

Public Participation Networks Annual Report 2016



**Department of Rural and
Community Development**



*An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail*

*Report commissioned by
the National PPN
Advisory Group.*

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Foreword by Sean Kyne, T.D., Minister of State
at the Department of Rural and Community Development and the
Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.



It is with great pleasure that I present to you the 2016 Annual Report of the National Public Participation Networks Advisory Group. I hope that you will find this report both informative and interesting and that it will give you a good understanding of the range of work undertaken by PPNs throughout the country.

2016 was a good year for PPNs nationally - it was the first full year of operation for most of our PPNs. By years end, the basic structures and necessary supports that are essential to the success of the PPN process were in place, supported by PPNs themselves, local authorities and the Department of Rural and Community Development. These supports included the provision of funding to underpin the new structure, the development of a practical User Guide and the roll out of a new data base to support the work of the PPN Resource Workers.

I hope that, through this report, you will gain an appreciation of the importance and relevance PPNs have for our society as a whole as they embrace and drive the principles of citizen engagement. At the heart of all good organisations are good people and I want to pay particular thanks to all involved for their efforts to make the Public Participation Networks part and parcel of our democratic process.

Is iad na Líonraí Rannpháirtíochta Poiblí an príomh-nasc trína gceanglaíonn an t-údarás áitiúil leis na heagraíochtaí pobail, deonacha agus comhshaoil agus tugann siad éagsúlacht guthanna agus leasanna don phróiseas cinnteoireachta.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Kyne". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Foreword from the National PPN Advisory Group

The role of the National PPN Advisory Group is to advise and support the Department in the development and operation of the PPNs. In doing so, the Advisory Group is required to monitor progress on the development and implementation of PPNs across the country to ensure consistency of implementation across local authority areas.

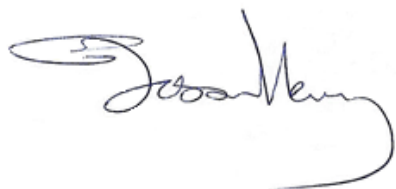
This 2016 Annual Report is a first step in establishing a data baseline to capture the range of activities undertaken by PPNs. The results are intended to support the further development of PPNs – by ensuring that arrangements are implemented in a coherent and consistent fashion and that PPNs are achieving their overall purpose of facilitating engagement with the local authority and ensuring greater input by citizens into decision making processes at local government level.

It is envisaged that the Annual Report will become an annual document and that the content and recommendations of the 2016 report will inform the development of the Annual Report for 2017 and subsequent years.

The report contains a number of recommendations made by the various stakeholders, which the National PPN Advisory Group will examine with a view to their implementation.

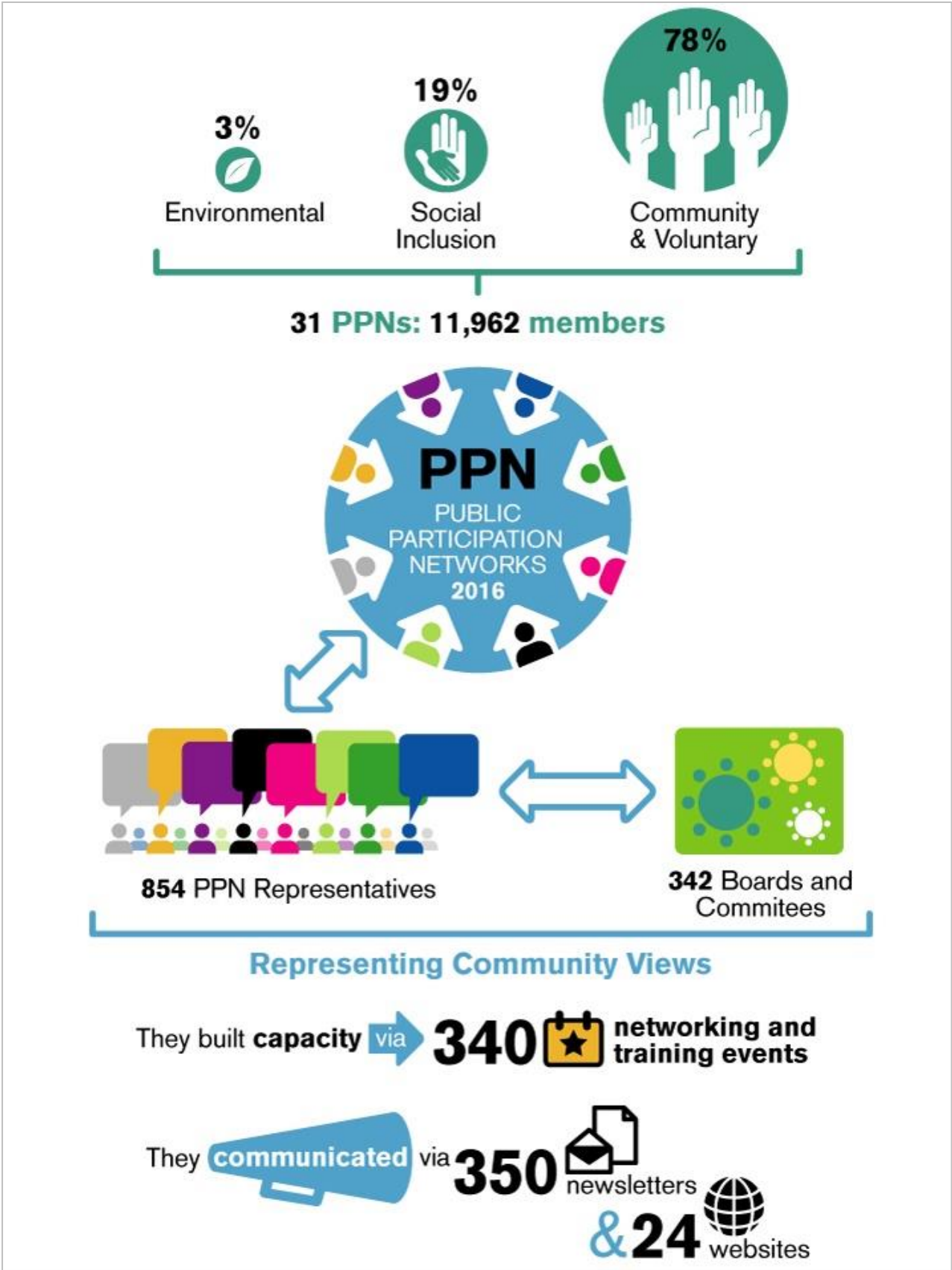
On behalf of the National PPN Advisory Group, I would like to thank all PPNs and local authorities for their sterling work to date on behalf of their communities and to all who contributed to the completion, compilation and production of this report.

With the growth and continuing development of PPNs, we are looking forward enthusiastically to the years ahead.



*Jason Kearney
Chairperson
National PPN Advisory Group.*

PPNs 2016 at a glance



Main recommendations for the development of PPNs

1. A **National Publicity Campaign** which would highlight PPNs and their importance to the wider public, agencies, national and local government. Elements of such a campaign should include
 - Promoting participation in general and the role of Linkage Groups within PPNs.
 - Plain English approach to explain PPNs.
 - Encourage groups to engage fully with their PPN and in particular to encourage younger people to get involved.
 - Encouraging all agencies to use PPN's for community, environmental and social inclusion representation.
2. **National Co-ordination for PPNs** which would include support for PPN Secretariats and Staff, a facility / website to share best practice, and work closely with the publicity campaign to develop the work of PPNs. This would require at least a full time dedicated resource.
3. Funding for **an administrator in each PPN** to support the Resource Worker. Many PPNs noted that the workload was too much for one individual, and that having an administrator would free up the Resource Worker for developmental work.
4. A commitment from the Department to **security of funding for PPNs** to enable future planning.
5. **Review of the PPN structure** including the operation of Linkage Groups and Municipal District PPNs, allowing flexibility for specific urban or rural challenges.
6. **Enhancing Local Authority Capacity** with regard to Public Participation. This would include
 - A review of the Strategic Policy Committee structure to make it more effective
 - Improved consultations processes, including direct feedback to those who have made submissions, and longer timelines to facilitate member groups.
 - Training for Local Authority staff and representatives.

