

National Advisory Group

Date/Time: Tuesday, 23rd November 2021, 10:30

Venue: Webex via Department of Rural and Community Development

Draft Minutes

Attendees:

Pillar Representatives:

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

PPN Volunteers:

- Lynda O'Shea (Waterford PPN; C&V representative),
- Bibiana Savin (South Dublin PPN; Social Inclusion representative),
- Cliona Kelliher (Kildare PPN; Environmental)

PPN Resource Workers:

- Helen Howes (Wicklow PPN),
- Sarah Wetherald (Sligo PPN).
- Kieran Walsh (South Dublin PPN)

CCMA Representatives:

- *Rebecca Loughrey (CCMA)*
- *Alan Farrell (CCMA)*

Department of Rural and Community Development:

- Ciara Bates (Chair), Deirdre Kelly, Caoimhín Ó Tuathail, Alan Monks.

Apologies:

- Elaine Jennings (DRCD)

The Chair opened the meeting which was conducted on-line due to the current restrictions as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Minutes

1. Opening Remarks by Chair

Ciara welcomed Cliona Kelliher from Kildare PPN onto the National Advisory Group to represent the Environmental electoral college. Ciara also informed that we included a note of tribute to Terrence McDonough's community and PPN work in the 2020 PPN Annual Report.

2. Adoption of Minutes of 18th Meeting of Group on 21 September 2021.

3. Matters Arising.

There was a request to bring forward items 10 and 11 for discussion to an earlier part of the meeting.

4. Update on PPN Structural Review

It is anticipated that the draft report will be finalised by the end of the year. The draft report will then be circulated to the Oversight Committee. Further to the report being finalised and considered by the Minister of State, it is the intention of DRCD to collaborate with the Resource Workers Network, the Secretariat Network and all other stakeholders on the implementation road map.

Following consideration of the findings and recommendations in the final report, the Department will look at developing a programme of work aimed at implementing the recommendations which will commence early next year.

It is the intention that the findings of the Structural Review will feed in to the SPC Review planned by D/Housing & Local Government, where relevant.

5. Subgroups

I. PPN Handbook Changes

The Handbook sub-group of the NAG will discuss updates to the Handbook in early 2022. DRCD have been compiling a number of suggestions for updates made by stakeholders since the Handbook's publication, and we would welcome further suggestions.

DRCD outlined the issues requiring immediate attention.

The sub-group will also consider how the Handbook might need to be updated in light of the structural review and its recommendations in 2022. There is agreement that a written process needs to be established for how changes are made to the handbook in the future.

II. Communications Strategy RFT (draft circulated for discussion)

It is hoped that the RFT will be published in the next two weeks.

DRCD will be looking at putting together an Evaluation Committee to evaluate tender responses early in the New Year so any volunteers welcome.

III. Annual Report

Draft due from Designers by the 3rd of December. Once complete, DRCD will launch the report and distribute printed copies to each PPN.

IV. Annual Conference (HH)

A meeting of the Annual Conference subgroup took place on the 6th of October and 17th of November.

Caution was expressed about over programming and over-scheduling. Suggestions for presentations, workshops and field trips are under consideration. Some potential speakers have also been identified.

6. Funding, Finance & Returns

I. Funding

The second tranche of funding was sent to PPNs. It was accompanied by an updated Financial Controls document, with added advice based on queries that came into the Department during the year and the findings of an audit carried out by DRCD's Internal Audit unit.

II. Internal Audit

DRCD advised that a number of additional PPNs would be audited in 2022. There needs to be a specific meeting to discuss Travel & Subsistence.

7. Online Training

The third online training programme for stakeholders is ongoing and will conclude on the 26th of November. Three more training programmes are scheduled for 2022. The first programme will commence in January and the others will commence in April and September.

8. Additional Supports RfT

The evaluation criteria are currently being finalised following valuable input from a number of our corporate support areas. Once this process is complete the Request for Tender for the Additional Programme Supports can be issued.

Areas covered:

1. Capacity and Governance,
2. HR/Staff Support,
3. Workplace mediation, and
4. National-level PPN coordination support.

9. PPN's and Climate Action

Deirdre gave a presentation on the Community Climate Action Programme. The closing date for applications is the 14th of January 2022. A copy of the presentation was circulated after the meeting.

Most PPNs will be eligible for grants. PPNs could collaborate on a submission for grant money. PPNs could collaborate on several joint applications but can only submit one independent application. Sarah Wetherald will mention this at the Resource Workers Meeting on the 24/11/21. It was suggested that queries be directed to Pobal on application possibilities and Charles was happy to approach the IEN regarding a collaborative piece with eth PPN's

The report is available here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4bf2c-national-dialogue-on-climate-action-ndca/>

10. Research in 2022 around the barriers to participation in the PPNs

A discussion took place around the barriers to participation on foot of correspondence received by the Department in the context of supports not being available to allow for participation in PPN activities.

A national consultation of PPN members and stakeholders is something that we are considering going forward as part of our work programme and in terms of our Department's policy remit for PPNs in 2022. This area is also be examined by the LCDCs and this will also be considered as part of the process.

Action: DRCD will further scope a potential project in this area

11. PPN Well-being Framework Workshop (3rd December)

The purpose of the workshop is to test the national wellbeing framework against the needs and concerns of the local community & voluntary sector.

31 PPN participants (1 per PPN; mix of staff and volunteers) have been invited to attend.

This workshop is for PPNs only and is a separate component from other parts of the consultation process.

Action: CSS to send us in a proposal for the National Co-ordination piece for Wellbeing Statements.

12.A.O.B

Social Justice Ireland would be happy to assist the department PPN Well-being Framework Workshop. Only one member per PPN can be facilitated the workshop.

There is a need to revisit the wording around maternity benefit in the financial document.

With reference to the proposed research on barriers to participation on the agenda, Seán Healy expressed surprise as SJI in the final stages of developing the survey for the follow-up research to the report we published earlier this year which will in part raise issues regarding the barriers to participation.

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