Fingal Public Participation Network

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021

Fingal Public Participation Network

Overall strategic goal:

That Fingal PPN is an integral and respected local decision-making partner and network. It is engaged and pro-actively consulted in the development of all Fingal economic, social, community and infrastructural policies. Its members are well supported and aware of their ability to make a difference for their community.

Our overall strategic goal will be achieved through 17 strategic actions, under the following four strategic areas:

Improving our Network

Action 1: Grow PPN membership in a planned and sustainable way.

Action 2: Increase the operational capacity of the PPN.

Action 3: Operate the network to the highest possible standard.

Action 4: Further develop Linkage Groups.

Improving our Communications

Action 5: Showcase our achievements.

Action 6: Continue to develop communications.

Action 7: Work closely with Fingal County Council in communicating to citizens.

Improving our Representation

Action 8: Further develop relationships between the PPN and Public Representatives.

Action 9: Foster key partnerships and explore further public participation initiatives.

Action 10: Establish the PPN as a mandatory consultative and participatory structure.

Action 11: Provide more information sharing opportunities and supports for PPN Representatives.

Action 12: Develop the Social Inclusion Pillar.

Action 13: Develop policies to make the PPN more accessible.

Improving our Membership Supports

Action 14: Provide a range of training supports.

Action 15: Establish an efficient signposting and referral service.

Action 16: Develop an open data membership database online.

Action 17: Collaborate across the Greater Dublin Area.

Contents

01	**Preface – PPN Secretariat**	**3**
02	**Preface – CEO of Fingal County Council**	**4**
03	**Introduction**	**5**
	Overview	5
	PPN Vision, Values and Principles	5
	Overview of the Role of the PPN	6
	Key Successes of Fingal PPN	6
	How the PPN Works with National and Local Policy	7
	PPN Membership Profile	9
	Demographic Profile of Fingal	11
04	**Feedback on the PPN from PPN Members**	**14**
05	**The Development of the Plan – How and Who**	**16**
06	**Our Wellbeing Statement**	**17**
07	**Overview of the Strategic Vision and Key Areas of Work 2018 – 2021**	**18**
08	**Area 1 – Improving our Network**	**19**
	Overview	19
	Action 1 – Grow PPN membership in a planned and sustainable way	19
	Action 2 – Increase the operational capacity of the PPN	19
	Action 3 - Operate the network to the highest possible standard	20
	Action 4 – Further develop Linkage Groups	20
09	**Area 2 - Improving our Communications**	**21**
	Overview	21
	Action 5 – Showcase our achievements	21
	Action 6 – Continue to develop communications	21
	Action 7 – Work closely with Fingal County Council in communicating to citizens	22

10 Area 3 - Improving our Representation 23

Overview 23

Action 8 – Further develop relationships between the PPN and Public Representatives 23

Action 9 - Foster key partnerships and explore further public participation initiatives 23

Action 10 – Establish the PPN as a mandatory consultative and participatory structure 24

Action 11 – Provide more information sharing opportunities and supports for PPN Representatives 24

Action 12 – Develop the Social Inclusion Pillar 25

Action 13 – Develop policies to make the PPN more accessible 26

11 Area 4 – Improving our Membership Supports 27

Overview 27

Action 14 – Provide a range of training supports 27

Action 15 – Establish an efficient signposting and referral service 27

Action 16 - Develop an open data membership database online 28

Action 17 – Collaborate across the four Dublin PPNs 28

12 Systems and Structures to Support the Plan 29

Overview 29

Key Processes to Support Implementation of the Plan 29

Key PPN Resources and Partners 29

13 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and Our Strategy 30

Overview 30

The Sustainable Development Goals 30

How our Strategy Reflects the SDG 30

01
Preface – PPN Secretariat

The Secretariat of Fingal Public Participation Network (PPN) is delighted to present this Strategic Plan for the period 2018 to 2021. This plan sets out the next phase of development for the PPN in Fingal. We are heartened and grateful to note that over 300 member organisations of the PPN engaged in this process, which we feel, provides us with a strong mandate on our priorities for the coming four years.

Fingal PPN was setup as part of Local Government Reform in late 2014 as an evolution of the previous community and voluntary forum structure. We first elected a Secretariat to lead and oversee the operations of the PPN in 2015. The Secretariat then developed a 2016 to 2018 work plan that brought us through an intense but rewarding period of structuring. The results of this can be seen today through the wide variety of organisations and individuals who avail of our training programmes, participate in our Linkage Groups, volunteer as PPN Representatives, contribute to consultation submissions and attend our Plenary meetings.

We recently engaged Quality Matters, a research charity, to support us to continue our journey through a planned and strategic approach. This process was overseen by a Strategic Plan Steering Group*. The steering group worked with the researchers to brainstorm, critique, develop and add value to this plan. As well as this plan, the steering group also oversaw the development of the Fingal Wellbeing Statement contained within this plan and the PPN Community Issues Paper, a separate publication.

It was a pleasure to work with the Steering Committee and Quality Matters, we would like to acknowledge and thank them for the commitment, passion and imagination they brought to this process.

As a PPN, we have an obligation to promote and facilitate meaningful citizen participation and engagement in local decision making structures. Our commitment to this is matched by our aspirations for the PPN through our overall Strategic Goal, which is:

That Fingal PPN is an integral and respected local decision-making partner and network. It is engaged and pro-actively consulted in the development of all Fingal economic, social, community and infrastructural policies. Its members are well supported and aware of their ability to make a difference for their community.

We are committed to working with the community, environment and social inclusion sectors to support organisations to contribute positively to their own communities and to the County of Fingal. We are also committed to engaging as an equal partner with decision makers at both local and national level.

We wish to acknowledge the significant on-going support of Fingal County Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development to the PPN structure and look forward to growing and strengthening this into the future.

Finally, we would like to thank all Fingal PPN member organisations that have shown enormous support to the PPN to date and look forward to working with them on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Fingal PPN Secretariat 2018
(Ann Lynch, Bob Dowling, Ema Idowu, John McGrath, John Melvin, Maria Tormey, Mary Harford, Michael Walsh, Pat Murphy, Peadar O'Kelly, Siju José and Tony Brennan)

*** Strategic Plan Steering Group**
(Members of Strategic Plan Steering Group included: PPN Members Ema Idowu, Ian Murphy, John Harford, John Melvin, Maria Tormey, Marie Reynolds, Mary Harford and Siju José; PPN Resource Worker Jamie Moore; and Fingal County Council Senior Community Officer Sinéad Wiley)

02
Preface – CEO of Fingal County Council

As Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, I view the establishment of the Public Participation Network (PPN) as an important part of the most recent reforms of the local government and local development structures and consider that it provides an excellent framework for participation by the local community in the decision-making processes of the local authority.

As the Council works towards making Fingal the place of choice to live, work, visit and to do business in Ireland, the community is an integral part of realising this vision and the role of the PPN in this regard is essential.

I very much support the four strategic areas set out in this Strategic Plan for improving the PPN, including its communications, representation and the supports it provides to its members. The 17 actions proposed to help realise the strategic goal of the PPN are welcome and I look forward to the PPN building on the good start it has made since its establishment in 2014 and further strengthening its role over the 2018-2021 period.

The plan will require the commitment of the PPN members and the continued dedication of its Secretariat and supporting staff. The Council supports the development of this Strategic Plan and will work closely with the PPN in realising mutually beneficial outcomes and supporting the PPN in strengthening its position as an integral and respected partner in local decision-making.

Paul Reid **April, 2018**
Chief Executive, Fingal County Council

03
Introduction

Overview

Fingal Public Participation Network (PPN) is the local Public Participation Network. The PPN provides a structure for a two-way flow of information and engagement between Fingal County Council and Community, Environment and Social Inclusion groups. The PPN also provides opportunities for the capacity building and growth of its member organisations. This strategy outlines how the PPN can work together with local agencies and democratic decision-making processes to ensure that local policy making includes and is beneficial for Fingal communities. The strategy has been developed by members of the PPN.