Introduction

International institutions such as the EU and OECD highlight that the participation of citizens in public life and their right to influence the decisions that affect their lives and communities are at the centre of democracy. Open and inclusive policy-making increases public participation, enhances transparency and accountability, builds civic capacity and leads to increased buy-in and better decision-making. The PPN structure is designed to be a key element in delivering this vision in Ireland.

Volunteer-led organisations make a significant contribution to the social, cultural, economic and environmental fabric of Ireland. Groups range from large sporting organisations and their individual clubs, to small entities like choirs or art collectives etc. Large or small, local or regional, all enhance the lives of their members and the communities which they serve. In addition, they have huge experience and expertise in the issues that directly affect people, communities and the environment in their areas of operation.

As part of the reform of Local Government in Ireland, a working group on Citizen Engagement was established in 2013 to make recommendations for increasing the participation by people and communities in decision-making process at local government level. The group produced a comprehensive report¹, recommending the establishment of Public Participation Networks (PPNs) in each Local Authority area to

- Facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary sectors on decision making bodies.
- Strengthen the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate.
- Provide information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary sector and acts as a hub around which information is distributed and received.

Local Authorities were instructed to develop PPNs in June 2014, in line with the commencement of Local Government reform. A formal budget line of €80,000² was allocated in mid-2015 to enable PPNs to employ a Resource Worker and fund their activities. A National PPN Advisory Group was established in early 2016 (see Appendix 1).

This report describes the activities of PPNs in 2016. It should be read in the context that many PPNs did not have a secure staffing arrangement until well into 2016. Thus the reporting PPNs were at varying stages of development, and the level of reported activity reflects this.

Methodology

The information in this report comes from the PPN Annual Report for 2016 (Appendix 2) which was to be completed by Local Authorities, PPN Resource Workers and Secretariats. They were to be signed by all three partners. The report was approved by the National Advisory Committee for PPNs.

Of the 31 PPNs, 29 reports were returned in full and two PPNs gave some limited quantitative information only.

¹ <http://drcd.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Citizen-Engagement.pdf>

² A maximum of €50,000 allocated from the Department to be matched pro rata by €30,000 from the Local Authority

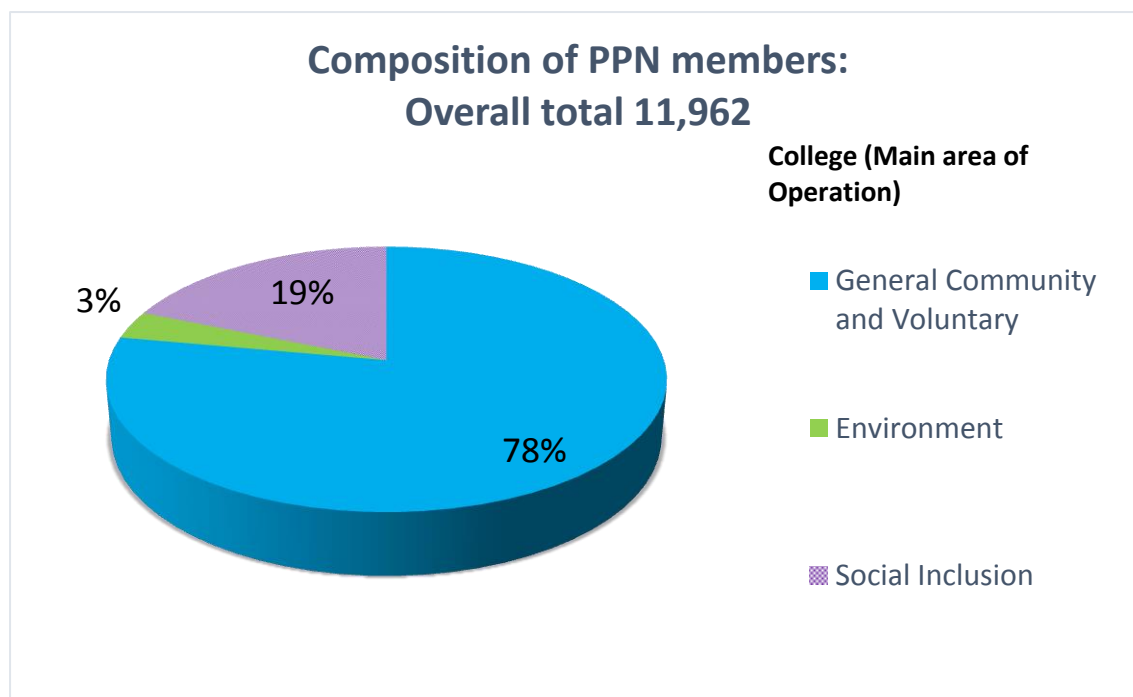
SECTION 1: Membership.

PPN Membership

Membership of the PPN is open to volunteer led / not for profit organisations within a city or county. Groups are divided into three colleges based on their main area of interest; Environment, Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary³.

By the end of 2016, 11,962 organisations were members of 30 local PPNs, ranging from 90 to 1,144 per PPN, with the average being 386. The breakdown by college is shown here, with the Community and Voluntary college having 78% of groups and the environmental college at 3%. Social Inclusion groups comprise 19% of those registered.

Figure 1: Composition of PPN members in 2016



Membership has grown in all PPNs since 2015, with some PPNs almost doubling their membership, while others have grown by single digits.

Six PPNs offer associate membership in addition to full membership. This is for groups who do not fit the full membership criteria, but who wish to be kept informed on PPN developments. They do not have a vote or the right to nominate representatives.

Implementation of Salesforce

The Department, in conjunction with the South Dublin Volunteer Centre have developed a Salesforce based software package to manage the PPN database and facilitate targeted

³ Organisations self-select into either the Community and Voluntary or Social Inclusion “College”. Groups wishing to be part of the Environmental college must have their application approved by the National Environmental Pillar. Further details can be at <http://environmentalpillar.ie>

communications. This has been rolled out to PPNs via group training sessions and support which commenced in 2016. The level of implementation up to the end of the year is shown in (Table 1). Where PPNs are using the software confidently, they find that it is assisting them with email and text alert as well as general database management. Some PPNs received the training late in the year and stated that they intend to adopt it in 2017. Others have noted a steep learning curve and consider that it will take more support to get them up and running. Three PPNs stated that they do not plan to use the system for a variety of reasons, including data protection concerns.

The database provides a means for each PPN Resource Worker to gather and manage a database of member organisations, contacts within the PPN area. It also provides a facility for the Resource Worker to manage a variety of communications processes and events such as email campaigns, newsletters, workshops and training events and to log and track meetings and attendances at meetings. The information gathered also provides data for reporting.

Table 1 Implementation of Salesforce by PPNs in 2016

Level of Implementation	No of PPNs	%
Fully	7	24%
Partially	12	41%
Not yet	7	24%
Not planning to implement	3	10%
Grand Total	29	100%



SECTION 2: Representation and Decision Making.

One of the core objectives of a PPN is to facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary colleges on decision making bodies. All PPNs were active in this regard using a variety of methodologies.

Representation on Boards and Committees

When a Local Authority requires community, voluntary, social inclusion or environmental representation on a Board or Committee, they must source that via the PPN. Thus, PPN members can play a part in policy development and decision making within their county/city.

In total, the 31 reporting PPNs had 854 representatives on 342 Boards or committees around the country, in addition to 86 vacancies. The gender breakdown of the representatives was 54% men and 46% women. 179 new representatives were elected in 2016, and 61 retired, indicating that more organisations are now seeking PPN representation on their Boards. An illustrative list of the Boards and Committees which have PPN representation is included in Table 2.

