

## Overview of 2019

### Opening remarks on behalf of Limerick PPN Secretariat

On the night of our election in late October 2019, we committed to deliver on the wishes of the membership of the PPN, particularly in relation to opening and overseeing elections of PPN representatives to the various committees of Limerick City and County Council. We soon realised that to progress the core functions of the PPN, governance and procedural issues needed to be addressed first. These became our priorities for the two months of 2019 that this Secretariat was in situ. We feel this report gives a fair and honest overview of the PPN in 2019. It gives a clear baseline to show where Limerick PPN is coming from and gives a direction on what needs to be done in 2020 and beyond.

*Patrick Fitzgerald*

Facilitator, on behalf of Limerick PPN Secretariat

31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

#### Members of Secretariat on this date:









- Catherine Dalton, Environment
- Jack O'Connor, Newcastle West
- John Buttery, Limerick Metropolitan
- Michael Quilligan, Social Inclusion
- Noreen Stokes, Cappamore-Kilmallock
- Patrick Cummins, Community
- Patrick Fitzgerald, Social Inclusion
- Three (3) vacancies: 1 Environment, Adare-Rathkeale, 1 Community

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**Overview of 2019**

**Overview of membership**

Pillar/sector	Full Members 31/12/2019	<p><b>Municipal District</b></p> 	Full members 31/12/19
 Community and Voluntary	58		69
 Social Inclusion	35		16
 Environment	8		10
			6
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>

**Notes on membership**

1. Details of the three pillars/sectors of the PPN can be found on [limerickppn.ie](http://limerickppn.ie)
2. Membership registration opened in August 2019 once the website was made functional. As the information about groups previously registered with Limerick PPN was so out of date on Salesforce, it was more appropriate to remove all data and start afresh.
3. Associate membership was introduced in the draft constitution that was prepared in 2019 and circulated to members for consideration:

*Associate Membership provides a link between the PPN and key community groups, organisations and services in Limerick who are not full members of Limerick PPN. Associate Members can attend PPN meetings, join Linkage Groups and receive information (such as newsletters, notices and minutes of meetings), but they do not have voting rights and they cannot represent or be elected to represent the PPN on external committees and they cannot sit on the Secretariat*

## Overview of 2019

### PPN representation on external committees

	Committees prior to 2019 Local Elections	Managed by	No. of seats	No. of PPN Reps		% occupied seats	No. Community and Voluntary Pillar Reps	No. Social Inclusion Pillar Reps	No. Environment Pillar Reps	No. meetings Jan-May 2019
				Male	Female					
1	Joint Policing Committee (JPC)	Limerick City and County Council	7	3	1	57%	2	2	0	1
2	Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	Limerick City and County Council	5	1	4	100%	2	2	1	5
3	Travel and Transportation SPC	Limerick City and County Council	4	2	2	100%	2	1	1	2
4	Environment SPC	Limerick City and County Council	4	0	0	0%	0	0	0	2
5	Community, Leisure and Emergency Services SPC	Limerick City and County Council	5	0	2	40%	1	1	0	2
6	Home and Social Development SPC	Limerick City and County Council	5	1	1	40%	2	0	0	2
7	Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC	Limerick City and County Council	4	1	1	50%	1	0	1	2
8	Culture SPC	Limerick City and County Council	0	This new SPC did not have PPN reps as the PPN was not fully functioning when this SPC was established. It is now incorporated into another SPC under new SPC scheme						
			34	8	11		10	6	3	16

No PPN elections took place in 2019 - apart from electing a new Secretariat in late October 2019 - therefore the vacancy rate is high with only the representatives on the LCDC remaining in place. The new SPC scheme was adopted in September 2019

