



Department of Rural & Community Development Public Participation Network Structural Review

Stakeholder Engagement & Consultation – Communications Document

Following a competitive tendering process, Mazars (www.mazars.ie) was appointed to support the Department of Rural and Community Development in the structural review of the Public Participation Network (PPN). PPNs have been operational for six years. As the PPNs have grown, the types of resources and supports needed have changed.

This review will:

- Consider the operation of the PPN network to date
- Identify opportunities for further strengthening PPNs
- Make recommendations for the future development of PPNs
- Provide community groups with the means to effectively and meaningfully input into, and contribute to the local decision making process
- Consider the impact of the supports provided to PPNs by the Department of Rural and Community Development, Local Authorities, and other sources to enable PPNs to fulfil their purpose effectively.

The review began in April 2021, and involves the following steps, which will be completed by Mazars:

Research & Benchmarking

This includes a detailed review of relevant documentation and research into participation structures that exist internationally.

Timeline: April – May 2021

Consultation & Engagement

The consultation and engagement process will include an online survey, virtual meetings and virtual workshops to capture the views of a broad range of stakeholders. The consultation process will consider:

- Current positioning of PPNs – *what works well? What could be improved? What gaps or obstacles exist in current structures?*
- The Future of PPNs – *What threats exist? What opportunities are there? What improvements, if any, could be made?*

The results of the survey will inform further consultations.

It is vital that a broad range of key stakeholders have an opportunity to give their views on the structures of PPNs.

Timeline: May – September 2021

Review of Structure & Governance

Using the information gathered through research and consultation, Mazars will assess the suitability of the current arrangements and consider what is needed to strengthen and enhance the structure.

Timeline: July – September 2021

Reporting & Recommendations

The findings and recommendations arising from this review will be documented in a report to the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Timeline: October - November 2021

Over the course of the review, Mazars will receive input and support from the specially formed Oversight Committee, whose members all have a strong PPN background.