National Civic Forum for Dialogue with the Community & Voluntary Sector 15th November 2023

Event Report

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Introduction

In August 2019, the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) in collaboration with the Community and Voluntary Sector published [Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024](). Action 1.4 of this strategy committed to '*Support participative and deliberative approaches for developing public policy, including establishing a Civic Forum for formal dialogue between the sector and local and central government'*.

'To advance this objective, DRCD and the Community & Voluntary sector, through the Cross-Sectoral Group (CSG) for Local and Community Development co-designed the first annual Civic Forum for the community and voluntary sector. The inaugural Civic Forum was held on 21st November 2022. The full Report on the 2022 Civic Forum is available [here]().

Event Overview

The Second Civic Forum was designed drawing on the feedback from the 2022 Forum and in collaboration with the relevant sub-group of the CSG, comprising state and civil society representatives. In addition, arising from feedback received, Terms of Reference for the Forum were designed with the sub-group and circulated in advance to those who registered for the 2023 Forum. It was agreed with the sub-group that the Terms of Reference (included at Appendix A) will be a living document, which evolves over time, based on learnings.

The 2023 Forum took place on the 15th November 2023 at the Aviva Stadium, Dublin. Officially opened by Paschal Donohoe, T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, with Minister of State Joe O'Brien, in attendance, the event was attended by approximately 130 delegates from across the state and C&V sectors.

The theme of the event was 'Bringing the Values and Principles to Life', with delegates hearing examples of how the Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership-Working have been used in practice, in addition to joint presentations on policy co-design and inclusive engagement at local level. Participants were also invited to engage in discussions around challenges, opportunities and recommendations for improvement.

The Event Programme for the day is below.

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Civic Forum Event Programme

09:00	**Arrival and Registration**
09:45	**Welcome Remarks** Secretary General of the Department of Rural and Community Development, Mary Hurley Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, Paschal Donohoe TD Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, Joe O'Brien TD
10:00	**Introduction and Programme Outline** Moderator Anna Shakespeare (CEO Pobal)
10:10	**Values and Principles in Practice** *Health Dialogue Forum and Partnership Principles* Keynote Speakers: Laura Casey(Dept. of Health); Dr. Damian Thomas (NESC); Ivan Cooper (CEO – The Wheel)
10:30	**Values and Principles in Practice** *Development of the new National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy* Keynote Speakers: Conor McGinn (DCEDIY); Martin Collins (Director, Pavee Point)
10:45	**Panel Discussion**
11:00	**Morning Break / Networking Opportunity**
11:20	**Policy Co-Design and Collaboration** *Zero Tolerance for Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence – Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy* Keynote Speakers: Deaglán O'Briain (Dept. of Justice); Orla O'Connor (CEO, NWCI); Mary McDermott (CEO, Safe Ireland)

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11:35	**Policy Co-Design and Collaboration** *National Youth Assembly on Climate* Keynote Speakers: Eileen Leahy (DCEDIY); Renagh Hayden (National Participation Office)
11:50	**Panel Discussion**
12:05	**Roundtable Discussions on the morning's themes**
12:45	**Lunch / Networking Opportunity**
14:00	**Feedback from pre-lunch discussions**
14:15	**Inclusive Engagement at a Local Level** *Dormant Accounts Funded project on Inclusive Engagement at local level* Keynote Speakers: Ann Irwin (CWI); Deirdre Whitfield (Wicklow County Council); Niamh Wogan (Bray Family Resource Project)
14:30	*Public Participation Networks (PPNs)* Keynote Speakers: Aoife O'Brien (DRCD); Charles Stanley-Smith (Tipperary PPN and PPN National Advisory Group)
14:45	**Panel Discussion**
15:00	**Roundtable discussions on afternoon's theme and on the Civic Forum itself**
15:45	**Feedback from the Roundtables**
	Civic Forum Ideas Wall
	Tea & Coffee Served
16:00	**Moderator Final Remarks** *Closing remarks from Joe O'Brien TD, Minister of State at Department of Rural and Community Development*
16:15	**Event Closes**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SESSION 1: THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

In the first session there were two joint presentations on the Values and Principles in practice: a presentation on the Health Dialogue Forum with voluntary organisations in the health and social care sector and one on the development of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy.

The first presentation emphasised the co-design of partnership principles which were informed by the Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working and the emergence of a more collaborative and productive relationship between the statutory and voluntary sectors. The principles were identified as part of a dynamic virtuous cycle that have positively influenced work on the review of the Service Arrangement by the HSE.

The development of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, which represents a whole of government approach, included the co-development of guiding principles for the consultation processes. Values were also identified in the strategy process to reflect the Government's commitment to the Values and Principles.

In the panel discussion which followed the presentations, the speakers highlighted the importance of the elevated status given to the Values and Principles and the heightened recognition by Government of the value of partnership working. Some challenges were identified, including addressing previous fractured relationships, raising the quality of life for marginalised communities, disillusionment with the slow delivery of commitments and the sharing of power.

The round table discussion considered the question of how the Values and Principles can be embedded in collaboration and partnership working. It was stated that the Values and Principles should inform meaningful and inclusive communications and collaboration between Government Departments and the C&V sector with ongoing relationship building and clear feedback processes. It was stated that Government Departments should be accountable for this.

The provision of sufficient resources to the C&V sector to address problems at local level, to recruit and retain staff, to engage in partnership processes and to provide a safety net, were highlighted. The need for training and awareness raising on the Values and Principles and the sharing of best practice, was also raised.

The roundtable discussions also identified the need to include marginalised and under-represented groups in consultation processes and to identify impacts of policies on poverty levels. The need for high level buy-in at national and local government levels was also discussed. Concerns regarding implementation were identified. It was suggested that there should be progression towards co-

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implementation and the embedding of the values and principles into operational plans to provide better outcomes. Sufficient time and space should be given for consultations on policy review.

SESSION 2: POLICY CO-DESIGN AND COLLABORATION

This session commenced with two further joint presentations. The first presentation was on the development of the third national strategy on Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence, and the second was a presentation on the National Youth Assembly on Climate.

The first presentation set out the collaborative and co-design approach adopted including the formal recognition of the partnership, joint methods of working and joint ownership of the agreed policy actions. The benefits, challenges and learnings from the process were identified. The need for creative mechanisms to facilitate representation and information sharing was highlighted and the need to balance 'pragmatism and possibility'.

The second presentation demonstrated that working with young groups and maintaining their engagement in processes is made possible through co-design and cooperation. Once more, the values and principles served as a pillar in this initiative.

During the post-presentation panel discussion, the speakers emphasised the importance of hearing the voices of those with expertise and lived experience (human rights-based approach), including the voices of young people on matters that will affect them. The importance of feedback and honesty in collaborative processes was also emphasised.

Feedback from the roundtable discussions on this theme identified the need for co-design practices to be built in to all stages of policy design and delivery, including co-implementation, drawing upon what the state and community and voluntary sector can contribute. The value of on-going review and measurement of the impact of policy delivery, using the best available communications and feedback tools and establishing the right structures to manage the co-design process, were also raised.

The feedback also highlighted the need to resource the co-design process and not over-burden the community sector. Resources are also required to build capacity and enhance leadership skills and build relationships among all of the key actors. Co-design should also break down 'knowledge silos' and embed a new public sector culture of valuing meaningful engagement with communities.

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SESSION 3: INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL

In the afternoon session, there were two joint presentations on the themes of inclusive engagement at local level. The first was on inclusive community planning and the second on the Public Participation Networks (PPNs).

The first presentation set out existing policy and principles for inclusive community engagement. Details of learnings from a recent Dormant Accounts funded initiative including the delivery of training workshops were provided. Some lessons from a pilot project in Wicklow were presented, including barriers to participation, how to relate policy to people's lives and conditions for real collaboration.

The final joint presentation outlined the role and structure of the PPNs and the inclusive engagement processes adopted in undertaking a structural review of the PPNs and the development of an implementation roadmap arising from the review.

During the panel discussion which followed, the speakers stressed the need for meaningful engagement processes that reach out to the marginalised, addressing barriers to participation and using simple language. Several challenges were identified, including the need to prevent exclusion, address staff retention and ensuring that the right people are at the table. There were also points made regarding the management of expectations, avoiding consultation fatigue and allowing sufficient time for inclusive engagement at local level. The value of skilled community development workers was highlighted.

The roundtable discussions on this theme, focussed on ensuring that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive and that structural barriers are addressed. Initially, attention was drawn to the necessity of having the appropriate blend of skills and knowledge, including the capacity of the civil service to manage such processes. Additionally, overcoming obstacles to effective consultation was identified as a significant challenge. The feedback from the discussions also identified features of good consultation processes, such as clarity of objectives and outcomes, senior management buy-in, follow-through on identified actions, recognising cultural barriers and providing adequate time and resourcing of the process. The acknowledgement of power distribution was also identified.

Contribution of the Civic Forum and suggestions for the next Civic Forum

The afternoon session of the Civic Forum included roundtable discussions on what learning participants would take from the event to use in their own organisation, how the Civic Forum can improve dialogue between the state and C&V sector, as well as a discussion on suggestions for the next Civic Forum. An Ideas Wall was also provided on which attendees posted their feedback and suggestions on the next Civic Forum.

It was stated that the holding of the Civic Forum was an acknowledgement of challenges and the need for learning and improvements. Many attendees identified the need for improved engagement processes, including new ways to engage marginalised groups and of overcoming systematic barriers to participation. The need for planning of engagements, providing enough time, assignment of responsibilities and getting people involved from the start were also highlighted as learnings. It was stated that not everyone is digitally literate nor can respond to an on-line survey. Better communications with participants, including feedback on outcomes were also identified along with the effective use of social media. The need for sharing of best practices was also identified.

It was suggested that the Civic Forum could receive updates on how the Values and Principles are being adopted and what progress is being made in gaining senior leadership buy-in in state organisations. The Forum could also improve governance and encourage collaboration and greater understanding between the state and the C&V sector. It was also suggested that the Civic Forum could be used to share knowledge and highlight best practice and successes and drive changes in terms of better engagement. The provision of training and awareness raising on the Values and Principles was suggested, along with the resourcing of marginalised groups to engage and the provision of multi-annual funding to the C&V sector were also highlighted.

There were several practical suggestions regarding the format, number of presentations, focus of discussions and amount of time for discussions etc. It was suggested that the Civic Forum be open to a wider and more diverse audience, including community organisations and Civil Servants. It was suggested that the forum be 'deformalized' and that papers could be circulated in advance, leaving more time for discussion. It was also suggested to involve more young people and beneficiaries of community services. Holding more events and learning from international examples were also suggested. The theme of policy implementation was suggested by several participants for the next Civic Forum.

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Opening Speaker Remarks

Addressing delegates at the opening of the event, Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, Paschal Donohoe TD said:

> *"I cannot overstate the importance of events like this, which bring together the state and the community and voluntary sector to discuss openly and frankly how we can better work together to deliver the best outcomes for all.*
>
> *The crises of the last number of years have illustrated, if we needed evidence, the invaluable role played by the community and voluntary sector both nationally and locally and the benefits of the state and the sector working together to address the challenges that we face.*
>
> *We will hear examples today of how you are using your experience, from your work on the front line within our communities, to inform and in some cases co-design the policies that have the greatest positive impacts for all in our communities. Indeed, our policy making processes are better for your involvement."*

Also addressing delegates in the opening session, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development, Joe O'Brien TD, said:

> *"I am delighted to be here, to welcome you all on behalf of my Department, to build on what we started last year. I see evidence every day that we are all starting to really live the values and principles that we mutually agreed on. This means that can will move forward together with a shared understanding of our objectives and how we work together to achieve them.*
>
> *Today, we will see examples of the Values and Principles in use, how the sector and the Government have come together to bring them to life. I'm around this sector long enough to remember times when the relationship between the Sector and the State was not in a great place. And while there will always be an amount of tension, the shared approach that brought the agreed Values and Principles into being, has resulted in a greater understanding and a solidifying of relationships. This will make for a better service that we deliver together to individuals and communities across Ireland.*

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I am very proud of how the Values and Principle for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector has been taken on board across government departments. The speakers here today, from across different Government departments and the sector, are a testament to its success".

Presentations and Discussions

Moderator and Introduction to the Day

The Event Moderator was Anna Shakespeare, Chief Executive of Pobal.

Anna, is an experienced Chief Executive, and has been Chief Executive of Pobal since August 2019. Pobal works on behalf of the Irish Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion outcomes. The role of Pobal is to provide management and support services to Government and State Agencies, and to 41 programmes in the areas of Social Inclusion and Equality, Inclusive Employment, and Enterprise, and Early Learning and Care.

Anna has more than 20 years' experience serving on State and Community and Voluntary Boards. She currently serves as a Voluntary Non-Executive Director on three Boards in the areas of Higher Education, Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Disability Services and Supports.

During her introduction the moderator welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. She then made the following points:

- Set out her role in terms of progressing through the programme and ensuring that the event was as engaging as possible, also how she would moderate the three panel discussions and take feedback from the two roundtable discussions.
- Stated that all presentations throughout the day would be co-presented by representatives from non-governmental organisations and the government sector (central and local).
- Confirmed that the attendees would be asked and encouraged to contribute throughout the day, with their views welcomed by asking questions from the floor, through roundtable discussions, as well as putting their feedback onto an Ideas Wall at the end of the event.

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SESSION 1: THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

This session began with two presentations followed by a panel discussion.

The first of these was co-presented by representatives from the Department of Health with NESC and The Wheel on the Health Dialogue Forum and its partnership principles. *See presentation slides below in Appendix E.*

The second presentation in Session One was by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and Pavee Point on the development of the new Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. *See presentation slides below in Appendix E.*

Panel 1 Discussion: 'Values and Principles in Practice'
(Full Panel Discussion notes are available in Appendix B)

On the panel were the speakers from the session one presentations: Laura Casey (Dept. of Health); Dr. Damian Thomas (NESC); Ivan Cooper (The Wheel); Conor McGinn (DCEDIY) and Martin Collins (Pavee Point)

The panel was moderated by Anna Shakespeare with the panellists asked in the first instance to consider two key questions.

- To what extent have the values and principles defined your working relationship?
- Has the process led to better working relationships and improved policy development?

Some of the key points which emerged from the discussions:

- The values and principles aren't new concepts. The sector has been using them for years. It is the status change that is important.

- The Values and Principles are not just words, they emanated from practice, were agreed and are tied into the strategy (the Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector).

- There has been a 'progressive realisation' that we need to work in partnership to a common goal.

- The values and principles have been 'elevated' but it is a long-term piece. At the same time quick wins are important to build momentum and trust.

- We have to tackle the difficult issues as well or there is no point. Systemic racism was raised as an example.

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- Recognition of the partnerships developed by HSE and DCEDIY with the sector but there are still challenges.

- Biggest challenge (for both sides) is in implementation.

- There has been fair criticism of the Health Dialogue Forum process but the forum emerged from the Report of the Independent Review Group established to examine the role of voluntary organisations in publicly funded health and personal social services, which acknowledged the fractured relationships between the State and Voluntary Providers. The forum was unapologetically framed in dealing with that as it was having an effect on service provision. Health Forum is very focused on the relationship piece.

- Partnership for a purpose. Didn't start off trying to develop partnership principles, started off trying to do things. May not have been able to agree them from the outset.

- There has been some improvement in implementation but something more is needed to improve the quality of life for the most marginalised.

- Lived experience and being able to articulate that experience are two different things and policies will be more successful if they can bring both of these things.

- Traveller organisations are having difficulty with fatigue and disillusionment locally due to a lack of outcome.

- Need to look at and respect the different roles and responsibilities between the state and the sector.

- Pavee, for example, have the mandate to represent communities and get the best possible outcomes but often, from a local point of view at least, that is not achieved.

- There is a challenge for representative groups to bring the communities they represent along with them and that difficulty needs to be acknowledged.

Additional Audience Input

- Challenge – how are you framing what you are talking about, in terms of needs or rights? If in terms of rights (where we need to be) need to think about moving those furthest back first. Can't just talk about citizens, rights of those with no status are important.

- Make diversity a direct part of the decision making process and not a side piece.

- Need to do more than just looking at this through monitoring.

- It's all a start. The Values and Principles first appeared in a white paper many years ago and were taken into the strategy. A word that hasn't

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been used is power. Partnership means sharing power. We need to consider what that really means. Also the power of the purpose. Spirit of partnership working versus the distinction when it comes to allocation of resources. Need a commitment to move from consultation to co-decision making. Give people a real say in what public monies should be spent on.

- Sector want costings for Implementation Plans, budgets ring-fenced etc. to ensure proper implementation.