## Overview of 2019

	Committees post 2019 Local Elections	Managed by	No. of seats	No. of PPN Reps		% occupied seats	No. Community and Voluntary Pillar Reps	No. Social Inclusion Pillar Reps	No. Environment Pillar Reps	No. meetings held June - Dec 2019
				Male	Female					
1	Joint Policing Committee (JPC)	Limerick City and County Council	7	0	0	0%	0	0	0	2
2	Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	Limerick City and County Council	5	1	4	100%	2	2	1	4
3	Travel and Transportation SPC	Limerick City and County Council	4	0	0	0%	0	0	0	3
4	Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment SPC	Limerick City and County Council	4	0	0	0%	0	0	0	2
5	Community, Leisure and Culture SPC	Limerick City and County Council	6	0	0	0%	0	0	0	1
6	Home and Social Development SPC	Limerick City and County Council	5	0	0	0%	0	0	0	2
7	Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning SPC	Limerick City and County Council	4	0	0	0%	0	0	0	2
8	Implementation Advisory Group for the Directly Elected Mayor	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	1	0.5	0.5	100%	0.5	0	0.5	2
The elections for this seat were planned for 2020 after adoption of a constitution. Additionally, only a week's notice was given for the first meeting. As an interim measure two Secretariat members attended two meetings held in December 2019.										
			36	1.5	4.5		2.5	2	1.5	18

### Note on representation on external committees

Following the 2019 Local Elections, all PPN seats were vacated on SPCs and the JPC. The 2019-2024 SPC Scheme was adopted by Limerick City and County Council in September. Limerick PPN was not in a position to organise elections in 2019 due to the prioritization of Secretariat elections (late October 2019) and governance issues.

## Overview of 2019

### Support structures for PPN Representatives

	Yes	No
<b>Linkage Groups</b>		X
<b>Thematic or Activity Networks (specific purpose, e.g. Disability Network, Social Inclusion Network)</b>		X
<b>Representatives Charter</b>		X
<b>Training for PPN Representatives</b>		X
<b>Meeting Feedback Forms Completed by Reps</b>		X

### Notes on PPN support structures for PPN Representatives

1. In 2019, agreement was reached between the previous Secretariat, the Department of Rural and Community Development and Limerick City and County Council on a way forward for Limerick PPN following a significant period of the PPN not fully functioning. The part-time resource worker started in July 2019. Registrations reopened in August 2019. The first Plenary meeting in 2 years took place in September 2019. Secretariat elections were prioritised and happened in late October 2019. The full-time support worker started in early November.
2. The drafting of a constitution informed by 1) the principles of good governance and 2) the 2018 independent Deloitte review of Limerick PPN, and dealing with new and unforeseen challenges within the Secretariat and the PPN were the focus of the new Secretariat in November-December 2019. The constitution was seen as essential to ensure that agreed and robust nominations and elections processes were in place before any elections to external committees could take place.
3. The main priority for Limerick PPN in 2019 was getting revitalised and fully functioning. Support structures for PPN representatives were included in the draft constitution that was circulated for review and with an invitation to table amendments) to members in December 2019.

### Examples of proposals and outcomes from PPN representation on external committees

1. LCDC: There is PPN Representation on the LCDC SICAP subgroup which has a contract oversight and monitoring role
2. Implementation Advisory Group for the Directly Elected Mayor: In 2019 there were two meetings of the new Implementation Advisory Group for the Directly Elected Mayor. At these meetings, the PPN representatives advocated for a strong public consultation process and secondly that rural regeneration in the county and community energy be considered in the possible policy priorities.
3. Healthy Limerick: The PPN representative advises on the direction of Healthy Limerick as a member of the interagency subcommittee of the Limerick LCDC. In 2019, for instance, a Healthy Limerick initiative was a silver winner at the All Ireland Community and Council Awards and identified for replication in other counties. A second initiative was also identified for use by other counties.

## Overview of 2019

### Examples of impact of PPN representation on external committees

1. PPN representatives on the LCDC:
  - a) Played a key role when a decision was made to move budgets across different themes in the EU LEADER Programme.
  - b) Informed the decision-making process on the funding for environmental/biodiversity projects under certain programmes
  - c) Were a critical influence on LCDC position paper development
2. The decision by plebiscite in Limerick to hold elections for a directly elected mayor was a historic one. It was significant that the PPN was invited to have a representative on the advisory group to advise the Minister on the role and remit of the directly elected Mayor for Limerick. The group was scheduled to report back to Government in mid-2020.
3. The Healthy Limerick Steering Group made recommendations to the LCDC for a programme of work worth almost €250,000 with six actions to enhance health and wellbeing in Limerick and a mental health small grants initiative. This programme was approved in 2019 and most actions got underway in late 2019.

