

**4th Meeting of the Second PPN National Advisory Group,  
Trinity Point, Leinster Street South, Dublin 2.  
Wednesday 16 May 2018**

**Attendance:**

**Stakeholder Group: Pillar Representatives:**

- Catherine Lane, (C&V pillar),
- Sean Healy (Social Inclusion Pillar).

**Stakeholder Group: PPN Volunteers:**

- Aileen Eglington (Dún Laoghaire Rathdown PPN; C&V representative),
- Sadhbh O'Neill, (Kilkenny PPN; Environment representative).

**Stakeholder Group: PPN Resource Workers:**

- Helen Howes (Wicklow PPN),
- Annette Barr Jordan (Westmeath PPN),
- Jamie Moore (Fingal PPN).

**Stakeholder Group: Local Authorities:**

- Dymphna Farrell, (Dublin City Council),
- Donal Brennan, (Director of Services, Laois County Council)

**Stakeholder Group: Department of Rural and Community Development:**

- Officials - Jason Kearney (Chair), Niall Hayden, Ellie Corcoran.

**Apologies:**

- David Collins (Galway County PPN; Social Inclusion representative ),
- Michael Ewing (Environmental Pillar).

Jason Kearney, the Chair, welcomed all to the meeting and requested that the Environmental Pillar matter on the agenda be deferred to a later meeting. He also suggested that the item referring to Galway would be removed as it was dealt with by the Department. There were no objections.

Minutes of Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> February were agreed. The Chair informed the group of his imminent departure from the Department and thanked the group for their continued support. Members in turn wished the Chair the best for the future, complimented him for his commitment and drive on behalf of PPN's and thanked him for all the support given to them individually and collectively.

Some Group members commented at the frequency changes have been made at PO since the Advisory Group first came together. The constant changes were not helpful to the Group or the PPN's and gave the impression that the Department wasn't exactly fully behind PPN's. The Chair assured the Group that contrary to what might be the impression, the Department was fully supportive of the PPN's, accepted that staff changes didn't help and explained that his appointment to the Department was on secondment and now he must return to his parent Department.

The chair thanked the members of the Advisory Group for their time and commitment and their support and assistance to him for the short time he was in the Chair.

### **Salesforce**

An update on usage by PPN's of the Salesforce data base package was given by the Departments Rep. All but a few PPNs have engaged with South Dublin Volunteer Centre to commence Salesforce training and use the database.

In the matter of a usage guide the Chair advised that the Department had been working on a Protocol for use, events had more or less been overtaken by GDPR and this would be dealt with later in discussions.

The Chair thanked the group for continued support in relation to the matter of ensuring that all PPNs use Salesforce.

### **2017 Annual Report – update / Sligo Conference Report.**

All but four of the 2017 annual reports have been received, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, Louth, Limerick and South Dublin are outstanding. Seán Healy reported that the information in those processed to date is quite encouraging. Some, but not all, Local Authorities are inviting engagement on policy. PPNs generally have good support within their communities and with their local authority. Membership numbers are up on 2016 and a few other positives make for interesting reading. The first draft will be ready for the sub-group review by the end of June.

That subgroup consists of Sean Healy, Helen Howes, Jamie Moore and a representative of the Department.

### **2018 National Conference.**

The Chair complimented the work done by Sligo PPN and its partners in hosting the 2017 Conference. The production of a report on the event was praised by the Group for presentation and content aside from its usefulness going forward.

The 2018 National PPN conference is proposed for Thursday and Friday 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone. A draft agenda was outlined by Annette Barr Jordan. Some suggestions were made by the group that might enhance the Conference - field trips to projects, time specifically set aside for Secretariat members to facilitate networking, invite representatives of the LCDC to give a talk for the benefit of those attending.

The original sub-group established to arrange a conference in 2018 will reconvene as early as possible to look at all aspects of what is proposed. The group will be formally joined by a representative of the Department. The members are Jamie Moore, Annette Barr-Jordan, Aileen Eglington and a representative of the Department.

### **Re-registration – GDPR Requirements.**

A number of members commented that questions remained on the issue of ownership of data and responsibilities relating to that data ahead of the GDPR May 25<sup>th</sup> deadline. As examples they cited that in areas where the information is stored or circulated on a PC based in Local Authority property the data might be legally under the Local Authority GDPR responsibility. Similarly, for PPNs who are limited companies, the company responsibility may be onerous. The annual re-registration could be deemed excessively and unnecessarily onerous and thus should be reviewed.

The point was made that PPN's are getting different advice on the matter and they require clearer directions on their responsibility for managing data.

It was agreed that the dual issue of hosting and re registration would be dealt with in a review of the User Guide and in the issuing of a short circular from the Department in the matter of re registration.

The Chair told the meeting that from the Departments perspective, two points needed to be made. The first was that irrespective of how individuals feel about it, PPN's are data collectors and not the Department and the second point was that the Data Commissioner is the ultimate adjudicator where there is conflicting advice. The chair advised that in the matter of re-registration, the law was clear – if the data was not specifically requested, then it must be requested. PPN's cannot assume consent.

PPN's needed to be advised that all processes must be consistent with the law and that they would be bound, if asked, to show that the processes for their compliance with GDPR had commenced by 28<sup>th</sup>. May.

Donal Brennan undertook to seek advice of the Data Protection Group of the LGMA while the User Guide would be reviewed by a sub-group of the National Group. The Chair called for volunteers for this subgroup and the following agreed to sit on the User Guide Review Group – Sean Healy, Annette Barr Jordan, Catherine Lane, Dymphna Farrell, Jamie Moore and a representative from the Department.

