

Communities In Transition

Participatory Design Process – Reporting Template

Please complete this report following each participatory design session (i.e. one per session) to record the key of the discussion. Please use the sections below to structure the report. If any area was not covered during the discussion, please note that in the relevant section.

Please return the completed report to cit@cooperationireland.org within one week of each participatory design session.

Area: Carrick/Larne

Theme: Environment and Culture

Date: 31/01/19

Number of attendee's: 6

1. Proposed interventions discussed to address the issues identified in Phase 1 fieldwork?

- Participants noted the progress being made within communities in relation to the re-imagining of paramilitary murals in parts of Carrick and Larne, and they would like to see these interventions being further supported.
- A participant acknowledged the success in Larne of Council providing a base for bonfires within Craigyhill. However, it was emphasised that this was possible after effective community dialogue to establish the need and also the most appropriate site for a base within the area. This sent the message to communities that better bonfire management was in their own interests, and that statutory agencies were not developing such programmes to 'take culture away'.
- Community education programmes on the health risks of burning bonfires with carcinogenic materials.
- Workshops and education programmes on culture, identity and history, (including bonfires and flags and emblems with young people and interested community members).

2. Comments on current community capacity to address issues identified?

- Participants felt that the current community capacity to address the issues is low; but they did acknowledge that good work was being undertaken in some areas of Carrick and Larne around flags and murals and that this should be recognised and supported.
- The theme of culture and history was suggested by several participants to be a very useful way to engage the community in Carrick and Larne – several examples were given of the development of a community group or dealing with additional issues (such as mental health) which were begun by

engaging communities around cultural issues which interested them (bonfires etc.). In other words, interventions around cultural and history were believed to be a good 'in' to communities which were generally apathetic to outsiders and community development in a more general sense.

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

- Reduction of paramilitary murals and flags.
- Promotion of a civic pride in Carrick and Larne amongst community residents.
- Increased knowledge and awareness of heritage and culture which in turn may contribute to more historically accurate and appropriate cultural expressions (specifically relating to bonfires).

4. How did participants suggest will we know if these projects/interventions have succeeded? (indicators/measures)

- Reduction in paramilitary murals, flags and emblems
- Promotion of 'community' bonfires with a general sense of community ownership.
- Changing community narrative around cultural expression.

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

- Members of cultural organisations
- Young People
- Residents and local communities
- Council/statutory agencies.

6. How did participants suggest these projects/interventions will build the capacity/capability in the community?

- Participants suggested that these interventions could engage with a new cohort of individuals from the community.
- As noted previously, it was felt that the local communities in the B4 areas in Carrick and Larne were interested in cultural and historical events – and that by framing some initial interventions around these themes, there could be a cohort of local people stimulated in to engaging on other topics and perhaps even forming new community groups/associations (as these tend to be lacking in the areas at present).

7. How did participants suggest these projects/interventions will support the overall objectives of the Tackling Paramilitarism Executive Action Plan...?

- a. **Paramilitarism has no place.**
- b. **Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.**
- c. **The public support and have increased confidence in the justice system.**

d. Support is available for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures.

It was suggested by one participant that historical and cultural education would provide the potential for more historical accurate cultural celebrations (e.g. bonfires without tyres and paramilitary trappings), which would be in line with the more general aims of the programme.

8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

- The relationship between statutory organisations (particularly the Council) and the community is perceived to be very poor, and participants expressed concern about how viable any interventions under any theme will be without sufficient attention being given to building effective statutory-community relationships.
- Representatives noted the difference between Carrick and Larne regarding bonfires – this was exemplified by one police officer noting a feeling of being welcome at bonfires in Larne, but not in parts of Carrick. Participants generally felt that Carrick was more susceptible to being influenced by issues in parts of Belfast (specifically East Belfast following on from tensions in July 2018).
- One participant raised the challenge of funding requirements of some statutory pots of money. Having to pay perhaps 50% up front to engage in a cultural programme was believed to be beyond the reach of most small community organisations and was believed to have contributed to the lack of funding applications which generally emerge from Mid and East Antrim. This can also feed in to the lack of sustainability of small, community-based organisations in the longer-term.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

- Participants felt that the experiential narrative within the Protestant-Unionist-Loyalist community generally, as well as the specific narrative of each community in these areas, manifests as anxiety and fear over a perceived 'threat to culture'. This fear can inhibit conversations and engagement over examples of cultural expression, particularly around bonfires.
- Participants stated that they did not see how it would be possible to bring Carrick and Larne together in one plan around environment and cultural issues given the differences between the two towns and the physical distance separating them.

10. Any other comments made by participants?

- Participants welcomed the development of new community residents' groups in Castlemara and Glenfield (and a women's group in Woodburn) as indicative of the potential for further community development. It was felt however that these new organisations require support to sustain themselves moving forwards.

- Participants believed that cultural events and programmes are a pathway to building relationships with the community in Carrick. It was posited that engaging individuals from the community through cultural celebration was a route to creating conditions to establish groups to move towards transitioning communities.
- One participant suggested that a barrier to transition was new planning rules, which from their perspective, were making it difficult to enable communities to re-image murals.
- Participants agreed that council requirements pertaining to bonfires had contributed to communities being unwilling to apply for council funding. It was suggested that this was due to applications requiring a named individual (or group) to apply and this was seen as attaching legal liability which ensured that communities withdrew from engaging.

11. Is a further follow-up workshop required? Please provide details.

- No follow-up required.