According to the guidelines, an individual should represent the PPN on only one Board or Committee. 12 of the 29 reporting PPNs report fully adhering to this requirement in 2016, a further 11 have one or two representatives occupying more than one seat, and are working to resolve the issue, while four have duplicate representation with no plans to change the situation, and two PPNs did not give a clear answer to the question. Where dual representation and vacancies exist, many PPNs cite a lack of available environmental representatives to fill seats.

Contribution of PPN Representatives

PPN representatives contributed to the workings of the Boards or Committees in a variety of ways including active participation in discussions and decisions, membership of subgroups and task groups, creating links between agencies and the community, supporting consultations etc. They were very active in devising the plans and strategies for their groups e.g. LECP, Rural Development Strategy, Joint Policing Plan, CYPSC Plan, Age Friendly Strategy etc. Fourteen PPNs reported that their representatives had brought forward formal proposals to the various Boards or Committees on which they sit. Examples of these included restructuring community grants, inputs on homelessness, disability, older people etc., proposed changes to byelaws, creation of town teams etc. Local Authorities reported general satisfaction with the

Table 2 Boards and Committees with PPN Representation

- Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs).
- Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) – typically 4-5 SPCs per LA.
- Joint Policing Committee.
- Traveller Interagency Committee.
- Sports Partnership.
- Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC).
- Tourism Board.
- Transport Co-ordination Unit.
- Drug and Alcohol Task Force.
- Suicide Prevention Group / Mental Health Group.
- Healthy County.
- Peace IV.
- Local Development Company.
- Independent Evaluation Committee (Leader).
- County/City Childcare Committee.
- Rural Development Forum.
- Fisheries Local Action Group.
- Smart City.
- Heritage Forum.
- Citizen Information Service.
- UrbACT.
- Age Friendly County.
- Adult Education Advisory Board (ETB).
- Volunteer Centre.
- Covenant of Mayors Sustainability Group.
- Various county specific groups.

contribution of PPN representatives to the committees on which they participate. As some LAs put it

“The contribution of the PPN in all its structures is invaluable to the Local Authority in terms of meeting its objectives of community participation and consultation”

“The PPN takes an active and constructive approach and are willing to engage in all relevant aspects of Council business”

“The positive and well informed contribution made by PPN members on decision making committees reveals a real connection with the community through the Linkage Groups process “

Support for PPN Representatives

It is imperative that PPN representatives bring forward the views of the PPN and not their own personal views. To facilitate this, a Linkage Group structure was proposed whereby the PPN stakeholders in a particular issue came together to elect and advise their representative(s) on each board or committee. PPN representatives consult with their Linkage Group and each other before each meeting to discuss agenda items and their inputs. After the meeting, they complete a summary template of the outcomes which is disseminated to the Linkage Group. This builds capacity and understanding of the policy process within the community.

In 2016, the reports demonstrate that this was a work in progress, with 165 Linkage Groups established with 117 of these reported to be active. Six PPNs did not report any Linkage group activity, of which one stated that they operate a thematic structure instead, one has established groups but none are active, one used breakouts at their plenary meetings for discussion with members and one sent updates to the whole membership on all topics. Two did not comment, one commented that they found the structure did not work. However, PPNs did work to support the representatives in many other ways which are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 Supports for PPN Representatives in 2016.

No of PPNs with	No	%
Linkage Groups	23	79%
Wider Thematic Groups e.g. older people, environment etc.	13	45%
Representatives Network	17	59%
Representatives Charter	17	59%
Training for Representatives	23	79%
Feedback Forms	23	79%
Total PPNs responding	29	100%

PPN Representatives Expenses

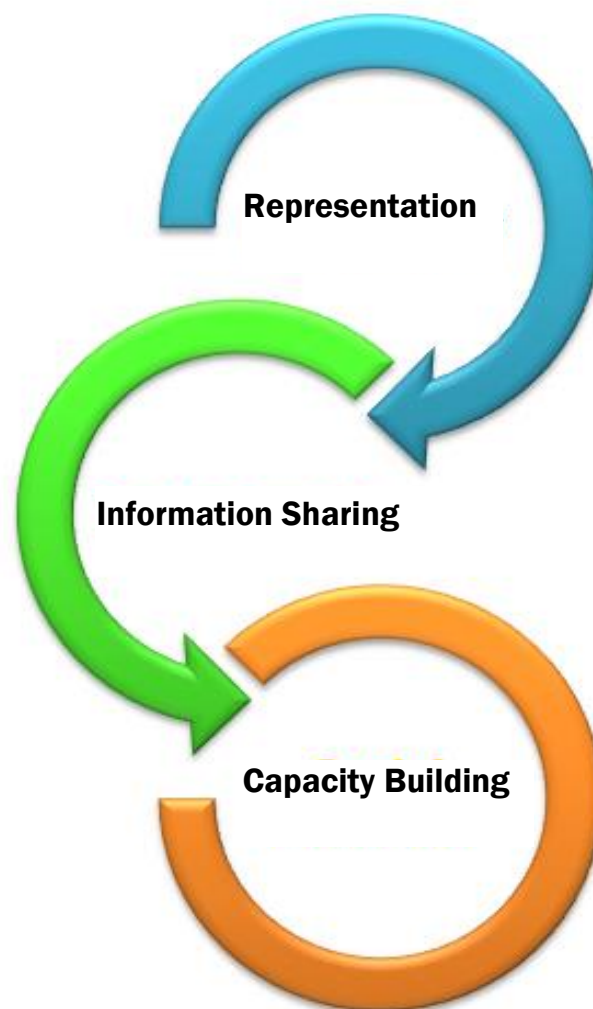
According to the Guidelines, PPN representatives should be reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses incurred while attending meetings. Overall 25 PPNs reimbursed travel expenses in 2016; those not doing so were in urban areas with good public transport or in one case where the representatives live near the meeting venue.

The User Guide states that “Volunteers should never be out of pocket for their participation on Boards or Committees, and it is the role of the relevant Board or Committee to pay expenses. Only in very specific circumstances where the Board or Committee has absolutely no resources, should the PPN pay expenses to their representatives.” However, in the case of 11 PPN’s the Local Authority is paying expenses from their own Budget. The remainder used their core budget to pay expenses. Several reports noted that the Local Authority considered that the €30k which it contributed to the main PPN Budget should be used for representative expenses. One Authority stated

“The PPN as an independent entity has to decide itself how best to use the funds at its disposal. The contribution of 30,000 from [LA] is expected to go towards the costs of the PPN incurred in its council related work including that of the LCDC”

Other involvement in decision making and policy

PPNs were asked about the extent to which they were involved in consultations and bringing the views of the community to the policy making table. All PPNs publicised consultations to their members via a combination of email, newsletters, website, social media etc. 17 PPNs attended consultation events in a formal capacity and 14 made written submissions to a total of 44 consultations. 93 consultations were reported to have been run through PPN in 2016.



SECTION 3: Communications.

Communicating the existence and activity of the PPN is essential for its functioning. All PPNs had a dedicated email address, which is used for correspondence. 17 of the 29 PPN's had a local authority host, while the remainder were hosted independently. 24 of the 29 reporting PPNs produced a newsletter and/or regular email bulletin as their main means of communicating with their members. Some also shared this document with other agencies and stakeholders. Over 350 newsletters were produced in 2016. Where Salesforce has been implemented, PPNs found it very helpful in communications.

Developing dedicated websites for the PPN was an important activity in 2016. At the end of the year, 24 of the 29 PPNs reported having a website. Some were hosted on the Local Authority site, and the remainder were standalone. A further two PPNs said that they planned to launch their website in 2017.

Social Media was also an important form of communication and 22 PPNs used Facebook with 8,572 followers, with 17 using Twitter with 2,685 followers reported at the end of 2016. PPNs also used traditional media with all reporting using local press and radio to promote their activities.

