

## **IRISH PLANNING INSTITUTE BRANCHES GUIDELINES**

**Approved by Council October 2025**

1. The Irish Planning Institute serves a large membership comprising planners who work across a wide spectrum of issues and in diverse contexts. In recognition of the scope of planning practice and geographical areas and to promote local engagement the IPI structure includes a branch network. Presently there are three branches (Cork, Dublin, Northern) and IPI welcomes proposals to establish new branches where there is local demand.
2. In practice the arrangements relevant to the running of branches have been greatly simplified in recent years with the removal of much of the administrative and financial burden, which now rests with the staff and directors of IPI. This significant change leaves the branches free to concentrate on the core function of the running of activities. The major change in process means that the Branches Handbook of February 2011 is outdated and is replaced by the guidance below.
3. The primary purpose of the branch network is to provide an opportunity for members to develop professional networks and to run events which are of particular interest to planners who live, work or have close links in the locality.
4. Branches are assisted and monitored by the Director of Branches who will also be a conduit of information between the IPI Board of Directors and the branch. However, the branches are run locally. The typical branch structure may comprise a committee including a chair, secretary and treasurer, all of whom shall be IPI members. The committee is encouraged to communicate regularly through the holding of meetings or other online methods. Ideally the committee will be composed of planners working across public, private and academic sectors to ensure good diversity and sharing of resources and expertise. The Director of Branches will seek to support the activities of the branches, may attend branch meetings and will report to the Board of Directors on the functioning of the branches and be available to assist the branch.
5. Branches are likely to run about four events per annum. Provided events are focused on spatial planning, IPI will not seek to unduly influence the activities of the branches as the branch members are best placed to identify relevant issues and needs. In scheduling events branches are requested to pay attention to the main IPI activity programme and to avoid duplication.
6. If branches decide to request funding for the year's programme of events an indicative budget submission shall be lodged by mid-June each year to allow consideration of the requirements in the Institute's budget which runs from October-September annually. Branches will be expected to account for any funding provided and will be assisted by IPI staff in this regard. Branches may raise other monies for example through sponsorship, subject to compliance with the relevant

Sponsorship and Support Policy. Activities must also have regard to the Institute's Sustainability Principles and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement.<sup>i</sup>

7. In the running of events the administration of booking and payments will be handled by IPI staff. Branches are encouraged to provide text and / images to IPI for inclusion in newsletters, website, social media etc.
8. Although they have a degree of independence from the main body, the branches do not operate in a vacuum and their role includes supporting and complementing the services provided centrally, by running site visits, CPD and social events, some of which may be of national interest. The branches may be used as a means of highlighting best practice in a locality and bringing it to the attention of all IPI members.
9. As is longstanding Institute policy, branches are precluded from taking a public stance on policy issues (though they may of course participate in, or be consulted as part of, internal policy development consultations) and shall not issue media statements, communicate with the media, give interviews etc. Requests from journalists or media outlets must be referred to the Institute's office. Further to an IPI Council decision in December 2024, the Institute no longer posts to or engages via Twitter/X and branches should not have separate social media accounts on that or any other platform.
10. Branches may be given a designated IPI email address if considered necessary but all activities are subject to data protection requirements and the Institute's Data Protection Policy.<sup>ii</sup> Mandatory data protection training may be provided to branch committees from time to time.
11. Branches are expected to prepare a short report of activities annually for inclusion in the Annual Report presented to the AGM each December.
12. Non-compliance with these guidelines may result in suspension of branch activities or revocation of branch status.
13. This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Directors and updated as necessary to reflect legal and organisational changes.

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<sup>i</sup> All policies referenced in this section are available on the Institute's website.

<sup>ii</sup> Available on the Institute's website.