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SESSION 2: POLICY CO-DESIGN AND COLLABORATION

The session was led by a further two joint presentations. The first of these, on *'Zero Tolerance for Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence – Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy',* was co-presented by the Department of Justice, the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) and Safe Ireland. *See Appendix E for slides.*

The second presentation in this session was co-presented by DCEDIY and the National Participation Office, on the *'National Youth Assembly on Climate'. See Appendix E for slides.*

Panel 2 Discussion: 'Policy Co-Design and Collaboration'

This second panel discussion comprised Deaglán O'Briain (Department of Justice), Orla O'Connor (NWCI), Mary McDermott (Safe Ireland), Eileen Leahy (DCEDIY) and Renagh Hayden (National Participation Office). It was again moderated by Anna Shakespeare, with the panellists asked to consider the following questions:

- What has been the added value of following a co-design approach?
- What have been the biggest challenges?
- In hindsight, what would you have done differently?

Some of the key items of discussion:

- When dealing with complicated, deep rooted problems, it's impossible to know in advance if the actions will be effective if you have not negotiated them with those with lived experience.

- Principle of 'nothing about us without us' is key.

- We need to work on what a co-design practice would look like in designing policy and implementation in terms of voices of those with lived experience. In terms of the practicalities, we need to speed up the glacial pace.

- You get better, more effective services, programmes, policies if you ask the people affected by them. Everyone who lives here has a right to have a say in how government spending works etc.

- Regarding children/young people's experience – the result is that they come up with good solutions to solving complex problems. Government collaborating with young people is very productive – not outlandish as some would think.

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- D/Justice had a particular experience of this in terms of consulting with youth people who had previously been involved in the criminal justice system through Youth Diversion Projects. That consultation was invaluable.

- One of biggest challenges is gauging the impact things such as the Youth Assembly are having in terms of hearing youth voice. Trying to develop better mechanisms all the time. The YAs convene each year; the next year they ask for updates from the policy maker vis a vis last year's recommendations. Important to keep feeding back even if those who said it are gone. Issue internationally around the feedback piece. Trying to improve it. People move on, including the civil servants.

- Departments need to be honest with young people, tell them it's a long process – acknowledge it's a long journey – continue to have them at consultations and feedback.

- Parameters of expectations.   Sitting down with Government Departments people need to be clear on the parameters of decision making. Civil servants need to be up front and honest about what they are there to do -. 'I'm here to do the strategy, not be who will allocate resources'. Vulnerability and frankness are required.

Additional Comments and Suggestions (inputs from the floor)

- Department of Taoiseach should endorse as strongly as The Department of Rural and Community Development

- Structure and framework for Values and Principles, some co-ordination across departments and agencies, with more resources at a local level to embed.

- Co-implementation needs to be seen as an intrinsic part of co-design (ensures it can be implemented on the ground).

- To do with power, allocation of resources and priority setting within plans.

- Pragmatism important from both sides. What can each commit to and deliver? Realistic expectations from government and NGO sector.

- Acknowledge limitations and who is not in the room.

- Importance of knowing where the knowledge and expertise sit. Those with expertise or lived experience can spot unintended consequences and should be part of the processes from the start.

- Implementation Network of Ireland as a valuable resource - Implementation@effectiveservices.org

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- Hostility has to be dealt with either directly or indirectly.

- Community capability is necessary – not all service users are best placed to feed back into processes.

- We need to get better at using the structures that we have created. Programmes such as SICAP are implemented at local level through local government. No reason the strategy can't be implemented in the same manner.

- Need to be understood and then exercised by all – need not to lose the things that matter between pragmatism and possibility.

- Importance of promoting public ownership of plans and policies

Round Table Session 1: "Values and Principles in Practice"

A roundtable discussion took place after the morning sessions. Tables were asked to consider a number of questions, with each table assigned a note taker to compile a record of the points discussed. Each table also selected a facilitator from within their group, who was tasked with reporting one key point from their table for each of the questions supplied by the moderator.

Full comments from the Roundtable Discussions can be found in **Appendix B**.

The first Round Table Session focussed on the theme of the 'Values and Principles in Practice'. The first question considered was "*How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?*" Several key themes emerged:

- Communications
- Accountability
- Funding/Resources
- Training/Awareness Raising
- The issue of under-represented groups
- Roles and responsibilities of local authorities

Chief of these topics was the importance of good **communication** between all parties involved.

Communication/Consultation

- Values and principles need to be front and centre of all communications between the different Government departments and with all voluntary organisations.

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- Open and honest conversations from both sides, manage expectations and be realistic in what can be achieved within the timeline, budget and what is expected from both sides to contribute to the project.

- Give respect. NO quick turnarounds – allow the sector the required time to engage with members to have a more meaningful and inclusive input.

- Acknowledge operating challenges.

- Provide time and a space to give feedback – mentioned throughout the discussions was that feedback/update is not given to those who give their time, to participate and attend meetings, etc. Discourages people to take part in the future. Won't get people to "buy in" if not kept updated on progress. Continued engagement – even if no update.

- Open-up communication and share best practices.

- Being open by allowing the Community and Voluntary sector to initiate the consultation process.

- Understand who you are talking to – a more collaborative process in the design of the consultation.

- Address barriers to consultation.

- Use the power of media advertising to get the message across. Need to ensure all voices are heard and that vulnerable people are reached to get their views and opinions within these groups at local level rather than pressure at National Forums.

- It was recommended that after consultations, a continued relationship needs to remain.

Accountability

The question of who should have accountability for the inclusion of the Values and Principles were also mentioned:

- Important to have accountability in adhering to Values and Principles – Values and Principles adherence and promotion could be linked to funding for initiatives etc.

  o An example given was that of the UK's use of a 'civil society test' for any policies, ensuring any policy proposal incorporates the Values and Principles agreed between stakeholders.

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Funding/Resources

This issue of **funding** was discussed at some length, including the following key points:

- More resources are required at local level for the Values and Principles to be understood and articulated.

- Individuals are being asked to problem solve, match up people's expertise, more resources, resources used correctly and in the right area. Look at problems as they arise rather than having to wait years for a policy to fix problems. Resources relevant to the right group of people.

- How is money funnelled down to every organisation, could we combine resources?

- The recruitment and retention of staff within the C&V sector is essential, cannot think about growth when trying to keep the basics going. More recognition of the sector is required as not resourced properly, desire to engage on consultations but not matched with funding to facilitate the backfilling of time spent on same.

- When organisations are always on survival mode it's hard to collaborate. Need to pitch projects, practical examples and sharing of information. Need for a safety net for organisations to fall back on outside of their current funding, such as contingency funding and back up plans which is also of reference to Q2.

- The Values and Principles cannot be embedded when basic funding levels are not reaching what is needed. Organisations are losing staff from within the sector. They feel that they are not being valued as equal partners in terms of resources; not paid accordingly with same conditions as others at the table.

- Ambitions and resources need to be aligned.

Training/Awareness Raising

Participants saw training and awareness raising as key requirements for embedding the Values and Principles:

- Embed Integration Training

- Best Practice advocates

- Noted the need for education on Values and Principles, including time for self-reflection and training supports to refresh values knowledge.

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- An example of best practice was shared – to get the messaging right from the beginning so people understand what is being asked of them. Keep language simple so people can understand it. Give straight forward explanations of what something is.

- Another best practice example was-
    - 12-18 workshops
    - Engagement with different groups to hear different voices
    - Analysis of the results
    - Breakdown into younger/older/coastal etc.
    - This gives you a clearer view if there is a missing group/cohort

- People need support/mentoring regarding how to approach/deal with Government departments so they are more confident engaging in discussions

- Lack of public knowledge of "what it actually is"

Under-represented Groups

There was some discussion around the under-representation of some marginalised groups and the importance of their inclusion in meaningful consultation.

- Address barriers to consultation.

- Need to ensure that the policies are being properly gender/poverty/disability proofed with regards to social justice. How does it impact poverty levels?

- Also it was pointed that there are many groups not being represented and more needs to be done to reach these groups.

- A greater connection needs to be made with marginalised communities.

Government/Local Authority Roles & Responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the Government and the Local Authorities for embedding the Values and Principles was discussed:

- More than raising awareness of the V&Ps, it's about all of Government and all of the Sector living them. There is a responsibility on Government to lead the way in this regard – high level buy in is required.

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- Statutory side need to buy into the idea that these Values will actually help with delivery of good outcomes.

- Public Sector Reform is important. Acknowledge the Civil Service piece in this, Governments change but civil servants remain

- Disjointed between National level and Local level, what works for one might not work for the other. If new at national level it can cause problems to implement at local level

Finally, **comments**, **concerns** and **suggestions** around implementation were discussed:

- The values are already embedded in the co design portion of most policies but needs to be moved to the next step of co-implementation.

- Values and Principles should be agreed in an overarching sense prior to any policy development and engagement so at the outset these values and principles can be integrated into policy.

- Thereafter they need to be embedded into operational plans, which means people need to understand their relevance.

- Demonstrate tangible change and the outcome for people in communities.

- There are challenges in developing Values and Principles that can be agreed and mirrored across organisations, clash of values are inevitable between government departments, organisations, agencies, implementers etc. Noted the national debate on taxation included Community and Voluntary sector reps and this approach should be carried forward to other initiatives.

- Provide time and a space to review the policy etc. – There needs to be a realistic deadline for submissions/responses.

- Looking at other frameworks in place in other jurisdictions/countries to see what could work here in Ireland.

- Community development principles should be carried out through participation and living the Values and Principles.

- Use model example by Community Platform in the document on collaborate governance with the key principles of collaboration and implementation.

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- An example of where this could be applied is with the new LAIT (Local Authority Integration Team) in the implementation and delivery of the new programme.

The second question considered in this session was– "***How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?***"

Here the discussion focussed on three key themes:

- Implementation
- Best Practice and Challenges
- Funding and Resources

Implementation:

A large piece of this discussion centred on how the Implementation of policies should be done:

- Need to move away from leaving delivery of implementation to voluntary organisations and provide a process of delivery of implementation.
- There can be savings (financial) as a better plan will be more efficient in the implementation.
- Co-design approaches need to expedite the policy and implementation processes. Efficiencies should be gleaned from previous co-design initiatives.
- Co-design needs to be implemented from the very outset of policy creation. It cannot be retroactive, that is, Government policy cannot be pre-determined with only minor tweaks to fulfil a 'co-design' obligation. Co-designed policies should also be integrated into relevant strategies and stakeholder planning.
- 2 key points from discussion:
  - A Framework/Structure is required: A 'Coordinator with Teeth'!
  - Co-implementation as part of 'Co-design'
- Co-design Shared responsibilities – what can each side contribute to the implementation of a policy.
- Identify and maximise the expertise that people bring to the table – get them to take responsibility, as implementation is key.
- Sub-groups. Understand agenda/interests of implementers – this will result in better Value for Money as no duplication of funding.

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Best Practice and Challenges

A number of best-practice methods were discussed, along with some of the challenges to overcome.

- Review from moment of inception, is it working, how is development going etc.
- Tell the story!

  - It's currently happening in silos
  - Examine if/how the information is shared?
  - How are good models (collaborative programmes) shared?
  - How do we learn from communities that got it right?
  - Sharing across the country

- Clarity about the outcome wanted
- Knowing people who will be impacted, groups etc. Partnership in decision making, scale down large groups for discussions, one rep from each means a more manageable group. Don't over invite from the same "group", numbers will be smaller at meetings. Meet as "committee" style having a representative from each stakeholder, represented fairly. Some Reps cover a number of areas.
- Feedback process.
- Balance of expertise and also value lived experience.
- Review what worked and didn't work – lessons learned.
- Consult. Use a Public Plan so that the public can be held accountable and it is the publics input. By getting the public to write the plan it is far better for people with lived experience, monitoring body.
- The workplans should echo the policy and translated to organisations to undertake the roles and transparency around how to make submissions to the workplan.
- Maximise the use of communication tools that are available to us in terms of social media forums, tik tok, etc. Should contain digestible information as the guide for inclusive community engagement in local planning and decision making; contains too much information so needs to be broken down to target different sectors.
- There needs to be a "lifecycle of a consultation" meaning that after the consultations and strategy is developed, there is further engagement with groups in relation to explaining to them how their feedback fed into the report. For example, telling them what actions were developed using their input/insights. Closing this gap and helping groups understand where their views have been inputted will result in the groups feeling more empowered and more likely to engage again. It's really just about linking things effectively so people can understand the process.

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- Challenge to move from a National level to a Local level – driver for that.
- At the moment Government uses quantitative rather than qualitative analysis and this needs to change. This needs to be embedded in the strategy to measure impact of strategies across government departments to prove there are benefits.
- There are huge benefits in using co-design approaches but that needs to be maximised to ensure that the right people are targeted to be at the table on discussions. How do we target distanced voices?
- There is a need to draw on the expertise within the sector which is difficult when experienced staff cannot be retained.
- Capacity building required to support representatives at the table and this means more resources.
- How are everyone's views captured, how can we reach those still out there that are currently not being captured to ensure that engagement is meaningful. Learning how to be more inclusive.

Funding & Resources

There was also discussion around the availability of funding and resources for co-designing policy.

- Acknowledging that implementation can depend on resources.
- Over reliance on the voluntary sector, not enough resources for funding which leads to specific services not being met on the ground.
- Local councils under resourced, over - burdened with administration, they need "live documents"
- If the state wants collaborative engagement, there is a cost but also a benefit, define resource needs within local authorities i.e. upskilling, more staff on the ground.
- There needs to be resources put into the activation of citizens'/people's views and fostering that engagement.
- Resourcing issues were raised here a number of times in terms of multi-annual funding, resourcing the co-design process, funding to backfill hours spent on co-designing and consultation, acknowledgment of operational challenges. The delivery of daily tasks is affected when hours are spent on other duties. Retention of experienced staff as not paid on a par with others.
- Need for funding to resource leadership skills, relationship building and engagement training for those most disadvantaged i.e. Roma, homeless etc. Relationship building is hard to measure.
- Do we need to change the way we do policy in terms of getting a commitment to funding in advance?

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SESSION 3: INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL

This final session on 'Inclusive Engagement at Local Level', began with a joint presentation by Pobal, Wicklow County Council, Little Bray Family Resource Centre and CWI on Inclusive Community Engagement in Planning and Decision Making.' *See Appendix E for slides.*

The final presentation of the day, under theme three was on the Public Participation Networks. The presentation was co-delivered by DRCD and Tipperary PPN. *See Appendix E for slides.*

Panel 3 Discussion: 'Inclusive Engagement at Local Level'

For this panel, the participants were Paul Skinnader (Pobal), Ann Irwin (CWI), Deirdre Whitfield (Wicklow County Council), Aoife O'Brien (DRCD) and Charles Stanley-Smith (Tipperary PPN). The panellists were asked by the moderator to consider the below questions:

How can we ensure that public consultation and participation processes are inclusive and engage the most marginalised?

- Identify and address barriers to participation in consultation.

- Show clearly that voices are heard. As in, consultation should throw up issues to be tackled and we should see those being dealt with throughout the process. Language around consultation used needs to be simple.

- Acknowledge unconscious biases are prevalent in public bodies – need for cultural changes within the organisations that hold the majority of the power.

- 'Meaningful' = focussed and targeted, a sense of direction is important.

- Keep the process simple.

- Ensure enough time given to consider and respond.

- Language around consultation needs to be simple and limit the use of jargon and acronyms.

- The best outcomes are achieved when discussions are held in an open environment and those consulting are equipped with the necessary skills to address issues.

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- Be open and honest with those who are being engaged with.

- Ensure you know your audience and how they can be reached.

How do we ensure that people can see the impact of their contributions?

- Promote good news.

- Always give feedback.

- Ensure consultation is ongoing.

- Accountability. Feedback to groups about what has been done with information that was given. Show that the input was considered, even if it was not used.

- Reflect on what has been achieved.

What are the challenges and what steps can we take, at both state and sectoral level, to try and address those challenges?

- Ensure that people are not left out for example by not being computer literate or by virtue of the fact that English is not their first language. Consultation itself needs to be co-designed.

- Issues with staff rotation. Relationships are built up and then staff move on, succession planning is necessary.

- Ensure the Community & Voluntary sector is adequately resourced to get involved in consultations.

- Public bodies need to acknowledge the public body structure can create barriers.

- Ensuring that the right people are at the table, and what is being discussed is relevant to those attending. Demystify the process.

Additional Comments and Suggestions

- Timing of engagement is crucial. Need to be conscious of other commitments.

- Civic Forum is in itself an acknowledgement that there are challenges across the board, and there is need for learnings and improvements.

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- There are a lot of consultations; this leads to consultation fatigue.

- Manage expectations – what can be achieved now, and what people can influence in the here and now.

- C&V sector need to be partners at the developmental/formative stages – also gives them time to engage the voices that need to be heard.

- Different ideas and ideologies but we have a central government department that has a role in rural and community development who are running with a mandate. The strategy is the reason we are all here today. Here to come together about what we have in common, the power of community and its importance.

Round Table Session 2: "Inclusive Engagement at Local Level"

Discussion in the afternoon Round Table Session concerned the theme of 'Inclusive Engagement at Local Level'. The question '*How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?*' was examined first.