PPNs sought to brand the organisation with many reporting producing a logo, some through a competition amongst their members. They then developed publicity merchandise such as banners, stationery, and a variety of items such as pens, bags, keyrings etc. Two developed an online animation to explain the workings of PPN.

To publicise the PPN and its activities, 15 PPNs held roadshows around their areas, going into local communities to discuss the PPN and its activities. 23 PPNs co-operated with other agencies for publicity purposes, for example, having a stand or a speaking slot at events

from Enterprise Week, to Leader information sessions, to disability awareness days. Some of the many ways in which PPNs promoted their activities is shown in Table 4.

PPNs also hosted events, as required by the guidelines e.g. Plenaries, Municipal District Meetings, Linkage Groups. However, they also organised other events such as launches, information days on themes – disability / ageing, awards nights, consultation meetings etc.

In addition, PPNs worked with their Local Authority, giving presentations on the PPN to various audiences, elected members, Management and staff, LCDC, SPC, JPC, Municipal Districts etc.

Table 4 Publicity Methods used by PPNs in 2016

- Facebook / Twitter.
- Websites.
- Email / E bulletins.
- Attending relevant community events
- PPN Roadshows.
- Roadshows with other groups e.g. Development Companies.
- Networking with existing groups.
- Radio Interviews, Newspaper Articles and Adverts.
- Church / Parish News, Posters in shops / Public areas.
- Libraries.
- Official Launch with Press.
- Presentations to external agencies and groups e.g. LCDC, LA elected members, LA staff, Development Companies.
- Developing Logos.
- Branded personal items e.g. pens, bags, keyrings, mugs etc.
- Branded stationery, pull up banners, stickers.
- Fridge Magnet for elderly with medical information.
- Create online animation to explain PPN.
- General Election Hustings.
- Online Directory of member groups.
- Raffle for prizes for member groups attending.

SECTION 4: Capacity Building, Training and Events.

Training Held

Twenty two PPNs held over 150 formal training sessions for their members in 2016. The topics can be divided into generic skills for member groups e.g. social media or writing funding applications and PPN specific skills e.g. representation, policy development etc. Table 5, shows the wide range of activities involved. Six PPNs mentioned collaborating with a 3rd level institution to provide training, and three have funded members to take part in accredited training – Diploma in Community Development, BA in Community and Business Development. One PPN programme involves both PPN members and Elected Councillors studying together.

Future Training Needs for PPNs are listed in the recommendations in Section 7.

Table 5 Capacity Building Topics for members organised by PPNs in 2016

PPN Specific Topics	Generic Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPN structure and function. ● PPN Constitution / Terms of Reference / Code of Conduct. ● Managing your PPN. ● Effective representation. ● Evidence Based Policy Making. ● Lobbying and Advocacy. ● Policy areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable Energy Communities, ○ Food Sustainability, ○ Economics, ○ Climate Change, ○ Housing. ● Salesforce. ● Understanding Local and National Government. ● Team Building / Visioning for Secretariat. ● Pobal training on SICAP /LEADER (LCDC reps). ● SPC Specific training for SPC members. ● Induction for new committee members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information on various grant schemes, ○ Writing a good application. ● Communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Media skills, radio and press, ○ Social Media, ○ Presentation skills, ○ Website Development. ● Community Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Starting a community group, ○ Running effective meetings, ○ Building your community, ○ Promoting volunteering, ○ Mediation Skills and Conflict Management, ○ Community Leadership, ○ Community Development, ○ Strategic Community Planning. ● Governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governance Code, ○ Directors responsibilities, ○ Code of conduct and Ethics, ○ Charity regulator, ○ Garda Vetting / Child protection, ○ Insurance. ● Information and support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drug and Alcohol awareness / Addiction Studies, ○ Safetalk (Suicide Prevention), ○ Disability Awareness, ○ First Responder / Defibrillator.

Events Held

Hosting meetings and events for member groups was an important activity in 2016. 27 PPNs held at least one Plenary⁴ Meeting in 2016 (total 48 Plenaries) and 18 PPNs held a total of 75 Municipal District Meetings⁵. PPNs were also involved in organising other events and activities (Table 6), ranging from a formal launch of the PPN with dignitaries, to drop in coffee mornings. Awards nights were a popular way of recognising the contribution of member groups to their city/county and also raising the profile of the PPN.

Collaboration with other agencies

Given its small resource base, collaboration with other organisations adds huge value to PPN activities. The main agencies worked with were the Local Development Companies (in particular the SICAP⁶ and LEADER programmes), and the Local Authority. Other PPNs worked with 3rd level colleges on training and research, with relevant national groups such as Disability Federation of Ireland, Social Justice Ireland, Muintir na Tire, Irish Rural Link, New Communities Partnership and others on policy. Locally PPNs collaborated with neighbouring PPNs and with Volunteer Centres, Citizens Information, HSE, ETBs, County Childcare Committees, Older People's Councils etc. The benefits of collaboration were clear as expressed below

“[Our PPN] has found that by working in collaboration with other agencies/organisations who have a common objective i.e. getting the information out there, we are increasing community awareness as our message gets out to a much larger and broader section of the community. “

Table 6 Events and activities organised by PPN (excluding Training, Plenary, Linkage and Municipal District meetings)

Events / Activities

- PPN Launch events.
- Annual Report Launch events.
- Community Awards (often in collaboration with other agencies).
- Information roadshows with and without other agencies.
- Networking meetings for PPN representatives on Boards and Committees.
- College meetings (Social Inclusion, Environmental, Community and Voluntary).
- Consultation meetings on particular issues within the City / County.
- Use your Vote - Hustings (General Election 16).
- Community Surveys, both online and face to face.
- Themed days e.g. Disability / Older People / Sustainability.
- Drop in Coffee Mornings for various events e.g. International Women's Day, Social Inclusion week, Mental Health Week etc.
- Street Feast.
- 1916 Commemoration.
- 1:1 support for groups.

⁴ Plenary meetings involve delegates from all member groups in the PPN. The County Plenary is the ultimate decision making body of the PPN.

⁵ Note Municipal District meetings are not relevant for the 6 Urban PPNs

⁶ Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme which is delivered in each Local Authority area. The Programme Implementer is usually a Local Development Company

SECTION 5: Operation of the PPN

Secretariat

The Secretariat is the administrative body of the PPN, elected from the membership to manage its affairs between Plenary⁷ meetings. They operate to a workplan agreed by the Plenary and the Local Authority. Secretariat membership is balanced on a geographical and college basis. Overall 185 men and 131 women served on their PPN Secretariats in 2016, and a further 10% of Secretariat seats were vacant at the end of the year. Secretariats ranged in size from 6 to 22. Typically, they meet monthly, often with a break in the summer period. 294 Secretariat meetings were reported, two groups met 15 times, and one met on only five occasions.

Flat Structure

The PPN is charged to operate as a Flat Structure, where the Plenary is the decision making body and there are no permanent officers (i.e. Chair, Treasurer, Secretary), and decisions are made, where possible, by consensus. In 2016, 26 PPNs reported progress towards a flat structure. However, one PPN stated “[Our network] operates in a way that maximises participation. [We] do not believe that the ‘flat structure’ is an appropriate one.”

To implement the flat structure, the majority of PPNs had a rotating chair / facilitator for meetings (24 out of 29). In one PPN, the worker chairs the meetings while another simply stated that they followed the guidelines. The meeting facilitator is rotated either every meeting, every three meetings and in two cases every six months. In addition, three PPNs mentioned decisions by consensus / participatory process, four mentioned the Plenary as decision maker, others mentioned moving the location and timing of meetings, using Skype to facilitate people to participate. 23 of the 28 PPNs reported using a subgroup structure, with Secretariats operating between one and nine subgroups in 2016. Some of the subgroups were permanent e.g. Finance while others were set up for a specific task e.g. organising an Awards Event.

