



Memorandum of Understanding 2020

Between

Sligo County Council (SCC)

And

Sligo Public Participation Network (Sligo PPN)

Purpose and Scope

To outline clearly the roles and responsibilities of Sligo County Council and Sligo Public Participation Network (PPN) with regard to the delivery of the PPN Programme as laid down in Local Government Reform Act 2014, Guidelines provided by Department of Environment, Community & Local Government in May 2014 (as set out in Circular CVSP1/2014), further clarification provided during 2014 in FAQ documents by Pobal, Sept 2014, and in subsequent Departmental circulars.

Background & Context

Guidelines issued by the DECLG (now DRCD) direct local authorities to satisfy the requirements of the Act by establishing Public Participation Networks:

"A new framework for public engagement and participation, to be called "The Public Participation Network (PPN)" will be developed within each local authority area (engaging in and within municipal districts and at the County/City level) to enable the public to take an active formal role in the policy making and oversight activities of the Local Authority's areas of responsibility.

The PPN will be the main link through which the local authority connects with the Community, Voluntary and Environmental sectors without prejudice to other consultation processes.

The aim of the structures and processes is to facilitate and enable the public and the organisations to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system, not to reduce or homogenise this diversity. A parallel and equally important aim should be to facilitate the local authority in making better and more timely decisions.

Members of the local community interact with local government at different levels. The PPN facilitates input by the public into local government through a structure that ensures public participation and representation on decision-making committees within local government.

The Network is expected to perform its functions following core principles to facilitate active participation with decision making bodies as identified earlier i.e. participation, trust, accountability, transparency and independence.

Goals & Objectives

To establish and ensure the continued development of a Public Participation Network in Co. Sligo which:

- *To provide an effective structure for greater community participation in Local Government.*
- *Facilitates the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the Environmental, social inclusion and community & voluntary sectors on decision making bodies*
- *Encourages active citizenship at all levels of society and in all aspects of community life and Council activity*
- *Facilitates voices from all backgrounds to get involved and have their say on issues which affect them*
- *Strengthens the capacity of communities and of the Environmental, Social Inclusion, and Community & Voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate*
- *Provides information relevant to the Environmental, Social Inclusion and Community & Voluntary sector and acts as a hub around which information is distributed and received.*

The Role of the PPN is:

- *To contribute to the local authority's development of a County vision for the well-being of this and future generations.*
- *to facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and the sharing of information between Environmental, community and voluntary groups and between these groups and the local authority.*
- *to identify issues of collective concern and work to influence policy locally in relation to these issues.*
- *to actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination, including the Traveller & Roma communities to enable them to participate at local and county level and to clearly demonstrate same.*
- *to encourage and enable public participation in local decision making and planning of services.*
- *To facilitate the selection of participants from the Environmental, social inclusion and community & voluntary sectors onto county decision making bodies.*
- *to support a process that will feed the broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals of the Network into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers in areas that are of interest and relevant to the Network.*
- *To work to develop the Environmental, Social Inclusion and Community & Voluntary sectors so that the work of the sectors is clearly recognised and acknowledged and the sectors have a strong collective voice within the County.*
- *to support the individual members of the Public Participation Network so that:*
 - *They can develop their capacity and do their work more effectively*
 - *They can participate effectively in the Public Participation Network activities*

- *They are included and their voices and concerns are heard.*

Core Areas of Activity & Responsibilities of the Partners

Membership

- The PPN shall maintain a database of member organisations.
- All active, non-political community & voluntary organisations based in Co Sligo shall be entitled to join. Membership shall be free.
- Sligo County Council (SCC) shall encourage all community groups with which it comes into contact to register with the PPN
- SCC shall **only** provide funding support to groups which are registered with the PPN.

Representation

- SCC shall source all community representatives for Council committees such as Strategic Policy Committees, Joint Policing Committee, Local Community Development Committee and other committees as they may arise, via the PPN
- PPN reps shall be provided with induction training by the PPN and SCC upon taking up position, and shall be facilitated to feed back to the PPN.
- PPN reps shall be supported, through good governance practise, to inform and consult on key committee discussion items .

Consultation

- Council Plans and Strategies for public consultation must be forwarded to the PPN for comment within an acceptable timeframe.
- Where the PPN Secretariat considers that the potential impact of a proposed Plan/ Strategy on the community sector is great, the PPN may run a community consultation event in support of the Council's wider public consultation exercise.

