



Galway City Community Network

The Public Participation Network in Galway City

Representatives' Charter

Introduction

Galway City Community Network is the Public Participation Network in Galway City. Public Participation Networks were established by the Government in 2015 to support community involvement in decision making. GCCN elects representatives to a variety of policy and decision-making structures in the city, including Galway City Council's Strategic Policy Committees, the Local Community Development Committee, the Joint Policing Committee and Galway Sports Partnership. This charter provides Galway City Community Network representatives with guidance on their role, what support they can expect and what is expected of a GCCN representative.

Criteria for GCCN Representation

Representing GCCN on policy and decision making structures is an important task. In order to ensure that representation is informed and based on knowledge of the policy area and on commitment to the values of the PPN, the following criteria for GCCN representatives are required to have:

- An awareness of general policy in the area you are seeking to represent on;
- A knowledge of the GCCN policies in the area and a commitment to promoting these policies and to policy development where necessary;
- A proven track record in the ability to represent.

For more on GCCN policies and positions please refer to the [GCCN Policies and Positions](#)

Role of a GCCN Representative

The role of a GCCN representative is to:

- Represent the agreed policy positions, values and interests of GCCN on the structure to which they are elected, including relevant sub groups¹;
- Actively promote the policies, positions and values of the PPN, including by seeking the inclusion of items on the agenda and proposing motions at the meetings.;
- Regularly attend meetings of the structure to which they are elected and actively participate in discussions;

¹ GCCN recognises that representatives are drawn from member groups who may at times have a different policy position from the network. GCCN respects members' right to follow different policy positions when they are not formally representing the network.

- Participate actively as a member of the relevant Linkage Group, supporting engagement of GCCN members in the development of policies and positions to inform GCCN representatives.

Linkage Groups

- GCCN has established a series of thematic Linkage Groups. The Linkage Groups are open to all members of the Galway City Community Network and interested individuals.
- They act as a reference point for GCCN representatives in the thematic areas. GCCN representatives are required to be members of and attend Linkage Group meetings. One representative on each structure should act as Convenor (this position may rotate). The Convenor will then be responsible for convening meetings of the Linkage Groups, keeping, minutes etc.

For more on GCCN Linkage Groups please refer to the [GCCN website](#)

Responsibilities of a GCCN Representative

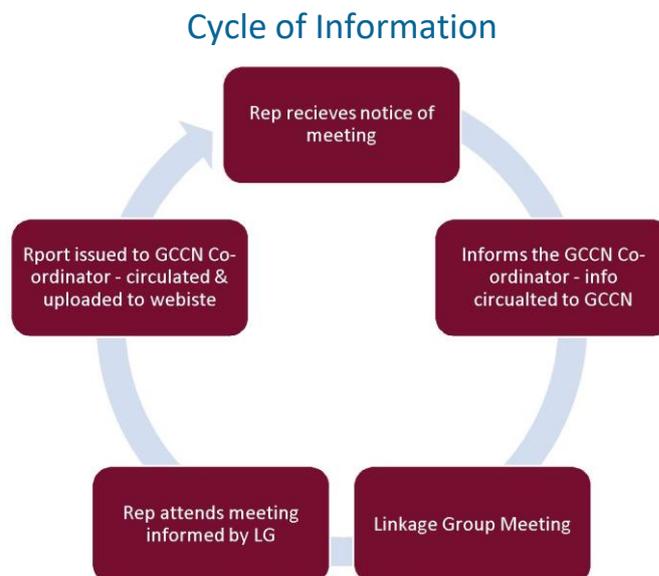
When carrying out the role GCCN representatives should take the following practical steps:

