



Cork City Public Participation network is one of 31 PPNs now operational in local authority areas across in the country.

The PPN supports the work of community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups from across the city. One of the PPN's key roles is to encourage and coordinate representation of the community in strategic policy and decision making in Cork City Council.

PPN and policy & decision making

As of November 2017, the network regularly communicates with 160 members representing more than 120 member organisations.

PPN representatives sit on Strategic Policy Committees, Joint Policing Committees and Local Community Development Committee. Regular, whole-network plenary meetings are held, as well as smaller sub-group meetings and ad-hoc events on distinct topics.

Cork City PPN maintains a strong and productive relationship with colleagues in Cork City Council.

PPN as a national and local consultee.

In 2017, the network has coordinated consultation events on flood management schemes and on the question of the Cork City boundary extension. The latter event was undertaken pursuant to a request from the McKinnon Expert Advisory Group on Local Government in Cork. The network is also frequently represented by members at large public consultation events, such as an open session in June on Local Area Plans for the Cork Docklands.

Cork City PPN is glad to contribute to this consultation exercise.

However, our network would like it to be noted that Public Participation Networks across Ireland represent an invaluable and trusted contact point with the community and voluntary sector, and a clear route for citizens, by means of participative democracy, to become more involved in consultations and policy making just like this.

Evidence has shown that where the community are consulted in a meaningful way on strategic policy, the result is a more sustainable and nuanced policy which will serve as broad as possible a range of community members.

Meaningful robust consultation, whether at this point, or at the pre-Draft stage, requires more than a general release of the information on a website.

It requires

- Targeted communication with PPN resource workers and secretariat, either directly or through our government funders in the Department Rural and Community Development
- Coordination with Local Authorities, who part fund the PPN programme, to reach out to PPNs and allocate the expertise of their planning officials to inform communities of the importance of these kinds of strategies.
- Guidelines to consultees on how they might approach this document- a lay person's guide to planning policy and where possible a multimedia, accessible context setting to the NPF process
- Support from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

We at Cork City PPN would encourage the team working on Ireland 2040 to operate best practice in this area in the remaining stages of this work, and to relay this feedback to colleagues in both government departments. Coordination between departments will be crucial in involving the community in this, and all, consultations of importance.

Cork City PPN Submission.

In October of 2017, Network members were invited to submit their feedback on the Ireland 2040 Our Plan. These are presented below for consideration.

High level goals

The high level goals and "elements of the strategy" are to be commended in particular the *compact growth element*.

The environmental pillar (which comprises Environmental interest groups in the Public Participation Network) sees this as key to sustainability.

Housing in Cork

- The international, migrant community and groups representing young professionals, while less articulate on the strategies to solve the problem, are extremely exercised on both the lack of housing. This is a particular concern to those forced to move out of the centre to find housing-for example those who are forced out to satellite town such as Ballincollig and Carrigaline. Knock on effects on commute time and social isolation detract from overall quality of life.
- It is also disappointing that there is no explicit guidance to the effect that housing should not be built in areas which already show a significant proportion of the working population commuting out e.g. Ballincollig & Carrigaline.
- In a similar vein, industrial development should be discouraged where it requires people to commute out e.g. Cork Airport Business Park, except where it is necessary e.g. large chemical plants should be in Ringaskiddy/ Little Island not the city centre.

Cork as a counterbalance to Dublin

- In the course of the PPN's engagement, in particular in the last year, with the discussion around the boundary extension due to be finalised in Cork City, this is an area which has repeatedly come to the fore. One of the key factors considered as our network decided to lend its support to the boundary extension rather than a merger was the belief that a strong, city authority and economy was key in ensuring the sustainability of Cork as a realistic counterbalance, and second city to the economic strength of the eastern seaboard, and the greater Dublin area in specific.
- There is concern that while Dublin's growth is to be de-emphasised down to 20/25%, the growth in the Eastern/Midland Region outside Dublin is still expected to be high (475,000/500,000 of which 265,000 are to be in Greater Dublin leaving up to 235,000 outside Dublin)

There is a concern that this will become a de facto growth of Dublin's suburban sprawl undermining both the concept of balanced regional growth between the cities and compact growth.

- Cork is anticipated to grow by 50% with 50% of growth being brownfield. The 50% growth target is shared with the other regional cities and is twice that of Dublin to ensure balanced regional development. This is welcome goal; however, the population of Cork is as great as all of the other regional cities combined. While we hope that all of the other cities have the critical mass to ensure this growth will take place and efforts to support that ambition are welcomed, the reality is that one or more may fall short. In order to ensure a rebalancing away from Dublin, provision should be made for Cork to have the capacity to "take up the slack" if any other city does not achieve its 50% growth.

Brownfill and Public Transport

- The goal of 50% of development being infill or brownfield is regarded as unambitious and insufficient. The inner suburbs and even central areas in Cork and other Irish cities do not have the density to allow quality public transport and other services as well as vibrant communities.
- Communities need an absolute minimum density of 5,000 people/km² to allow efficient public transport while 10,000+, people/km² is desirable. The level in infill required to achieve this is greater than 25% of existing population. Recognising that infill is not always easily achieved. The target should be raised to 75%.