

National Advisory Group

Date/Time: Tuesday, 29 March 2022, 14:30

Venue: Webex via Department of Rural and Community Development

Minutes

Attendees:

Pillar Representatives:

- Seán Healy (Social Inclusion Pillar),
- Catherine Lane (C&V Pillar).
- Charles Stanley Smyth (Environmental Pillar)

PPN Volunteers:

- Bibiana Savin (South Dublin PPN; Social Inclusion representative),
- Cliona Kelliher (Kildare PPN; Environmental)

PPN Resource Workers:

- Sarah Wetherald (Sligo PPN).
- Kieran Walsh (South Dublin PPN)

CCMA Representatives:

- Emer O'Gorman (CCMA)

Department of Rural and Community Development:

- Ciara Bates (Chair), Aoife O'Brien; Elaine Jennings; Caoimhín Ó Tuathail

Apologies:

- Alan Monks (DRCD); Lynda O'Shea; Helen Howes; Brendan Jennings

DRCD circulated a note in advance of the meeting to inform NAG members of important developments. It is hoped that this approach will streamline meetings, which can then be used exclusively for discussion.

Minutes

- 1. Opening Remarks by Chair**
- 2. Adoption of Minutes of 23rd Meeting of Group on 23 November 2021.**
- 3. Matters Arising.**
- 4. Update on PPN Structural Review**

Laura O'Neill and Elaine McGeary from Mazars were present at the meeting to give an overview of the PPN structural review. Elaine Jennings (DRCD) also presented on the next steps (including approval from the Management Board and the Minister of State) and the Department's proposed approach to implementation.

In the course of discussion, Advisory Group members identified areas where further details may need to be fleshed out in relation to the proposals and recommendations in the report.

The Group agreed that it would be necessary to allow stakeholders adequate time to read through and digest the report before any webinar or consultation could take place. The Group also agreed that it would be beneficial to identify recommendations that can be implemented in the short term in order to start the process swiftly.

5. Subgroups

I. PPN Handbook Changes

Due to time constraints during the meeting, this item was addressed via email.

A draft procedure for updating the Handbook was circulated to all NAG members, and their feedback was solicited via email. NAG members suggested broadening the Handbook sub-group, and getting broader agreement to any changes from other stakeholders before they are incorporated into any updated version of the Handbook.

II. Annual Report

Due to time constraints during the meeting, this item was addressed via email.

The NAG were informed that hard copies of the 2020 Annual Report are available on request, and a timeline for returning the completed 2021 template was outlined.

III. Annual Conference

DRCD gave an update on the PPN Conference to be held in Laois on the 21st/ 22nd October 2022.

6. Community Wellbeing project

Due to time constraints during the meeting, this item was addressed subsequently via email.

NAG members were given an update on the current status of the project. Based on the information available, the costs of completing the project in line with PPNs' stated needs may require the Department to tender for a service provider to assist in delivering this. Feedback was solicited via email on how the project might proceed from this point.

7. A.O.B

Seán Healy expressed a view that PPNs were not being consulted about policy issues in relation to the arrival of displaced Ukrainians.

Charles Stanley-Smith raised the matter of maternity leave (statutory leave incl. pensions) within a hosting company and any guidance on this matter for PPN staff.

8. **Next Meeting:** Webex/Trinity Point. *(To be agreed, DRCD to send out doodle poll)*