This strategic plan begins with an overview of the PPN, its mission, values and structures as well as its key achievements to date. This plan provides a profile of Fingal PPN and outlines key demographic information about the Fingal area. The steps undertaken to develop the plan are outlined. This is followed by the PPN Wellbeing Statement, which provides an overriding vision for what the PPN is working towards. Following this the plan outlines 17 actions across four strategic areas, which relate to how we operate, and how we communicate, represent and support PPN members. The final sections of the plan outline how we will support the plan to be implemented and how the activity of the PPN has incorporated the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

PPN Vision, Values and Principles

Vision

The Vision of the Fingal Public Participation Network is to '*act as the voice of the Community in Fingal and to influence improved decision making in the county*'.

Values

The Fingal PPN is underpinned by the values of:

- Inclusiveness and Participation
- Independence and Diversity
- Accountability and Transparency

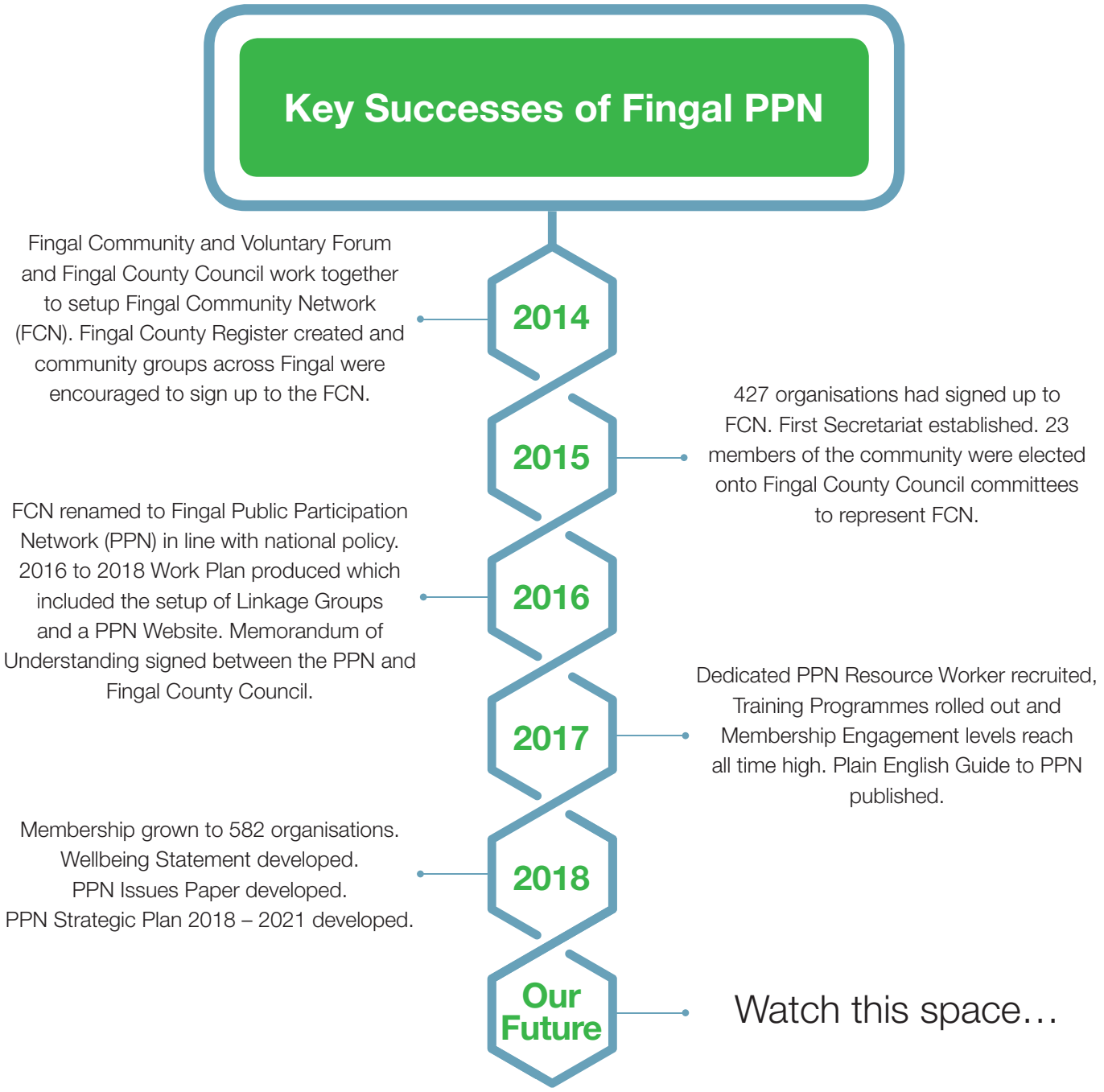
Principles

Fingal PPN operates under the principles of:

- **Clarity** – of role and structure
- **Commitment** – to our members and the integrity of the organisation
- **Communications** – to be in a clear, concise, simple and timely manner
- **Consistency** – of service and a clear mechanism of two-way engagement

Overview of the Role of the PPN

The PPN is a countrywide initiative to build a network of community, social inclusion and environmental groups who work within a local authority area. The focus of the PPN is to empower and assist groups to participate in local decision making. The PPN is key to Fingal's framework for public engagement. It provides the structure to facilitate the two-way engagement between Fingal County Council and Community, Environment and Social Inclusion groups. The network enables residents of Fingal to influence plans and policies for the future development of the County through their local community organisations.



How the PPN Works with National and Local Policy

The PPN was setup as part of Local Government reform in 2014. This was on the foot of a 2013 recommendation by the Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government. The recommendation was set out to achieve the aim of more extensive and diverse input by citizens into the decision-making process at local government level. Since their establishment PPN's are the primary means of Civic Society to engage with County Councils. PPNs are joint-funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development in partnership with the local County Council, in this case, Fingal County Council.

National Level

The PPN User Guidebook[1] states that the PPN is to function as **"the main link through which the Local Authority (LA) connects with the community, voluntary, environmental and social inclusion sectors"** and **"enables the public to take an active formal role in the policy making and oversight activities of the LA's area of responsibility."**

The intention is to achieve local representation through a collaborative partnership approach. Positive relationships between PPN and the LA are essential for the success of this. Each PPN and LA draws up a clear memorandum of understanding to govern their operations, funding and independence.

The Irish Government is committed to the continuation and development of PPN. The Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-2018, commitment 2[2] is to support PPNs through the operation of the National PPN Advisory Group (NAG). The NAG is charged with advising and supporting the Department in the development of PPNs. The membership of the NAG is made up of representatives from the Department, sectorial interests, PPN volunteers and PPN workers, one of which is the Fingal PPN Resource Worker.

The role of the National Advisory Group is to:

- Engage with all stakeholders, including other PPNs, community-based PPN member organisations and local authorities to promote best practice.
- Update and improve the PPN User Guide.
- Continue on-going training/capacity building programmes for local PPN participants.
- Roll out a capacity building programme for LA members and officials.
- Develop a national communications/awareness-raising plan for PPNs.
- Roll out and update as necessary a county register of member organisations.

Local level

At local level the PPN is embedded in Fingal County Council through the Fingal County Council Corporate Plan[3]. This plan provides a framework within which annual service delivery plans set out the principal service objectives and priorities for each functional directorate. As part of its community services section it states that it is required to develop a strong PPN and implement a Wellbeing Plan for the citizens of Fingal, this relates to corporate objectives 4[4] and 7[5].