- Before meetings of the committee or board provide the GCCN staff with the following information for circulation to the linkage groups:
 - a. Meeting date;
 - b. Meeting agenda and relevant documents;
 - c. Highlight any items of interest which require GCCN action in advance of the meetings.
- Attend the Linkage Group meeting in advance of the committee or board and support GCCN members to identify issues, research and policy proposals and positions and identify key questions and comments on agenda items.
- Prepare thoroughly for the committee or board meeting including by reading all relevant documentation and meeting in advance with other GCCN reps if possible
- Work strategically with other reps and non-GCCN members to bring forward the issues raised by the Linkage Group and to advance the policies and positions, vision and values of GCCN;
- Support each other as representatives in meetings of the board or committee.
- Agree the role of note taker with fellow representatives and ensure that person drafts a report of the meeting.
- After meetings submit a meeting report using the GCCN reporting template to the coordinator for circulation to the Linkage Group and on the website.
- Work with fellow representatives to prepare the quarterly report to the GCCN Plenary on the work of the committee or board and submit this two weeks in advance of the Plenary to the GCCN staff for circulation to the membership.
- Attend the quarterly meetings of the GCCN Plenary to answer any questions or queries from the membership on the representative's report.
- Bring to the attention of the chairperson any conflicts of interest or loyalties that arise and may impact on their role as a representative.

GCCN commitment to Representatives

GCCN will support its representatives to perform their role by:

- Providing relevant training for the representative role.
- Ensuring regular Linkage Group meetings that support representatives to carry out the role.
- Proactively addressing barriers to participation.
- Supporting attendance at GCCN events where appropriate.
- Responding in a respectful, supportive and timely manner to any concerns or issues regarding their work as a representative.



GCCN expectations of representative structures

GCCN expects that structures to which GCCN representatives are elected undertake the following:

- Provide timely induction supports from the committee or board, including terms of reference, standing orders, meeting schedules, technical support and contact details for committee or board members.
- Ensure timely access to the relevant meeting documentation for a committee or board in an accessible format.
- Provide updated organisational and staff charts to the members of the board or committee
- Provide regular written updates from the staff to the members of the board or committee, e.g. the quarterly Galway City Council Departmental reports for SPC reps.
- Respect GCCN representative as equal partners with due regard to dignity and natural justice.
- Provide expenses for attending meetings, including subgroup and associated meetings, where appropriate and in line with the policy of the committee or board.

For more on GCCN expectations please refer to
[GCCN Guidelines for Successful Community Engagement](#)

Grievances

Should a grievance arise between representatives or between GCCN and representatives the following steps will be taken:

1. Where the grievance is between representatives, representatives should attempt to resolve conflict through dialogue between those involved, seeking the support of the GCCN staff where necessary.
2. Where the grievance is between representatives and members of the network, or between GCCN members but impacting on the work of the network, GCCN representatives should

attempt to resolve conflict through dialogue between those involved, seeking the support of the GCCN staff where necessary.

3. Where resolution is not possible refer the issues to the GCCN Secretariat through the Chairperson.
4. Where the conflict is with the Chairperson, refer the issues through the Co-ordinator to the GCCN Secretariat.
5. The GCCN Secretariat will address each grievance on a case by case basis, responding in a respectful, supportive and timely manner.

Resolving grievances

GCCN seeks to support of all its representatives to carry out their role to the best of their ability but reserves the right to intervene if a representative is not carrying out their role, including by:

- Repeatedly failing to attend meetings (without reasonable grounds);
- Representing their personal or their organisation's views rather than those of the GCCN;
- Representing values contrary to values, policies and positions of GCCN;
- Acting in a manner which is contrary to the values of GCCN;

In this context, GCCN will undertake the following action:

1. The issue will be brought to the representative's attention by the GCCN Co-ordinator and the representative will be given a chance to address it, including identifying any supports that GCCN can provide to help them to fulfil their role.
2. If step one is unsuccessful then the matter will be referred to a subgroup of the Secretariat to be convened and act on a case by case basis, responding in a respectful, supportive and timely manner.
3. The Secretariat Subgroup will work with the representative to seek to resolve the issue which is preventing them from carrying out their role.
4. If step three is unsuccessful, the Secretariat subgroup will make a decision regarding the representative's continued role on behalf of GCCN. This decision could lead to the representative being removed from their position.
5. This decision will be communicated in writing to the representative. The representative has the right to appeal the decision of the subgroup to the Secretariat.
6. At the meeting where this appeal is considered the members of the subgroup whose decision is being appealed will explain their decision to the secretariat. The subgroup will then be required to exempt themselves from the discussion and decision.
7. Should the Secretariat make a final decision to remove a representative, the person will be informed in a respectful and timely manner. The relevant Linkage Group will then be informed and a replacement sought through the standard procedure for filling a vacancy.