Feedback from roundtables:

The importance of getting the **right mix of skills and knowledge** around the table was emphasised in the following points:

- Community Development Workers with skills and expertise are required. Also, Public/Civil Service staff need to develop expertise.

- Consider the level of capacity building required in the Civil Service.

- Issue with rotation of staff. Relationships are built over time in the community space. Succession planning is necessary.

- Being open by allowing the Community and Voluntary sector to initiate the consultation process.

- Try to include people of interest for example a member of a particular party, which may attract people to the event.

- Ensuring right people at the table, and what is being discussed is relevant to those attending. Demystify the process.

- From the Government side, make the public aware:

    o Advertise through social media and local libraries

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- o   Acknowledge their voice is important

- o   Advise them they can contribute

- Workers on the ground need to do the work in relation to building interest/understanding among marginalised communities in particular about things happening in their communities that affect them.

Barriers to consultation were considered as a key challenge, as outlined below:

- People being left out for example: not computer literate, in care, no access to computer, English not first language. Need to include all multiple channels online and in person. Ensure you know your audience and how they can be reached. Examples are of young people on social media and older people through newspaper ads or bulletins.

- A first step is in public bodies acknowledging issues with their own cultures and the barriers these cultures create. Important to acknowledge systemic issues are real. Structural barriers need to be addressed.

- It is vital the Community and Voluntary sector is adequately resourced to actually get involved in consultations, which can be a significant undertaking.

- Equally, it is vital that members of marginalised communities themselves are resourced to get engaged with consultation processes in the first instance. Processes need to ensure the quiet voices are given space and time to emerge as well.

- Consultations should be accessible in both digital and written form, literacy – there are a range of impairments and understanding is needed.

- Language around consultation used needs to be simple the use of jargon and acronyms should be limited.

- Pathways for engagement is crucial. The process needs to be accessible to all.

- New faces and voices need to be in these spaces.

- Distribution of power within discussion, making sure it's an opening environment for marginalised communities and equip them with the necessary skills to empower them to address the issues. Public bodies should meet where the community is located.

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- Make sure people that are being consulted truly represent their community or group.

- Groups need to be aware of incentives that could be put in place to encourage groups to participate. Structural barriers, (undocumented) time demands and involvement required, language barriers. Demystify the process of decision making, realistic expectations.

In order to have good consultation, an additional challenge that must be addressed is **consultation fatigue**, which was raised by several participants.

- There are a lot of consultations; people don't always know the outcomes.

- People are tired, and confused, regarding the impact of these consultations.

- Using phrases like 'participation process' rather than 'consultation process' as there is consultation fatigue.

- To make any consultation process meaningful, it must be ensured the objectives of whatever initiative or policy is being discussed are meaningful and relevant to the marginalised people it is intended to support.

- Give respect. NO quick turnarounds – allow the sector the required time to engage with members to have a more meaningful and inclusive input.

- Better understanding of what "meaningful" engagement means.

There was a great deal of discussion as well on **good consultation processes**, including:

- Show clearly that voices are heard. As in, consultation should throw up issues to be tackled and we should see those being dealt with throughout the process. Not just consultation for the sake of it.

- Acknowledge unconscious biases are prevalent in public bodies – need for cultural changes within the organisations that hold the majority of the power.

- 'Meaningful' = focussed and targeted, a sense of direction is important.

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- Keep it simple; don't make the process more difficult than it needs to be.

- Clarity required

    o around the resources available to people

    o on expectations

    o on outcomes

- Processes are relevant to the people you are trying to support.

- Consultation itself needs to be co-designed.

- Put value on engagement and feedback processes.

- Accountability. What has been done with information given?

- Work with the dynamics of each particular group, community work and relationships take time, patience and persistence and necessary resources.

- Start by being open and honest with those you wish to engage with

- Reflect on what you have done.

The second question in the afternoon session was *'From what you have heard today, what learning would you take away and use in your own organisation?'* This discussion gave rise to a number of very **good engagement practices** to take back to their own organisations:

- Identify and address barriers to participation in consultation.

- Mandate and monitor progress in the implementation of the Values and Principles.

- Timing of engagement is crucial. Be conscious of other commitments.

- Civic Forum is in itself an acknowledgement that there are challenges across the board, and there is need for learnings and improvements.

- Be clear about who has responsibility for actions.

- Use diagrams and stories to assist with leadership and governance.

- The examples given today are all very early engagement, however, they all focus on the need for implementation. So that is a key element.

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- Judge the process based on outcomes.

- Get people in at the start of the process – engage with the youth early (not included late in the process) – buy in early. The right people need to be in at the start.

- To ensure enough time is given to consider and respond – realistic deadline for responses. Time – balance task - don't just issue with deadline – give time and also create a space that can be used for this part of the process.

- Social Media presence – advertise etc. Inform the community of the ask and involvement requested.

- "What's my investment" – people to know why they are there and what is the requirement, matched skill set and knowledge to the ask.

- Right people to attend the right forums – relevant to your job etc.

- Championing co-design - the Community and Voluntary sector need to take ownership of how to implement things better.

- Participants in the consultation need to know what's happening with inputs. Need to know what happens when inputs are submitted, what points are taken on-board and the process that follows.

- Starting point for everything, it's not a done deal, make sure people know that feedback will build into the process, ideas are a work in progress.

- Promote good news.

The next question for discussion was "*How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community and voluntary sector?*" Responses included:

- Updates as to how the Values and Principles are being adopted and used. Publish examples of these.

- Clear instructions from the Taoiseach down with ample notice.

- Opportunity to meet directly, stop "consultation fatigue" with nothing happening.

- Better Governance

- More Collaboration.

- Greater Understanding.

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- The Department using the forum to facilitate the sharing of knowledge.

- Highlight any and all successes.

- Pulling together and coordinating consultations in a structured manner.

The final discussion topic for the session asked for *Suggestions for the next Civic Forum.* (This question was also addressed on the 'Ideas Wall'.) A lot of good ideas came out of this, which included:

- Better communications in advance of the forum, opening it up to a wider audience. Particularly across the Civil Service.

- Focus on the implementation piece.

- Showcase successful examples, e.g. bring back previous years' speakers to highlight what progress has been achieved.

- Until now we've discussed issues specifically impacting the sector; how do you bring this concept to wider themes in society, e.g. Housing, Care, Climate.

- Implement the LAIT (Local Authority Integration Team) and form them to come back next year and share successes – inspired by the learnings from this event.

- Use this Forum as a 'better engagement' forum.

- The Community and Voluntary sector to take ownership and 'organise' the next event, Music

- Enable the rotation of people at tables.

- Have young people present and speak.

- Presentations should be shorter, with more emphasis placed on engagement, networking and discussion. More space needed for constructive dialogue between the State and Community and Voluntary sector. There needs to be constructive and challenging critique on the issues facing all parties.

- Next Civic Forum should be less tentative in engaging with the issues of the day – next Civic Forum needs to take a deeper dive into these issues.

- Next Civic Forum should allow for a discussion and analysis of actual progress made in the 3 years since the first Civic Forum was called.

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What has been achieved, what needs to be worked on, what isn't working etc.

- Civic Forum should make space to look beyond just the issues facing Ireland – there are shared issues internationally and learnings could be gleaned.

- Make an effort to look for people that otherwise wouldn't be involved.

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Ideas Wall

The purpose of the **Ideas Wall** is to fill up an entire wall, in a short amount of time, with the ideas generated by the attendees. The act of physically pinning the answers to a wall is to help show progress, give inspiration and expand on ideas.

There were three separate questions asked and the attendees were requested to pin their answers onto the ideas wall.

Q1: What learning would you take away from today and use in your own organisation?

- There is enthusiasm and energy to do things differently from the State and Community and Voluntary Sector.

- Different groups need different mechanisms to ensure engagement, so formal & informal; in-person & online; surveys & focus groups AND going to the source ≠ expecting people to come forwards.

- Ensure seats on LCDC PPN Sec. and look for accountable representatives for black and minority ethnic communities.

- Need for an advisory body (with relevant stakeholders) in Department of Taoiseach to support and coordinate collaborative processes across Government.

- Policy related to implementation.

- Use different and new ways to consult and enable participation.

- Multiple ways for people to be consulted – not just written; online accessible, various times.

- De-formalise space for engagement and processes.

- Be brave! Don't be afraid to do something different. Culture change is happening. Close one feedback loop.

- Be willing to have the difficult conversations.

- Synchronicity of values, policy and strategies.

- Getting everyone together.

- Co-design, co-implement.

- Need to tackle systemic barriers.

- Resource marginalised and minority groups to engage.

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Q2: How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector?

- Provide training supports to the State and Community and Voluntary Sector on the Values & Principles and Community Development.

- Mandate Government Departments and Local Government to take action to incorporate Values & Principles into local frameworks.

- Identify and address barriers to participation during planning.

- Seek out people who would not usually participate and involve them.

- Set expectations early.

- Have focused and meaningful discussions.

- Ensure methods of facilitating participation are diverse and then enable all people to participate fully.

- Year on year examine best practice and build a shared understanding of co-creation.

- Don't over consult! Participation fatigue.

- Do something, act on products of engagement through conversation. Online and in writing are not the only way to engage people due to barriers.

- Timing of engagement is crucial.

- There's definitely a need for examples → goals on "whole of government approach" on issues. So much feels siloed.

- Commitment of long term investment in resourcing relationships and participatory processes.

- Need succession planning in statutory agencies and multi-annual funding in C&V organisations.

- Needs to be clear feedback mechanisms to ensure communities are informed and updated.

- Trained and qualified with skills and expertise.

- Commitment from employees and the State to resource education and training in community work skills for their staff.

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Q3: Suggestions for the next Civic Forum.

- Ensure different organisations and people are at the event.

- It's important for civil servants to speak about their challenges in co-design/co-participation.

- The dialogue needs to be resourced – provide background papers and discussion questions in advance. Equal participation from civil service.

- Civic Forum should assess its achievements.

- More diversity of participants.

- Does the Forum reflect how diverse the sector is, i.e. different needs?

- The Dialogues on the Future of Europe x 5 – has not adequately been committed to max marginal sectoral participation and environmental shifts.

- Mailing system! E.g. human rights, inclusivity – new solutions to access funding via LEADER and The Wheel – It is taking far too long.

- More dialogue amongst public bodies and C&V sector – less presentations, frame the dialogue in background papers circulated in advance.

- There is a lot of 'code language' in the sector, 'voluntary', 'community', 'consultation', etc.

- Consider bringing the Forum outside Dublin, maybe even regionally, so more can engage.

- The Civic Forum should assess what has been achieved since the first Forum.

- Inter Departmental Co-operation – particular difficulty with PPN – and DRCD and Local Authority under Department of Local Government.

- Less presentation, more engagement.

- Demystify the process of consultation. Better expectations of what can be achieved.

- Far too many basic views as policy is being convoluted – lack of clarity between National/LAs unity of purpose, alignment, etc.

- Each organisation bring someone with them – for example, young people, disabled, etc. – not just people speaking on their behalf.

- More coffee.

- Use videos; community worker facilitators; move the event to a different venue; more engagement; 'ice-breakers'; Gaeltacht area reps.

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- Civic Forum – similar to PPN's – needs a national structure to "drive the bus" – the title is 'Learning to Maximise Outcomes'.

- Swap people around to different tables in order to get different ideas flowing.

- Implementation – how is it going?

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) – There needs to be new direction – National & Local Authorities – In addition to the Green Paper as not adequate, holistic i.e. share the cut-off date via the PPNs.

- Collaborative approach to housing/climate will be inclusive and the outcomes should benefit all in society.

- Reformat the agenda. Reduce number of presentations. Explore how 2022 & 2023 recommendations have been actioned.

- Further communications plan for the Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community & Voluntary Sector – make sure everyone knows.

- Require PO of Departments and senior LA's CEO's to attend. Keep the energy positive!

- Understand the need to cover a lot of ground 'cos the sector is so diverse but too many speakers leave no time for meaningful discussions and feedback sessions.

- World Café as a process of creative engagement.

- Build on work on Collaborative Governance by Community Platform. More time for participation. Thank you!

- Consider inviting different people especially on State side to spread the message & embed & create champions.

- Clearer info on location & accessibility including transport. (E.g. is there secure bike parking?)

  Can we make a concerted effort to reduce, simplify the number of fora?

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Conclusion

The primary objective of the National Civic Forum is to facilitate candid communication and greater cooperation between the State and the Community & Voluntary sector in tackling societal concerns. This approach aims to improve policymaking and more efficiently serve the needs of all our communities. The Forum is just one part of wider work that is on-going to encourage more participatory and deliberative approaches to policymaking.

This year the Forum focussed on , "Bringing the Values & Principles to Life", with the day broken down under the following sub-themes::

- o The Values and Principles in Practice
- o Policy Co-Design and Collaboration
- o Inclusive Engagement at a Local Level

Whilst each of the sessions commenced with presentations, in each session there was time given thereafter for contributions and engagement by way of questions to panellists and thereafter roundtable discussions on the themes. There was excellent participation on the day and a large amount of feedback. Whilst some excellent relationships and good examples were highlighted the delegates made clear that there is much work still to be done.

Many participants gave feedback on what needs to be done and how the Civic Forum might be a vehicle to make further improvements. Many of the attendees identified the need for improved engagement processes, including new ways to engage marginalised groups and of overcoming systematic barriers to participation. Much was heard of the need for proper planning of engagements, with a focus on sufficient time being set aside and inclusion from the outset. The key role that feedback plays in meaningful engagement processes was stressed by a number of participants.

In terms of suggestions for the Civic Forum itself, it was felt that the Forum would be interested in hearing updates on how the Values and Principles are being adopted, particularly progress on gaining buy-in from senior leadership. An interest was expressed by many in looking at moving beyond co-design of policy to looking at co-implementation and how that can be done. A number of participants suggested that papers be circulated in advance to facilitate more discussion in future.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the 'National Civic Forum for dialogue with the Community & Voluntary Sector'

1. Strategic Context

Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities, a five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024 contains a number of actions aiming to strengthen and develop collaboration and 'partnership-working' with the aim of fostering effective partnerships between the community and voluntary sector and government at local, regional and national levels.

Specifically, strategic action 1.4 in the government's strategy commits the government to:

> Support participative and deliberative approaches for developing public policy, including establishing a Civic Forum for formal dialogue between the sector and local and central government.

It is the responsibility of DRCD to manage and organise the Forum in conjunction with the sub-group of the Cross Sectoral Group on Participative and Deliberative Approaches to Developing Public Policy.

2. Underpinning Values and Principles

The establishment and hosting of the Civic Forum is underpinned by the Values and Principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector. These values and principles were co-developed with community and voluntary sector representatives and were adopted by Government in 2022.

3. Purpose of the Civic Forum

The following purposes are proposed for the Civic Forum

3.1 To provide a forum for dialogue between Government and the community and voluntary sector

3.2 To promote participatory policy processes across Government, at central, regional and local levels

3.3 To inform the community and voluntary sector about Government initiatives to promote participatory engagement, including follow up on issues raised at previous Civic Forum sessions

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3.4 To identify means of strengthening citizen engagement and the engagement of civil society organisations in public policymaking

3.5 To share and disseminate best practices, including international best practices

3.6 To provide representatives of the community and voluntary sector with an opportunity to give feedback to government bodies on participatory engagement

The role of the Civic Forum is to complement and add value to the existing sectoral fora, rather than to duplicate their work.

4. Frequency of Meetings

The Civic Forum will meet once per annum, unless otherwise agreed between the Department of Rural and Community Development and the sub-group of the Cross Sectoral Group on Participative and Deliberative Approaches to Developing Public Policy.

5. Secretariat

The Department of Rural and Community Development will provide the secretariat for the meetings of the Civic Forum. Representatives of the Community and Voluntary sector may be invited to act as facilitators and/or rapporteurs for break-out sessions during the event.

6. Agenda and Theme Setting

The agenda, theme and format for meetings of the Civic Forum will be developed in collaboration with the sub-group of the Cross Sectoral Group on Participative and Deliberative Approaches to Developing Public Policy.

7. Invited Attendees

The broad composition of the Civic Forum will be determined in consultation with the sub-group of the Cross Sectoral Group on Participative and Deliberative Approaches to Developing Public Policy It shall include:

- All Government Departments and/or agencies under their aegis that have an ongoing engagement with the community and voluntary sector

- Representatives of local government

- Members of the Cross Sectoral Group which oversees the implementation of *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities*

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- National organisations and federations that represent the community and voluntary sector, with the aim of ensuring a broad representation of sub-sectors

- Representatives of the Public Participation Networks

- Academics and Researchers, with a focus on participatory and deliberative democracy

The number of invitees to the Civic Forum may vary dependent on the capacity of the chosen venue and also to enable a meaningful opportunity for engagement in its deliberations.

The Department of Rural and Community Development will issue invitations to attend the Civic Forum. Invitees may be represented by alternates at the Civic Forum.

8. Independent Moderator

An independent moderator shall be selected by the Department of Rural and Community Development, in consultation with the sub-group of the Cross Sectoral Group on Participative and Deliberative Approaches to Developing Public Policy.