1 http://drcd.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/public_participation_networks_ppns_user_guide_march_2017.pdf
2 http://www.ogpireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Final-National-Action-Plan-2016-2018.pdf
3 http://www.fingalcoco.ie/media/Corporate%20Plan%20(reviewed%20Sept2016).docx.pdf
4 To develop, support and enhance the quality of life of sustainable, inclusive communities
5 To promote participation in and awareness of Council activities through effective communications, consultation and engagement

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) are local authority committees whose membership includes elected councillors, representatives of business, farming interests, trade unions, environmental/conservation groups, community and voluntary services and members of the PPN. It is the task of the Strategic Policy Committees, to advise and assist the council in the formulation, development and review of policy. Fingal County Council contains six, which are:

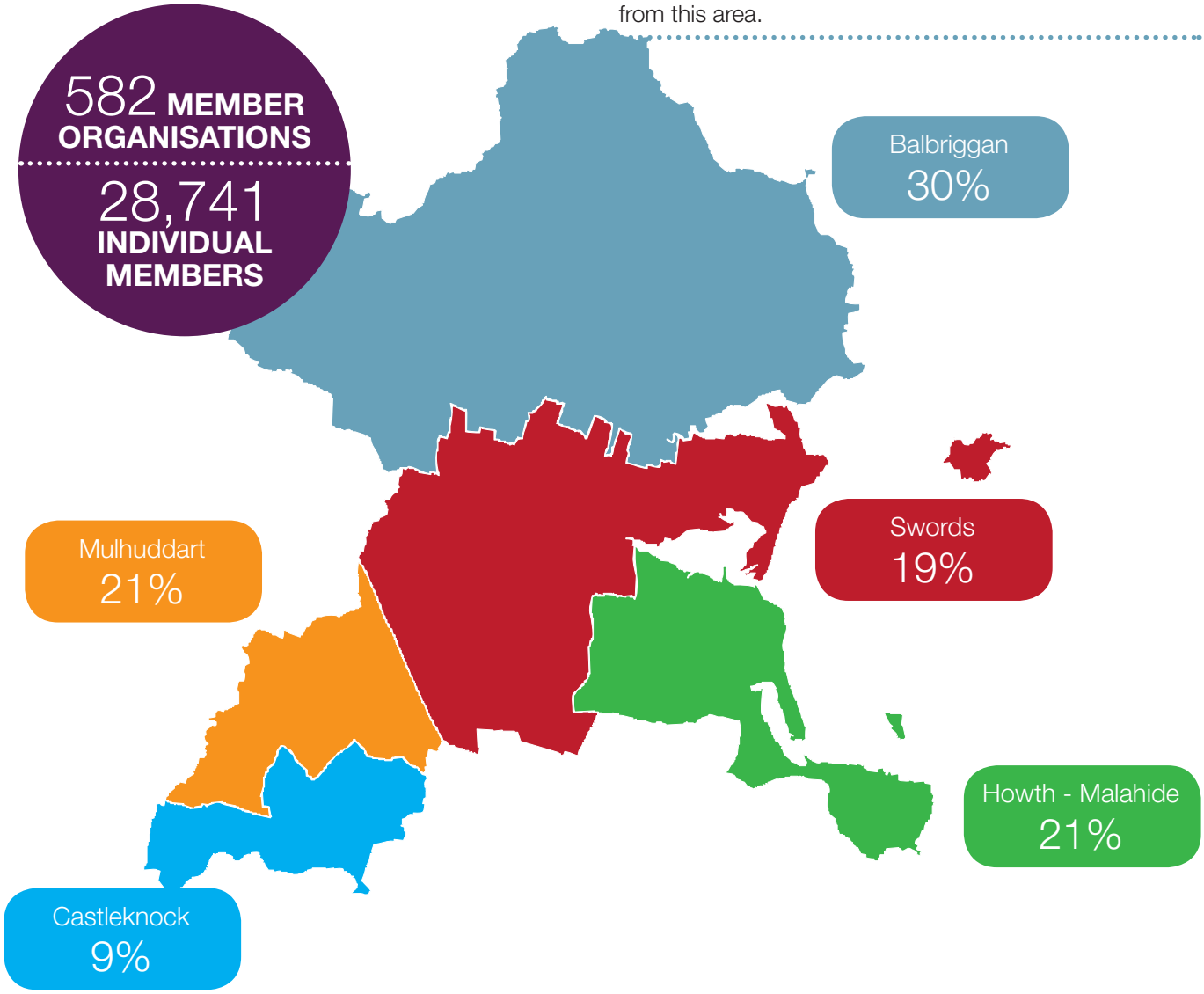
To align with the SPC's the PPN runs similarly themed Linkage Groups; open to all members of the PPN. These Linkage Groups meet quarterly and discuss issues of concern to the community. These groups provide the two PPN members who represent them with a mandate for their engagement in the SPCs.

Five members of the PPN sit on the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and contribute on behalf of the network to the Fingal Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). There are also seven members of the PPN who sit on the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) and contribute on behalf of the network to the Fingal JPC Six Year Strategy.

PPN Membership Profile

Membership Numbers: The PPN is made up of approximately 582 member organisations which between them contain an estimated 28,741[6] individual members[7]. More than nine in ten organisations in the PPN report that 76% to 100% of their members live in Fingal[8].

Electoral Areas: Almost a third of organisations are found in the Balbriggan local electoral area, with one in five organisations found in the Howth-Malahide and the Mulhuddart areas, Swords accounts for one in six-member organisations and the Castleknock local area contains proportionally the fewest number of PPN member organisations with less than one in ten hailing from this area.



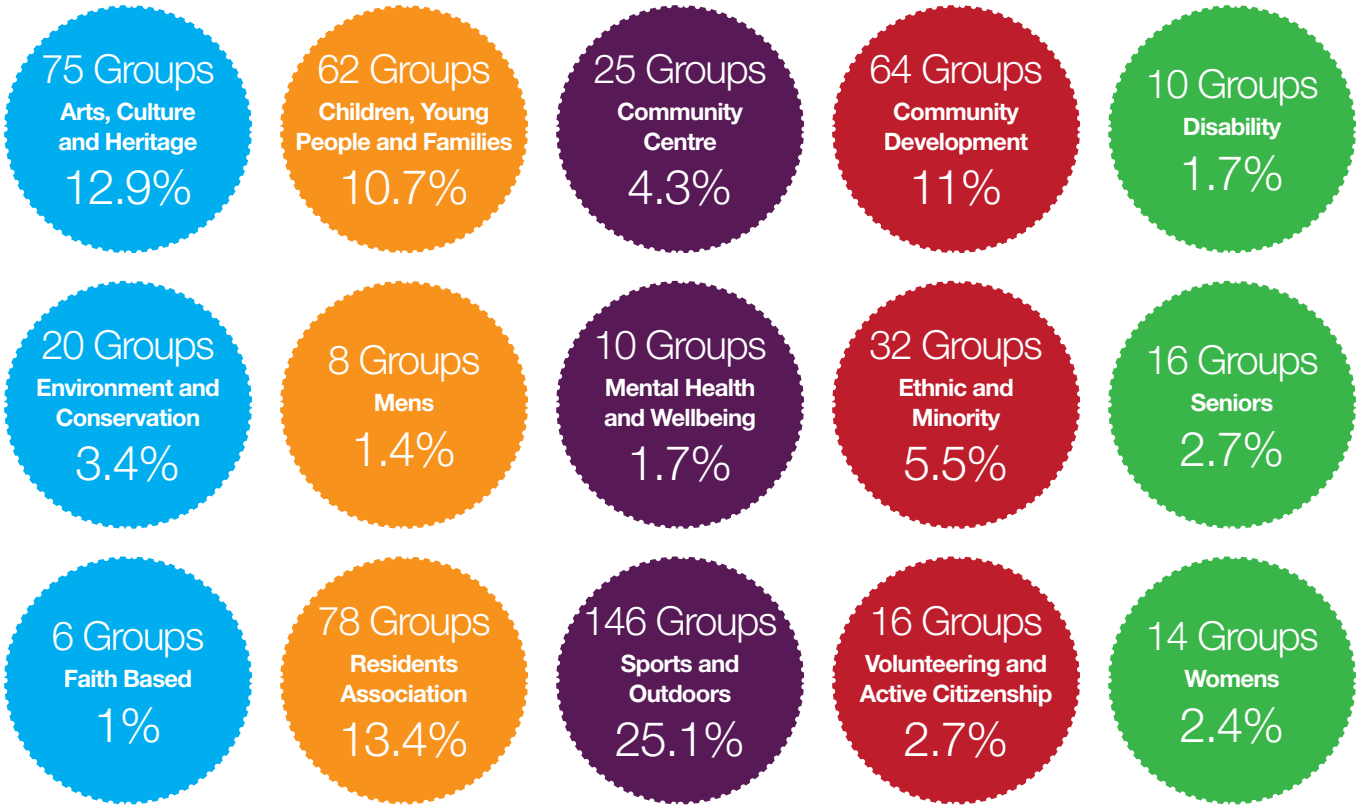
6 Figures in this section are based off a sample of 525 membership organisations in the PPN database

