



Submission from County Longford Public Participation Network to Community Grant Support Scheme 2016

County Longford Public Participation Network welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Economic & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee in relation to the Community Grant Support Scheme 2016.

County Longford Public Participation Network (PPN) is the framework established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 which enables public input into local government through a structure that ensures participation and representation on decision-making committees and bodies.

Longford PPN is the main link through which Longford County Council connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors.

The PPN Network is divided into two primary groupings. Sectoral, where groups through their activities align with Environment, Social Inclusion or Community & Voluntary interests. The other division is geographical and relates to the Local Authority's Municipal Districts structures of Granard, Longford and Ballymahon

100 Community groups are currently registered with the Longford PPN. All Longford County Council structures must source their community representation through the PPN. 10 PPN community representatives currently sit on Longford County Councils Strategic Policy Committee's ensuring that the wider PPN and the local authority have an effective two way communication system.

After reviewing and discussing the Terms and Conditions and Application form for the Community Grant Support Scheme the PPN Secretariat would like to make a submission on behalf of all registered PPN community groups to the Economic & Enterprise SPC.

In addition to the Terms and Conditions outlined the PPN Secretariat recommends the set up an Evaluation Committee consisting of elected representatives and community representatives who will adhere to a transparent evaluation process.

The PPN also recommend investigating the expansion of the fund to incorporate for example the establishment of a project like "Town Team" and or SEAI Better Communities.

1. TOWN TEAM Project

The Town Team project should be seen as a unique holistic approach to managing a town. It should bring together all of the unique groups and stakeholders in a town to work together with a common and mutually beneficial goal. There is a necessity for town centre partnerships to be established involving all relevant stakeholders. For the partnership to be an "effective partnership" it must comprise public, private, voluntary, community sectors and all other relevant stakeholders.

This type of project has been established in County Roscommon but the Longford PPN would recommend that a County Longford "Town Team" project be more community based

with priorities given to more sustainability. For further information on Town Team (Roscommon) visit <http://www.townteamsroscommon.com/>

2. BETTER ENERGY Project

In December 2015, Minister for Energy Alex White, TD announced €20 million in grant offers for local communities under the 2016 Better Energy Communities scheme. The scheme, which is administered by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), has supported 260 community energy efficiency projects over the last years. As a result over 12,000 homes, community, private and public buildings have received energy efficiency upgrades, supporting hundreds of jobs each year – See more at http://www.seai.ie/Grants/Better_Energy_Communities