The role of the moderator shall be to facilitate panel discussions, and summarise proceedings. The moderator may also provide their own observations and insights into the topics under discussion.

9. Reports on Proceedings

A report shall be prepared on the proceedings at each Civic Forum. The preparation of the report may be done directly by the Department of Rural and Community Development or by a third party organisation engaged for this purpose. The report shall be published on gov.ie

Note

This Terms of Reference will remain open to evolving over time. A 'test and evolve rather than solve and leave' approach.

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Appendix B: Attendees

National Economic and Social Council (NESC)

Comhairle na nOg

Women's Council of Ireland

Community Work Ireland

Department of Children, Equality, Disability,
Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)

Pavee Point

Department of Further and Higher Education,
Research, Innovation and Science (DEFHRIS)

Pobal

Department of Justice

Safe Ireland

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Sligo County Council

Department of Rural and Community
Development

South Dublin County Council

Department of Social Protection

South Dublin PPN

Department of Transport

Specialisterne Irl CLG

Department of Health

St. Vincent de Paul

Disability Federation of Ireland

Tallaght Community Arts

Donegal Intercultural Platform

TASC

Donegal Travellers Project

The Homeshare

Dublin City South CYPSC

The Wheel

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown PPN

Tipperary County Council

European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)

Tipperary Heartland Tourism Group

Family Resource Centre National Forum

Tipperary PPN

Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)

Trinity College

Galway County PPN Secretariat

Tusla

Inclusion Ireland

Waterford County Council

Independent Living Movement Ireland

Wicklow County Council

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
(IHREC)

Young Social Innovators

Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)

Youth Work Ireland

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Appendix C: Panel Discussions Questions & Answers

Note that the below responses to questions in this appendix are all (non-attributed) quotes made by attendees during the panel discussions

Panel 1 Questions:

To what extent have the values and principles defined your working relationship?

Has the process led to better working relationships and improved policy development?

How has differed from how you worked previously?

- 'Progressive realisation' work in partnership to common goal

- Values & Principles there forever but on-going work in progress

- Elevation of agreed Values & Principles

- Broadly welcomed. Social Inclusion lived experience with physical condition

- Green paper in Dublin castle – How can DSP for two hours never mentioned human dignity.

- Flattening the curve, need authenticity around the table and that's how you do things

- Need to do more than just looking at it through monitoring

- (Referring to Dublin Castle Presentation)

- Community and rights based organisations

- Acknowledge the partnerships developed with HSE and DCEDIY

- Challenge – how are you framing what you are talking about, in terms of needs or rights?

- If in terms of rights (where we need to be) need to think about moving those furthest back first. Can't just talk about citizens, rights of those with no status are important.

- What you are about makes lots of sense but a strategy that ignores diversity that has always been a part of Ireland (that doesn't directly include) it can't go the journey about rights. How are you including

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ethnic equality monitoring, how are you dealing with the equality data in your partnership arrangement?

- Make diversity a direct part of the decision making not a side piece.

- Implementation the key thing people are looking for, not just for NTRIS but to make the principles real. Otherwise they are just words on a page.

- Everyone here is a duty bearer to the people they work with and for.

- Repairing relationships acknowledged as fractured by the Catherine Day report

- Fair criticism of our process but forum emerged from the Catherine Day group review. The relationship between health service and voluntary providers was quite fractured. The forum unapologetically framed in dealing with that. Was having an effect on service provision. Forum very focused on relationship piece.

- Progressive realisation. Point in time piece, quick wins really needed to build momentum and trust. Not shying away from really difficult issues, seen in the service review. They have tackled the difficult issues. No point if we don't go to the difficult things.

- Biggest challenge in implementation for both sides. Not to say there hasn't been some it has just been insufficient. Need something more significant to improve quality of life. Acknowledge improvement but is still a WIP. Need to address systemic racism also. Lived experience and being able to articulate it are different skills. Policies will be more successful if they can bring both of these. More cost effective policies save time and frustration. Need to look at and respect different roles and responsibility between state and sector. Traveller organisations having difficulty with fatigue and disillusionment locally due to lack of outcome. Pavee Point at the table with mandate to represent communities and get best possible outcomes but often not achieved from POV of local organisations or sometimes national organisations. Challenge to bring the communities with them. State need to acknowledge the challenges and responsibilities of this.

- Partnership for a purpose. Didn't start off trying to develop partnership principles, started off trying to do things. May not have been able to agree them from the outset.

- DRCD V&P not just words, emanated from practice, agreed, tied into strategy.

- It's all a start, and DRCD guide for all to use. V&P first in white paper many years ago and taken into strategy. Word that hasn't been used is power. Partnership means sharing power. We need to consider what that really means. Also the power of the purpose. Spirit of partnership working versus the distinction when it comes to allocation of resources.

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Need a commitment from consultation to co-decision making. Give people a real say in what public monies should be spend on.

- Values and Principles are not new concepts; the sector has been using them for years. It's the status change that is important.

- NTRIS consultations about the consultation and what it should look like

- Co-design was central from the very outset, including in design of tender documents.

- 6 Roma, 2 traveller consultations – in advance of consultations

- 6 reports, which the organisations could review and engage with the Department around.

- Next up, ID priorities and actions for the policy. Most difficult part.

- Sector want costings for Implementation Plan, budgets ring-fenced etc. to ensure proper implementation.

- Need to change narrative

- Capacity building is talked about as if it only relates to NGOs and the sector. There appears to be an assumption that there is an inherent inability within the sector to engage effectively and an inherent ability on the state side to engage effectively.

- Body of work on how the state can engage and collaborate more effectively.

- Need to tackle racism at the individual and institutional level.

Panel 2 Questions:

What has been the added value of following a co-design approach?

What have been the biggest challenges?

In hindsight, what would you have done differently?

Q: what's the added value of a co-design process?

- When dealing with very complicated deep rooted problems it's impossible to know in advance if the actions will be effective if you haven't negotiated them with those with lived experience. You can't do anything transformative without that expertise.

- 'Nothing about us without us' as key.

- We need to do work around what a co-design practice would look like in designing policy and implementation in terms of voices of those with lived experience. In terms of the practicalities, we need to speed up the glacial pace.

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- You get better, more effective services, programmes, policies if you ask the people affected by them. Everyone who lives here has a right to have a say in how government spending works etc. Re children/YP experience – the result is that you come up with good solutions to solving complex problems. Government collaborating with young people very productive – not outlandish as some would think.

- Question from floor: Mechanism to gauge impact youth assembly is having in terms of hearing youth voices (when it takes so long)?

- One of biggest challenges. For everyone. Trying to develop better mechanisms all the time. The YAs convene each year; the next year they ask for updates from the policy maker vis a vis last year's recommendations. Important to keep feeding back even if those who said it are gone. Issue internationally around the feedback piece. Trying to improve it. People move on, including the civil servants.

- Departments need to be honest with young people, tell them it's a long process – acknowledge it's a long journey – continue to have them at consultations and feedback.

- YP in criminal justice system – invaluable consultation with former participants – children who had previously been involved in youth diversion projects

- Inspiring to hear speakers. During COVID one of things coming up a lot was the lack of knowledge of what was available for women seeking accommodation etc.

- Parameters of expectations. Sitting down with Government Departments. Parameters of decision making. NGOs do quite a bit of this but civil servants need to be up front and honest about that. 'I'm here to do the strategy, not be who will allocate resources'. Vulnerability and frankness.

- We don't use a lot of what's there… great at creating committees, strategies, during 2014 reform there was an IDG set up to ensure that national policies could be implemented through local government. That is underused. Very important that strategy is utilised … SICAP etc. funded through LG, no reason that strategy can't be implemented at local level. IDG forgotten about.

- On the point on expert/expertise - where does the knowledge sit? Most recent interaction with legislation is one of no consultation with the sector or a number of sectors affected. When they go to engage with the Department re legislation and unintended consequences met with brick wall. Trying to get the government/politicians out of a situation they have put themselves in. None of charities consulted in the drafting of the legislation and struggled to get any hearing from anyone on it. Consultation and collaboration is great when it happens. But it is still as struggle, work to do.

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- Where co-design approaches are happening and Co-design v Co-implementation. Piece there, something to take away to move discussion on from co-design into effective systems of co-implementation. To do with power, allocation of resources and priority setting within plans.

Feedback from tables on panel discussion

- Department of Taoiseach should endorse as strongly as DRCD
- Should be put in place through something like SLAs to ensure use
- Recognising the value of people
- Multi Annual funding
- More resources at local level to embed V&P
- Synchronicity of overarching values across Departments
- Incorporate into funding criteria
- Policy co-design should feed through into co-implementation
- Structure and framework for V&P and some co-ordination across departments and agencies.
- Co-implementation needs to be seen as an intrinsic part of co-design (ensures it can be implemented on the ground)
- Communication from the top down (the info).
- Process to ensure you know who does what
- Is being embedded but co-implementation and co-delivery is where there is an issue. Needed to keep faith.
- Pragmatism important from both sides. What can each commit to and deliver? Realistic expectations from government and NGO sector.
- Need ongoing dissemination, ongoing communications
- Operational challenges with staff churn – needs to be acknowledged in relation to capacity building on both sides
- Communicate what the outcomes for communities is.
- Open honest relationships
- Up front about limitations.
- Recognition that government is listening.
- Implementation can depend on the resources available to implement.
- Acknowledge limitations and who is not in the room.
- Implementation@effectiveservices.org

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- Implementation network of Ireland

- Key connecting to the right people in the community, needs the resources to do this. It can't just come to you.

- Pilot Clare and Carlow – community officers

- Hostility has to be dealt with directly or indirectly.

- Need a strong structure and expert leadership – not just a secretariat – has to be a plan for it and everyone needs to be clear on expected outcomes from the process.

- Community capability is necessary – not all service users are best placed to feed back into processes.

- Need to be understood and then exercised by all – need not to lose the things that matter between pragmatism and possibility.

- Look at frameworks to mandate as well as empowerment.

- Need to alter our assessments beyond outputs and KPIs (the actual benefits of the process).

- Difficulties in communications across boundaries

- Electoral cycles

- Changes also afford opportunities

- Importance of promoting public ownership of plans and policies

- Importance of consulting before pen goes to paper.

- Key principles of collaborative paper

- Integration teams in LA

- Resourcing – not sitting as equal partners in terms of T&C

- Properly gender, disability and poverty proofed.

- Need proper culture change. Strong outside of the book communications.

- Felt values already embedded and at much more of a building stage – bridge any gaps that are there.

- LGMA – feedback from communities that there is too much collaboration – can some of them be aligned if within similar timelines.

- Those choosing not to engage?

- Not LGMAs experience – feels there is constant engagement and reach out. Implementation not as new as highlighted this morning.

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Panel 3 Questions:

How can we ensure that public consultation and participation processes are inclusive and engage the most marginalised?

How do we ensure that people can see the impact of their contributions?

What are the challenges and what steps can we take, at both state and sectoral level, to try and address those challenges?

- In absence of collective autonomous spaces it comes out as tokenism. For communities to feel active they need time and space to analyse and strategies collectively. Disabled people sick of being consulted, there is a disconnect between them and policy. They need time and space to strategise can't do that in a single event or an annual event.

- Need to invest in community structures so they have the mandate of their communities and that they can go back to say there is good faith, there is progress albeit slow. The natural assumption with those on the ground is that policy is either removed from them or has failed them. Need additional investment for the marginalised voices to be part of things. It is about supporting collective lived experience as that is where change has come from.

- We can have all the guides but what communities tell us is that the real barriers are structural. Still very much the case, state agencies have a lot of work to do internally. Making statements about human rights and equality and what those agencies actually stand for. They need to live up to those principles.

- Consultation v implementation. Last year we presented platform paper. It is a work in progress but this forum should be an nb place to build on this work – how do we put it into practice building leadership in civil service and how can that actually happen.

- Wicklow Co Co state and society together have a huge part to play in the structural piece. A huge task not just in the hands of the state.

- No substitute for CD work and infrastructure. Where that is in place, it makes things easier to name and address the structural pieces. We need to go back to first principles. If the state thinks this is all a good idea (open Govt, collaboration) that step has to be there.

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Feedback

Q1

- Open, inclusive, feedback loop closed

- Groups and community members need an exercise in demystifying the consultation itself and the processes (even how LA are run)

- Manage expectations – what can be achieved now, and what people can influence in the here and now

- Public bodies open to sector opening engagement processes

- Two phase – bodies with sector, sector with communities

- Replace consultation with engagement – which is two ways and can be positively engaged with.

- Clear purpose or don't do it.

- People should be resourced to engage

- Need to acknowledge that their own cultures create its own issues

- Need to ensure themes are relevant to the people you are trying to engage

- Resource the marginalised people so they can engage in the issues they are facing

- Need for community dev works with skills, which is also needed within state sector (expertise in the engagement processes)

- Timing of engagements – be mindful

- Workers on the ground – to build understanding within the communities

- Issues around rotation of staff in LAs, in the wider public service – in community space relationships built over time are nb

- Adopt creative approaches – need work on design to ensure they are inclusive – participants to know their mandate, why are they there?

- Recognise impact of previous consultations not being successful/impactful.

- Consultation itself needs to be co-designed.

- Recognise processes that have worked and be open to learning from them

- Better structures around inter-departmental approaches to consultation on wide reaching issues.

- C&V sector need to be partners at the developmental/formative stages – also gives them time to engage the voices that need to be heard

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- Co-creation at formative stage is required to make meaningful and inclusive

- Facilitation is a skillset

- Demystify what is involved

Wrap up

- Honesty, co-design principles reform initiatives and co-design acknowledge what is working and not challenge and change with practice wisdom

- Different ideas and ideologies but we have a central government department that has a role in rural and community development who are running with a mandate. The strategy is the reason we are all here today. Here to come together about what we have in common, the power of community and its importance.

- The pandemic was a catalyst which threw into stark relief the essential nature of community and C&V services. Need to celebrate it - context of a department who wants to support our development and sustainability.

- Alone we can do so little, together so much

- Mead never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed…

- Much more powerful when we do it with instruments of the state

- At all costs mind the relationship we have – positive respectful – together we are stronger

- On the right path, a lot of what people want to see is envisaged by the two documents – a good start.

- Docs are lovely but we do want to see them make a difference in communities.

- Noting attendance by Minister Donohoe. A particular role around engagement with other departments and embedding values.

- Structural barriers/inequalities – they are real and can look insurmountable. Stay with us, keep pushing the guide, the values, they're not used as much as we would like but it is happening

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Appendix D: Roundtable Discussions Notes

Table 1

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Values and principles need to be front and centre of all communications between the different Government departments and with all voluntary organisations.

- Need to move away from leaving delivery of implementation to voluntary organisations and provide a process of delivery of implementation.

- Over reliance on the voluntary sector, not enough resources for funding which leads to specific services not being met on the ground.

- State has responsibility to cater for its people rather than shift responsibility to voluntary groups.

- Trust needs to be built with communities by being honest and open with them to get buy in from the community with delivery and implementation of resources.

- Local councils under resourced, over - burdened with administration, need "live documents"

- If the state wants collaborative engagement, there is a cost but also a benefit, define resource needs within local authorities i.e. upskilling, more staff on the ground.

Roundtable Session Two:

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

2. From what you have heard today, what learning would you take away and use in your own organisation?

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3. How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community and voluntary sector?

4. Suggestions for the next Civic Forum:

(Please note - additional answers were placed directly onto the 'Idea Wall' due to time constraints)

- Balance between a quick win and long term results.

- Senior management buy in from the relevant state bodies

- Stakeholders need to be represented with a mandate.

- Hard to get participation in consultation process if historical outcomes are not positive.

- Deformalize the process, use different social media, think outside the box.

- Use an informal wider consultation with all community groups and local state bodies.

- Community will tell you if not meaningful, is a true measure

Table 2

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- Implementation of actions. Core decisions must be made around how resources (not just money) are allocated.
- The alignment of ambitions with resources.
- There has to be a prioritisation of certain areas and room made to discuss tackling big issues.
- We must recognise the value of people on the ground, not just the need for money.
- Multi-annual funding.
- More resources at local level for the Values and Principles to be understood and articulated.
- A greater connection needs to be made with marginalised communities.
- Building relationships (using the values and Principles as a guide) can improve trust.

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- More than raising awareness of the V&Ps, it's about all of Government and all of the Sector living them. There is a responsibility on Government to lead the way in this regard – high level buy in is required.
- Statutory side need to buy into the idea that these Values will actually help with delivery of good outcomes.
- There needs to be a commitment from Government (as set out in the V&P document) to make the change required.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Getting people and communities into the room who aren't in a position to have a voice themselves. Proactively reaching out to these groups is an obligation – not just responding to those knocking on the door.
- There is a lot of learning (on the state side).
- There can be savings (financial) as a better plan will be more efficient in the implementation.
- If you want to maximise the benefits, there has to be access to money.
- Do we need to change the way we do policy in terms of getting a commitment to funding in advance?

