

Review of PPN User Guide – submission from Waterford PPN

Waterford PPN welcome the consultative approach of this review and that a final draft review will be circulated for final comment before completion.

General Comments:

- It is important that the Guide remains a Guide enabling PPNs to adopt best practice; different PPNs can have different interpretations to suit local circumstances. For example Waterford CCC provide office space and support to the PPN and in return the PPN covers elected PPN reps travel costs – suits both parties and we would wish to keep this flexibility.
- The PPN encourages it's reps to raise and follow up issues raised by member groups; WCCC sees the PPN role as representative but not necessarily as the 'critical friend'. LAs realise that PPNs have a much wider remit than simply sitting on a Committee.
- Clarification of the role of the IEN and eligibility of PPN groups (eg Tidy Towns) for membership of the IEN and representation as PPN Environment reps.
- The flat management structure of the Secretariat continues to give concern – the need for rotating facilitators is accepted but some flexibility is also needed – maybe facilitators could be rotated on a quarterly or six monthly basis?
- Clarification management structures including Limited Companies is needed – the structure in Waterford works well and we see no reason to change it.
- A list of acronyms would be useful.
- The role of the National Advisory Group (NAG) is increasingly important and welcomed. The NAG should be the main consultation vehicle for the Department, Local Authority and PPNs.

Specific comments on the existing Guide:

- Page 9 Linkage Groups: this needs to reflect the reality that too many meetings cause meeting fatigue and is not practical on the ground; guidance on best practice for set up and engagement would be useful;
- P14 Resource Worker – clear line management arrangements needed – whether this is through Local Authority or Secretariats. Avoidance of any conflict of interest.
- P15 Relationship with the LA – bullet point 2 'right throughout the LA': This is key to the development of PPNs and perhaps we can consider a structure to facilitate this? LAs need to be encouraged to support PPNs a little more.
- Appendix 1 – Managing Membership - clear guidance is needed on the re-registration process: maybe specify "at least every second year" to allow individual PPNs latitude to do this annually if they wish.
- Appendix 1 – Managing Membership - Paragraph 6 'As such they should be active users of email' makes sense but we must recognise that many active groups do not use email. We must remain inclusive.
- Appendix 1 – Managing Membership - Paragraph 6 'An individual should not be the contact for multiple groups' – we agree with this as an aim but it is difficult in practice: some groups would not be members only for one key contact who is happy to take on the contact role. We do not want to lose groups.

- Appendix 8 – The responsibilities of the board or Committee are all great but meet resistance at Committee level. This is guidance for best practice and as such LAs should be encouraged to insist Board/Committees adopt the guidance as well.

Waterford PPN are happy to elaborate on any of these points

Kind Regards on behalf of the Waterford PPN Secretariat

John Hawkes

Programmes Coordinator - Waterford PPN -

City Hall - The Mall - Waterford - 051 849597 - 087 980 9985

Charity Number - 15681

