreed Work Plan

## 6. Meeting Conduct and Participation

Secretariat members are expected to:

- Attend meetings regularly and punctually
- Prepare for meetings by reading papers in advance
- Participate actively, respectfully and constructively
- Follow agreed meeting procedures and the direction of the Facilitator
- Contribute to a positive and inclusive meeting environment

## 7. Confidentiality and Information Handling

Secretariat members are entrusted with access to sensitive information.

Members are expected to:

- Respect confidentiality where required
- Not share sensitive or confidential information inappropriately
- Balance confidentiality with transparency, accountability and data protection obligations

Not all information discussed at Secretariat level is confidential. Decisions and agreed actions should be communicated appropriately to members, in line with good governance practice.

## 8. Relationship with Plenary and Accountability

The Secretariat is accountable to the Plenary.

This includes:

- Acting on behalf of Plenary between meetings within agreed limits
- Reporting regularly to Plenary on its work and decisions
- Operating in a transparent and accountable manner

The Plenary retains ultimate authority within SDC PPN.

## 9. Term of Office, Continuity and Handover

Terms of office, election processes and eligibility are set out in the Constitution and Standing Orders.

Secretariat members are expected to:

- Support orderly handover when leaving the role
- Contribute to continuity and organisational memory
- Support incoming Secretariat members where appropriate

## 10. Relationship to Other Governance Documents

This Charter operates alongside, and should be read in conjunction with:

## South Dublin County PPN Secretariat Charter

- The Constitution
- Standing Orders
- The General Code of Conduct
- The Secretariat Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Safeguarding Statement

### **11. Review of the Charter**

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

It will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate, effective and aligned with best practice and the evolving needs of the PPN.