Roundtable Session Two:

(Theme three 'Inclusive Engagement at local level' and some more general questions on the Civic Forum itself will form the basis of roundtable discussions at 15:00.)

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

- Community Development Workers with skills and expertise are required. Also, Public/Civil Service staff need to develop expertise.
- Identify and address barriers to participation in consultation.
- Timing of engagement is crucial. Be conscious of other commitments.
- Workers on the ground need to do the work in relation to building interest/understanding among marginalised communities (in particular) about things happening in their communities that affect them.
- Show clearly that voices are heard. As in, consultation should throw up issues to be tackled and we should see those being dealt with throughout the process. Not just consultation for the sake of it.

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- Issue with rotation of staff. Relationships are built over time in the community space. Succession planning is necessary.

2. From what you have heard today, what learning would you take away and use in your own organisation?

- Mandate and monitor progress in the implementation of the Values and Principles.
- Consider the level of capacity building required in the Civil Service.

3. How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community and voluntary sector?

(No notes)

4. Suggestions for the next Civic Forum

- Updates as to how the Values and Principles are being adopted and used. Examples of same.
- Keep control of time.
- Better communications in advance of the forum, opening it up to a wider audience. Particularly across the Civil Service.
- List of attendees would be great.

Table 3

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- Values and Principles should be agreed in an overarching sense prior to any policy development and engagement so at the outset these Values and Principles can be integrated into policy.
- Important to have accountability in adhering to Values and Principles – Values and Principles adherence and promotion could be linked to funding for initiatives etc.
- The example was raised of the UK's use of a 'civil society test' for any policies, ensuring any policy proposal incorporates the Values and Principles agreed between stakeholders.
- There are challenges in developing Values and Principles that can be agreed and mirrored across organisations, clash of values are inevitable

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between government departments, organisations, agencies, implementers etc. Noted the national debate on taxation included C+V sector reps and this approach should be carried forward to other initiatives.

- Good work has been done on the collaborative front to date, but more to do.
- Noted the need for education on Values and Principles, including time for self-reflection and training supports to refresh values knowledge.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Noted the need to ensure co-design on policy needs to transfer across into co-implementation.
- Co-design learnings should be a thread through the entire process from policy creation to assessment.
- Co-design approaches need to expedite the policy and implementation processes. Efficiencies should be gleaned from previous co-design initiatives.
- Co-design processes must ensure formation of knowledge silos on particular aspects of a policy do not form.
- There needs to be resources put into activation of citizens'/people's views and fostering that engagement.
- Policies should become more sustainable as a result of co-design processes, i.e., there should be stability and continuation of policy regardless of changes in the political landscape.
- Honest and frank approach needed for co-design to work. While compromise is an inevitable aspect of co-design, parties cannot shy away from raising issues if the best policy outcomes are to be secured.
- Co-design needs to be implemented from the very outset of policy creation. It cannot be retroactive, that is, Government policy cannot be pre-determined with only minor tweaks to fulfil a 'co-design' obligation. Co-designed policies should also be integrated into relevant strategies and stakeholder planning.

Roundtable Discussion 2:

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

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- A first step is in public bodies acknowledging issues with their own cultures and the barriers these cultures create. Important to acknowledge systemic issues are real. Structural barriers need to be addressed.
- Acknowledge unconscious biases are prevalent in public bodies – need for cultural changes within the organisations that hold the majority of the power.
- To make any consultation process meaningful, it must be ensured the objectives of whatever initiative or policy is being discussed are meaningful and relevant to the marginalised people it is intended to support.
- It is vital the C+V sector is adequately resourced to actually get involved in consultations, which can be a significant undertaking.
- Equally, it is vital that members of marginalised communities themselves are resourced to get engaged with consultation processes in the first instance. Processes need to ensure the quiet voices are given space and time to emerge as well.

2. From what you have heard today, what learning would you take away and use in your own organisation? How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the State and C+V sector? Suggestions for the next Civic Forum?

- Civic Forum is in itself an acknowledgement that there are challenges across the board, and there is need for learnings and improvements.
- Forums should place further emphasis on importance of values and principles, as well as discussions on what those values and principles actually are – this is within the sector and State's gift to drive.
- Presentations should be shorter, and more emphasis should be placed on engagement, networking and discussion. More space needed for constructive dialogue between the State and C+V sector. There needs to be constructive and challenging critique on the issues facing all parties.
- Next Civic Forum should be less tentative in engaging with the issues of the day – next Civic Forum needs to take a deeper dive into these issues.
  Next Civic Forum should allow for a discussion and analysis of actual progress made in the 3 years since the first Civic Forum was called. What has been achieved, what needs to be worked on, what isn't working etc.
- Civic Forum should make space to look beyond just the issues facing Ireland – there are shared issues internationally and learnings could be gleaned.

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Table 4

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- A very practical question
- Do people understand what the values and principles are?
- Create understanding between parties (before you start)
- Celebrate success
  - Use examples
- Embed Integration Training
  - Best Practice advocates
- Implementation is not currently robust
  - No one is driving it
- Collaborative Governance is required
  - Someone needs to 'drive the bus'!
  - Depts/Sections are working on it, but no-one is over that
  - Alignment amongst departments (not the most robust culture)
  - How? Through PPNs? Engagement with departments (need to be trained)?
  - Different departments have different policies; one department to oversee them
  - Proposal that Department of the Taoiseach monitors this (or does DRCD have this responsibility?)
  - Propose framework/structure to implement that
  - Focus on outcomes for people
- Both parties need to be straight up and honest
- Outline the A to Z of how we are going to deliver
  - Consider the parameters of decision-making

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- Public Sector Reform is important. Acknowledge the Civil Service piece in this, as Governments change, but civil servants remain

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Tell the story!
    - It's currently happening in silos
    - Examine if/how the info is shared?
    - How are good models (collaborative programmes) shared?
    - How do we learn from communities that got it right?
        - Sharing across the country

[Is that currently happening? No]

- Coordinate the implementation
- Challenge the legislators
- Embed it – and the culture – into the system (to ensure consistency when civil servants move on)
- Culture comes from the top down, so this system needs an influential department to govern
- Leadership, plus authenticity on the ground
- Ensure the right people are at the table, and there is an appropriate level of leadership
- Judge the process based on outcomes
- Not just 'co-design', also 'co-manage'; otherwise, what's the point?
    - Need to influence spend too
- The question is wrong:
    - It's not just about policy development, it's about implementation too
    - It's about ownership. No ownership currently
- Share nationally
    - Resonance

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- - Adaptation
    - Buy-in
- C&V organisations have their job to do. Govt/Civil servants also have a job to do, telling the C&V orgs what a great job they're doing and also promoting their own part in this.
    - Why not just do the job, i.e. without the grandstanding?
- Today is a good forum to showcase how we do it right; is something else now needed?
    - E.g. a national structure, with a CEO, etc.
- 2 key points from discussion:
    - A Framework/Structure is required: A 'Coordinator with Teeth'!
    - Co-implementation as part of 'Co-design'

Table 5

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- How is money funnelled down to every organisation, could we combine resources?
- Use technology better to bring groups together for better services
- Silo mentality difficulty achieving long-term goals? Different remits, Ireland most centralised in Europe
- Communication needs to be fed from the top down

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- It is proven when process involves into co-design
- Review from moment of inception, is it working, how is development going etc.

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- Links in chain are only as good as weakest link

- Meetings need to held regular, showing thoroughly how things are implemented

- Replicate good practice, identify it and get good leaders

- What is impact/blockages but when identified sometimes resources/money is not available

Roundtable Session Two:

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

- Citizens and people getting reps from all areas, building inclusion for all

- Representing minority communities who otherwise wouldn't have a voice

- People being left out for example: not computer literate, in care, no access to computer, English not first language. Need to include all multiple channels online and in person. Need to be open to new suggestions.

- This is an opportunity for communities to come together collectively; it's important to rebuild this, if it has been lost

- There has been a lot of consultation required this year on various policies and strategies (e.g. LA plans, CAP, etc.), now that space is free over the next year, we can focus on capacity

- Something is starting to emerge. It's frustrating.
    - Are we talking the talk and walking the walk?

From the Government side:

- Make the public aware

- Advertise through social media and local libraries
    - Acknowledge their voice is important
    - Advise them they can contribute

- 'Meaningful' = focussed and targeted, a sense of direction is important

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- Keep it simple; don't make the process more difficult than it needs to be

- Clarity required

    o around the resources available to people

    o on expectations

    o on outcomes

- Ensure succession planning, within PPNs

- There are a lot of consultations; people don't always know the outcomes

    o People are tired, and confused re the impact of these consultations

2. How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community and voluntary sector?

- Clear instructions from the Taoiseach down with ample notice

- Make an effort to look for people that otherwise wouldn't be involved

- Importance of facilitation skills

- Opportunity to meet directly, stop "consultation fatigue" with nothing happening

- Too much repetition "less is more"

3. From what you have heard today, what learning would you take away and use in your own organisation?

- Be clear about who has responsibility for actions

- Representation in a clear way, outlining what needs to be addressed

- Use diagrams and stories to assist with leadership and governance

- The examples given today are all very early engagement, however, they all focus on the need for implementation. So that is a key element

- Judge the process based on outcomes

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4. How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community and voluntary sector?

[Ran out of time]

Suggestions for the next Civic Forum

- Focus on the implementation piece

    - Showcase successful examples, e.g. bring back speakers to show progress

    - Highlight outcomes

- Until now we've discussed issues specifically impacting the sector; how do you bring this concept to wider themes in society, e.g. Housing, Care, Climate

- Resource those that are being consulted

Table 6

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- The values are already embedded in the co design portion of most policies but needs to be moved to the next step of co-implementation.

- Open and honest conversations from both sides, manage expectations and be realistic in what can be achieved within the timeline, budget and what is expected from both sides to contribute to the project.

- Effective leaders to advocate for the community/voluntary sector as a whole and not just the portion they work for.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Have open, honest face to face conversations if possible.

- Assess all issues that may arise from both sides.

- Shared responsibilities – what can each side contribute to the implement the policy.

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- Be realistic in what needs to be achieved and in what time frame.

- Be inclusive – nothing for us without us.

[For round table discussion session 2 please see table 5 notes – the tables were combined after lunch.]

Table 7

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- How does the Government and Voluntary Sectors agree values and principles in a timely fashion to be brought to the table?

- Local Government need to come out of Dublin

- Is everyone aware of the documents associated with the principles?

- How is it embedded in an organisation or department?

- There should be a work plan in place.

- How we are committed to delivery and continuity.

- Proper handover of work.

- Impact of staff on keeping show on the road.

- Values & principles – cultural changes.

- Openness and transparency.

- What policy to change.

- Officials should communicate more between departments.

- We need feedback on decisions to the communities.

- Change in policy made to peoples' lives.

- Dissemination

- Acknowledge challenges

- Outcome of change

- Acknowledge operating challenges ref staff shortages

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- Demonstrate tangible change and the outcome for people in communities.

- Open, honest relationships.

- Implementation

- Accountability

- Feedback

- Generate dialogue between parties.

- Policy and practice kept together.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- We need a good framework to deliver the objectives.

- To have a good structure for delivering dialogue and problem solving.

- Government are listening – we have come a long way – progress

- Engagement is there.

- Appreciate efforts being made on engagement.

- Who is responsible to implement the policy?

- Acknowledge the different roles in the implementation of the policy

- Clarify who gets to speak for whom.

- Scan the environment to see who is dealing with what.

- National Structure.

- We need to change how we do things.

- Implementation can depend on the resources available to implement.

- Bring co-design into co-implementation.

- Learn to be more inclusive and acknowledge limitations and who is not in the room.

- Communication is key.

- Acknowledging that implementation can depend on resources.

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- Plan – ensure everyone involved is clear on the outcome of the process.

- Constant engagement with stakeholders.

Roundtable Discussion Two

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

- Public bodies need to acknowledge the public body structure can create barriers.

- Processes are relevant to the people you are trying to support.

- Identifying and addressing barriers.

- Showing voices are being heard

- Issues around rotation of staff whereby relationships are developed between staff and community groups

- Formalise processes

- Consultation itself needs to be co-designed

- Open to learning

- Consultations should be assessable both digital and written, literacy – range of impairments and understanding.

2. From what you have heard today, what learning would you take away and use in your own organisation?

- Promote good news

- You can't assume everyone can complete an online survey.

- How to engage with people who are not computer literate or disabled.

- Government is getting better

- Much done – more to do

- Look forward and make things better

- Cultural change is needed.

- Always give feedback

- Interdepartmental consultation is needed.

- Ensure consultation is ongoing.

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<u>Table 8</u>

Roundtable Session One:

<u>*Theme One*</u> *– 'Values and Principles in Practice'*

- Provide time and a space to review the policy etc. - realistic deadline for submissions/responses

- Provide time and a space to give feedback – mentioned throughout the discussions, feedback/update is not given to those who give their time, to participate attend meetings. etc. Discourages people to take part in the future. Won't get people to "buy in" if not kept updated on progress. Continued engagement – even if no update.

- Lack of public knowledge of "what it actually is"

- Gap in policy development

- Individuals being asked to problem solve, match up people's expertise, more resources, resources used correctly and in the right area. Look at problems as they arise, having to wait years for a policy to fix problems. Recourses relevant to the right group of people.

- PPNs reluctant to speak freely in front of their own LA, PPNs to look at ways to get the "Right" people involved.

- Disjointed between national level and local level, what works for one might not work for the other. If new at national can cause problems to implement at local level

- Listen to people, even if off topic sometimes they just need to be heard.

- Community Development Officer's, DRCD pilot mentioned, great resource in communities to engage with people, know the "right" people. Have resources to connect the "right" people across communities.

<u>*Theme Two*</u> *– 'Policy Co-Design and Collaboration'*

- Dedicated person to collate the idea's – hire staff

- Work backwards – engage with people

- Clarity about the outcome wanted

- Knowing people who will be impacted, groups etc. Partnership in decision making, scale down large groups for discussions, one

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rep from each, more manageable group. Don't over invite from the same "group" numbers smaller at meetings. Meet as "committee" style have rep from each stakeholder, represented fairly. Some Reps cover a number of areas.

- Challenge to move from national level to local level – driver for that

- Time manage

- Maximise resources

- Take responsibility

- Invest in principles in co-design

- Consistency across the board

- Look to EU level for best practices

- Right process, manageable

- Strong structure, Plan

- Qualified/knowledgeable persons in areas they work in

- Community capability

- Feedback process

Roundtable Session Two:

Theme Three – *'Inclusive Engagement at local level'*

- Get people in at the start of the process – engage with the youth early (not included late in the process) – buy in early. Right people in at the start

- To ensure enough time given to consider and respond – realistic deadline for responses. Time – balance task- don't just issue with deadline – give time and also create a space that can be used for this part of the process

- Provide evidence that all input was considered – even if not used. Account for all points raised

- Hard to learn all area's in one day, some may need more information – explained

- Social Media presence – advertise etc. Inform the community of the ask and involvement requested.

- Mindful of the same people on the same groups

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- Awareness of all forums, subgroups etc.

- "What's my investment" – people to know why they are there and what is the requirement, matched skill set and knowledge to the ask

- Right people to attend the right forums – relevant to your job etc.

Table 9

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- Principles not being fed down to local level- only agreed at top level

- Time not provided at local level to enable time for co-design, consultation to implement national programmes or objectives.

- Allow the time at local level for principles to be understood.

- Awareness of principles and partnership

- Principles not being used correctly, using only when suits.

- Awareness needed of principles in community and voluntary sector.

- Local volunteer's expectation PPN

- Representation to inform

- Policy – how aware are they of the principles

- Top Down – operational

- Implementations – train the trainer style. Not being broken down properly/sown how relevant to person.

- Embedding into operational plans and understanding relevance.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Co-Design, effective way to achieve

- Strong policy input

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- People on the ground having a voice and input into agenda, policy impact on operational decision

- Listening to those with lived experience, human based rights approach

- Get all views and perceptive

- Importance of getting people with lived experience in policy affecting them

- Balance of expertise and also value lived experience

- Co- implementation must follow co-design

- Review what worked and didn't work – lessons learned

[N.B. Only notes from the first session are available – after lunch most people at table had left.]

Table 10

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- Developing the strategy is very much co-designed but a move towards co-implementation is needed.

