



LAOIS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

SUBMISSION

Laois County Development Plan 2021 -2027

1. Introduction

Laois Public Participation Network (PPN) was established under the Directive of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and in accordance with legislation in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Section 46).

Laois PPN is an independent organisation and is a framework for public engagement and participation with sustainability and wellbeing at its core. The aim of this structure is to facilitate and enable public organisations operating within the wider community to articulate and give voice to a diverse range of views, issues and interests within the local government system.

Laois PPN currently represents 553 registered community/voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups across the county.

The Secretariat of Laois PPN will make this submission on behalf of Laois PPN member organisations using comments and feedback gathered. Laois Public Participation Network welcomes the opportunity afforded to them by Laois County Council to make this submission to the Laois County Development Plan 2021 -2027.

"Access for All" Disability Workshop Report

Background

Laois PPN, in collaboration with the Disability Federation of Ireland, hosted a consultation workshop to highlight, document and raise awareness of the challenges faced by people with disabilities in Laois.

The aim of the consultation and subsequent report (copy included) was to highlight the needs of people with disabilities in Laois and propose responses to these needs through the SPC structure of Laois County Council. It is anticipated that the outcomes of the consultation and subsequent report would feed into the Laois County Development Plan 2021 -2027.

Why Laois PPN undertook this piece of work:

The current policy context of the workshop and its outcomes is to be found in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021. Laois PPN was recognised as the lead agency with a number of high-level goals including:

High-Level Goal 6 – Recognise and Support the Diverse Needs of People. In this regards Laois PPN is to:

"Work with key organisation to build a representative structure within the disability sector in Laois in order to facilitate their participation in decision making structures which inform social and economic policies and practice impacting on the sector"

The Process:

Laois PPN invited all member organisations to the "Access for All" Disability Workshop on Wednesday 13th February 2019 in the Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise. The gathering included people with physical, intellectual, sensory and mental health disabilities. Those attending the consultation were divided into eight groups at eight round tables where the discussion were facilitated and recorded by members of Laois PPN and Laois Co Co.

There were four discussions. During each round each groups concentrated on the work of a specific SPC looking at how the SPC is relevant to the lives of people with disabilities. The groups explored how people with disabilities can have an impact on the work of that SPC and suggested recommended actions that could be taken.

Questions Asked:

- What are the issues under this theme that prevent or limit people with disabilities fully participating within society?
- What effects does this have on people?
- What action need to be taken and by whom?

Proposal:

Laois County Council has started the review of the Laois County Development Plan which began on 6th January 2020 and the process will take 2 years to complete. The Laois County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 will set out a vision for County Laois for 2021 and beyond.

It is with this in mind the Laois Public Participation Network submits our Access for All Disability Report for consideration to be included into the Laois County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Article 1 – Purpose

The purpose of the present Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Article 3 – General principles

The principles of the present Convention shall be:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

Article 4 – General obligations

1. States Parties undertake to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability. To this end, States Parties undertake:

- a) To adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention;
- b) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- c) To take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes;
- d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice that is inconsistent with the present Convention and to ensure that public authorities and institutions act in conformity with the present Convention;
- e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability by any person, organization or private enterprise;
- f) To undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, which should require the minimum possible adaptation and the least cost to meet the specific needs of a person with disabilities, to promote their availability and use, and to promote universal design in the development of standards and guidelines;
- g) To undertake or promote research and development of, and to promote the availability and use of new technologies, including information and communications technologies, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities, giving priority to technologies at an affordable cost;
- h) To provide accessible information to persons with disabilities about mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, including new technologies, as well as other forms of assistance, support services and facilities;
- i) To promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities in the rights recognized in the present Convention so as to better provide the assistance and services guaranteed by those rights.

2. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, each State Party undertakes to take measures to the maximum of its available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of these rights, without prejudice to those obligations contained in the present Convention that are immediately applicable according to international law.

3. In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations.

4. Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions which are more conducive to the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities and which may be contained in the law of a State

Party or international law in force for that State. There shall be no restriction upon or derogation from any of the human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized or existing in any State Party to the present Convention pursuant to law, conventions, regulation or custom on the pretext that the present Convention does not recognize such rights or freedoms or that it recognizes them to a lesser extent.

5. The provisions of the present Convention shall extend to all parts of federal States without any limitations or exceptions.

Laois Public Participation Network would welcome the inclusion of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities for consideration to be included into the Laois County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

Conclusion

Laois PPN welcomes the opportunity to feed into the Laois County Development Plan 2021 -2027 and make this submission on behalf of the Environment, Community/Voluntary and Social Inclusion pillars of the PPN.

We hope that Laois County Council find this submission beneficial, that it considers the suggestions put forward carefully and that the majority if not all recommendations are implemented.

In the meantime if you have any queries regarding the proposals contained herein please do not hesitate to contact us.