



## **Consultation on Structural Review of Public Participation Networks.**

### **1. The Structural Review of the Public Participation Network**

As you may be aware, the Department of Rural and Community Development appointed Mazars in March 2021 to provide consulting services to deliver a structural review of the Public Participation Network (PPN). According to the Request for Tender, the purpose of the Review was to:

- assess the operation of the network to date against the overall objectives as outlined in the 2014 Report;
- identify opportunities for further strengthening and enhancing PPNs;
- make recommendations as to how to build on existing strengths and support the future development of PPNs; and
- focus on highlighting examples of best practice already in operation and provide recommendations on how these could be replicated across the network where appropriate.

The Report of the Structural Review was published in June and is available here - <https://assets.gov.ie/227490/1223d8cc-dedc-4e1e-a2b7-37d9e198a06f.pdf>

The Department of Rural and Community Development have sent out asked all stakeholders to provide feedback on the review document by the end of August 2022. They plan to hold a webinar on the Report in September to discuss its findings and make plans for implementation.

### **2. Social Justice Ireland Supports**

To support stakeholders to provide this feedback, *Social Justice Ireland* plans to hold five online consultation sessions to discuss the findings and recommendations contained in the report and to gather views. We will then will make a submission to the Department following these consultations. All and any stakeholders can still make their own submission, but this may also help.

### **3. Who can attend?**

All PPN stakeholders including staff, Secretariat Members, Representatives, Members, Local Authority staff and Councillors are welcome to come along.

#### 4. When are they on?

We've put together 5 online meetings dates, scheduled across different days and times in order to facilitate as much participation as possible.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 12 – 2pm**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEscemtqTMvHdBl4YzsojxsRLQFAZjqYlPJ>

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2 – 4 pm**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUsd-muqDloHdE-Ctivc8ZGASl2n4fGKewy>

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 5 – 7 pm**

Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqfu2gqjwvHNM3t-cw4iGbm71skU0P3\\_BU](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqfu2gqjwvHNM3t-cw4iGbm71skU0P3_BU)

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 10am – 12 pm**

**Register** in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtf-6hqzwqGdy50rHQcfGIXQzU944OQDSE>

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July 7 – 9 pm**

Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAuceitpj8iG9Fgyw\\_Om4p14oyNHf-PDtXp](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAuceitpj8iG9Fgyw_Om4p14oyNHf-PDtXp)

These events are not being held on a regional basis, so anyone can go to any event. A report will be drafted at the end of each session and circulated to the attendees. This will form part of the final submission to the Department.

If necessary, and to facilitate those who prefer an in-person session, we are also looking to schedule an in-person event, likely in the Midlands as a midway point for the country, in the third week of August. Please let us know if you're interested or have stakeholders who may be interested in attending that.

#### 5. Structure of the Events

After a brief introduction, we plan to take each of the following findings and recommendations, taken from the Report itself, for discussion. **Your views will be important to shape the final form of these recommendations..**

- **Governance & Accountability**

**Finding** - Slow pace of action to address issues and implement change in line with recommendations arising from previous reviews and reports

**Recommendation** - Take a 'back to basics' approach and prioritise action

**Finding** - Lack of consistency in the implementation of mandatory PPN requirements and guidance

**Recommendation** - Clarify mandatory requirements and pro-actively address non-compliance

**Finding** - Not all PPNs are operating independently

**Recommendation** - Review structures to ensure independence is maintained

**Finding** - Differences in culture evident across the PPNs

**Recommendation** - Establish trust and respect that makes collective action possible

- **Communication & Engagement**

**Finding** - Lack of visibility, understanding and awareness of PPNs

**Recommendation** - Introduce a PPN wide communication structure that improves the visibility and accessibility of PPNs

**Finding** - Confusion around roles and dilution of responsibilities

**Recommendation** - Simplify roles and responsibilities to provide clearer descriptions for stakeholders

**Finding** - COVID-19 impact on interaction across the PPNs

**Recommendation** - Embrace opportunities for flexible models of engagement

- **Coordination & Participation**

**Finding** - Difficulties in recruitment and retention of a diverse range of members and representatives

**Recommendation** - Minimise the barriers to participation experienced to achieve greater partnership in participation

**Finding** - Limitations in stakeholder relationships can impact the overall success of a PPN

**Recommendation** - Strengthen relationships and improve communication and engagement between PPNs and stakeholders

**Finding** - Lack of coordination within and between structures can result in missed opportunities

**Recommendation** - Introduce a PPN wide coordination structure

- **Training, Delivery & Supports**

**Finding** - Inconsistent approach to delivery across PPNs

**Recommendation** - Develop a 'PPN Way' of addressing and delivering the role of PPNs

**Finding** - Significant duplication is occurring across the PPNs

**Recommendation** - : Adopt a 'one and done' approach to activities

**Finding** - Limited capacity for current and new activities

**Recommendation** - Clarify expectations of PPNs and provide necessary support to address issues of national importance

- **Staffing & Skills**

**Finding** - Challenges arising from differences in staff skills

**Recommendation** - Clarify staff requirements and address gaps in skills and competencies

**Finding** - Challenges arising from differences in staff terms and conditions

**Recommendation** - Further consider employee Terms & Conditions

**Finding** - Challenges arising from staff turnover

**Recommendation** - Provide more proactive and coordinated HR support

- **Future PPN Structure Options - we will go through these options in greater detail**

1. Simplify and create a National coordination structure.
2. Create a National coordination, communication and support structure.
3. Create a National independent structure to lead and support local PPNs.

- Any other recommendations or observations in relation to the review.

## **6. All queries to:**

We hope to see as many of you as possible there, please spread the word to all contacts! If you have any queries, please contact [susanne.rogers@socialjustice.ie](mailto:susanne.rogers@socialjustice.ie)