

## **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](mailto:cit@cooperationireland.org) within one week of each participatory design session.

*Area:* Brandywell & Creggan

*Theme:* Personal Transition

*Date:* 04/01/19

*Number of attendees:* 19

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

Participants engaged in a lengthy and difficult discussion around the issue of transition, what it means and what is required to bring it about. There was broad agreement on the necessity of support for (ex-)prisoners and others who are moving away from armed actions – mental health support, support in accessing welfare and public services, employment and training, wrap-around family support, political and community engagement, opportunities to pursue alternatives, the removal of legal barriers and bail/licence restrictions etc. However, as in Phase 1, serious doubts were raised as to whether this would be possible within the framework of the Tackling Paramilitarism programme or in the absence of positive changes in the wider context.

Several community workers made it explicit that while they are opposed to the actions of armed republican groups and would continue looking to engage with those concerned, they did not wish to be complicit in any intervention that bases transition on the ‘criminalisation and demonisation’ of alternative political viewpoints. Any support for this conception of transition would, it was suggested, have the effect of ‘sowing division and disharmony within the republican family’ and the wider community.

While some groups and individuals are discussing the potential or possibility of transition, this was still at a tentative stage. There remains a reluctance to engage with the Tackling Paramilitarism programme or to accept any funding from state institutions as part of any such process, but rather any process of transition will be driven from within the groups or organisations themselves.

Elsewhere it has been suggested that what is needed to facilitate any process of transition is time and space to allow dialogue to take place and discussions to develop. It has also been noted that some current police approaches, such as extensive use of stop and search, or house searches tends to inhibit such dialogue and undermines arguments for transition by reinforcing a sense that nothing has changed in terms of policing.

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

N/A

**3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?**

N/A

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

**5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?**

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

**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.

**8. Any dependencies identified by participants?**

N/A

**9. Any risks identified by participants?**

N/A

**10. Any other comments made by participants?**

As in Phase 1 and previous workshops, participants raised concerns about the language and framing of the Tackling Paramilitarism programme, which they believe have effectively excluded certain constituencies from the outset. It was acknowledged that the programme was signed off by the Executive parties, but suggested that this should not detract from the consistent and growing concerns of community representatives. Increasingly, these

concerns are linked to a deep sense of frustration with the nature and direction of policing, which has in their view proven to be counter-productive to the objective of 'transition'.

It was noted that unresolved issues regarding the treatment of republican prisoners in the separated regime at Maghaberry Prison are reinforcing the perception that the state institutions are not committed to transition. A number of participants pointed to the August 2010 Agreement as a landmark document that has not been fully implemented – that republican prisoners are denied access to education and cultural activities, while some are still subjected to full-body strip searches. In addition, participants cited the example of a young prisoner who has 'clearly made the transition within the prison system' yet remains subject to the conditions of Category A status. What happens within the prison system was identified as rippling outwards to the constituencies concerned and to the wider community.

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

N/A