7 Exact numbers are not kept, estimation calculated through simplifying numeric bands *(Less than 10 members, 11–25, 26–50, 51–75, 76–100. 100+ members*) in the database and adding the resulting totals. It should be noted that this is estimate is conservative. *Band Less than 10 = 9, Band 11–25 members = 25, band 26–50 members = 50, band 51–75 members = 75, band 76–100 members = 100, band 100 or more members = 101*

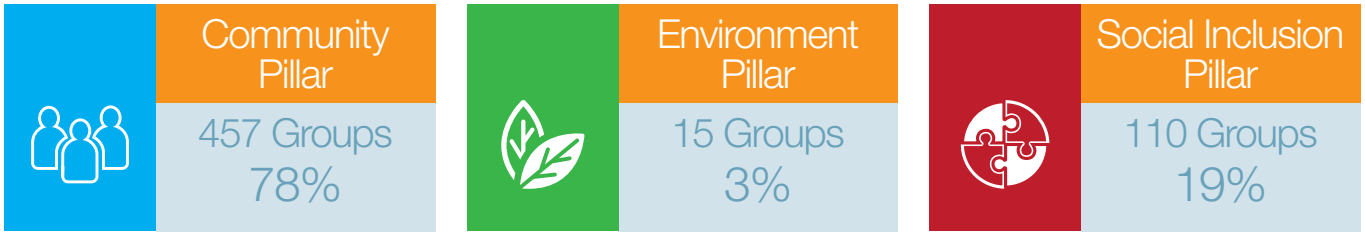
8 93%

More than eight in ten organisations have a committee structure, with 8% being associations and 6% being Limited Companies[9].

Half of the organisations describe their primary concern as being either sports, outdoors, residents associations, arts, culture or heritage[10].



Eight in ten PPN member organisations are in the Community Pillar while less than two in ten are in the Social Inclusion Pillar and 3% in the Environment Pillar.



9 Organisation structure: Committee (83%), Association (8%), Limited Company (6%), Charity (2%), Affiliated (1%), Other (1%)
10 sports/outdoor activities (24%), residents associations (14%) or arts/culture and media (11%)

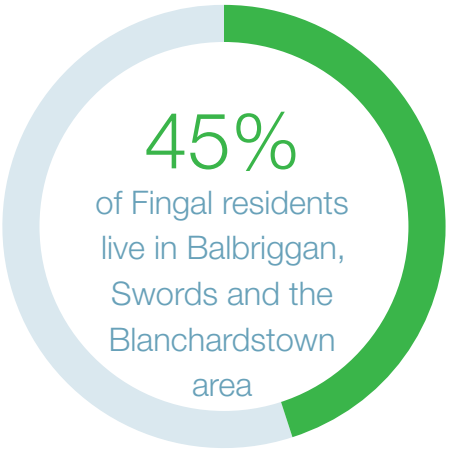
Demographic Profile of Fingal

Who lives in Fingal?

Fingal is a large area that spans rural, urban and suburban communities. More than nine in ten residents live in a town area[11], despite large parts of the county being rural and devoted to farming. According to the last census, Fingal is the third most populous local authority area in Ireland with the sixth highest population density (persons per km^2). Fingal's population is growing faster than any other local authority area and now accounts for 22% of the entire population of Dublin County. Swords is officially the largest town in Dublin and the second largest in the country. Swords is the county town of Fingal and both Swords and Blanchardstown contain the two main offices of Fingal County Council.

Population Hubs

There are three main population hubs in Fingal; Blanchardstown, Swords and Balbriggan. Balbriggan is the 12th largest town in Ireland with 21,722 residents, Swords is the second largest town in Ireland with 39,248 residents and the Blanchardstown area[12], though not classified as a town in its own right, contains 74,501 residents. The three population hubs are geographically dispersed in the north (Balbriggan), south (Swords) and southwest (Blanchardstown) of the region and account for 45% of all residents in Fingal.



11 The population of an aggregate town area is defined as those persons living in population clusters of 1,500 residents or more
12 Blanchardstown area consists of the electoral divisions: Blanchardstown-Blakestown, Blanchardstown-Coolmine, Blanchardstown-Tyrrelstown, Blanchardstown-Mulhuddert, Blanchardstown-Abbotstown, Blanchardstown-Roselawn and Blanchardstown-Delwood, Blanchardstown-Corduff

Young People

Fingal contains the youngest population of all 31 local authorities in Ireland. More than one in three Fingal residents are between the ages of 0 – 24 years, compared to the national average, Fingal has a larger proportion of pre-school and primary school aged children (3% more). On the other end of the spectrum, less than one in ten residents in Fingal are over the age of 65, the lowest proportion of all 31 local authorities.

Fingal residents are on average 3 years younger than residents of other local authorities

Fingal has a large youth population: 36% of residents are between the ages of 0 - 24

Fingal has the smallest proportion of its population aged 65 years or older of all local authorities: 9%

New Communities

Fingal is one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the country, with one in six residents from new communities; this is five per cent higher than the national average. The area contains the second largest number of new community residents out of 31 local authorities. Fingal has proportionally more non-Irish Whites, Asians and Black residents compared to the national average. This diversity is not spread evenly across the county, for instance the three population hubs (Balbriggan, Swords, Blanchardstown) contain almost double the proportion of new communities within their population as Skerries and Malahide[13].

1 in 6 residents of Fingal are from New Communities

Second largest number of new community residents out of 31 local authorities

Physical Infrastructure

Fingal is home to Dublin Airport, which is the busiest airport in the country and handles more passengers, freight and commercial flights than all the other main Irish airports combined. Dublin Airport is a vital element of national infrastructure and the single largest employer in Fingal. It is a key facilitator of economic development and its economic importance is illustrated by the approximate 117,300 jobs which are supported or facilitated by the airport, and by the €8.4 billion contributed to the Irish economy, which is equivalent to 3.1% of GDP[14]. However, the airport also has an impact on residents in terms of noise and traffic, which requires on-going monitoring.

Despite the large and growing population of the county, there is no light rail in Fingal. This has resulted in residents having to commute to work and experiencing large commuting times. 53% of commuters in Fingal spend more than

13 Census 2016: Residents from EU 28 countries (excluding Ireland) and the rest of the world: Balbriggan (4,070, 18.9%), Swords (7,103, 18.1%), Blanchardstown area (14,891, 20.1%), Skerries (736, 7.2%), Malahide (1,552, 9.5%)

14 https://www.dublinairport.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/economic-impact-study---2016.pdf?sfvrsn=0

30 minutes commuting to work compared to 43% in the Dublin City Council area. The Ireland 2040 Plan proposes to connect Dublin Airport and Swords to the city centre which would go some way to relieving this pressure.