Resource Worker

The guidelines stipulate that each PPN should employ a resource worker or a full-time equivalent, reporting to the Secretariat, to support them and the Plenary in their work. According to the User Guide, the Secretariat should be involved in the recruitment of the worker, and directly manage their work.

All reporting PPNs had a resource worker by the end of 2016. Nineteen of the 29 had one full time worker, three had a single part time worker, three had two part time workers, while four had more than one FTE, generally a resource worker plus administration support. Nineteen workers were employed directly by the relevant Local Authority, of whom 11 were existing LA staff who were either assigned the PPN role, or had been appointed following an internal competition. Six were recruited from outside the LA system, one was a self-employed contractor and one transferred from the old Forum under a “transfer of undertaking”. Eight workers were hosted by an external organisation (four Local Development Companies, two Volunteer Centres, a Family Resource Centre and a Traveller Group). The final two PPNs have a Company Limited by Guarantee structure and directly employ their worker(s).

A dedicated resource worker was appointed for the first time in 2016 to 17 PPNs. The Secretariat reported active involvement in the recruitment process in six cases, partial involvement in three and no involvement in six where the LA appointed the worker (two PPNs did not respond). There were

⁷ The Plenary is the full membership of the PPN, and is the overall decision making body in the flat structure.

many nuances reported in the line management of PPN staff, however a summary follows: Staff who were employed outside the Local Authority were managed and directed by the Secretariat with some HR support from the host organisation. For those employed by the LA, approximately half were line managed within the LA, reporting on the agreed workplan to the Secretariat and taking direction from them. The other half of LA staff was line managed and directed by the Secretariat, with support from the LA for HR and liaison purposes. In the two situations where the PPNs are associated with a company, all employment matters were administered by the company.

Promoting Social Inclusion

The guidelines for the establishment of PPNs state that networks must “actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination, including Travellers to enable them to participate at local and county level”. PPNs reported a variety of activities to meet this objective. At its most basic, this involved having the Social Inclusion college electing representatives to bring that voice to various Boards and Committees. Beyond that, 12 PPNs reported direct work with Traveller Groups and three PPNs had elected Travellers as representatives. Six reported specific work on Disability, five on older people and five on New Communities. Others have drawn up Social Inclusion policies and actions via the Social Inclusion college or relevant Linkage Groups. Many PPNs collaborated with existing organisations such as Family Resource Centres or SICAP providers, to encourage target groups to engage. Other activities targeted to promote social inclusion included

- Held roadshows and events in community venues in areas with a high level of deprivation.
- Co-hosted a conference with the Traveller Action Group.
- Co-ordinator provided specific supports for representatives from socially excluded groups include Travellers, People with Disabilities and Ethnic Minorities.
- Worked with refugee resettlement group.
- Working towards having PPN documentation in Plain English and accessible.
- Established an Equality Subgroup within PPN.
- Contributed a strong Social Inclusion voice to the LECP and Local Development Strategy.
- Training for PPN members on Social Inclusion topics.

Formal Agreements with Local Authority

Each PPN should agree a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and an annual workplan with the Local Authority. A draft template for these documents was provided to each PPN in June 2015. These agreements are a measure of the active commitment of the PPN and the Local Authority to work together. At the end of 2016, 20 of the 29 reporting PPNs had signed a MoU, a further six stated that it was at draft stage. 25 PPNs reported that a workplan had been agreed for 2016.

Budget

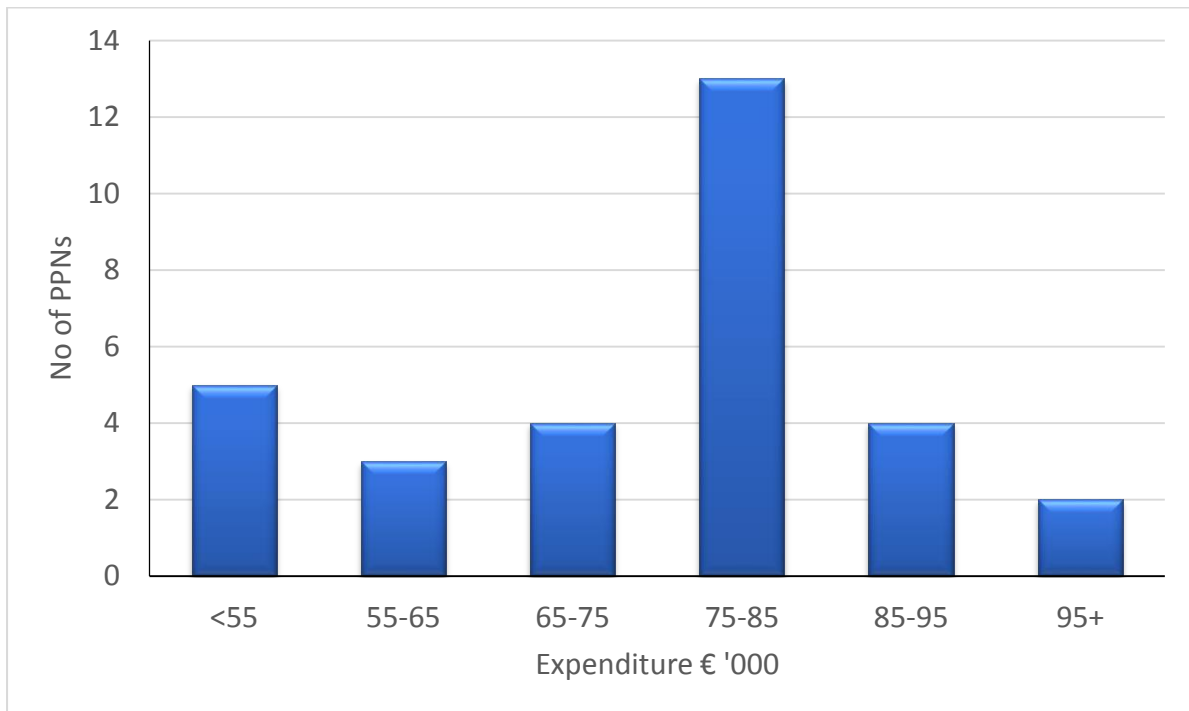
The Department allocated each PPN up to €50,000 in 2016, which was to be matched by at least €30,000 by the local authority⁸. Based on expenditure returns from 31 PPNs/LAs to the Department, total expenditure by PPNs amounted to €2.269m. The average expenditure was €73,225. The lowest amount spent was €32,995 (possibly down to start-up date) while the highest was €108,591.

The distribution of expenditure is shown in Figure 2. Where expenditure exceeded €80,000, PPNs either received an extra contribution from the Local Authority, or had access to other resources. The distribution of expenditure reflects in part the different stages of development of PPNs in 2016, and

⁸ A reduced spend by the LA, resulted in a reduced payment from the Department.

when their resource worker was recruited. Salary costs were the largest single element of most PPNs expenditure.

Figure 2 Reported PPN Expenditure in 2016



In 18 PPNs, the budget is fully held and managed in the LA, usually via the Agresso system, four PPNs had their own Bank Account and the full amount was paid over by the LA, in a further four an external host organisation held and managed the money, and in the final two, the LA held the money for salaries and overheads, and paid the remainder to a PPN Bank Account. All PPNs reported that the Secretariat was involved, at minimum in setting and reviewing the budget, and in some cases the total financial management was undertaken by a finance subgroup of the Secretariat. Resource Workers also had a key role in the day to day management of the PPN Budget.