- Progress is slow but is evident

- People with Disabilities not mentioned at all (this needs to be addressed)

- People need support/mentoring regarding how to approach/deal with Government departments so they are more confident engaging in discussions

- Onus is on departments for the principles to be exercised at Government level

- Looking at other frameworks in place in other jurisdictions/countries to see what could work here in Ireland

2. How to maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- At the moment Government uses quantitative rather than qualitative analysis and this needs to change. This needs to be embedded in the

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strategy to measure impact of strategies across government departments to prove there is benefit

- Power balance needs to change. Everyone's voice and opinion should have equal measure

- Co-Design will not work without adequate resourcing being made available in areas such as disabilities

Roundtable Session 2:

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

- Breaking down topics

- Language around consultation used needs to be simple and limit the use of jargon and acronyms

- Be clear on who is involved in the process

- Using phrases like participation process rather than consultation process as there is a consultation fatigue

- Pathways for engagement is crucial. The process needs to be accessible to all

- New faces and voices need to be in these spaces

- Put value on engagement and feedback processes

- Accountability. What has been done with information given

- Knowing the difference and taking stock of what realistically can be done/achieved

2. From what you have heard today,

a. What learning would you take away and use in your organisation?

b. How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community?

c. Have you any suggestions to the next Forum?

[N.B. Attendees were given the opportunity to put answers to Question 2 on the Civic Forum's Ideas Wall]

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<u>Table 11</u>

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- Better communication in government and organisations. Have a clear understanding of the Principles and what we should be working on collaboratively.

- Local government all use different language, there needs to be a common ground using plain language, stop using acronyms as it causing too much confusion to people.

- When new communities' start-up they have no chance to understand the language

- Community development principles should be carried out through participation and living the values.

- The community and voluntary sectors should not be squeezed out. If funding is pulled, not able to continue support, the sector itself needs to be protected.

- Community development work is important finding a voice is important.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Consult. Use a Public Plan so that the public can be held accountable and it it's the publics input. By getting the public to write plan it is far better for people with lived experience, monitoring body.

- Being consistent with deadlines and dates.

[N.B. Group joined Table 5 for second roundtable session.]

<u>Table 12</u>

[Very small group of delegates at this table, joined other table/s before first session.]

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<u>Table 13</u>

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- Use model example by Community Platform in the document on collaborate governance with the key principles of collaboration and implementation.

- An example of where this could be applied is with the new LAIT (Local Authority Integration Team) in the implementation and delivery of the new programme.

- Giving the amount of stakeholders involved – who takes lead? A more 'bottom-up' input/approach needed.

- Open-up communication and share best practices.

- Better communication – share the knowledge of what's happening with communities quicker. Especially when it's going to have an impact on communities, examples include wind-farms; migrants. This would help avoid shocks in communities.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Good communication is key.

- Have an agreed agenda.

- Identify and maximise the expertise that people bring to the table – get them to take responsibility, as implementation is key.

- Listen to the people who have been effected.

- Sub-groups. Understand agenda/interests of implementers – this will result in better Value for Money as no duplication of funding.

- Sharing experiences.

Roundtable Session Two:

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

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- Being open by allowing the community and voluntary sector to initiate the consultation process.

- Understand who you are talking to – a more collaborative process in the design of the consultation.

- Time; Investment; Resources

- Give respect. NO quick turnarounds – allow the sector the required time to engage with members to have a more meaningful and inclusive input.

- Better understanding of what "meaningful" engagement means.

- If you need to make it 'inclusive' and have better design – who are your target groups.

- Address barriers to consultation.

2. From what you have heard today, what learning would you take away and use in your own organisation?

- Championing co-design - the community and voluntary sector need to take ownership of how to implement things better.

- The sector should be thinking about how to do it – some are doing it but who are they – greater need to share best practices.

- Participants in the consultation need to know what's happening with inputs. Need to know what happens when inputs are submitted, what points are taken on-board and the process that follows.

Points for the Ideas Wall:

3. How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community and voluntary sector?

- Better Governance

- More Collaboration

- Greater Understanding

- The Department using the forum to facilitate the knowledge sharing.

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4. Suggestions for the next Civic Forum

- Implement the LAIT (Local Authority Integration Team) and form them to come back next year and share successes – inspired by the learnings from this event.

- Use this Forum as a 'better engagement' forum.

- Organise another networking event earlier in the year to help keep on top of things as there is too long of a gap between annual events.

- The community and voluntary sector to take ownership and 'organise' the next event, supported by the Department.

Table 14

Roundtable Session One:

(Theme One 'Values and Principles in Practice' and Theme Two 'Policy Co-Design and Collaboration' were the subject of these discussions.)

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- Need to ensure that the policies are being properly gender/poverty/disability proofed with regards to social justice. How does it impact poverty levels?

- Use the power of media advertising to get the message across. Need to ensure all voices are heard and that vulnerable people are reached to get their views and opinions within these groups at local level rather than pressure at National Forums.

- The Values and Principles cannot be embedded when basic funding levels are not reaching what is needed. Organisations are losing staff from within the sector. Feel that they are not being valued as not equal partners in terms of resources, not paid accordingly with same conditions as others at the table.

- When organisations are always on survival mode it's hard to collaborate. Need to pitch projects, practical examples and sharing of information Need for a safety net for organisations to fall back on outside of their current funding, such as contingency funding and back up plans which is also of reference to Q2.

- The recruitment and retention of staff within the C&V sector is essential, cannot think about growth when trying to keep the basics

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going. More recognition of the sector is required as not resourced properly, desire to engage on consultations but not matched with funding to facilitate the backfilling of time spent on same.

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- There are huge benefits in using co-design approaches but that needs to be maximised to ensure that the right people are targeted to be at the table on discussions. How do we target distanced voices?

- Resources issue was raised here a number of times in terms of multi-annual funding, resourcing the co-design process, funding to backfill hours spent on co-designing and consultation, acknowledge operational challenges the delivery of daily tasks is affected when hours are spent on other duties. Retention of experienced staff as not paid on a par with others.

- There is a need to draw on expertise within the sector which is difficult when staff cannot be retained in the sector and loss of experienced staff

- The workplans should echo the policy and translated to organisations to undertake the roles and transparency around how to make submissions to the workplan.

- Communications need to be in place for feeding back the information from the table discussions back to those that are being represented.

- Maximise the use of communication tools that are available to us in terms of social media forums, tick tok, etc., should contain digestible information as the guide for inclusive community engagement in local planning and decision making contains too much information and so needs to be broken down to target different sectors.

- Capacity building required to support representatives at the table and requires resourcing.

- To change culture, need to shake society. Local accessible engagement for exchange of information and gathering views.

- Need for funding to resource leadership skills, relationship building and engagement training for those most disadvantaged i.e. Roma, homeless etc. Relationship building is hard to measure.

- How can we be proactive to delays? Reactive as opposed to being proactive to put things in place for our changing diverse populations for the coming years.

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- How are everyone's views captured, how can we reach everyone and those still out there that are currently not being captured to ensure that engagement is meaningful. Learning how to be more inclusive.

- More networking and training events for the sector. Networking opportunities are lost when we are all so busy.

Roundtable Session Two:

(Theme three 'Inclusive Engagement at local level' and some more general questions on the Civic Forum itself formed the basis of these roundtable discussions.)

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

- Ensuring right people at the table, and what is being discussed is relevant to those attending. Demystify the process.

- Distribution of power within discussion, making sure it's an opening environment for marginalised communities and equip them with the necessary skills to empower them to address the issues. Public bodies should meet where the community is located.

- Make sure people that are speaking to truly represent the community

- Groups need to be aware of incentives that could be put in place to encourage groups to participate. Structural barriers (undocumented) time demands and involvement required, language barriers. Demystify the process of decision making, realistic expectations.

- Work with the dynamics of each particular group, community work and relationships take time, patience and persistence and necessary resources.

2. From what you have heard today:

a. What learning would you take away and use in your own organisation?

- Starting point for everything, it's not a done deal, make sure people know that feedback will build into the process, ideas are a work in progress.

- Need to have a level of autonomy for community organisations to carry out the work in accordance with their ethos

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b. How can the Civic Forum improve dialogue between the state and community and voluntary sector?

- <u>Highlight</u> any and all successes

- Pulling together and coordinating consultations in a structured manner.

- Question asked if only one forum per year what engagement takes place outside of this forum.

c. Suggestions for the next Civic Forum

- Music

- Rotation of people at tables

- Having young people speaking

- Update on NTRIS Strategy Development

- What actions were taken forward from this forum and how can they be built on.

<u>Table 15</u>

[Please note after lunch three attendees did not return and only two attendees left at this table. Two new attendees joined for the afternoon conversations.]

Roundtable Session One:

1. How can the values and principles be embedded in collaboration and partnership working between government and the community and voluntary sector?

- A point was made that many community groups are reporting "consultation fatigue". They feel they are constantly being asked for input, but they do not see or understand where their input feeds into the policy. Which leaves them disheartened.

- It was recommended that after consultations, a continued relationship needs to remain.

- Local authorities are over-burdened with consultations. A suggestion was made if for example three Departments could come together when working on policy/strategy and get information as a collective.

- The language used in consultations was noted as intimidating to some.

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- It was also noted it seems to be the same people/groups that get involved in consultations. Other people would like to get involved but do not have the confidence- how can we build capacity for these people to engage?

- Also it was noted there are many groups not being represented and more needs to be done to reach these groups.

- An example of best practice was shared- to get the messaging right from the beginning, so people understand what is being asked of them. Keep language simple so people can understand it. Give straight forward explanations of what something is.

- Another best practice example was-

- 12-18 workshops

- Engage with different groups to hear different voices

- Then you can analyse the results

- Breakdown into younger/older/coastal etc.

- Gives you a clearer view if you are missing a group/cohort

2. How can we maximise the benefits of using co-design approaches to policy development?

- Again a discussion was had on the fact that groups are saying they give feedback, but do not feel it was taken on board or that their views are reflected in the policy.

- More feedback is required in relation to policy development.

- A suggestion was made to have a "participatory budget" where some sort of incentive or reward was offered for feedback.

- Public need to see that the outcome of a policy/strategy will have an effect on their everyday lives', otherwise they lose sight of it.

- There needs to be a "lifecycle of a consultation" meaning that after the consultations and strategy is developed, there is further engagement with groups in relation to explaining to them how their feedback fed into the report. For example, telling them what actions were developed using their input/insights. Closing this gap and helping groups understand where their views have been inputted will result in the groups feeling more empowered and more likely to engage again. It's

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really just about linking things effectively so people can understand the process.

Roundtable Session Two:

1. How can public bodies and the community and voluntary sector ensure that consultation processes are meaningful and inclusive?

- Make a plan, but if you feel you are not on the right track don't be after to make changes, even if you are half way through.

- Start by being open and honest with those you wish to engage with

- You can never fully ensure that consultations are meaningful

- Reflect on what you have done

- Target a representative of a specific group you wish to engage with

- Try to include people of interest for example a member of a particular party, which may attract people to the event

- Ensure you know your audience and how they can be reached. Example young people on social media, but older people through newspaper ads or bulletins.

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Appendix E: Presentation Slides

SESSION 1: THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

(a) Health Dialogue Forum and its partnership principles

Dialogue Forum Process

► **Established December 2019**

► **ToR:** a *regular platform for dialogue* ….with an overarching mandate to build a *stronger relationship* between the State and voluntary providers for the *benefit of patients and service users*.

► **Membership:** DoH, DCEDIY, HSE, HIQA, MHC, 8 Representative Bodies of Voluntary Organisations

► **Key Elements of Process**
  ► Independent Chair
  ► Buy-in at leadership level
  ► Focused work programme & regularity of meetings
  ► Planning Group
  ► Co-creation approach
  ► NESC reports – neutral "stock-taking"

Concrete Initiatives

► Co-designed Partnership Principles
  ► Starting Point – Values and Principles
  ► Layered with lived experience of COVID-19

► Two "live" reform initiatives underway
  ► Design of Health Regions
  ► Review of the Service Arrangement (SLA)

► Further NESC review in 2024

► Work in progress – iterative and evolving

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Building **A New Relationship** between Voluntary Organisations and the State in the Health and Social Care Sectors

Taighde, Idirphlé, Comhairle
Research, Dialogue, Advice
NESC

Covid-19- Partnership in Action in Real Time

► Collaborative and innovative national response to an unprecedented national crisis

► Voluntary Sector : remarkable degree of change; pace & scale

► The emergence of more collaborative and productive relationships between the statutory and voluntary sectors **-**
  ► **Hybrid system – mutual interdependency**
  ► **Benefits of a partnership-style approach**
  ► **Change was possible**

► <u>**Surfaced the principles**</u> that could inform and guide future relations

► Sub-Group was established to develop an agreed set of partnership principles

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Dialogue Forum with Voluntary Organisations
Partnership Principles

Building A New Relationship between Voluntary Organisations and the State in the Health and Social Care Sectors

We recognise the critical role that voluntary organisations play in our hybrid system

- Trust & Mutual Respect
- Transparency
- Accountable Autonomy
- Engagement & Participation
- Agreed & Shared
- Meaningful & Relevant
- Collective Leadership
- Implementable & Impactful
- Innovation & Learning
- Problem-solving Deliberation
- Quality People-centred Services

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50 NESC Taighde, Idirphlé, Comhairle
Research, Dialogue, Advice
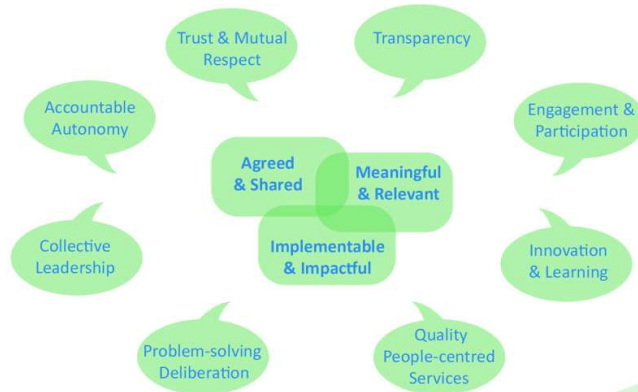
Agenda for Change

- ▶ Emanate from real time experience – collectively they represent an agenda for change in how things are done
- ▶ Agenda for change has to owned, embraced and championed
  - ▶ *Have to be lived rather than laminated*
- ▶ Commitment to changing behaviours and relationships – principles have to be embedded in structures, projects and processes
- ▶ Difficult contentious and messy - Not just for global pandemics!
- ▶ Complex and integrated set of challenges facing the healthcare sector
- ▶ Maintaining and deepening collaborative and productive relationships is now more important than ever
- ▶ Partnership Principles should be considered as part of a dynamic virtuous cycle

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50 NESC Taighde, Idirphlé, Comhairle
Research, Dialogue, Advice

Building a New Relationship: A Dynamic & Virtuous Cycle

- Principles
- Practices
- Projects
- Outcomes
- Monitor & Review

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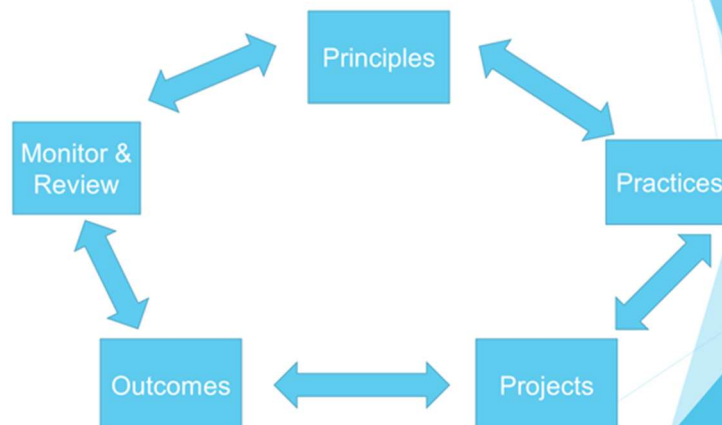
How is it working on the ground?

▶ Slow progress but progress nonetheless

▶ Really strong support for the principles at top level must be acknowledged.

▶ Would like to see the principles become more embedded in day to day interactions between State and Voluntary Agencies across the delivery system.

▶ The Service Arrangement review work should be acknowledged as a good start. Further embedding of the principles throughout Sláintecare implementation will no doubt help.

Partnership principles are now informing work on SA review and Health Regions

▶ The formal acknowledgement of the principles in both processes.
▶ There is a noticeable change in the nature of the engagement (e.g. the complete change in approach in the SA review).
▶ Ongoing engagement with the Sláintecare Implementation Team (although the rationale for recruiting representatives to particular working group remains inconsistent).
▶ Strong commitment to widening the communication around the principles throughout the sector.
▶ In the SA review, both sides are challenged to view the issues through the lens of the Partnership Principles and not just see the issue from their own point of view.
▶ A number of *quick wins* have been agreed (approved by HSE EMT), set to commence in 2024, with further more in-depth review of the SA throughout the year. A number of the initiatives are pilots and these will be monitored closely and their impact reviewed.

Quick Wins - examples

1. Trialling a new funding threshold of up to €1m for the application of the Grant Aid Agreement as opposed to the Service Arrangement approach. Current threshold is €250k.

2. Trialling the simplification of Part 2 in terms of schedules and document requests. This will be piloted in 2 care groups in 2024.

3. Amendment of three clauses in Part 1 (12,14,33) to make them more balanced while acknowledging the funding relationship. More can be done with Part one but time didn't allow.