Roles and Responsibilities

- SCC will deliver a Public Participation Network in its operational area. SCC undertakes to provide support funding to maximise the budget available to Sligo PPN
- Sligo PPN shall take responsibility for the operational rollout of the PPN in Co Sligo
- Sligo PPN Secretariat may delegate up to three individuals to act on its behalf with regard to the negotiation and progress of this MOU.

Work Plan and budget

Sligo PPN will:

- Devise an annual detailed work plan each year which will clearly demonstrate how it will achieve the aims and objectives of the PPN within that calendar year.
- Identify the itemised budget and resource requirements under the work plan
- Have in place a robust financial management system and financial reporting structure
- Have a clear reporting mechanism on key performance indicators and other items related to PPN activity.

Sligo County Council will:

- Provide an allocation in the Council's annual Budget to cover PPN costs.
- Ensure all funding by the Department is made available for the operation of the PPN programme.

- Ensure that determination of budget expenditure is agreed jointly by the PPN Secretariat and Sligo County Council.
- Agree the work plan and budget for each calendar year within one month of receiving the proposed plan from the PPN

Payments

- Areas of expenditure shall be agreed in principle at Secretariat meetings. Details of expenditure, including adherence to procurement procedures, and financial payments procedures, shall be the responsibility of the PPN Team, and overseen by Council line management.
- Financial payments shall be made by SCC, through the Agresso financial payment system and following normal Council procurement and financial payment procedures
- PPN expenditure shall be subject to SCC audit

Resources

Sligo County Council will:

- Provide necessary management and policy supports, guidance and expertise, to assist the PPN in designing and implementing annual work plans.
- Provide workspace and equipment for the PPN Team
- Provide HR and IT support, as required
- Provide relevant training and development opportunities to the PPN Team
- Identify and agree with the PPN Secretariat, on an annual basis, the projected level and cost of Council support required to deliver PPN work plans and ensure the appropriate apportionment of funds to cover agreed staff costs
- Assist Sligo PPN in managing its budget to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet anticipated expenditure subject to budget provided by Sligo County Council / funding from the Dept of HP& LG.

Operational Co-operation

Sligo PPN will:

- Work constructively and collaboratively with SCC in the furtherance of the aims of Sligo PPN as set out in the Department's guidelines as set out in Circular CVSP1/2014 and other relevant circulars
- Work with SCC on any funding applications which may be appropriate.
- Engage in other activities provided they are complementary to their work plan and that they can access the extra resources required to undertake such work

Sligo County Council will:

- Support the development of a wellbeing statement at local and county /city level through resources and promotion.
- Approach PPN for representatives for all seats on decision making / advisory bodies under their auspices which require Environmental, Social Inclusion, or Community and Voluntary members
- Pay expenses to the PPN representatives on such structures according to a mechanism to be agreed with the PPN
- Work with the PPN to agree, adopt and implement a protocol for all committees/decision making bodies with PPN representatives that will enable the representatives to engage fully and have equal footing with other committee members. This will include taking into consideration timing, location, documentation etc.

- Use the PPN as their main way of communicating with the Environmental, Social Inclusion and Community & Voluntary Sector, including formal consultations.
- Offer workshops and training as required to PPN members to build their capacity to feed into policies and plans
- Work with PPN on any funding applications which may be appropriate.

Reporting and Evaluation

Sligo PPN will:

- Submit a PPN report to each meeting of Sligo Local Community Development Committee and SCC management committee
- Carry out Annual Reviews and produce an Annual Report on the PPN
- Devise, agree and implement a participatory evaluation framework which involves all stakeholders in the PPN process

Sligo County Council will:

- Submit reports to the Department as required to draw down funds
- Inform the PPN in a timely way of all Dept correspondence regarding the PPN
- Participate in evaluation and monitoring of the PPN's performance
- Support the work of the Secretariat

Conflict resolution

Every effort should be made to avoid serious conflict between the parties, by providing good communication protocols that will enable any issues to be dealt with early and in a timely manner.

In the event that any dispute relating to this MOU cannot be resolved by settlement between the parties, the parties shall attempt to resolve all disputes through informal means.

Dispute resolution may include mediation, arbitration, or any other procedures upon which the parties agree.

Review

This MOU can be reviewed at any time at the request of either party, by giving one months notice in writing.

Commencement

This agreement will commence at the date of signing.

Name:

FRANK DORLAN

Name:

[Signature]

Signed:

[Signature]

Signed:

MICHAEL KILGAY

On Behalf of Sligo County Council

On Behalf of Sligo PPN

Date:

25/2/20

Date:

19/2/20