### Communications

Communications were done via:

1. Salesforce/email
2. Social media
3. Press coverage (for reopening of registration process and for Secretariat elections results)

In November 2019, the Support Worker post was filled. The Support Worker managed much of the communications on behalf of the Secretariat and PPN. A communications subgroup of the Secretariat met in 2019 and drafted a communications protocol.

Communications Methodologies:

	Number	Number of Likes / Followers (where applicable)
Physical printed newsletters		
Electronic online newsletters		
Email (individual emails)	24	
Website		
Facebook Posts		
Twitter Posts	57	89
Participating in events hosted by other organisations		
Local Radio (Community and/or Commercial)		

Type of content communicated to members:

1. PPN Events
2. PPN Vacancies
3. Consultations
4. PPN Activities
5. Funding Information

## Overview of 2019

### Functions on the Limerick PPN website:

1. Directory of members
2. Minutes of Secretariat meetings
3. Minutes of Plenary meetings
4. List of elected PPN Representatives
5. Adopted PPN policies
6. Financial reports

### Capacity Building

1. In 2019, Limerick PPN was just getting fully functional again. Therefore, there were no capacity-building activities. The Secretariat are mindful of not duplicating the SICAP and LEADER-funded capacity-building activities which are delivered by local agencies.
2. Limerick PPN was represented at the National PPN Conference and on the National PPN Resource Workers Network.
3. A straightforward two-page document explaining the background, functions and structures of Limerick PPN was prepared and circulated to PPN members, Limerick City and County Council staff and Elected Members of Limerick City and County Council. This is available on [Limerick PPN website](#)

### Operation of the PPN

#### Secretariat

<b>How many places are allocated on the Secretariat</b>	10
<b>How these places are allocated</b>	2 per pillar; 1 per Municipal District
<b>Term of office on the Secretariat</b>	Max 6 years
<b>How the Secretariat operates a flat structure:</b>	
- Rotating Facilitator	Y
- Decisions made by consensus	Y
- Proposals brought to Plenary	Y
- Terms of Reference emphasising flat structure	In draft constitution
- Minutes / Reports available to all PPN members	y

#### PPN Meetings

	Total Number Held	No. Held in Evening
<b>Plenary</b>	2	2
<b>Secretariat</b>	10	10

There were two different Secretariats in place in 2019. One up to end October (6 members) and after elections, there was a new Secretariat with 10 members.

Signed minutes of all meetings are on the [Limerick PPN website](#)

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### Staff

1. So as to enable the PPN to get fully functioning again, the previous Secretariat and Limerick City and County Council agreed for the Council to host the PPN staff and provide office space until agreement was reached on the future governance structure of Limerick PPN.
2. Part-time interim resource worker from July 2019
3. Full-time clerical support worker from November 2019
4. Both staff are employees of Limerick City and County Council.

### Staff management

1. The PPN staff are managed by and answerable to Limerick PPN through the Secretariat with their work activities and priorities agreed upon and directed by the Secretariat.
2. The PPN staff are, nonetheless, employed by Limerick City and County Council and are line-managed as such - this is with full agreement of both Secretariats in 2019 and is likely to continue going forward.
3. As employees of the local authority, the PPN staff partake in shared duties of staff in the Community Development Directorate and Council in the Council's corporate headquarters building, such as staff training and meetings and sharing office duties with other local authority staff. This is valuable to the PPN because:
  - a) it is much easier to have good communications with the key staff in the local authority (e.g., in Corporate Services, Communications, and in the different strategic directorates of the Council (Community Development, Economic Development, Physical Development and Housing)
  - b) the Secretariat and PPN do not have employment and other HR responsibilities
  - c) the PPN benefits from practical supports (at no cost) such as mail, storage, phone, desk space, meeting rooms, photocopying/ scanning facilities etc

### Finance

1. 80% funded by Department of Rural and Community Development and 30% funded by Limerick City and County Council
2. Expenditure was minimal in 2019 and primarily covered staff and meetings costs
3. The Local Authority approved expenditure relating to staff salaries and expenses. Exceptional staff expenses (eg. attending the national PPN conference) were based on approval of the activity by the Secretariat. The Secretariat approved expenses of its own members - all expense claim forms must be signed by two members of the Secretariat (not including the claimant)
4. Local Authority financial standards and practices were applied in relation to all PPN income and expenditure.
5. Any underspend from 2019 will deducted from funding allocated in 2020.



