

Memorandum of Understanding 2024

Between

Carlow County Council of Athy Road, Carlow, 059-9172474, mbrennan@carlowcoco.ie

And

Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN) of Town Hall, Centaur Street, Carlow, 059-9172495, carlowppn@carlowcoco.ie

Purpose and Scope

To outline in a clear and unambiguous manner the roles and responsibilities of **Carlow County Council** and **Carlow Public Participation Network** regarding the delivery of the PPN structures and activities as outlined in Public Participation Networks Handbook 2020

An annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be required after an agreement on a detailed Annual Programme of Work. This objective of the SLA will be to ensure that work is undertaken in a timely and appropriate manner and fulfils the requirements for the PPN.

Background and Context

A new framework for public engagement and participation, called "The Public Participation Network (PPN)" was developed within each local authority area (engaging in and within municipal districts and at the County level) to enable the public to take an active formal role in the policy making and oversight activities of the Local Authority's areas of responsibility.

The PPN is the main link through which the local authority connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors without prejudice to other consultation processes.

The aim of the structures and processes is to facilitate and enable the public and the organisations to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system, not to reduce or homogenise this diversity. A parallel and equally important aim should be to facilitate the local authority in making better and timelier decisions.

Members of the local community interact with local government at different levels. The PPN facilitates input by the public into local government through a structure that ensures public participation and representation on decision-making committees within local government.

The Network is expected to perform its functions following core principles to facilitate active participation with decision making bodies as identified earlier i.e. participation, trust, accountability, transparency and independence.

Goals and Objectives

To develop the Public Participation Network in Carlow which:

- Facilitates the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion and community & voluntary sectors on decision making bodies.
- Strengthens the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion, and community & voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate.
- Provides information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion and community & voluntary sector and acts as a hub around which information is distributed and received.

The role of the Network is:

1. To contribute to the local authority's development for the County a vision for the well-being of this and future generations.
2. To facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and the sharing of information between environmental, community and voluntary groups and between these groups and the local authority.
3. To identify issues of collective concern and work to influence policy locally in relation to these issues.
4. To actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination, including Travellers to enable them to participate at local and county level and to clearly demonstrate same.
5. To encourage and enable public participation in local decision making and planning of services.
6. To facilitate the selection of participants from the environmental, social inclusion and community & voluntary sectors onto city/county decision making bodies.
7. To support a process that will feed the broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals of the Network into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers in areas that are of interest and relevant to the Network.
8. To work to develop the Environmental, Social Inclusion and Community & Voluntary sectors so that the work of the sectors is clearly recognised and acknowledged, and the sectors have a strong collective voice within the Count.
9. To support the individual members of the Public Participation Network so that:
 - They can develop their capacity and do their work more effectively
 - They can participate effectively in the Public Participation Network activities
 - They are included, and their voices and concerns are heard.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Carlow County Council will deliver a Public Participation Network in its operational area.
- Carlow County Council undertakes to provide a minimum of €30,000 matched funding to maximise the departments funding of €60,000, thus ensuring a minimum annual budget of €90,000 available to the PPN.
- Carlow County Council undertakes to provide a minimum of €5,000 matched funding to maximise the departments funding of €25,700 to employ a Support Worker.
- Carlow PPN Secretariat will take responsibility for the operational management of the PPN in County Carlow.
- Carlow PPN will delegate the Secretariat to act on its behalf regarding the negotiation and progress of this MOU. Any change in these individuals must be communicated in writing to both parties.
- The Chief Executive whose responsibility includes Community will act on behalf of Carlow County Council. Any change in this must be communicated in writing to both parties.

Programme of Work and Budget

Carlow PPN will:

- Devise an Annual Programme of Work which will clearly demonstrate how it will achieve the aims and objectives of the PPN within that period.
- Identify the itemised budget and resource requirements under the Programme of Work.
- Through Carlow County Council Agresso System, have in place a robust financial management system and financial reporting structure.
- Have a clear reporting mechanism on key performance indicators and other items related to PPN activity.

Carlow County Council will:

- Endorse the Programme of Work for 1st Jan 2024 to 31st December 2024.
- Agree resource allocations for 2024.
- Appoint a liaison person between Carlow County Council and the Carlow PPN who is at least at Administrative Officer level.
- Have employer's liability and other relevant insurances.

Staffing

Carlow PPN Co-ordinator is currently employed through Carlow County Council. Carlow County Council in collaboration with Carlow PPN will:

- When necessary, devise a job description and terms and conditions of employment for the co-ordinator and support worker.
- Participate in the recruitment process of the co-ordinator and support worker.
- Facilitate the provision of suitable workspace and equipment for the co-ordinator and support worker, on-site and remotely.
- Offer support, supervision and relevant training and development opportunities to the co-ordinator and support worker.

Operational Co-operation

Carlow PPN will:

- Work constructively and collaboratively with Carlow County Council in the furtherance of the aims of PPN as set out in the Department's guidelines as set out in Public Participation Networks Handbook 2020. Manage and maintain an up-to-date register of Carlow PPN members in Salesforce. This register is the sole responsibility of Carlow PPN and the information therein will not be shared with any other organisation.
- Take out suitable insurance policies as are required for its activities, and those policies will specifically indemnify Carlow County Council.
- Engage in other activities provided they are complementary to the Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 and the Annual Programme of Work and that they can access the extra resources required to undertake such work.
- Work with Carlow County Council on any funding applications which may be appropriate.

Carlow County Council will:

- Consult Carlow PPN for representatives for all seats on decision making / advisory bodies under their auspices which require Environmental, Social Inclusion, or Community and Voluntary members.
- Pay reasonable expenses to the Carlow PPN representatives that are not from nominating bodies or Community Agencies on the LCDC, SPCs and JPC structures.
- Work with Carlow PPN to support the implementation of the Representatives Charter which will enable the representatives to engage fully, taking into consideration timing, location, and documentation etc. of all committee/decision-making bodies.
- Use Carlow PPN as their main way of communicating with the Environmental, Social Inclusion and Community & Voluntary Sector, including formal consultations.
- Offer workshops and training as required to Carlow PPN members to build their capacity to feed into policies and plans.
- Work with Carlow PPN on any funding applications which may be appropriate.

Reporting and Evaluation

Carlow PPN will:

- Submit quarterly reports to Carlow County Council detailing progress on the programme of work in accordance with agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Submit quarterly financial reports to Carlow County Council.
- Organise quarterly review meetings with Carlow County Council or as otherwise agreed.
- Devise, agree and implement a participatory evaluation framework which involves all stakeholders in the PPN process.
- Carry out Annual Reviews and produce an Annual Report on the PPN.

Carlow County Council will:

- Submit reports to the Department as required to draw down funds.
- Pay over approved funds to PPN in a timely way to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.
- Participate in evaluation and monitoring of the PPN's performance.

Conflict resolution

Every effort should be made to avoid serious conflict between the parties, by providing good communication protocols that will enable any issues to be dealt with early and in a timely manner.

In the event that any dispute relating to this MOU cannot be resolved by settlement between the parties, the parties shall attempt to resolve all disputes through informal means. Dispute resolution may include mediation, arbitration, or any other procedures upon which the parties agree.

Review

This MOU will be reviewed in writing every year on the anniversary of its signing. Any recommended changes must be agreed by both parties.

Commencement

This agreement will come into force on 01/01/2024 and be effective until 31/12/2024

Name EAMONN A MOORE

Signed *Eamonn A Moore*

Date 12/02/2024

On Behalf of Carlow County Council

Name MICHAEL BRENNAN

Signed *Michael Brennan*

Date 13-2-2024

On Behalf of Carlow PPN