SECTION 6: Work with the Local Authority

This section was completed from the perspective of the Local Authority, to describe their input and views on the PPN. All Local Authorities have used the PPN to fill the majority of Environmental, Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary seats on their LCDC, SPCs, JPC and other committees. 85 consultations were reported as having been carried out via the PPN. These covered areas such as the development of the LECP, Age Friendly Strategy, and Joint Policing Plans etc. Other areas of organisational support included:

- LA staff attending Secretariat meetings for updates and information.
- Senior Management attending and speaking at PPN events.
- Information about the PPN on the LA website and in publications.
- Using the PPN to distribute information about LA programmes, consultations and grants.
- Promoting the PPN throughout the organisation, and in dealings with external groups.
- Training LA staff on PPN and its operation.
- Providing office space, equipment, meeting venues and consumables at low or no cost.
- Support for Resource Worker and Secretariat e.g. HR, Admin, IT, Communications etc.
- Supporting PPN representatives with induction and training.
- Having PPN as a lead actor in LECP and other plans.
- Inviting PPN to LA events in recognition of their role.
- Responding to issues raised by the PPN and feeding back to them.
- Establishing protocols between LA structures and PPN.

PPNs and Local Authorities have also co-operated on a range of projects and activities. Some of the most common are:

- Thematic projects e.g. Disability Network, Age Network, Integration Forum, Social Enterprise Forum.
- Joint Consultations e.g. on LECP, where the PPN and the LA jointly facilitated community consultation meetings.
- Community and Voluntary Awards.
- Producing information leaflets on a range of issues.
- Joint events to give information on grants etc.

Contribution of PPN to the relationship between the LA and community organisations.

Local Authorities were asked about the impact of PPN on its relationship with volunteer led organisations within the catchment area. No negative responses were noted. Three considered that it was too early to assess this or that an independent survey would be required. Some quotations illustrate the main thrust of the responses

“Proactive and Positive, Community representatives have contributed greatly to the civic participation process and enabled a more active citizen engagement as a result”

“Working very effectively at engaging and linking groups to the different LA Departments”

“PPN is a valuable resource to link with the groups who are involved in many activities on a voluntary basis. Work is ongoing to improve communications through the PPN and develop a partnership approach to the decision making process. Flow of information has

increased awareness of the role of Local Government and its activities. This [leads to] opportunities for more informed decision making in general”

“The PPN provides a structure which enables us to source truly representative reps. The Resource Worker mentors the reps and provides them with ongoing guidance, training and support. As a result, reps are more effective so I would rate the PPN highly overall for the stage we are at in the process.”

Supports for PPN Reps on Local Authority Committees

Local Authorities were also asked what supports they have in place to facilitate the participation of volunteers on their Boards and Committees. The report of the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government highlighted potential barriers to volunteer participation including the timing of meetings within work hours, use of jargon and unfamiliar formalities. The majority of Authorities stated that they had not made any specific provision for the inclusion of volunteers in 2016, but that each committee had a Terms of Reference and Standing Orders which supported participation and mutual respect. Others discussed having flexibility in terms of the location and timing of meetings and having training and mentoring available for PPN reps. Some direct provisions included having a PPN slot on the agenda, outcome statements after the meeting and a friendly open ethos.

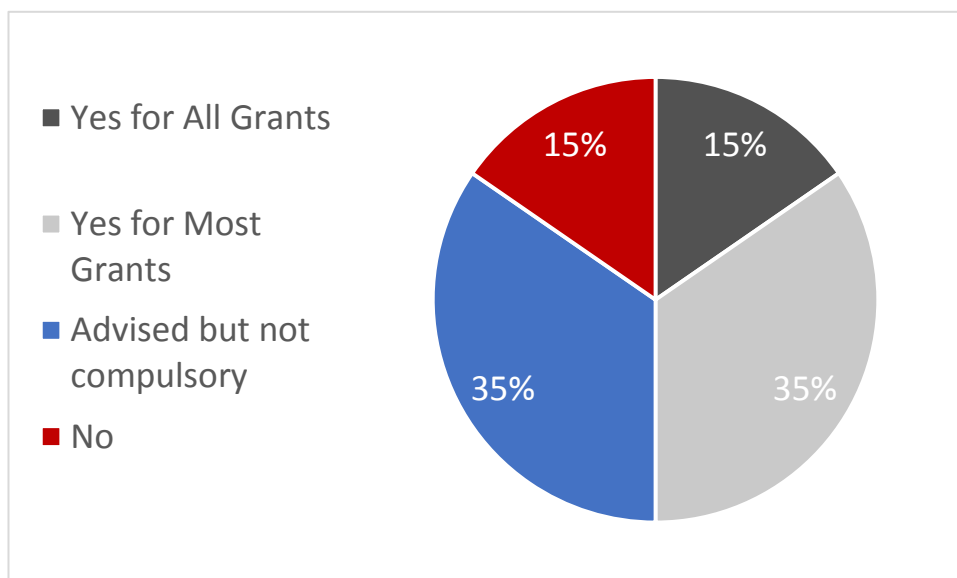
Training for LA staff on PPNs

In 2016, eight PPNs carried out formal training for their staff and/or for elected members on the PPN. In some cases, this was delivered by the Resource Worker or Administrative Officer with responsibility for PPNs, while in others, Social Justice Ireland delivered the training.

Grants

One of the advantages for groups in joining their local PPN is access to information about Local Authority grants. Of the 26 authorities who answered this question, four made it compulsory in 2016 for groups receiving all LA grants to be members of their PPN. Nine made it compulsory for most, while nine advised groups to join PPN when applying, but the PPN status did not affect their qualification for a grant. The remaining four authorities did not refer to the PPN in terms of grants

Figure 3 Is PPN Membership required for LA Grants to Volunteer-Led groups?



SECTION 7: Recommendations

Each Local Authority and PPN was asked to jointly come up with recommendations for the successful development of the PPN in 2017 and into the future.

Additional supports from the Department requested by LAs

Local Authorities requested increased support from Department including:

- Secure and adequate funding with provision for extra to cover expenses in a large county, and resources for the LA itself to support PPN across all its Directorates.
- Designation of an individual within the Department to deal with queries and issues.
- Consistency in distribution of circulars to Local Authorities / Resource Workers / Secretariats, to ensure that all involved receive information in a timely manner.
- Strengthen the Advisory Group and improve communications between it and PPNs on the ground.
- Establish a Local Authority forum on PPNs to develop clarity on the LA role regarding PPNs, which appears inconsistent across the country. This should include procurement.
- Training / Support for Local Authority Staff (see next section for details).
- Networking / training opportunities for volunteers i.e. Secretariat members and representatives.
- Opportunity to review the current structures.

One PPN expressed the views of many

“The best support that both the Department and the Local Authority can give to the PPN is to ensure its continued funding and that both understand that [PPN] is a long term project that requires patience and protection. It will take time to build the capacity of communities and agencies (including the Local Authority) to engage in a collaboration that recognises that all are equal partners and stakeholders in building a sustainable community that promotes well-being for generations to come.”

Other suggestions included:

- Due to the size and complexity of some of the large urban areas, the ideal model would be to have five area based PPN’s. This would be the long term aim for the PPN and wouldn’t be possible until the Citywide PPN was fully established and would require more support being provided by the Department.
- Local Authority Director / CEO should be mandated to attend two Secretariat meetings per year.
- Agenda for Municipal District Meetings should include an opportunity for PPN feedback.
- Resources to be provided to promote community wellbeing.
- Increase the number of Environmental groups joining PPN either by relaxing the Environmental Pillar guidelines or increasing the number of groups who meet the guidelines.

Future Training Needs

Future Training needs were established both by the PPN itself and jointly by the PPN and the Local Authority. Training was suggested for three distinct groups, Local Authority staff and elected members, Secretariats and Representatives, and PPN member Groups.

For Local Authorities

- For Senior Staff on benefits and procedures involved in engagement and Public Participation, and the operation of the PPN.
- For Elected Members on the PPN, its role, operation, and ethos.
- For all local authority staff on best practice on executing meaningful consultation and engagement with the community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors and on the significance and operation of PPN, as well as how the PPN should be engaged with to incorporate community views in decision and policy making.
- Again for all staff of the local authority on dealing with volunteers and barriers to participation including anti-racism and discrimination training. This training should also cover the strengths and limits of the PPN as a voluntary entity.
- Meeting Management / Facilitation Skills to promote full participation at meetings.
- Sustainable Development Goals.
- Universal Access (Disability).
- Support for LA staff to develop specific thematic links e.g. Health / LCDC / PPN etc.
- Directorate specific National Training on PPNs, and public participation (e.g. Planning, Housing, Transport etc.).

