

**15th August 2019**

**SUBMISSION from the Clare Public Participation Network (PPN)**

**DRAFT SCHEME FOR STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES 2019 -2024**

Clare PPN is a network of 296 community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups from Clare. Each PPN has three 'Colleges' which organise the member groups in terms of their interests and activities – these are environmental college, social inclusion college and community and voluntary college. Clare PPN exists to facilitate the formal participation by the community sector in Clare County Council's decision making structures and to serve as a support and information sharing network for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Clare. It is funded jointly by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Clare County Council but is autonomous and its activities are directed by its members through an elected secretariat.

After consultation with Clare PPN representatives and with the wider community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion member groups the following recommendations are being proposed:

***'3.0 Proposed Framework for the Strategic Policy Committees, Clare County Council propose to establish four Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs).'***

In addition to the four proposed SPCs, Clare PPN recommends the establishment of two further SPCs.

**1. Climate Change and Biodiversity SPC**

In March 2019, the Joint Oireachtas committee on Climate Action published 'Climate Change: A Cross-Party Consensus for Action' which highlighted the fact that decisions taken today will significantly impact the climate and Ireland's exposure to climate change for many generations to come. It also noted a strong desire on the part of citizens for the State to take far more ambitious actions to make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change.

Chapter 3 relates specifically to 'Citizen & Community Engagement' as follows:

3.3 *‘Local authorities have significant structures and experience in engaging citizens through their planning functions, particularly local area planning and **as facilitators of the Public Participation Networks (PPNs)**. They can also effectively contribute to climate action in the fulfilment of their existing statutory functions. Climate change considerations should be addressed across all local authority plans, policies and activities including through their existing Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) **and a dedicated new Climate Change SPC for climate action.**’*

3.4 *‘**Government must continue its support of Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and PPNs**, financed through the Department of Rural and Community Development, as both offer the potential to act as key drivers of effective local action. However, there is currently no specific mandate for these bodies to address climate change. The Committee recommends that the **PPNs and LCDCs be fully utilized and supported with additional resources to address climate change as part of their remit** and to build capacity among communities to carry out projects which directly tackle climate change starting in Budget 2020’*

3.6 *‘The Committee recommends: The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment should enable each local authority to **establish or designate a Climate Change Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), to be incorporated into the SPC schemes for each local authority after June 2019**. External representation on this SPC should be inclusive of all social, economic and environmental stakeholder groups. (Section 3.3)’*

**Clare PPN proposes** the establishment of a Climate Change and Biodiversity SPC including PPN representatives from each pillar (community & voluntary, social inclusion and environment) and from relevant social, economic and environmental stakeholders.

This proposal relates to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



## 2. Traveller Accommodation SPC

In July 2019 the ‘Traveller Accommodation Expert Review’ was published as prepared by an independent Expert Group on behalf of the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. It was noted that the current system (LTACC) for assessing the scale and nature of accommodation need is not working effectively, and this creates difficulty in reaching a consensus on the true need.

***‘At local level, the Expert Group recommends that Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACCs) are replaced with Strategic Policy Committees for Traveller accommodation.’***  
*(Executive Summary)*

**Clare PPN proposes** the replacement of the LTACC with a Traveller Accommodation SPC and that this SPC would have at least 4 to 5 Traveller representatives and at least one social inclusion representative from Clare PPN. This would ensure a strong evidence base for policy making. The establishment of a specific Traveller Accommodation SPC would also ensure that arrangements for the governance of Traveller accommodation provision would be more closely aligned with arrangements for the governance of local authorities’ other functions.

This proposal relates to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



### 3.1 ‘Guidelines regarding Sectoral Interests

*.....The nomination process for the remaining sectors will be determined via the PPN structure on the basis of a local nomination process.’*

The remit of each SPC invariably effects each ‘college’ of the PPN. There is also considerable expertise in each PPN college to inform and contribute to policy issues as they arise. Therefore it is vital that each PPN college is in a position to nominate at least one representatives to any/all SPCs. The PPN should be the ‘go to’ organisation for all bodies in a county/ city who wish to benefit from community and voluntary expertise at their table. All previous PPN representatives felt that there was not enough community & voluntary representation on their SPC.