## Overview of 2019

### Income & Expenditure Report for 2019 – Limerick PPN

#### **INCOME**

Opening Balance at 1/1/19 (if any).	€22,500*
Department of Rural & Community Development (DRCD) funding	€14,110.06
Local Authority funding	€12,836.27
From other source	<b>€0</b>

\* Ring-fenced funding towards new clerical Support Worker

**Total Income 2019:**

**49,446.33**

#### **EXPENDITURE**

Salary Resource Worker incl. PRSI	€12,148.46
• Travel & Subsistence Resource Worker	€385.21
Salary Support Worker incl. PRSI	€3,050.92
• Travel & Subsistence Support Worker	€
Secretariat Travel & Subsistence paid for by PPN	€2,258.14
Rent and Rates (if applicable)	€
Postage / Telephone	€
Office Supplies/Stationery/Printing	€61.50
Light and Heat	€
Insurance	€
Bank Charges (if any)	€
Auditing, Accountancy & Professional Fees (if any)	€
Training & Development	€
Equipment for PPN	€209.51
IT/Server Support & Maintenance	€51.08
Website/Hosting Fees	€111.75
Marketing & Promotion of PPN	€3,130.50
Projects/Activities /Events sponsored by PPN	€
Plenary Costs (excl. Room Hire /Refreshments)	€
Room Hire/Refreshments	€2,366.72
General Maintenance – cleaning, waste etc.	€

**Total Expenditure 2019:**

**€23,773.79**

## Overview of 2019

### Learning arising

These learnings informed recommendations to Department of Rural and Community Development in the annual report to the Department:

1. Clarity on a national position on GDPR responsibilities of PPN's and support for PPN's on this matter
2. Specific national training/seminar events for Local Authority officials
3. Environment pillar: 1) Clarity on the ratifications process and rationale for same for groups wishing to register under the environment pillar. Some community groups have queried why they have to go through 'this extra loop' and a national body during registration to be a member of a Limerick-based network. 2) Additionally, membership of this pillar is low, meaning it will potentially be difficult to fill seats allocated to this pillar.

### Suggestions for training for both local authorities and PPN's:

1. Specific national training/seminar events/briefings for Local Authority officials and briefing session for Committee Chairs
2. Increased understanding of Council structures and the role, functions and even limitations of Council committees. For instance:
  - a) there can be expectations that SPC's are decision-making bodies
  - b) there are a number of ways to influence local policy as well as through being an elected PPN representative on a committee (for example, through public consultations and through Elected Members of a council)
  - c) local policy (eg. housing and planning) and processes (eg. timeframes) are generally governed by national legislation
3. Citizen engagement practices: There needs to be a clear understanding and commitment to public participation, using a structured spectrum of participation along the lines of that developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Local Authorities and PPN's should agree the range of participation to collaborate, the techniques needed to deliver this range and the training and capacity building that will be required to deliver
4. Pre-committee meeting briefings with PPN representatives
5. Adoption of the contents – as far as is within committee standing orders - of the Representatives Charter as given in the national PPN userguide (and the draft Limerick PPN constitution)
6. Effectively engaging traditionally marginalised communities and groups
7. How PPN structures work (for PPN members)
8. Influencing national and local policy
9. Human rights and equality issues/Public Sector Duty
10. Sustainable Development Goals

### Concluding remarks

This report summarises the activities of Limerick PPN in 2019. This was an important year in the life of Limerick PPN which saw the revitalisation of the Network begin under the direction of two different Secretariats and with the support of Limerick City and County Council. It was an eventful year with two PPN Plenary (members) meetings, PPN Secretariat elections, the drafting of a new constitution for Limerick PPN, two new support staff, and the local government elections (which meant the closure of the majority of committees of Limerick City and County Council and the adoption of the new [Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2019-2024](#)). It was a historic year, with the majority vote in Limerick in favour of a Directly Elected Mayor. It was also a challenging year, with high expectations of Limerick PPN to deliver on its key functions while key governance questions needed to be prioritised first. However, thanks to the direction and commitment of the fifteen volunteers who were on the two Secretariats over the course of 2019, Limerick PPN has risen to the challenges and opportunities and a baseline to measure progress going forward is now established.