It was agreed that one of the first actions of the Review group would be to invite submissions from stakeholders.

### **Introduction of Assistant Secretary, Bairbre Nic Aongusa.**

The Chair introduced Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Assistant Secretary to the group. Ms. Nic Aongusa reiterated her, and the Department's, intention to support the Community sector and the appreciation of the PPNs' importance in achieving that principle. She thanked those present for their unwavering enthusiasm and dedication to the work of PPNs particularly in light of the fact that the PPN work is in addition to day jobs.

In response a number of Group members questioned the regularity at which changes at PO level were being made within the Department and the effect on the development of PPN's this might have. A number asked whether the Department was in fact fully behind PPN's.

Accepting that there have been a number of changes at PO level, Ms Nic Aongusa stated that the latest was not a matter the Department had any control over. While there has been changes, she felt these to be incidental when viewing the Department's commitment to build a sustainable, vibrant community sector. The support given to PPN's should be an indicator of the commitment.

Ms Nic Aongusa was asked about increased funding to PPN's in view of the increasing workloads they are expected to handle. The Department she advised, was aware of the need for increased funding and would work within budgetary parameters to achieve an increase for PPN's. She went on to say that visibility at local level and positive political perception ensure that further submissions to the Department of Public Expenditure are more favourably considered.

### **2018 Communications Plan.**

It was agreed that a communication plan covering all PPN's needed to be looked more closely. Getting the message out to all and sundry was the concern of all.

Local versus National was a topic discussed. The Group discussed the issue of national branding of PPN's and using national radio and TV to inform the public. The point was made that PPN's are about local communities so it was natural that local and community radio and local newspapers be embraced. Quite a few PPN's do exactly that to get their message to the community and at the same time, enhance their profile.

The issue of a uniform logo for PPN's was raised. Each PPN, the group was advised, had its own distinctive logo which identified them in their local communities. That was good enough reason to retain individual logos. The other side of the debate was for a National logo much like that used by other groups who have national appeal. It was agreed that this may not be the appropriate time to be looking at logo's when there are some fundamental issues with PPN's to resolve and that this particular matter would be revisited at a later date.

The question of funding a National campaign was raised and it was agreed that this was a matter that required serious thinking as to how it should be developed. The Group did agree that the profile of PPN's most definitely needed to be raised as there were many organisations and community groups who have yet to hear about PPN's let alone know anything about them.

A suggestion that was made that Aileen Eglinton would hold a workshop on communication at the 2018 Conference. It was agreed that this should be considered in the context of the agenda being prepared by the Conference sub group.

Finally it was agreed that the outcome of the 2017 report completed recently by PPN's would most likely influence the planning of any future Communications Plan.

### **Environmental Pillar.**

In Michael Ewing's absence a deferral on this matter was agreed.

### **Funding Model for PPNs – Discussion point.**

Catherine Lane made a short presentation on a funding model for PPN's. It was suggested at a previous meeting that an alternative funding model for PPNs could be sought to maximise benefit for the less affluent areas. The current funding level is considered to be a base level whereas any additional money could be dispersed according to the 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index for Small Areas (SA). This of course may not work for PPN's and might actually be objected to for a number of reasons, but the model or something similar might indeed be a basis for discussion.

Values such as population, size, levels of deprivation could be considered in any model. Other values particular to PPN's could be explored and adapted for purpose. Establishing a threshold i.e. a base figure that a PPN would need to function properly would need to be agreed.

The Chair advised that any additional funding obtained for PPN's would, given what has been relayed to the Advisory Group, be channelled towards Administrative support. The Group agreed with this approach.

As PPN is still a relatively new entity, it was further suggested that funding pattern will develop organically and the matter was left as a standing item.

### **Capacity Building and Training.**

It was agreed to leave this item on the agenda as both the Advisory Group and the PPN's have yet to advise the Department of their needs.

## **Fingal Strategic Plan.**

The Chair advised the group that he has attended the launch of Fingal's strategic Plan recently. He went on to say that he was very impressed by the event overall. The turnout and presentation given were excellent he said. He complimented Fingal PPN, Fingal Co. Council and all involved in the organisation and delivery on the night remarking that it was something other PPN's might seriously consider.

Copies of the Strategic Plan which circulated to the group by Jamie Moore. He advised the group that Fingal PPN were very fortunate in that they have excellent support from the local Authority which the PPN feel is hugely beneficial to achieving its objectives.

Sean Healy advised the Group that Social Justice Ireland were in the process of rolling out Strategy Planning for PPN's.

## **Code of Conduct.**

A Code of Conduct for representatives is being devised within the Department and would hopefully be available for the next meeting.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation.**

### *Review of SPC's*

Sadhbh O'Neill advised the group that her experience with the operation of SPC's and LCDC has led her to believe that a review of both should be undertaken as a matter of course. It was felt that not all engagement is actually productive and meaningful. The process was failing and may benefit from some overhaul. The experience of Aileen Eglinton of an SPC was quite the opposite to Sadhbh's.

As any review would involve Local Authorities, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in addition to the Department of Rural and Community Development, the Chair advised that all stakeholders would have to be included in any possible review.

*(On a point of information, any review of SPC's could only be initiated by the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government were it consider that a review was required in the first instance).*

## **AOB.**

University College Cork is currently undertaking a study on PPNs but have hitherto not contacted the Department or the NAG for participation.

Helen Howes circulated a Terms of Reference for Resource Workers document for information.

Date for next meeting: Wednesday 18 July at 11.00hrs.