Fingal is an area rich in tourist destinations, which could be further optimised through the development of its physical infrastructure. Development of tourist/recreational pathways, particularly the delivery of the Fingal Coastal Way (a cycleway/walkway which links to major heritage sites, parks and beaches) which is an objective of the Development Plan 2017-2023 in a manner similar to the Waterford Greenway project could have a major impact on recreation and tourist experience in the county.

Social and Housing Infrastructure

Fingal is ranked as the second most affluent local authority area in the country. However this statistic hides pockets of disadvantage that are spread around the county. It has a mixture of different socio-economic backgrounds, with urban areas in the south-eastern region of Fingal ranking as more affluent than parts of western Fingal. The county is on the commuter belt for Dublin City and has the fourth largest proportion of private rental tenancies in the country and the fifth highest rents[15]. A large number of people access emergency accommodation and there are a relatively high proportion of lone parent families in the county.

6% of the population
live in Small Areas classified as being 'disadvantaged' or 'very disadvantaged'

21.3% of all households are rented from a private landlord

One parent families account for 23.1% of all families with children in Fingal

Summary

Fingal is an area rich in diversity, both in its geography and in the makeup of its population. The county has the youngest population, and the second largest number of new communities, out of all 31 local authorities with the vast majority of residents living in town areas. Fingal is the second most affluent local authority in the country however, this masks pockets of disadvantaged throughout the county, particularly in the western end of the county.

Fingal is home to Dublin Airport which is the largest employer in the county. However, the county is lacking in certain key physical infrastructure that could facilitate wellbeing and investment opportunities such as the Metro Link and Fingal Coastal Way projects.

15 https://www.daft.ie/report/2017-Q4-rental-price-daft-report.pdf

04
Feedback on the PPN from PPN Members

The data in this chapter was captured though an online survey which was responded to by 190 members of the PPN in March of 2018. The survey found the following key information:

- 91% of respondents have a very good idea or a general idea about what the PPN does
- 96% of respondents are very interested or generally interested in the PPN
- 53% of respondents attend at least one Linkage Group meeting per year, 43% have never attended

Three quarters of respondents stated that they were interested in the arts, community, heritage and sport Linkage Group. This is in line with the profile of the PPN which shows that the primary cause for half of the member organisations was arts, culture, resident's associations and sports.

Table 1: Topical areas that groups/individual respondent's interests align with

Linkage Group	
Arts, community, heritage and sport	75%
Community safety and policing	45%
Social and rural development (inc. Youth)	38%
Planning and strategic infrastructure	38%
Transport, tourism and economic development	34%
Environment and water	29%
Housing and homelessness	14%

The vast majority of respondents rate their interactions with the PPN positively. Table 2 shows that vast majority of people feel heard, respected and welcome. There is also significant agreement that communications are effective and meetings are managed well. The area with most potential for improvement is the time that meetings are held.

Table 2: Members Experience of Fingal PPN

On a scale of 1 – 5, rate:	1 or 2 Disagree / Strongly disagree	3 to 5 Medium, Agree, Strongly Agree
I feel welcome in Fingal PPN	10%	90%
I feel respected at Linkage Group meetings	10%	90%
Meetings are managed in a way that give everyone the ability to contribute	13%	87%
I feel heard at Linkage Group meetings	15%	85%
Communications are effective	17%	83%
I find it easy to get the information I need from the PPN	19%	81%
If I need support I know where to go	20%	80%
Fingal PPN holds its meetings at a time that is suitable for me	27%	73%

Table 3 highlights that the vast majority of people see the PPN as effective in its purpose, ensuring that the views of local people are heard and effectively communicated to the local authority, with the end result being a clear impact for the local community.

Table 3: The impact and outcomes of the PPN

On a scale of 1 – 5, rate:	1 or 2 Disagree / Strongly disagree	3 to 5 Medium, Agree, Strongly Agree
Through the PPN I feel the views of local people are heard	16%	84%
If I have a concern the PPN is a forum in which I can air it	17%	83%
Fingal PPN is effective in putting forward the views of its membership in the Local Authority	17%	83%
I understand the impact we have	18%	82%

The data in Table 4 shows that people benefit significantly from being involved in the PPN. Over 75% of respondents report that they enjoy meeting people, the engagement brings meaning and that this increases a sense of belonging; all-important outcomes at the personal level.

Table 4: The benefits for members of the PPN

On a scale of 1 – 5, rate:	1 or 2 Disagree / Strongly disagree	3 to 5 Medium, Agree, Strongly Agree
I enjoy meeting people through the PPN	12%	88%
I feel that membership of Fingal PPN is meaningful	14%	86%
The PPN increases my sense of community belonging	16%	84%
I feel I can actively contribute to local decision making through the PPN	22%	78%

Summary

This survey provides a useful baseline in relation to the experience, perception of impact and benefits at the personal level. The survey provides a very positive view of the operation of the PPN, as well as showing room to continue to build on these strengths.

05
The Development of the Plan – How and Who

This strategy was developed by members of the PPN who contributed in four main ways: (i) Initiating the development the strategy at the November 2017 Plenary meeting. (ii) Engaging in Linkage Group meetings to identify strategic issues and actions. (iii) Participating in an online survey. (iv) Through membership on Strategic Plan Steering Committee. The Plan was drafted by the Steering Committee and approved by the Secretariat.

The strategic plan's key purpose is to orientate the PPN's systems and resources in a common direction in order to achieve the agreed goals. The strategic plan will also assist Fingal PPN in further establishing credibility as an organisation and expanding the scale and scope of work conducted by the organisation.

Figure 1: Strategic Plan Development by Numbers

	Stage	Numbers Involved
Foundation	**Project Steering Committee**	A committee of 10 PPN Members and Stakeholders led the strategic planning process.
Consultation	**Plenary**	More than 150 suggestions made by PPN members at the November 2017 Plenary meeting.
	Linkage Groups and Focus Groups	Over 100 people participated in 7 Linkage Groups and 2 Focus Groups.
	Survey	190 Members gave their views through survey
	Funders	5 senior management officials surveyed and submission made by the Chief Executive of Fingal County Council.
Strategy	**Strategic Plan Drafted**	18 Strategic Actions Drafted and Reviewed
	Final Strategic Plan	1 Fingal Plan that presents a roadmap for the PPN's future.

06
Our Wellbeing Statement

Overview

Through the PPN User Guide, the Department of Rural and Community Development has tasked Fingal PPN to develop a Wellbeing Statement. A wellbeing statement looks at what is required for the wellbeing of individuals and communities, now and for the generations to come.

Understanding what wellbeing is for our community is important to ensure that everyone involved in the PPN is aligned to a common vision. Wellbeing is a term being used across almost all governmental strategies. Many of these strategies have common elements. This wellbeing statement takes these common elements and defines wellbeing from the perspective of local Fingal residents and members of the PPN.

To develop the wellbeing statement participants in the seven Linkage Group Workshops were asked to describe what wellbeing meant to themselves and their community. 135 comments were collected from 102 workshop participants. These have been thematically analysed to produce a series of statements which together summarise what wellbeing is for our community. It is envisioned that this statement will guide the work of Fingal PPN, as well as how we do our work.

For our community wellbeing is:

1. Being able to live a healthy life in a healthy environment
2. Having access to affordable facilities and amenities that the community can use
3. Living in a community that supports social inclusion, integration and provides people with a sense of belonging
4. Feeling appreciation for contributing to a community where community members are valued and cared for
5. Having opportunities, being able to set goals and to enjoy positive personal growth
6. Having respect for and trust in local decision-making structures which are transparent and where members of the community feel listened to
7. Feeling secure and safe

07
Overview of the Strategic Vision and Key Areas of Work 2018 – 2021

Overall strategic goal:

That Fingal PPN is an integral and respected local decision-making partner and network. It is engaged and pro-actively consulted in the development of all Fingal economic, social, community and infrastructural policies. Its members are well supported and aware of their ability to make a difference for their community.