For PPN Secretariats and Representatives

- How the Local Authority and National Government system works. Understanding the different Plans and Budgets.
- Policy training and workshops on specific policy issues, including making effective inputs to consultations.
- Empowerment, facilitation, mediation, negotiation, lobbying, advocacy and groups skills for all reps to ensure they are confident at participating fully in their forums.
- How the PPN works (for new members and reps).
- Reps Training on Managing a Linkage Group, Feeding Back, Reps Charter.
- Linkage Group Members on how they can directly impact on policy making in their community & county.
- Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Salesforce, Data Protection, Data Management.
- Wellbeing.
- Sustainable Development Goals.
- Universal Access (Disability).
- Upskilling for Resource Worker in topics as relevant.
- Continue accredited Community Development programmes with 3rd level institutions.
- PPN Awareness Raising and Communications.

For Member Groups

- Social Inclusion Awareness on Mental Health, Suicide prevention, Drugs, Alcohol, Disability, Ethnic Minorities etc.
- Funding matters e.g. Peace, LEADER, LA Grants and how to apply etc.
- Good Governance and understanding relevant regulation.
- Communications, presentation skills and social media.
- Making local Community Plans.
- How the Local Authority system works. Understanding the different Plans, and when and how to input for your community.
- Sustainable Development Goals.
- Universal Access (Disability).
- Effective inputs to consultations.

Main Recommendations for the Development of PPNs

1. A **National Publicity Campaign** which would highlight PPNs and their importance to the wider public, agencies, national and local government. Elements of such a campaign should include
 - Promoting participation in general and the role of Linkage Groups within PPNs.
 - Plain English approach to explain PPNs.
 - Encourage groups to engage fully with their PPN and in particular to encourage younger people to get involved.
 - Encouraging all agencies to use PPN for community, environmental and social inclusion representation.
2. **National Co-ordination for PPNs** which would include support for PPN Secretariats and Staff, a facility / website to share best practice, and work closely with the publicity campaign to develop the work of PPNs. This would require at least a full time dedicated resource.
3. Funding for **an administrator in each PPN** to support the Resource Worker. Many PPNs noted that the workload was too much for one individual, and that having an administrator would free up the Resource Worker for developmental work.
4. A commitment from the Department to **security of funding for PPNs** to enable future planning.
5. **Review of the PPN structure** including the operation of Linkage groups and Municipal District PPNs, allowing flexibility for specific urban or rural challenges.
6. **Enhancing Local Authority Capacity** with regard to Public Participation. This would include
 - A review of the Strategic Policy Committee structure to make it more effective.
 - Improved consultations processes, including direct feedback to those who have made submissions, and longer timelines to facilitate member groups.
 - Training for Local Authority staff and representatives.

Appendix 1: Membership of the National PPN Advisory Group 2016

Membership of the Advisory Group.

	Name	Organisation
Chair (Principal Officer)	Emer Connolly replaced in August 2016 by Diarmuid O’Leary	Department Housing Planning Community & Local Government
Environment Sector Representative	Michael Ewing, Coordinator	The Environmental Pillar.
Community & Voluntary Sector Representative	Dr Seán Healy, S.M.A. Director.	Social Justice Ireland,
Resource Worker Representative	Geraldine Timlin	Sligo County Council
Resource Worker Representative	Helen Howes	Wicklow PPN
Resource Worker Representative	Annette Barr Jordan	Westmeath County Council
PPN Volunteer Representative (Social Inclusion)	Siobhan O’Dowd	Cork City PPN
PPN Volunteer Representative (Environmental)	Charles Stanley Smith	Tipperary PPN
PPN Volunteer Representative (Community and Voluntary)	Tess Murphy	Longford PPN
CCMA Representative (Co-opted) Local Authority Representative	Donal Brennan (Dec 2016) Bernie Doherty	Laois County Council. Dublin City Council.

Appendix 2 Annual Report 2016 Questionnaire

2016 PPN Annual Report.

Please complete the following report in respect of the activities of your PPN in 2016.

Please note that you can put extra information into the boxes or spaces shown as they will expand as you type. If you wish to make further comments on any section you may do so.

If you have documents which already give the information requested in some sections please append them and reference them in this report.

Sections 1 to 5 should be completed by the PPN Resource Worker / Secretariat. Section 6 should be completed by the Local Authority at least at Administrative Officer level and Sections 7 and 8 should be completed by both (local authority signature at DOS/SEO level).

Please submit a completed and appropriately signed copy of the Report to -

Ms Ellie Corcoran, Secretary, National PPN Advisory Group, Room 2.01, Custom House, Dublin 1. by **30th June 2017**.

An electronic copy should also be forwarded to ppn@housing.gov.ie

Name of PPN:

Main Contact person for this report:

Address

Phone No

PPN Email

Contact Person Email

Membership

1.1 Membership Numbers

	31/12/2016	31/12/2015
Total number of members/groups of the PPN		
No. in Community/Voluntary college		
No. in Environment college		
No. in Social Inclusion college		
No. of Associate Members (if any)		

1.2 Are you using Salesforce to manage your database? _ Fully _ Partially _ Not yet

1.3 If you have introduced the category of Associate Membership, please set out how the category is defined.

Representation and Decision making

Aim: Facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sectors on decision making bodies

2.1 In what ways has the PPN participated in consultations and policy development in the City/County in 2016 (tick all that apply and quantify or comment where possible)

- Brought forward specific proposals to Boards or Committees. No. _____
- Distributed information about consultations. No. _____
- Encouraged member groups / Linkage / MD groups to participate / make written submissions.
- Attended consultation events. No. _____
- Made written submissions to consultations. No. _____
- No of consultations specifically run through PPN _____
- Other (please specify)

PPN Representative seats

2.2 Please append a list of Boards / Committees which have requested PPN representatives, how many seats are filled, any vacancies and comments – see Appendix 1 for template

No. of PPN representatives on Boards / Committees -	Men	Women
No. of Boards / Committees that the PPN is represented on		
No. of new representatives elected this year		
No. of representatives who retired this year		
No. of open PPN vacancies on Boards and Committees		

2.3 Do any individuals represent the PPN on more than one board/committee? If so, please set out the process and timeline by which this situation will be regularised in line with the User Guide.

2.4 What structures are in place to support PPN representatives on Boards and Committees, and community input to policy development and decision making?

(Please tick all that apply, and give further information where appropriate)

Linkage Groups

No. of Linkage Groups formed _____ Active : _____

Ways of communication used by Linkage Groups eg email, direct meetings, virtual meetings etc

Thematic or Activity Networks

Representatives Charter

Training for Representatives / Linkage Groups

Feed back forms

Representatives Network

Representatives Expenses

Who pays travel and other expenses for PPN representatives on Boards and Committees?

Communications

Aim: Provide information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary groups and act as a hub around which information is distributed and received

3.1 Please tick all the communications methodologies that you use.

Newsletter No. produced and circulated _____

Email Address _____

Website Address _____

Facebook No friends / followers _____

Twitter No friends / followers _____

Holding roadshows _____

Participating in events hosted by other organisations _____

Developing promotional / publicity material _____

Other _____

3.2 Has the Salesforce system added value to the communications process? Please comment

3.3 How have you publicised / promoted your PPN and its activities in 2016

Capacity Building

Aim: Strengthen the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion community and voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside / participate

4.1 How many Training / Capacity Building programmes were held in 2016?

Please describe

4.2 Did your PPN participate in National or Regional Networking meetings?

Please describe

4.3 What future additional training and capacity building needs would you identify and what training would you prioritise for 2017?

