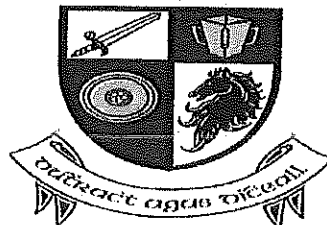


Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin



Monaghan County Council

# Memorandum of Understanding

Between

**Monaghan County Council, County Offices, The Glen, Monaghan**

**And**

**Monaghan Public Participation Network, County Offices, The Glen,  
Monaghan**

## Background and Context

Under Local Government Reform 2014 a new framework for public engagement and participation to be 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 is to facilitate the local authority in making better and more timely 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 will 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.

(Department of Environment, Community and Local Government)

## Goals and Objectives

To develop the Public Participation Network in Co. Monaghan which:

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

In particular the role of Monaghan Public Participation 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, social inclusion and community & voluntary 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 and communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination 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, via the nomination of PPN representatives to various council committees, such as JPC, SPC etc.
6. To facilitate the selection of participants from the environmental, social inclusion and community and 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 County.
9. To support the individual members of the Public Participation Network so that:
  - They can develop their capacity and to perform their work more effectively.
  - They can participate effectively in the Public Participation Network activities.
  - They are included and their voices and concerns are heard.

*(Department of Environment, Community and Local Government)*

## Roles and Responsibilities

### **Monaghan County Council will:**

- Monaghan County Council will continue to deliver a Public Participation Network in its Co. Monaghan operational area. Monaghan County Council undertakes to provide the required (a minimum of €35,000) funding to maximise the budget available to Monaghan PPN.
- The Director of Services whose responsibility includes Community, or their appointed representative, will act on behalf of Monaghan County Council. Any change in this individual must be communicated in writing to both parties.
- Engage the PPN as a consultative mechanism used across the whole local authority in public consultations.

### **Monaghan Public Participation Network will:**

- Monaghan PPN will take responsibility for the continued operation of the PPN in Co. Monaghan.

- Monaghan PPN Secretariat will fully participate in the development of this MOU. Any changes to the MOU must be agreed by the Secretariat and then ratified by the plenary. Monaghan County Council will be notified in writing of any changes made.

## Workplan and Budget

### Monaghan County Council will:

- In collaboration with PPN, agree an annual PPN work plan.
- Proactively identify relevant collaboration opportunities with the PPN.
- Employ a PPN Resource Manager as liaison person between the Local Authority and the PPN.
- Adequately support the PPN to fulfil its role as a consultative mechanism for public consultation.

### Monaghan Public Participation Network will:

- Develop an annual work plan clearly outlining the PPN objectives, the actions to achieve these and the outcomes and performance indicators for each. This work plan will form part of Community Development section plan and Monaghan County Council Corporate Plan.
- The PPN will have in place a proper financial management system and financial report structures including monthly financial updates to the Secretariat. A Sub Group of the Secretariat is established to approve PPN payments.
- Have a clear reporting mechanism on key performance indicators and other items related to PPN activity.

## Staffing

A full time Resource Manager and Support Worker will be employed whole time to the PPN. Both members of staff will comply with all of the duties and responsibilities in accordance with Departmental circular requirements with regard to the role of PPN Resource Worker and PPN Support Worker.

### Monaghan County Council will:

- Facilitate the provision of suitable workplace for the Resource Manager and Support Worker.
- Oversee the day to day work of both employees in the furtherance of the workplan.
- Provide support, supervision and relevant training and development opportunities to these workers.
- Act as the employer of both workers, taking responsibility for all relevant HR and Health and Safety matters, including having clear processes and procedures.

- Undertake to pay both employees, deducting all taxes and charges and paying them to Revenue.
- Have employers liability and other relevant insurances.

**Monaghan Public Participation Network will:**

- In collaboration with Monaghan County Council, agree an annual work plan.
- Appoint two members of the Secretariat to a Staff Liaison committee.
- Meet on a six week basis for progress meetings on the delivery of the workplan and budget.

**Supporting PPN Representatives**

**Monaghan County Council will:**

- Support the participation of PPN Representatives on Monaghan County Council committees including timely notification and organisation of meetings (online where possible and necessary), relevant documentation being made available to the PPN Rep in advance and access to training supports where relevant.
- Pay expenses to the PPN representatives on such structures according to a mechanism to be agreed with the PPN as per national guidelines.

**Monaghan Public Participation Network will:**

- Monaghan PPN will fill all vacant positions in a timely and efficient manner.
- Implement mechanisms to support the participation of PPN Reps including capacity building measures.
- Ensure mechanisms are in place for PPN Representatives to report back on PPN matters from their respective committee meetings.

**Operational Co-operation**

**Monaghan County Council will:**

- Support the development of a Community Wellbeing Statement at local/county/city level.
- Approach PPN for representatives for all relevant seats as required on decision making/advisory bodies under their auspices which require Environmental, Social Inclusion, or Community and Voluntary members.
- Work with the PPN to ensure that PPN representatives are supported to fully engage in all relevant committee's/decision making bodies.
- Pay expenses to PPN Representatives for attendance at Council committee meetings.
- Provide induction training to newly elected PPN Representatives.
- Use the PPN as their main vehicle of communicating with the Environmental, Social Inclusion and Community and Voluntary Sector, including formal consultations.

**Monaghan Public Participation Network will:**

- Work constructively and collaboratively with Monaghan County Council on the aims of the PPN as set out in Department guidelines.
- Engage in other activities provided they are complementary to the PPN work plan and that they can access any additional resources required to undertake such work.

## **Enabling Consultation**

**Monaghan County Council will:**

- Notify the PPN of all public consultations and determine the most appropriate method of consultation i.e. host workshops, circulate surveys etc

**Monaghan Public Participation Network will:**

- Liaise with the local authority on the most appropriate way to conduct a local authority consultation.

## **Reporting and Evaluation**

**Monaghan County Council will:**

- Monaghan County Council will in collaboration with the PPN assist with the submissions of reports to the Department as required to draw down funds.
- Forward approved funds to PPN in a timely way to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.
- Participate with the PPN in an annual exercise to evaluate and monitor PPN performance.

**Monaghan Public Participation Network will:**

- Submit regular reports to Monaghan County Council detailing progress on the objectives of the work plan.
- Facilitate an annual review meeting between Monaghan County Council and the PPN Secretariat in preparation of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Produce an annual report on PPN activities and present this at the AGM.
- Submit reports to the Resource Manager from representatives on council and other committees on the outcomes and actions achieved from the committee. These reports to be shared with all PPN members, thereby ensuring they are kept updated on any goals or targets achieved via the committees.

## 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. An independent mediator will be employed to guide both parties to reach mutually acceptable solution. Dispute resolution may include mediation, arbitration, or any other procedures upon which the parties agree.

## Commencement and Review

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

On behalf of Monaghan PPN

*PACKE* *1am*

On behalf of Monaghan County Council

*M. Brady*

Date ratified by the plenary

*10 February 2022*