Our overall strategic goal will be achieved through 17 strategic actions, under the following four strategic areas:

Improving our Network	Improving our Communications	Improving our Representation	Improving our Membership Supports
1. Grow PPN membership in a planned and sustainable way. 2. Increase the operational capacity of the PPN. 3. Operate the network to the highest possible standard. 4. Further develop Linkage Groups.	5. Showcase our achievements. 6. Continue to develop communications. 7. Work closely with Fingal County Council in communicating to citizens.	8. Further develop relationships between the PPN and Public Representatives. 9. Foster key partnerships and explore further public participation initiatives. 10. Establish the PPN as a mandatory consultative and participatory structure. 11. Provide more information sharing opportunities and supports for PPN Representatives. 12. Develop the Social Inclusion Pillar. 13. Develop policies to make the PPN more accessible.	14. Provide a range of training supports. 15. Establish an efficient signposting and referral service. 16. Develop an open data membership database online. 17. Collaborate across the Greater Dublin Area.

08
Area 1 – Improving our Network

Overview

An overall strength of the PPN is its engagement with local people and groups and effective communications across members. Fingal PPN will continue to develop its network, increasing the numbers of people involved, and ensuring high quality oversight and governance.

Action 1
Grow PPN membership in a planned and sustainable way

In order to increase membership, the PPN will be advertised and promoted through the following methods:

- Include adverts in Parish newsletters, free newspapers and websites (i.e. local events websites).
- Further use of public notice boards with eye catching posters.
- Conduct social media campaigns, targeted at different demographic profiles of Fingal residents.
- Contact all local resident associations and community groups not involved in the PPN to invite them to participate.
- Encourage PPN members to spread the word and support additional engagement of fellow community members.
- Engage in a 'Getting to Know Us' outreach programme to the towns/villages in Fingal. This programme to be situated in local community centres and be run by current PPN Representatives.
- Greater utilisation of outreach facilities in Fingal such as community centres, libraries, shopping centres, etc.
- Support and engage with any national campaigns.
- Work with relevant support agencies such as the local authority and local development companies, to encourage groups they work with to join the PPN

These actions will be staggered over the period of the strategic plan. The PPN membership list, in-line with GDPR and departmental guidelines, will be updated every two years. This process involves a reregistration of all PPN members.

Measure of Success

- 20% increase in membership over the period of the strategic plan.
- Maintain an active membership of 50% per annum.* Note an active member is anyone who engages with the PPN through an event, Linkage Group, plenary, survey, consultations, at least once per year.

Action 2
Increase the operational capacity of the PPN

Currently the network is supported by a full-time Resource Worker and a part time administrator (as of March 2018). Given the broad programme of work, number of meetings and large membership base, there is a need to review the PPN's staff resources, with the view of having a fulltime PPN Co-ordinator and fulltime PPN Support Worker in place on a permanent basis.

Measure of success

- Review undertaken and resources secured.

Action 3
Operate the network to the highest possible standard

The PPN is committed to ensuring that our network operates to good practice standards. To achieve this, we are on the journey towards Governance Code compliance (www.governancecode.ie).

The PPN will also continue to actively participate in the National PPN Advisory Group, the National PPN Workers Network and the regional PPN meetings. This will ensure continued learning and sharing of emerging good practice, resulting with the PPN remaining at the forefront of development in Fingal.

Measure of success

- The network self-assesses as completing the Governance Code.

Action 4
Further develop Linkage Groups

The vision of the PPN is that Linkage Groups will become stronger and more empowered to operate, resulting in each group having a simple work plan. Work plans will have a small range of specific projects that can be progressed at community level. Projects could be anything from a campaign, to an event, to an advocacy initiative. Specific projects will assist the Linkage Groups in addressing issues when they are outside the scope of the county council structures.

The development of Linkage Groups requires significant engagement and is dependent on real and genuine community ownership. The development of Linkage Groups will be enhanced through the following actions:

- Each Linkage Group to have a nominated lead facilitator for giving feedback and supporting meetings to function. These facilitators to receive training and mentoring.
- To develop work-plans that have significant membership support. Work plans to include specific projects that can be achieved at a local level, and which benefit the local community.
- To establish a fund to support Linkage Groups to manage specific action-based projects. The PPN will also aim to facilitate necessary supports from relevant agencies to assist the achievement of action-based projects.
- Expand the brief of Linkage Groups beyond the SPCs, JPC and LCDC to allow engagement with other state agencies such as Irish Rail, the OPW, Dublin Bus, the HSE and other relevant Government Departments and bodies.
- Upload PPN representative's reports prior to meetings and using the Linkage Groups for question and answers rather than reading out updates.
- Pilot and review use of technology to support people to participate in meetings from their home or local community centre.
- Use, review and update the PPN Community Issues Paper on an on-going basis, at least annually.

Measures of success

- Linkage Groups report that facilitators improve meetings.
- Positive engagement between the Linkage Groups and other decision-making structures.
- There are clear contributions and policy/practice outcomes from PPN engagement at any new forums.
- Brief information sheet on the technology engagement pilot.
- Each Linkage Group has a simple work plan and projects that result in specific measurable outcomes for the community.

09
Area 2 - Improving our Communications

Overview

The PPN was considered by those involved to be an important and effective way for local people to influence local planning and decision making. Good communications across the membership and between the PPN and other stakeholders is key to ensuring the success of this work. This section outlines how the PPN will build on its communication structures and processes.

Action 5
Showcase our achievements

It is imperative that the PPN communicates to our members and the public on the progress and achievements of PPN activity.

- To have a section added to the website which succinctly highlights the achievements of each Linkage Group.
- To continue to develop and disseminate six monthly update reports (in poster format), using infographics to highlight the achievements of the PPN.
- Use case studies in the six-monthly reports and on the website to highlight our success and impact.

Measure of Success

- Achievements are recorded and visible on the website.
- Numbers of reports / newsletters / etc. showcasing achievements published.

Action 6
Continue to develop communications

While there was broad agreement that communications were effective, and that there is a clear limit to the time people have to read communications. It was noted that small changes could improve communications for and between members:

- Website functionality to be reviewed annually and improved where possible. Potential improvements to be reviewed as part of this include the use of interactive apps such as online voting, polling and an events calendar.
- The development of an interactive map and directory of local groups and organisations. This directory to be shared with other local information and signposting projects that can benefit from it.
- Continue to promote funding opportunities through the website and newsletters.
- Expand recipients of the monthly PPN Newsletters to include local agency stakeholders and elected representatives.
- Engage with Comhairle na nÓg to explore how PPN communications can be more youth friendly and engaging.
- Develop a communications strategy.

Measure of success

- A 50% improvement across all online communication analytics within 2 years.
- Increased number of followers and engagements on social media.
- Rise in number of subscribers to the PPN Newsletter.
- Greater footprint on internet search engines.
- Communications strategy developed and implemented.

Action 7
Work closely with Fingal County Council in communicating to citizens

In order to support bringing the citizen closer to the work of local government through access to information, improved communication and clarity of role, the PPN will work with the Communications Unit of Fingal County Council to:

- Support the streamlining of communications on important day to day public information.
- Develop a communications protocol between Fingal County Council and the PPN. This will be particularly beneficial during periods of emergency response (i.e. severe weather warnings) and when major works are on-going.
- Offer suggestions and on-going feedback on improving the accessibility of the Council's communications.

Measure of success

- Marked improvement in efficiency of communications between the PPN and Fingal County Council.
- Effective co-ordination between the PPN and Fingal County Council during major incidents and emergency response, as judged between senior staff feedback.

10
Area 3 - Improving our Representation

Overview

The PPN was considered by those involved to be an important and effective way for local people to influence local planning and decision making. Good communications across the membership and between the PPN and other stakeholders is key to ensuring the success of this work. This section outlines how PPN will build on its communication structures and processes.

