An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Consultation on Review of Public Participation Network User Guide.

1. What are PPNs?

PPNs are a framework for public engagement, a structure to facilitate the two-way flow of information and participation between local authorities and the community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups within communities.

PPNs were introduced under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, following recommendations contained in the 2014 report of the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government, for more extensive and diverse input by members of the public into the decision-making processes at local government level. The purpose of PPNs is to enable the public to take an active formal role in relevant policy making and oversight committees of the local authority.

PPNs have been established in all local authority areas, supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development. A PPN National Advisory Group, representative of all stakeholders and designed to advise and support the Department in the operation and development of PPNs, has been in place since 2016 and has overseen the production of two Annual Reports on the operation of PPNs, copies of which are available on the Department's website www.drcd.gov.ie

2. PPN User Guide/Handbook

The PPN User Guide was developed by the Department of Rural and Community Development, with the assistance of Social Justice Ireland. This document was designed to be a practical guide to support all PPN stakeholders – member organisations, secretariats, Resource Workers and local authorities - in progressing a nationally consistent framework for PPNs.

The initial draft Guide was circulated to all PPNs in May 2016, with a request for feedback on the content of the draft document or suggestions as to other issues which should be included in the draft document. Some limited feedback was received from a number of PPNs and, where agreed by the National Advisory Group, was incorporated into the User Guide. It was always envisaged that the document would effectively be a "live" document, updated to reflect emerging issues in relation to PPNs. The most recent version of the User Guide dates from March 2017 and is available on the Departments website www.drcd.gov.ie

3. Proposed Review of User Guide

Given the experience to date in the operation of PPNs, it is now considered necessary, by both the Department and the National Advisory Group, to review the content of the User Guide to ensure it properly captures the range of issues impacting on the operation of PPNs and is fit for purpose in terms of supporting the on-going growth and development of PPNs.

A sub-group of the National Advisory Group has been established to review and update the User Guide, having regard to submissions received following a public consultation process.

As a first step, it has been decided to consult with all stakeholders in relation to the current User Guide and obtain their views on how a future guide/handbook might assist stakeholders with a concise resource of information that informs, guides and instructs in a user friendly way that is understood by all users.

4. Scope of Review

It is important to note that this consultation process/review relates specifically to the **content of the PPN User Guide,** and is **not** a review of PPNs generally. This is an important distinction which should be borne in mind by those responding to the consultative process.

You are also asked to consider as part of your response the specific areas of the User Guide that should be made mandatory in order to assist with the smooth operation of the PPN.

5. Structure of Review

Submissions are invited in relation to the updating of the PPN User Guide under the following headings.

- Structure of PPNs
  - County/City Plenary
  - Secretariat
  - Municipal Districts PPNs
  - Linkage Groups
  - Membership

- Activities of PPNs
  - Participation and Representation on Decision/Policy Making Bodies
  - Capacity Building and Training
  - Information Sharing and Communication

- Operation of PPNs
  - Budget and Work plan
  - Resource Worker
  - Support Worker

- Relationships between the PPN and the respective local authority
  - Budget

- o Work plan
- o Resource Worker

- Monitoring and Evaluation
  - o Budget
  - o Work plan
  - o Resource Worker

- What Templates would you regard as being helpful to include in a revised PPN User Guide (Constitution, Grievance Procedure, Representatives Charter, Expense Policy, Memorandum of Understanding etc.)

- Any other Recommendations in relation to the review of the User Guide?

6. Who can submit views?

It is open to any individual or organisations to submit their views on the review of the PPN User Guide.

It should be noted that in the interests of transparency, all written submissions received will be made publicly available on the Department's website.

7. Submission Details

Submissions may be made:

- By email to ppnuserguidereview@drcd.gov.ie
  Please use the tagline "User Guide Review" on all emails

- In writing to:
  Alan Monks
  Department of Rural and Community Development
  Trinity Point, 10-11 Leinster Street South,
  Dublin 2, D02 EF85

- By filling out an online survey at http://bit.ly/PPNUserGuideReview

- By attending one of the 5 Regional Meetings organised by *Social Justice Ireland* for this purpose (details below).

Tuesday, 12th March - **Dublin**, *Carmelite Community Centre, Aungier Street, Dublin 1.*

Thursday, 21st March - *Prince of Wales Hotel, **Athlone**.*

Tuesday, 26th March - **Limerick**, *Maldron Hotel.*

Wednesday, 10th April - *The Committee Room, Waterford City and County Offices, Waterford.*

Tuesday, 30th April - *Leitrim, The Hive, Carrick on Shannon.*

A report of each meeting will be drafted, circulated to attendees for approval and submitted by *Social Justice Ireland* on your behalf. Each meeting will take place from 2-4pm and a light lunch will be provided from 1pm. To register for one of these information meetings please go to the appropriate link below -

Dublin - https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ppn-regional-meeting-dublin-tickets-56641372871
Athlone - https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ppn-regional-meeting-athlone-tickets-56641530342
Limerick - https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ppn-regional-meeting-limerick-tickets-56641770059
Waterford - https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ppn-regional-meeting-waterford-tickets-56642018803
Leitrim - https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ppn-regional-meeting-carrick-on-shannon-tickets-56641930539

8. Freedom of Information

All materials received by the Department will be subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. This means that all materials submitted during the CFI could be released to a wider audience on request.

9. What will happen to submissions?

Submissions will be assessed and key themes identified. The feedback received will be considered by the sub-group* of the National Advisory Group and inform the review and updating of the User Guide. The revised document will then be circulated widely to all stakeholders and a copy posted on the Department's website www.drcd.gov.ie

* Catherine Lane Woman's Council of Ireland, Helen Howes Wicklow PPN, Jamie Moore Fingal PPN, Sean Healy Social Justice Ireland, Bibiana Savin South Dublin PPN, Michael Ewing Environmental Pillar, Deirdre Kearney DRCD.

Please note that submission made directly to any of the above named individuals will be considered invalid.

10. Other queries on submissions

Please contact ppnuserguidereview@drcd.gov.ie or Alan Monks at (076) 100 6907

11. Closing Date

The closing date for receipt of submissions is 3pm on 30 April 2019.