*‘The representation of environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary voices on local authority boards and committees is a core function of PPNs and where such community representation is to be provided on appropriate committees of the local authority, such as SPCs or LCDCs, **local authorities must source this through the PPN.**’ (Circular Letter CVSP 7/2019 Department of Rural & Community Development)*

**Clare PPN proposes** that membership of each Strategic Policy Committee is increased to include a representative from each PPN pillar:

- Community & voluntary
- Social Inclusion
- Environment

This proposal relates to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



## **Operation of Strategic Policy Committees and Corporate Policy Group**

### **Work plan & Protocol**

**Clare PPN proposes** that once established, each SPC with input from LA/Councillor and Sectoral Interests develops a workplan for the term of the SPC containing strategic goals and objectives aligned with the County Development Plan, Local Economic and Community Plan, the National Development Plan, the Climate Adaptation Strategy, the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy and any other relevant local, regional and national documents. This document should be published and kept available for public perusal.

**Clare PPN proposes** that once SPCs are established, a protocol be devised with participation from Clare PPN and then agreed and adopted in line with Circular Letter CVSP 7/2019 Department of Rural & Community Development to *‘enable the representatives to engage appropriately’*. This document should be published and available for public perusal.

### **Communication between Local Authority, SPC Chairpersons and Administrators**

We request that this draft scheme will be altered to contain a commitment that Clare PPN representatives and Clare PPN staff as well as sectoral interests receive an invitation to contribute to the agenda of each meeting before it is circulated.

We request that this draft scheme include a commitment that Clare PPN staff will receive an annual schedule of SPC meetings as soon as this is available, that Clare PPN staff will receive notice and agenda for each forthcoming SPC meeting as well as the draft minutes from the previous meeting, at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date. This is necessary to enable Clare PPN staff to work with their representatives and member groups on Clare PPN's contribution to each meeting.

We request that in line with the following '*that Local Authorities facilitate access to a library of relevant thematic documents focused on groups and committees that the Network are represented on*' (Circular Letter CVSP 7/2019 Department of Rural & Community Development) early access to hard and soft copies of all documents to be discussed at SPCs be made provided in advance to Clare PPN Staff and Representatives.

### **Agreed statement of actions**

Clare PPN requests that at the conclusion of each SPC meeting an agreed statement of outcomes and actions will be adopted by the membership and that this statement will be recorded by the administrator or minute taker and circulated to all SPC members within one week of the meeting having taken place. This statement of actions must not replace the minutes but rather be complementary to them and facilitate the ongoing work between SPC meetings. This system is already in action in other Local Authorities and Clare PPN requests that in the interests of effective participation and information sharing that this approach be adopted in Clare.

### **Corporate Policy Group**

Clare PPN requests that as part of the draft scheme for SPCs a commitment is included to ensure that SPC members and SPCs receive timely updates from the Corporate Policy Group. We request that up to date CPG minutes and/or draft minutes be circulated to all SPCs as part of their notice of meeting package along with the agenda and SPC minutes. We request that each SPC and each member of it should receive the minutes of all Corporate Policy Group Meetings that have taken place since the previous SPC meeting.

## Meeting documents

*Latest published CPG meeting minutes on Clare County Council website as accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019*

### 2017

-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 1st December 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 6th November 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 2nd October 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 4th September 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 3rd July 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 2nd June 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 2nd May 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 3rd April 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 21st March 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 6th February 2017](#)
-  [Minutes of CPG Meeting held on 3rd January 2017](#)

### 2016

-  [Minutes of Corporate Policy Group Meetings held in 2016](#)
-  [Corporate Policy Group Minutes, 29th April 2016](#)

The proposals listed above relate to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



## IN CONCLUSION

Clare PPN would like to thank you for this opportunity to feed into the SCHEME FOR THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES 2019 -2024 and for helping to ensure that the community & voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors can actively and positively engage with Clare County Council's decision making forums. We look forward to seeing our input considered and reflected in the final document. In the meantime if you have any queries regarding the proposals contained herein please do not hesitate to contact us.

This submission has been checked against the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For more information on the UN Sustainable Development Goals visit: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

