



**Submission to The Co Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy
2019 – 2024**

By

County Wicklow Public Participation Network

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Introducing County Wicklow Public Participation Network

County Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in July 2014 under the directive of the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and in accordance with legislation in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (Section 46). Public Participation Networks were established to be an independent structure that would become the main link through which local authorities connect with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in a process to facilitate communities to articulate a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system.

Co Wicklow PPN has 273 diverse member groups, some of these groups are networks in their own right. PPN representatives serve as a voice for the community on structures including: the Local Community Development Committee; Housing & Corporate Estate Strategic Policy Committee; Planning & Development Strategic Policy Committee; Transport, Water & Environment Strategic Policy Committee; Community, Cultural & Social Development Strategic Policy Committee; Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee; Wicklow County Childcare Committee; Co Wicklow Children & Young People's Services Committee; Co Wicklow Local Sports Partnership; Wicklow County Tourism Board; Co Wicklow Volunteer Centre, County Wicklow Partnership, and Co Wicklow Joint Policing Committee. PPN Representatives strive to ensure that the needs of the community sector are prioritised within local policy processes.

Consultation with Communities

In 2018, Co Wicklow PPN consulted community groups across the 5 Municipal Districts of Co Wicklow, asking them "What is your vision for community wellbeing for this and future generations"? We asked them to consider this question under the following headings:

- Environment & Sustainability
- Health (physical & mental)
- Work, Economy, & Resources
- Social & Community Development
- Participation, Democracy & Good Governance
- Values, Culture & Meaning

The responses we received were documented and are available to download from our website: www.countywicklowppn.ie . We ran 11 workshops, 5 online consultations and accepted 2 submissions in total. The consultations facilitated the development of an overarching vision for each Municipal District along with community visions and high-level goals under each heading. The county vision was developed in the same way.

Our Vision for Community Wellbeing and the Co. Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy

The aims of the Co Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy align quite well with the views expressed when we brought community groups in each of the five Municipal Districts in Co. Wicklow together to develop a shared vision for community wellbeing.

The importance of having opportunities to access and participate in our natural environment whilst striving to conserve and protect our natural environment and cultural heritage.

Outdoor Recreation is referenced under several of the domain headings in the Vision for Community Wellbeing documents. The Vision that emerged under the Environment and Sustainability heading is included below as it is particularly relevant to the development of the Outdoor Recreation Strategy for the County.

Our wise use of resources, and our care and connection with our environment enables all citizens to live healthy and sustainable lives

- ***All planning decisions and development support sustainability and liveability.***
- ***A cared for and accessible natural environment supports healthy communities.***
- ***All citizens have an awareness, appreciation and a strong connection to the natural environment and work to protect it.”***

The role that our natural and build environment plays in relation to the health of our communities was also highlighted by the community:

Our natural and build environment contributes to the good health of the community

An important, recurring theme that emerged in the Vision for Community Wellbeing is that County Wicklow is a ***‘caring, welcoming and inclusive community’***. Based on this vision for the Wellbeing of the Community it is important that the Outdoor Recreation Strategy seek to address the needs of **all** our citizens to facilitate their access to outdoor recreational amenities/activities/events.

Access to our natural environment/outdoor recreation was prefaced by balancing access with the preservation, protection and maintenance of our natural environment and build heritage. The Vision for Community Wellbeing spoke to the need for all enterprise activity to adopt environmentally sensitive practices.

Enterprise activity within the county is sensitive to our environment and people, and is enabled to achieve its full economic growth and potential

County Wicklow Public Participation Network trusts that you will take the views of our members into consideration in your further work on the Outdoor Recreation Strategy for County Wicklow. Should you require additional informational in relation to any of the points above please do not hesitate to contact us.