4. Shared commitment to meeting deadlines for signing SA and what is needed to support that.

5. Commitment to (re) establishing consultation structures (most likely under Slàintecare).

6. Communication plan across the system re: working to the Partnership Principles

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Leadership needed

We shouldn't underestimate the culture change required to adopt and implement. Really key that Leaders lead out on this and create expectation that partnership principles will be utilised, adopted and implemented.
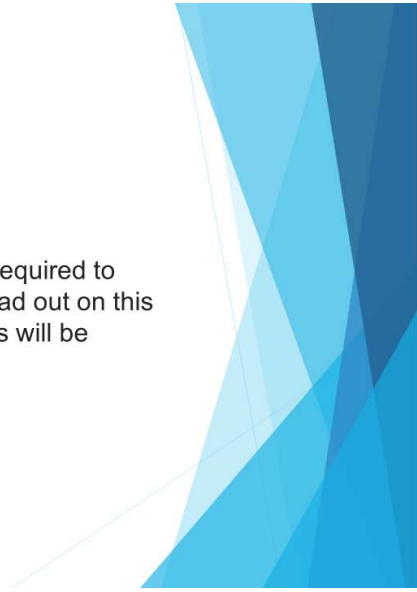
(b) Pavee Point on the development of the new Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

Sustainable Inclusive and Empowered Communities.
The Development of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

Department of Rural and Community Development Civic Forum

The Role of Travellers and Roma in the Consultation Process for the next NTRIS

Worked with the Department on Guiding Principles for the consultations and the tender document/recruitment of Values Lab consultants.

Worked with Values Lab on developing a framework document for the consultations, coordinated the 6 consultations across the country, in collaboration with local groups.

Reviewed the final consultation reports by Values Lab, engaged with local groups after the consultation process, and had a final review meeting with the Department to reflect on the process and discuss next steps.

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The Values of NTRIS

- **The Values of the next NTRIS should reflect the Government commitment in 'Values and Principles: Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector'**, to 'inform the design, implementation and monitoring of policy and programmes'
- The **overarching goal** of NTRIS, as an inclusion strategy, is to contribute to the promotion of equality of outcome and the fulfilment of human rights for, and an end to all forms of discrimination and racism against, Travellers and Roma.
- The **key values identified at the consultations** are identified as: **dignity; participation; inclusion; and social justice.**

- **Dignity:** elimination of structural and individual racism; intercultural engagement between public bodies and both Travellers and Roma; capacity building of State actors.
- **Participation:** meaningful consultation, co-design, and partnership in decision-making; at national and local levels; effective systems of accountability and transparency from decision-makers; from policy making to implementation.
- **Inclusion:** contribute to the design and delivery of mainstream policies and programmes, across all policy fields; acknowledging our roles as duty bearers and rights holders.
- **Social Justice:** a dual strategy of mainstreaming and targeting of resources, to ensure equality of access and outcomes in key policy areas; Acknowledging the role of Traveller and Roma organisations, working on behalf of their communities.

Important Observations of the Consultation Report in terms of next steps

- **Finalising the Strategy:** local Traveller and Roma organisations to review draft of the NTRIS and to be consulted in further developing and agreeing the final strategy draft.
- Traveller and Roma stakeholders should, further, be consulted on the **prioritisation of actions** for the first implementation plan
- The need for **clear targets**, progress milestones and measurable KPIs, properly costed.
- Alignment with the commitments made under the **EU Roma Strategic Framework** 2020-30
- **Robust data**, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, age, disability and geographical location is essential to effective monitoring of the implementation of the NTRIS.
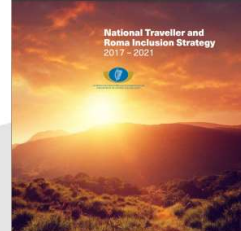
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An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Development of the successor strategy to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, 2017 - 2021

Conor McGinn, *Assistant Principal Officer, Traveller and Roma Policy*

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

CIVIC FORUM 2023: 15*th November 2023*

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Some background: National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) 2017 – 2021

The Irish Government's **National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS)** 2017 – 2021 represented a whole of Government approach to bringing about meaningful change and progress for the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. It brought Government Departments and Agencies together along with representatives of both Traveller and Roma communities to bring a focus to the issues which affect them most in a structured way.

The NTRIS contains 149 actions grouped under the following ten themes:

Cultural Identity	Education	Employment	Health	Public Services
Children & Youth	Gender Equality	Anti-discrimination	Accommodation	Traveller & Roma Communities

National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017 - 2021

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige I Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

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Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Successor strategy … one little caveat!

WORK IN PROGRESS

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Development of successor strategy

- Review of NTRIS, with stronger focus on outcomes in new strategy (PfG 2020)

- *March 2022 – March 2023*: Steering Committee reviewed progress under key strategic themes

- *June 2022 – March 2023*: SC members carried out high-level reflection exercise on the strengths and weaknesses of NTRIS, and on new Strategy content, with external facilitation at the end of the process

- *July 2023*: Independent evaluation of the processes for implementation of NTRIS and two other national equality strategies

Development of successor strategy – 2

- *May – June 2023*: Local consultation process agreed with National Traveller and Roma organisations, involving local Traveller and Roma groups, community groups and individuals

- *Sept – Oct 2023*: Six local consultation meetings; summary report prepared

In addition

Consider impact of related initiatives: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030; National Action Plan Against Racism; National Traveller and Health Action Plan; National Equality Data Strategy; review of equality legislation; National Traveller and Roma Education Strategy, etc.

Next steps

- A key focus on the identification of objectives, actions and indicators for Strategy and Action Plan.

- Focus extends to reporting under new Strategy: inclusion of targets will facilitate monitoring, reporting, accountability, and ultimately implementation.

- Currently engaging in bilateral meetings with relevant Government Departments as well as other Units in DCEDIY, who can consult the local consultation report when considering objectives, actions and indicators.

- First draft of successor Strategy, and 1st Action Plan, by end 2023/early 2024; SC will then consider

- Strategy to be submitted for Ministerial and Cabinet approval

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Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

With our partners in Pavee Point, and the other Traveller and Roma organisations, we hope the new Strategy will help deliver – in its processes of development as well as in its actual implementation – on the 6 Values for successful collaboration and partnership with the community and voluntary sector.

In the context of the new Strategy, the Values might be grouped as follows:
1. Social Justice; human rights, equality and anti-discrimination
2. Empowering communities; active participation; Social Inclusion; Sustainable development

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige I Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth   26

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Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Respect

Subsidiarity

Harmonisation

Value for Money

Implementation

Collaboration

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An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Thank you

Thank you.

Questions to conor.mcginn@equality.gov.ie

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(c) Third DSGBV Strategy – Co-Design Process

Civic Forum
DSGBV panel discussion

Third DSGBV Strategy – Co-Design
Process

Deaglán Ó Briain, Orla O Connor,
Mary McDermott

November 2023

Deaglán Ó Briain

Criminal Policy

Department of Justice

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A new National Strategy

- The task: development of a 3rd national DSGBV Strategy

- *Whole-of-government* and international context

- Law and court practices

- Treatment of victims

- Inter-agency coordination

- Public awareness and training

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A new National Strategy

- Implementation issues in 2nd national strategy

- Need for a step change in our response

- Key political priority

- Frontline services provided by NGOs:

    - standards and equity of access

    - legacy of deficit funding

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A new National Strategy

- Monitoring Committee for 2nd Strategy

- Different roles – Government must allocate resources and determine priorities

- But other sources of expertise exist

- Practice wisdom

- survivor voices

- An invitation to be partners in the development of 3rd Strategy

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Orla O'Connor
Director

Third DSGBV Strategy – Co-Design Process

nWc
National Women's Council

Collaborative and Co-design process on DSGBV Strategy

• Transparent establishment of partnership with National Women's Council and Safe Ireland to develop the Third Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence.
• Formal recognition of partnership
• Resourced
• Joint decision making for engagement of consultants
• Formation of an executive group to oversee the development of strategy
• Consideration on both content of the Strategy and consultation process

Methods of working

• The methods of working moved beyond traditional consultation,
• a genuine process of
    • joint discussion,
    • problem solving and
    • decision making
  while recognising the Department and Government will make final decisions on the content of the Strategy.

Positive outcomes

- Ambitious Strategy with real potential to achieve change on DSGBV
- Addressing a key societal issue together
- Joint ownership between civil society and state of strategy
- Identified a broader range of policy and actions
- Greater shared understanding of the challenges ahead to implementing the strategy
- Potential for collaboration on implementation is greater

Challenges

- Power imbalances between state and civil society
- Balance of Pace, deadline constraints and inclusiveness of the process
- Representational function of civil society organisations and confidentiality of process
- Balance between ambition and pragmatism
- **<u>Co-design into implementation of policy and delivery of services</u>**

Dept of Rural and Community Development

National Civic Forum for Dialogue with the Community & Voluntary Sector

Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV)

Safe Ireland, part of Advisory Group for

3rd National Strategy: Zero Tolerance

15.11.23

Mary McDermott, CEO Safe Ireland. Info@safeireland.ie

safeireland
Creating safety for women and children

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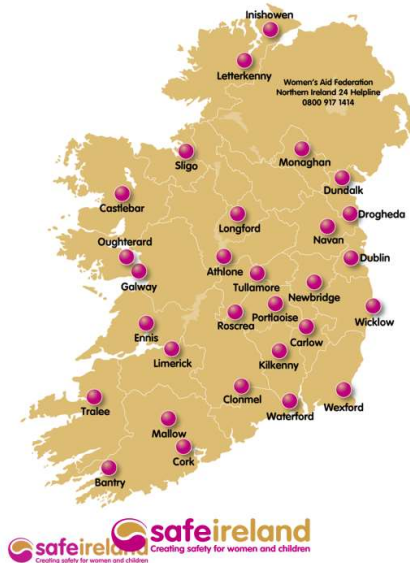
DSGBV Panel Brief - 3 Speakers

... "focus on the process rather than the content of the policy or engagement itself...

Government and C&V / NGO's working together

1.Benefits (DoJ)
2.Challenges (Safe Ireland)
3. Learnings (NWCI)

Domestic, Sex, Gender, and Sexuality-Based Violence: a keystone social problem

Complex Lead-up to establishing Advisory Group for the 3rd National Strategy

CONTEXT

1 – DSGBV is an under-developed Social Policy Area.
   Poorly conceptualised, poorly resourced, fragmented Government response

2 – DSGBV Networks, possibly last of 'organic', grass-roots C&V matrices
   Long-standing, strong community -based work

3 – Suddenly - Covid - DSGBV Organisations were core part of National Crisis at Frontline Level

4 – Open and positive engagement by Government, Civil/Public Service, Public, Communities

Principle of Co-Design built into 3rd National Strategy

CHALLENGES – Intelligibility & Intelligence

1 – *Intelligibility* – The Politics of Representation
- Neither Civil Service, nor NGO/Civil Society, are nationally democratic domains
- '*Who speaks for whom - on what basis, on what subject matter*' - real and difficult matter ('experience' vs 'expertise' vs 'expert' - power, money, status, knowledge, platform issues)
- Need creative mechanisms for facilitating modes of representation which resist populism, nepotisms, or cynical 'optics' exercises
- Naming Advisory Group – dealing with contested spaces

2 – *Intelligence* – Absolute need for Content
- Government working from extant policy, strategies / work programmes
- NGO's often work on 'emergent' Geographical, Identity, Issue-based problems: (Services, Advocacy, Awareness, Research, Policy Development)
- Need new data->information->intelligence cycles–> coherent Policy->Practice->Policy spiral

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Principle of Co-Design built into 3rd National Strategy

3 – Process of Co-Design in DSGBV: Balancing Pragmatism and Possibility
- Work of Advisory Group on 3rd National Strategy was positive – listening and responsive
- Actual dialogues open, sometimes robust, with give-and-take on pragmatic work of the strategy
- Acknowledging that, e.g. a 'visionary' document could well be completely ineffective because the mechanisms are not in place to implement…
-

4 - Co-Design processes of 3NS allowed difficult content from 'the ground'. GREVIO
- Acknowledged need for *Dedicated Accommodation Pathways for Domestic Violence Victims*
- Acknowledging *Children as Direct Victims of DSGBV*

5 – Conclusion – Co-Design requires…
- Mechanism: content driven coordination ⟶ produces coordinated content development
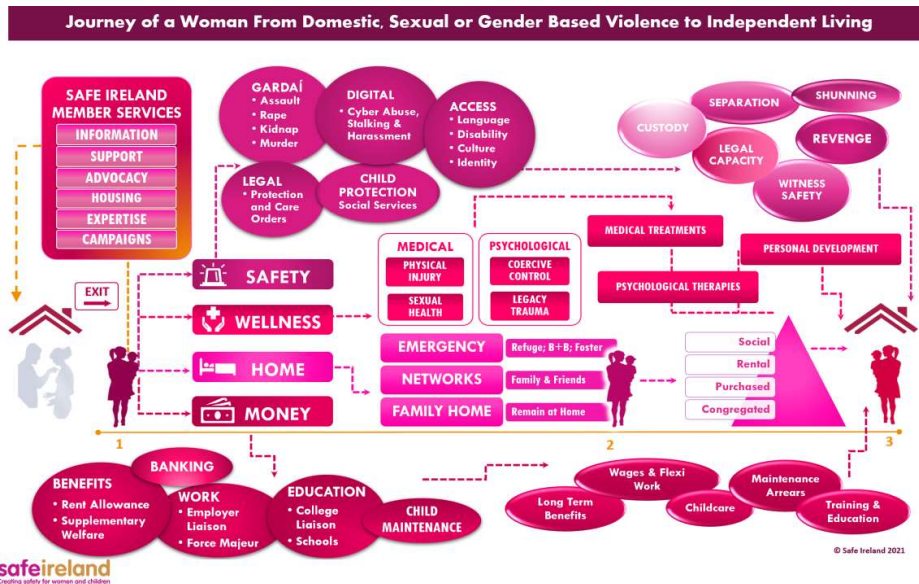
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(d) National Youth Assembly on Climate
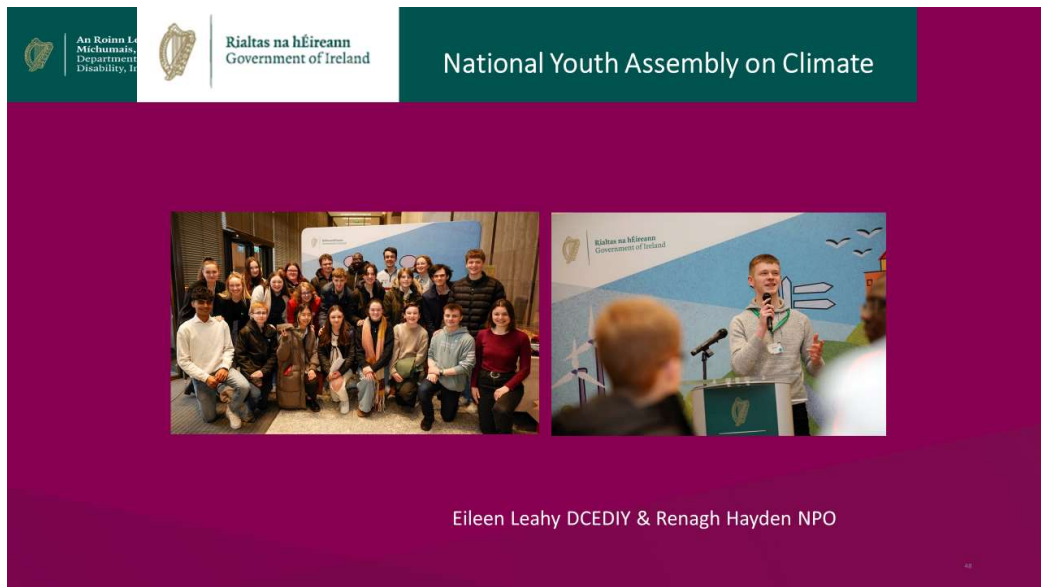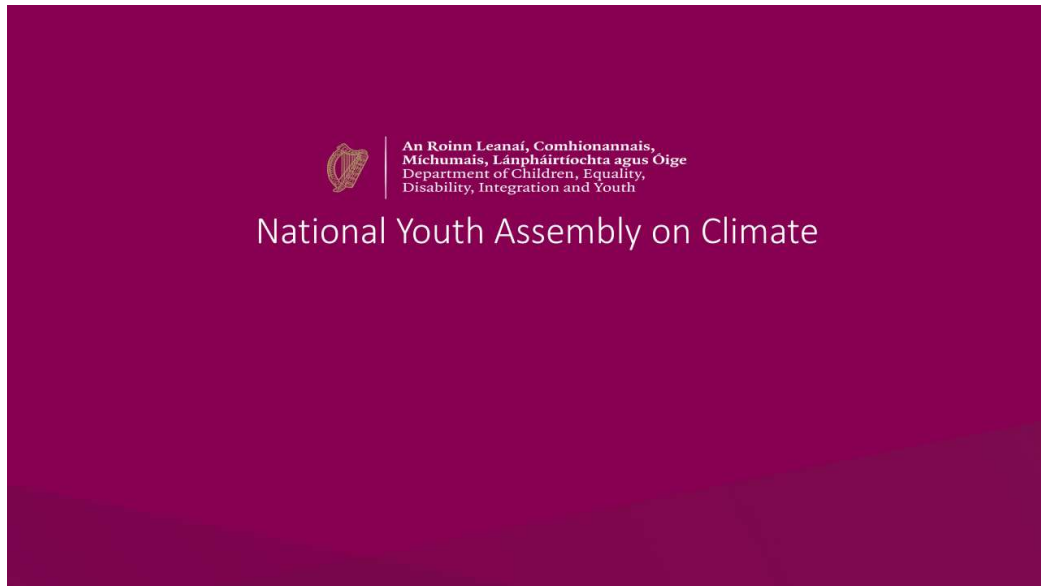
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National Youth Assembly on Climate

National Youth Assembly Main Overview 2023 - YouTube

YouTube Link: National Youth Assembly Main Overview 2023

National Youth Assembly on Climate

The National Youth Assembly on Climate convened on
Saturday March 11th 2023.