Action 8
Further develop relationships between the PPN and Public Representatives

In order for the PPN to effectively progress issues, beneficial and supportive relationships need to be continually developed between the PPN and Public Representatives. To further support this, and to raise awareness with public representatives as to the benefits of engaging with PPNs, the following will be done:

- Establish a system for PPN Linkage Group Representatives to meet the SPC / LCDC / JPC chairpersons prior to meetings, as needed, in order to build productive professional relationships.
- Seek support from public representatives, where relevant, when progressing community issues.
- Ensure Public Representatives are kept up to date on PPN activity through circulating newsletters and activity reports.
- Coming up to local elections the PPN to organise 'meet the candidate' events for PPN members.

Measure of success

- A survey and/or interviews to be undertaken with public representatives at mid-point and end of the strategy.

Action 9
Foster key partnerships and explore further public participation initiatives

There is potential for citizens to extend their influence through the development of PPN representation roles on other decision-making forums. To develop this role the PPN will gain agreement to have PPN representation on key committees in areas of strategic interest to the PPN, for instance in community development, health services and heritage.

The PPN will explore innovative public participation initiatives taking place in Ireland and the European Union with a view to learning from these and introducing enhanced participative democracy measures in Fingal (such as developing a Participation Unit, trialling Online Democracy and Participatory Budgeting, etc.). This should result in more active community participation in consultations, decision making and policy development exercises in Fingal County Council and other local agencies.

New and existing partnerships need to be fostered on an on-going basis, particularly in the areas of capacity building, in order to support PPN member groups to meaningfully engage in activity to achieve their goals.

Measure of success

- Increase representation on relevant local authority committees and consultation processes.
- There are new representative roles on non-local authority decision making forums.
- New participatory democracy initiatives trialled.

Action 10
Establish the PPN as a mandatory consultative and participatory structure

The PPN is a new and evolving structure. Although awareness of the PPN among key local and national agencies is being improved, the PPN will advocate that the Irish Government requires all consultations to notify PPNs in the areas affected by their policy development.

Measure of success

- A statement or circular is issued from the government regarding the requirement to notify PPNs of consultations in a timely manner.
- Increase in number of consultations coming through the PPN.

Action 11
Provide more information sharing opportunities and supports for PPN Representatives

PPN Representatives are volunteers from the community who give of their time freely to the PPN. Without these representatives, the PPN would not be able to do its job. It is important that the PPN acknowledges and facilitates the participation of all volunteer PPN Representatives. The following support structures will be put in place:

- Provide information sharing and learning opportunities for PPN Representatives through a forum.
- Provide an opportunity for PPN Representatives to engage in a personal development plan to include training and mentoring supports.
- Work with other PPNs to provide collective opportunities for Linkage Group representatives to meet to discuss synergies across shared topic areas.
- Explore with other PPNs the chance for representatives to meet nationally once a year.

Measure of success

- PPN Representatives Forum established.
- PPN Representatives engage and progress through Personal Development Plans.
- Regional and national meetings of Representatives considered useful and thus recurring.

Action 12
Develop the Social Inclusion Pillar

The PPN will develop the Social Inclusion Pillar, which will involve providing structures and supports to existing or new forums and networks so that their issues can be presented at PPN Linkage Groups. In order to develop the Social Inclusion Pillar in a meaningful way, the PPN will develop and implement the following measures in partnership with the relevant stakeholders:

Develop a Social Inclusion Pillar Toolkit

The toolkit will act as a road map and resource in developing the Social Inclusion Pillar. Among other things, the toolkit will provide:

- Easy to understand information on good practice in this area.
- Clarity on all aspects of how the process will work, including how networks are established and supported.
- Clarity on how agendas are developed, representatives selected and how feedback is managed on these agendas.
- Template terms of reference for all groups (i.e. for forums, networks and the Social Inclusion Pillar).
- An outline of communication strategies and supports.
- An outline of how challenges and barriers can be overcome.
- The roles of support staff / support agencies (i.e. Fingal County Council, Empower Partnership, etc.).
- An accompanying plan on training, mentoring and other supports required for the process to work well.

The process of developing the toolkit, as well as resulting in a useful resource, will have the objectives of engaging relevant support staff in their roles and gaining buy-in for the Social Inclusion Pillar to oversee the process.

Support the Engagement of Special Interest Groups

The following networks or forums will be engaged or developed:

1. People with disabilities
2. Ethnic minorities
3. Young people
4. Traveller and Roma
5. Older adults
6. Substance misusers
7. Other relevant emerging interest group

The Social Inclusion Pillar structure will involve working with staff in relevant organisations to build the capacity of these networks. The role of networks and forums involved in this pillar is to consult and engage members of communities / special interest groups and to represent their issues within the PPN Linkage Groups. To support this development, a Social Inclusion Pillar Group will be setup to monitor this process and ensure supports are adequate for these forums / networks and that the toolkit is being implemented, or is adapted as the structures develop.

Measure of success

- Toolkit agreed by all stakeholders by end 2018.
- Toolkit considered useful by people operating in support roles.
- Increasing participation from social inclusion groups from 10% to 30% by 2021.
- Positive feedback from social inclusion group members on the supports and the feedback they receive, as judged on surveys at 18 months and 3 years.
- Key agencies sign up to support roles.

Action 13
Develop policies to make the PPN more accessible

In order to make representative and participatory roles more accessible to current and future PPN members, the PPN will develop and implement a series of policies, starting with a Gender Equality policy (focusing on women's participation) and a Volunteer Management policy (focusing on supporting volunteers).

These policies will outline targets as well as the actions that will be undertaken to achieve these targets. The PPN will work with the relevant national and local agencies to achieve this.

Measure of success

- ➔ Policies developed and targets agreed as part of the policy.
- ➔ Targets are met.

11
Area 4 - Improving our Membership Supports

Overview

The training and supports offered to members were appreciated and well regarded across the network. The overall focus of the next strategic period is to continue to build the capacity of groups and representatives to engage with the public policy making process through awareness raising, mentoring and training.

Action 14
Provide a range of training supports

The PPN will continue to offer a range of training supports to members in partnership with relevant organisations. These will focus on two broad areas, the first is the ability of PPN members to be more effective advocates; the second is for PPN members to build the capacity of their groups.

The PPN will also aim to become the central hub in the provision of training supports to community groups through the development of a coordinated booking system for the majority of training offered to community groups in Fingal.

Measure of success

- ➔ Positive feedback from attendees highlighting an increase in skills and confidence.
- ➔ Positive feedback from new representatives on the revised induction programme.
- ➔ Development and growth of training hub.

Action 15
Establish an efficient signposting and referral service

The PPN plays an important role in signposting local community groups to information and supports that help them achieve their goals and organisational objectives. This includes providing information on council grants, and relevant support personnel in Fingal County Council, SICAP services and other organisations, as well as online resources. To ensure this is done as efficiently as possible the PPN website is to be developed to include signposting to a range of resources.

Measure of success

- ➔ Feedback on member survey at mid-point and end of strategy on the usefulness of the website.

Action 16
Develop an open data membership database online

PPN members represent a broad range of local community groups and agencies. Information on these organisations is valuable to other PPN members as well as to the people living in Fingal and interested in community groups operating in their area. To make this valuable information more accessible, the PPN will work closely with Fingal County Council to develop a live open data membership database.

Measure of success

- ➔ The database is developed and updated annually.
- ➔ Analytics on this aspect of the website show increasing usage and inform further development.

Action 17
Collaborate across the Greater Dublin Area

Fingal PPN will work with all Greater Dublin Area PPNs to provide collective opportunities for our member groups and Linkage Group representatives to meet to discuss synergies across shared topic areas, particularly, on topics where policies are made at county level.

Cross PPN collaboration is particularly relevant in the Greater Dublin Area due to the county being the capital of Ireland and the major infrastructure projects and policy developments that are attached to this. Joined up thinking between PPNs is crucial to the success of advocacy efforts at a county level.

