



# LAOIS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

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Submission to Dept of Rural And Community  
Development.

“Be Winter Ready”

June 2018.

## **INTRODUCTION**

County Laois Public Participation Network was established in 2015 as part of the Putting People First Strategy.

The aims of PPNs are to;

- Facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner in decision making by encouraging and enabling public participation in local decision making and planning of services.
- Facilitate the selection of representatives from the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors on to County decision making bodies.
- Support a process that feeds the broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals of the PPN into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers.
- Strengthen the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate by actively supporting the inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination, including Travellers to enable them to participate at local and county level and to clearly demonstrate same.
- Sharing information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary sector and acts as a hub around which information is distributed and received.

Currently there are 430 community groups across the three pillars affiliated to County Laois PPN.

After consultation between Laois PPN, Community & Enterprise Section and Fire Dept of Laois County Council a number of issues have been raised. While all section of Laois County Council and the community strive to provide vital services to all sections of the community especially during periods of extreme weather conditions, some simple measures can be taken to ensure that the health and safety of our citizens are prioritised. It is with this at the fore that we have identified two issues that we believe needs to be addressed.

### **Text Alert**

It is our view that a text alert system should be rolled out nationwide to alert all mobile phone users within the county boundaries of serious weather conditions specific within the area. The system identifies all mobile users with the area of a specific county and notifies them of any treacherous conditions/ unsafe road/ revised weather conditions / flooding/ water outages etc. There is no opt in/opt out as the technology will identify all users within the County and issue the alert directly to their phone. We feel that the Dept

should prioritise installing this system in all Local Authorities and provide funding for same. This system will benefit all member of our society especially those who are extremely vulnerable during severe weather condition. It would be our proposal that Laois could pilot this system which in turn, if deemed successful, could be rolled out nationwide.

## **Severe Weather Admin Budget**

Each Local Authority should be allocated a “Severe Weather Admin Budget” for the purpose of preparing booklets, leaflets and poster which are specific to their area. For example Laois County Council took the initiative to create and print an A4 information sheet and also large poster which were distributed throughout the county. The A4 leaflets were provided to all household while the large posters were distributed to shops in both urban and rural areas. This proved to be very expensive but also of great benefit to the people of the county. It is therefore our suggestion that a budget for these costs be made available.