- The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)
- In collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).
- As part of the National Youth Assembly of Ireland.
- Facilitated by the National Participation Office (NPO).

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Convened on Saturday March 11th 2023

- The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)
- In collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).
- As part of the National Youth Assembly of Ireland.
- Facilitated by the National Participation Office (NPO).

Recommendations:

The Assembly made recommendations to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications to be considered for the Climate Action Plan.

Sustainable Transport

Circular Economy

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Communication, engagement and climate literacy

Other theme chosen

United Nations Youth Delegates for Ireland, Jessica Gill and David Giles, were independent observers at the Assembly.

- Delegates to the National Youth Assembly of Ireland are aged between 12 and 24 years.
- 50 young people attended the Youth Assembly on Climate.
- There were 22 National Youth Assembly of Ireland delegates and
- 18 guest delegates who have a special interest in climate action.

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Disability, I...

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

- 10 Comhairle na nÓg (local youth councils) were represented)
- 17 counties were represented.
- 21 youth organisations and NGOs, including organisations with a particular interest in Climate.

An Roinn L...
Míchumais,
Department
Disability, I...

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland
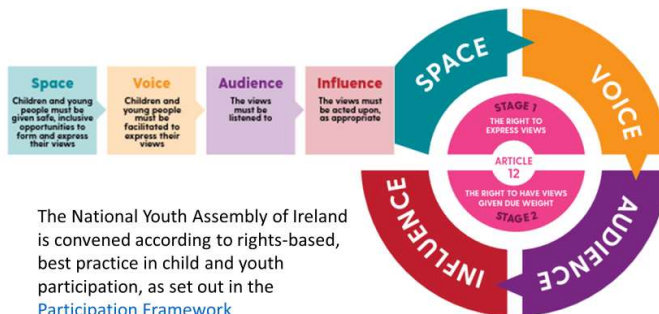
The National Youth Assembly of Ireland is convened according to rights-based, best practice in child and youth participation, as set out in the Participation Framework

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Thank you

Contact:
citizenparticipation@equality.gov.ie

Contact: citizenparticipation@equality.gov.ie

(e) Inclusive Community Engagement in Planning and Decision Making

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Community Sector Response

Towards a progressive model of collaborative governance

A Community Platform Discussion Paper
June 2022

Complex (Sticky) Social Problems

- Require approaches that are dynamic and fit for purpose…that maximise involvement and harness the expertise of organisations and communities
- Often includes influencing individual & institutional **attitudes and behaviour**

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Community Work Ireland

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Inclusive Community Engagement Planning and Decision Making [Second...]

Why this? Why now?

- **Demand**
  - **Practical, accessible**
  - **To support LECP and other planning processes**
- **Suited to the Irish context**
- **Builds on & doesn't deviate from existing policy**

Existing Policy

Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities

Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Public Sector Duty

Open Government Partnership

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Principles

Guide provides step-by step ways for implementation of principles

Training

9 principles for inclusive community engagement

- Genuine
- Purposeful
- Planned
- Clear
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Accountable
- Accessible
- Fit for purpose

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Workshops

- **15 workshops – one outstanding**
- **Good engagement from all over the country**
- **Well received - user-friendly and useful**
- **Concerns about resources and skills**

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Community Development

ciste na gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant accounts fund

Learning

- Created a common language and a common set of steps to follow all across the country
- Shared learning and networking
- There are no short cuts! The design, implementation and facilitation of consultation process takes skills. These skills:
  - May be available in-house
  - May be developed in-house
  - May require external 'expertise' – ensure that the external person/people have a real understanding of the communities with which they will be engaging
- Resources are critical – so pool them if at all possible
- Barriers to participation are real! Identify and address them.

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Community Development/Work

- **Often mentioned**
- **Where infrastructure exists**
  - conditions for marginalised communities to participate
  - provides a bridge in
- **Where it doesn't**
  - engagement difficult
  - risk of tokenism

Community Development Programme

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND INTEGRITY

Collectivity

Community Workers
Education and Training Providers
Organisations
Funders
Employers
Policy Makers and Programme Implementers
Communities

Participation

Community Empowerment

Human Rights, Equality and Anti-discrimination

Social Justice and Sustainable Development

Takeaways

- **Be aware of power – SMILE**
- **Make people comfortable**
  - De-formalise spaces
  - Use humour
  - Get people talking
  - Be creative
  - Food

Remember Task & Process

You need to accomplish the task but the way you do it creates the conditions for buy-in, ownership and future participation but, at the end of the day, it is about outcomes, impact and positive change

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The Dormant Accounts-funded Engagement Project
County Wicklow LCDC & Wicklow PPN

Initial Project

- Build on the collaborative approach between the PPN and the LCDC regarding consultation for the LECP and the PPN Well-being Statement
- Engage existing networks and key community leaders and support them to understand the background and context for developing the LECP and the PPN Wellbeing Statement
- Train & support them and other community members to run the consultation process with their groups
- Train & support them and other community members in simple data analysis, to enable them to feed their consultation inputs into the LECP and the WBS
- Report back on the learning from the project about what is needed to enable these groups to engage in consultations

What We Heard – Barriers to Participation

- Critical needs of target groups are a priority e.g. cost of living, transport, housing, and immigration issues. These are the primary concern for groups who do not see the relevance of engaging as there is no evidence that the LECP can or will have a beneficial impact on these.
- Raising expectations that cannot be addressed.
- Time restrictions for consultation & time restrictions/commitments of target groups
- Lack of commitment to actively address issues of target groups
- Lack of resources – people, expertise, and materials
- Too many consultations all asking similar questions
- No evidence of benefit i.e. no feedback, no change
- Overall poor experience of the value of engaging in consultations and widespread disillusionment.

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Project Review

Key Learning and Response

Key Learning

- Listen actively and prepare to review and amend process and project
- Plan for engagement sufficiently far in advance, provide adequate time and involve target groups in project design
- Provide feedback on the impact or results of consultation and demonstrate impact
- Establish regular feedback/engagement mechanisms
- Use familiar venues, personnel and scheduling eg Traveller Healthcare Workers, scheduled community sessions/activities

Response

- A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning & Decision Making embedded in LECP
- Project amended to focus on more long term meaningful engagement – SING established to monitor and feed into implementation of biannual action plans and contribute to Public Sector Duty Act
- Community Catch-up meetings held
- A booklet has been developed that identifies actions that link directly to the goals, objectives, and actions in the previous LECP to show relatable impact

Relating Policy to Peoples Lives

The booklet aims to show how policy leads to actions, and how the actions in the LECP 2016-2022 have impacted Wicklow Communities on the ground – from Age Friendly parking in handy locations to supporting job creation. It also shows how Wicklow County Council works with other organisations to access funding to address issues identified by communities.

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SING-Social Inclusion Network Group

- **First meeting July 2023**
- **Vast and diverse attendance and buy in**
- **Terms of reference discussed and agreed**
- **Membership reflects the marginalised Communities in Wicklow**
- **Reports to LCDC/ other WCC Departments/ Relevant Agencies**
- **Inform Local Area plans/ Service Strategies/ Deliveries /Budgets**
- **Fluid and Dynamic Structure, Facilitated not Chaired**
- **Facilitated and Resourced by Local Authority**
- **Have a County Wide Remit**

Purpose / Scope of S.I.N.G.

PURPOSE

- A forum for regular two-way communication
- An opportunity to examine and discuss plans and programmes and their delivery and relevance
- An opportunity for feedback on the rollout of plans and programmes as they impact on marginalised communities,
- A forum to identify initiatives,
- A forum for information dissemination and networking

Purpose / Scope of S.I.N.G. Contd.

SCOPE

- Promoting, progressing and identifying obstacles to social inclusion
- Cross-sectoral networking, learning and active engagement,
- Assisting with and gathering local data relevant to social inclusion
- Review SING after two years to ascertain its usefulness.

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Conditions for Real Collaboration

- **Leadership**, with a real willingness to engage and a belief that the process will lead to better outcomes.
- **Early trust building** and processes to support **dialogue and deliberation.**
- **Identifying power differentials and transparent motivation** for engagement from all participants.
- **Collaboration with relevant stakeholders**, and innovation in supporting **different forms of participation.**
- **Co-design and shared decision-making.**
- **Informed** and **deliberative approaches and processes** valuing relevant expertise and lived experience.
- **Flexibility and innovation** and linking mechanisms to the issue specific purpose they are required to serve.
- **Willingness to adequately resource** collaborative processes.
- **Commitment to** early **planning**, creating transparent and accountable **implementation and monitoring** mechanisms.

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(f) Public Participation Networks

The presentation was co-delivered by DRCD and Tipperary PPN

Public Participation Networks

Charles Stanley-Smith
Civic Forum
15th November 2023

PPNs – Public Participation Networks

- PPNs were established in the restructuring of the relationship between local communities and their local authorities under the Local Government Act 2014,

- PPNs are based in all 31 Local Authority areas.

- PPNs were established as formal networks which are the main link through which the local communities participate with Local Authorities and *vice versa*.

- They are independent of Local Authorities and self-governed.

- The PPN is a flat structure. This means that the Plenary body is the ruling body of the PPN with all decisions and elections to Council Committees taken at Plenary meetings. Decisions are normally by consent.

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Flat Structure

The flat structure is designed to:

- Spread the love and workload
- Non – hierarchical
- Once explained, it's easy to understand
- Once tried and understood people come on board and get involved
- More friendly and less of a chore
- No power grabbing or staying in place for ever
- Equality of participation – increased organisational, meeting and facilitation skills.
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Inclusivity & Diversity

PPNs

- The PPN bases its legitimacy and accountability on the requirement for member groups to be properly constituted groups, the decision making of the Plenaries, the election systems for representatives onto various Council bodies, and the structure of Linkage Groups.

- Together PPNs have a total of over 18,000 community group members, which themselves involve many hundreds of thousands of active participants.

- They, in turn, impact on a far greater number of people within the community; those that use the facilities and services they provide, that engage in sporting, arts, recreational and heritage activities, and those that benefit community-wide from work undertaken in maintaining and enhancing our built and natural environments, etc.

There is no other structure with such community outreach in Ireland.

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Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

PPN Structural Review and Implementation Roadmap

Civic Forum
15 November 2023

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•PPN Structural Review

Review aims

- Consider the operation of the PPN network to date

- Identify opportunities for further strengthening PPNs

- Make recommendations for the future development of PPNs

- Consider the impact of the supports provided to PPNs by the DRCD, Local Authorities, and other sources to enable PPNs to fulfil their purpose effectively

- Provide community groups with the means to effectively and meaningfully input into, and contribute to the local decision making process

Structural review: methods

- Desk research

- Survey – 665 responses

- Focus groups – 206 participants

- 34 written submissions from groups

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Some strengths of PPNs

- Provides communities with access to decision makers

- Assists a diverse range of voices and interests to be brought to the fore

- Creates strong relationships between stakeholders

- Delivers ongoing communication and engagement, both face-to-face and virtual

- Fosters the commitment and dedication of PPN staff and representatives to their work and roles

•Collaborative Roadmap Process

Overview of approach

Publication of Mazars Structural Review Report

Initial consultation(s) with stakeholders on Report & recommendations

Establish working group – representatives of stakeholder groups

Collaborate to develop draft roadmap for PPNs' future development

Further consultation with stakeholder groups

Submit agreed Roadmap to Minister for consideration

Implementation – continuing to co-design processes

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Consultation post-Structural Review publication

- Letter from Minister of State

- Call for written input

- Webinar

- Workshop at 2022 PPN National Conference

•Call for written input

Call for input submissions

- 46 submissions:

- 26 PPNs

- 13 local authorities

- 7 other stakeholders

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Call for input submissions

- Analysed to identify priority recommendations, areas of consensus, areas of concern

- Published on DRCD website

- Detailed results shared at DRCD workshop at 2022 National PPN Conference

- All submissions shared with Working Group, to guide development of Roadmap

Implementation Roadmap Working Group

Working Group
- Resource Worker Network (3 reps)
- Secretariat Network (3 reps)
- PPN representatives elected to Local Authority boards/committees (3 reps)
- County and City Management Association (CCMA)
- C&V Pillar
- Social Inclusion Pillar
- Environmental Pillar
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Comhairle na nÓg
- Department of Health
- Irish Local Development Network
- Association of Irish Local Government

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Working Group Milestones

1. Develop draft Roadmap based on report and feedback

2. Present draft to stakeholders for feedback to be incorporated into final draft

3. Submit the final draft to the Minister for consideration

•Draft Roadmap

Roadmap of PPNs' future development

• Mazars recommendations as starting point – not binding

• Feedback on Mazars recommendations

• New ideas beyond the Mazars report

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Roadmap

- "To guide future development to enable PPNs to best fulfil the objectives set out for them in the 2014 Report on Citizen Engagement with Local Government"

- Actions

- Owners

- Timescale

Roadmap: Areas for Action

- Governance and Accountability
- Communications and Engagement
- Coordination and Participation
- Training, Delivery and Supports
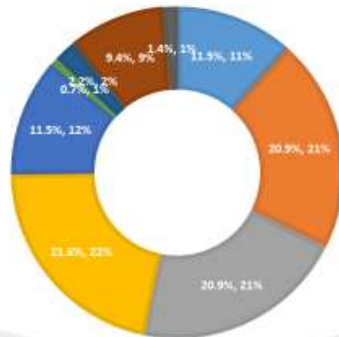- Staffing and Skills
- Additional (funding/resources)

•Consultation on Draft Roadmap

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Responses

Legend:
- PPN representative on a local policy committee/board
- PPN Secretariat member
- PPN staff member
- PPN other

Consultation: Crowe Next Steps

- Finalise survey analysis

- Conduct focus groups and one-to-one interviews with stakeholders, where needed

- Develop recommendations and revise Roadmap.

•Where we are now

Implementation Roadmap

A Process of Co-design

PPN National Advisory Group - Involvement

Tender Evaluation Committee

- The Department invited NAG members to sit on the evaluation committee that reviewed all tenders received and selected the service provider.

- It also invited two nominees to sit on the oversight committee, which oversaw the work of the review.

- Continuing involvement in design of process – ensuring good consultation with all and sundry

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Roadmap Implementation Group TOR

1. To represent stakeholder viewpoints in drafting the terms of reference for the tender process/contract for an independent party to design and facilitate a stakeholder engagement process and to develop the Implementation Roadmap.

2. To partake in a tender evaluation committee which will evaluate the tenders received (this will be open to a maximum of 3 subgroup members. PPN staff, Secretariat members, and employers will be represented on this committee.).

3. To monitor progress of the stakeholder engagement process leading to the final Implementation Roadmap.

4. To monitor progress on the delivery of the individual Actions agreed in the Roadmap.

5. To provide feedback, guidance and advice to the Department in relation to the implementation Roadmap, as well as early warning regarding potential obstacles to delivery.

Roadmap Implementation Group TOR continued../

6. The Group will advise and input into annual work plans to progress the actions. These work plans will include expected outcomes, the timeframes for delivery of actions, performance indicators, and appropriate monitoring and review mechanisms.

7. The Working Group may be invited by the Department of Rural and Community Development to lead on, or participate in, the delivery of some measures in the Implementation Roadmap if appropriate. [In such cases, the Department will retain ultimate responsibility (including final editorial authority) for the output.]

8. The Working Group may establish sub-groups to support its work. Sub-groups may include members external to the Working Group, but must include at least one member of the Group who will be responsible for reporting back to the Working Group.

Roadmap 6th September - Minutes

▶ Input from the working group is not merely welcome, it is critical. Members of the working group are here to represent their group's views, so time will be given for members to feedback information to their represented groups, gather their views and reflect them back to the working group.

▶ DRCD will provide administrative assistance to the working group. DRCD commits to holding open and transparent discussions, explain rationale behind decision making, and provide any information when requested/needed.

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