Measure of success

- ➔ Recording of activity between PPNs and feedback from members.

12
Systems and Structures to Support the Plan

Overview

This section briefly details the key structures and processes that will support the implementation of the actions within the strategic plan.

On completion of the plan, and approval by the Secretariat the steering committee established to support the planning process will be disbanded. The PPN Secretariat, made up of 12 PPN members, will then take responsibility for the implementation of the plan. The Secretariat oversees the day to day operations of the PPN and line manages the work of the full-time Resource Worker and part-time administrator.

Key Processes to Support Implementation of the Plan

To support the implementation of the plan a number of processes may be followed, including:

- Strategic plan progress report at each plenary meeting.
- An annual desk review of the strategic plan followed by the development of an annual work plan to implement actions.
- Mid-way and end of plan survey with members to assess experience, outcomes and personal benefits.
- If they occur, any blockages to the progression of strategic actions, will be raised by the Resource Worker with the Secretariat. This will then be raised and followed up on by the Secretariat with the relevant body.

Key PPN Resources and Partners

To support implementation of the plan the PPN has the following resources:

- Secretariat of 12 PPN members
- 24 Representatives on 8 Decision Making / Policy Committees
- 8 Linkage Groups
- 582 PPN Members Organisations
- 1 full time Resource Worker
- 1 part time Administrator
- Annual programme budget of approximately €25,000 (after staffing and overheads)
- Fingal County Council, in particular the Community, Culture and Sports Division
- Two local development companies (Empower Partnership and Fingal Leader Partnership)
- Department of Rural and Community Development and members of the National Advisory Group
- 40 Local Elected Representatives
- 9 Oireachtas Members

These resources should be fostered and built upon over the lifetime of this plan.

13
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and Our Strategy

Overview

This section of the report relates the strategic actions within this strategy to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the Global Goals, are a universal plan of action for people and planet to be achieved by the year 2030. These 17 goals aim to end poverty, combat climate change and ensure that we leave peaceful, just and equal societies for future generations.

The SDGs were agreed upon at the United Nations in 2015 and have been adopted by 193 countries worldwide. The goals are backed up by 169 specific targets, and provide clear guidelines for all countries to adopt according to national circumstances.

The goals follow on from the Millennium Development Goals which ended in 2015 whose main focus was on ending extreme poverty, hunger and preventable disease. The Sustainable Development Goals continue the fight against extreme poverty, but also add the challenges of ensuring more equitable economic growth and environmental sustainability, specifically in tackling the effects of human-induced climate change. They are universal in nature, applying to all countries equally.

The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership, encouraging all people across the globe to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for our children and for generations to come.

The Sustainable Development Goals

How our Strategy Reflects the SDG

Ireland played a key role in the design and adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the UN, with our permanent Ambassador to the UN, David Donoghue, leading the negotiations alongside Kenya.

Thank you to the Irish Environmental Network and the Make Ireland Sustainable for All project for their assistance in drafting this section.

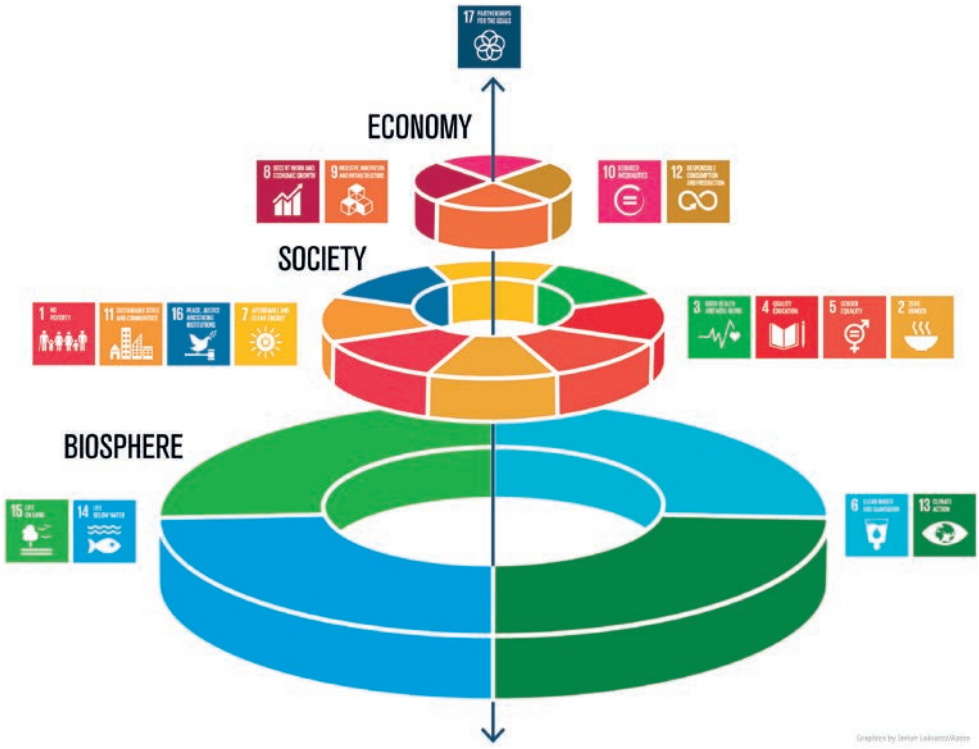
The Irish government is now on the brink of releasing its National Implementation Plan for the SDGs, in which it will outline how it intends for the goals to be achieved in Ireland. Achieving the SDGs will require the collaboration of all sectors, and the importance of local level action – in particular the roles played by local authorities, PPNs and the community and voluntary sector – will be crucial.

As President Michael D Higgins stated during his opening address at the 2016 Summit on the SDGs,

'By adopting a new set of transformational Global Goals, we have given ourselves a mandate to craft a reflexive and holistic vision for development and social progress.

We have a historic opportunity to lay the foundations for a new model for human flourishing and social harmony – one that is shared between all those who dwell on this planet, and one that is shared, too, between this generation and those to come. Let us commit, today, together, to make this promise thrive and bloom.'

Given the spirit and scope of the goals, the PPN is proud to endorse these as part of our work, starting with mapping the goals to our strategic actions and our PPN Linkage Group Issues Paper (separate publication).



How our Strategy Reflects the SDGs

While the majority of actions refer to goals 1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 17 combined, the future development of the PPN will impact on all SDGs, especially through our Linkage Groups, whether it is advocating for clean water through the environment SPC or improving community safety through the JPC, these improvements will together positively impact on community wellbeing.

Thank you to the Irish Environmental Network and the Make Ireland Sustainable for All project for their assistance in drafting this section.

Table 5: Linking the SDGs to our Actions

Actions	Sustainable Development Goals
Action 1 – Grow PPN membership in a planned and sustainable way	
Action 2 – Increase the operational capacity of the PPN	
Action 3 - Operate the network to the highest possible standard	
Action 4 – Further develop Linkage Groups	
Action 5 – Showcase our achievements	
Action 6 – Continue to develop communications	
Action 7 – Work closely with Fingal County Council in communicating to citizens	
Action 8 – Further develop relationships between the PPN and Public Representatives	
Action 9 - Foster key partnerships with the local authority and other agencies	
Action 10 – Establish the PPN as a primary consultative and participatory structure	
Action 11 – Provide more supports and sharing opportunities for representatives	
Action 12 – Develop the Social Inclusion Pillar	
Action 13 – Develop policies to make the PPN more accessible	
Action 14 – Provide a range of training/induction supports to further develop skills	
Action 15 - Establish an efficient signposting and referral service	
Action 16 - Develop an online membership database	
Action 17 – Collaborate across the Greater Dublin Area	

Thank you to the Irish Environmental Network and the Make Ireland Sustainable for All project for their assistance in drafting this section.

www.fingalppn.ie

Fingal Public Participation Network

supported by

An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and Community Development

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council