OPERATION OF THE PPN

Secretariat

5.1 How many places are on the Secretariat?

(Please detail the composition of your Secretariat)

5.2 How many are currently filled Men Women

(Please detail any seats not filled)

5.3 How does your Secretariat operate a flat structure as per the User Guide?

5.4 Does your Secretariat have subgroups (please detail)

PPN Events and Meetings

5.5 What PPN events were held in 2016 and number?

- Plenary Meetings No. _____
- Municipal District Meetings No. _____
- Secretariat Meetings No. _____
- Other PPN events please detail

Co-operation with other agencies

5.6 Has a Memorandum of Understanding been signed between the PPN and the Local Authority as stated in the User Guide? If not, please explain reason and describe progress towards this.

5.7 Was a workplan for 2016 agreed with the Local Authority?

5.8 How did the PPN collaborate with other agencies/ organisations in the county / city or elsewhere in 2016? What were the successes and challenges of this collaboration?

5.9 How has the PPN worked to “actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination, including Travellers to enable them to participate at local and county level” (PPN Guidelines 2014)

5.10 Structure of the PPN

Under what legal and administrative structure is your PPN operating:

- Hosted through the LA
- Hosted by another community organisation
- Independent company

Staffing

5.11 What staffing resources e.g. dedicated resource worker and/or support staff is available to the PPN?

5.12 If a full time equivalent resource worker is not currently in place as per the User Guide, please explain why and set out the process and timeline by which this will be achieved.

5.13 Was the Resource Worker recruited in 2016? If so, please state the date the worker took up the post and briefly describe the recruitment process and the nature of the involvement of the Secretariat in that process

5.14 By what entity (LA, Host organisation, directly by PPN?) is the PPN resource worker employed

5.15 How is the resource worker managed?

Budget

5.16 What was the budget and expenditure of the PPN in 2016?

5.17 How is the PPN Budget managed?

- Transfer of all monies to a PPN Bank account managed by the Secretariat
- Transfer of some monies to a PPN Bank account managed by the Secretariat?
What amount? How is this allocation determined?
How are the remaining monies managed?
- Managed in Local Authority
- Other, please specify

5.18 How are decisions made on how PPN funding is spent?

- By the Secretariat
- By the Resource Worker
- By the Local Authority
- Other, please specify

5.19 Please comment on the process for the management / administration of the Budget in 2016?

Work with the Local Authority

This section to be completed by the Local Authority official with responsibility for PPNs.

6.1 In what ways has the Local Authority supported the development of PPN, and the active participation of environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary organisations in policy and decision making? (Please note this does not include the provision of a budget or the core duties of the resource worker.)

6.2 How many LA related consultations were carried out via the PPN? _____

6.3 Please outline specific areas of collaboration and co-operation between the PPN and the Local Authority.

- 6.4 Are ALL community/voluntary, social inclusion and environmental seats on Local Authority Boards and Committees allocated to PPN representatives as per the User Guide? If not please set out the process and timeline by which this is to be regularised.
- 6.5 What actions have been taken to ensure that all provisions for representation by the 3 PPN colleges (Community/Voluntary, Environmental, Social Inclusion) are being met?
- 6.6 What arrangements are in place for the payment by the local authority of travel expenses to PPN representatives participating on local authority Boards and Committees?
- 6.7 How would the LA assess the contribution of the PPN to its relationship with community/voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups in the county?
- 6.8 Does the Local Authority require groups to be members of PPN to be eligible for grants?
- Yes always
 - Yes for most grants
 - Groups advised to join PPN but it is not compulsory
 - No.
- 6.9 Does the LA have any specific policy / procedure to facilitate the participation of volunteers on their Boards and Committees? Please comment.
- 6.10 What provision has been made for training of LA staff and elected members in public participation and the PPNs?
- 6.11 What additional support does the local authority believe should be provided by the Department to local authorities to continue to develop PPNs?

Recommendations

To be completed jointly by LA and PPN

- 7.1 What 3 recommendations would the PPN and the local authority (appropriate Director of Service, or equivalent) make for the successful development of the PPN in 2017 and in the future
- 7.2 What specific training is required for LAs and PPNs, both priority training in 2017 and also in subsequent years?

Signatures

PPN Secretariat

PPN Resource Worker

Local Authority

Appendix 3 Glossary of Terms

There are a broad range of definitions covering the nature and scope of public participation and local government. Some of these are explained below:

Community refers to a place (such as a neighbourhood or wider area), identity (such as belonging to an ethnic group), or interest (such as a commitment in common with others, for example, disability rights).

JPC: Joint Policing Committee: a Local Authority Committee comprised of councillors, TDs, Senators, the Gardaí and external stakeholders such as PPNs which makes policy proposals on policing issues.

LCDC: Local Community Development Committee – a Local Authority Committee with public and private members which oversees community development programmes in an area including LEADER and SICAP. PPNs typically have 5 members on that committee.

LEADER: A funding programme delivered via the LCDC, which aims to support economic social and environmental development of rural areas.

Linkage Group: A group of PPN stakeholders in a particular issue who meet to make policy recommendations and work closely with a PPN representative on a relevant Board or Committee.

Local Authority (LA): City / County Councils.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government oversees the operation and development of the local government system and provides the policy framework within which local authorities work and deliver services to the communities that they represent and serve. From July 2017, the policy framework regarding LCDCs, LECPs and PPNs transferred from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government to the Department of Rural & Community Development. Article 28A of the Irish Constitution recognises the role of local government in providing a forum for the democratic representation of communities and in exercising and performing powers conferred by law.

The elected council is the policy making forum of the local authority; the municipal district members act as a decision-making sub-formation of the overall council in respect of their municipal district area. Elected councils (operating at local authority or municipal district level) exercise ‘reserved functions’ defined in law across a range of legislation. The day-to-day management of a local authority is carried out by the executive, i.e. the full-time officials led by the chief executive. The chief executive has a duty to advise and assist the elected council in the exercise of their functions.

Local Authorities play a key role in supporting economic development and enterprise at a local level. Local Government support on the ground is critical to the success of many initiatives which drive local communities. These range from local festivals and events; design of streetscapes and village renewal schemes; support for micro-enterprises, business parks and incubation units; involvement in energy efficiency projects; promotion of rural broadband; planning for major investments in the green economy.

Local Development Companies (LDC): Organisations with a remit to support economic and social development in their catchment area. LDCs are typically contracted to deliver programmes such as the Rural Development Programme (LEADER), Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and Tús.

Municipal District (MD): A subdivision of a Local Authority area. Councillors meet at Municipal District level as well as in full council. MDs were established following the reform of Local Government Act in 2014.

Not for profit organisations are those whose objective is to return any surplus income generated back into the organisation and not pay a dividend to shareholders. It includes a vast range of organisations from very small groups with no income to large charities.

Plenary: All the member groups in a PPN. The Plenary is the ultimate decision making body of the PPN.

SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme): is designed to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality. Each SICAP provider works with both individuals and community groups in a city / county or subdivision thereof, with a focus on people experiencing disadvantage and areas which are designated disadvantaged.

Social Inclusion: activity centred on working to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment using community development approaches to build sustainable communities, where the values of equality and inclusion are promoted and human rights are respected.

SPC: Strategic Policy Committee – a Local Authority Committee comprised of councillors and external stakeholders which makes policy proposals on issues such as Housing, Environment, Community etc. Typically, LAs have 4-5 SPCs and each has some PPN representation.

Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Thematic Group: A group of PPN stakeholders working on a cross-cutting policy theme, e.g. disability, social inclusion, sustainability.

Volunteer-led organisations are those which are governed by a group of volunteers acting as a committee, board or other structure. They may also have paid staff who act on behalf of the Board.

Well-being describes a community that basic needs are met, that people have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important goals, to participate in society and to live the lives they value and have reason to value.



Donegal Public Participation Network
Do Chontae - Do Ghuth

