

## **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: Shankill*

*Theme: Community Safety and Policing*

*Date: 20/01/19*

*Number of attendee's: 9*

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

- Participants often referred to the work being coordinated and conducted by the Community Safety Network as an important conduit to improving relationships across the Shankill. This became a central point for discussion in relation to the suggested intervention from Phase 1 of local PSCP/Policing Committee can best support community initiatives to develop meaningful and positive working relationships with the PSNI. Participants asserted that the PCSP would not have traction with the community and noted that the Community Safety Network, in conjunction with community police, had already held a number of public education and awareness events to build relationships between the community and the PSNI. Other well-attended events have included “Managing Expectations” events run in liaison between the PSNI and Community Safety Network.
- Participants stated that the current situation facing the Community Safety Network and other local groups, whereby they have to seek out programmes, should be reversed. Many also felt that PCSP and statutory bodies need to ‘get out to existing community groups and actively engage with them.’
- With regards to community programs and meetings, those community participants in attendance stated that they would like such events to be written into policing and statutory codes of practice; as too often the community experience has been that events are held at the behest of individual officers and personnel. As a result, any changeover in staff can impact on events which have already been successfully established and operating.

- Governance and administrative support for community groups and individuals is essential to building sustainable capacity.
- Police participants acknowledged that there needs to be public discourse around policing issues which challenges negative perceptions, myths and stereotypes, and the general cynicism about operational policing.
- For example, there was a perception that the Tackling Paramilitarism Crime Taskforce is disproportionately targeting Loyalist communities, in spite of the main threat emanating from armed Republicans.
- There needs to be flexibility with small funding budgets that would enable and encourage smaller/developing groups to apply. Participants noted that the economics of applications can make funding streams limited to only the largest organisations who have sufficient capital already to invest in many programmes.

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

- Participants noted a disparity across the Shankill, in terms of capacity to develop and deliver programmes. According to participants, this capacity and desire to engage can vary from street to street.

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

- In relation to education programmes to make the community (and police) more aware of the roles and challenges faced within the area regarding community safety and policing, participants agreed that 'the community are more forgiving of policing, when they are informed and aware of the rationale and truths behind policing tactics and approaches.' Participants highlighted that this information must be communicated within the community, in an open and transparent manner, as 'the community are attuned to when they are being deceived or kept in the dark.'

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

- In relation to the strength and importance of relationships between the community and the PSNI, participants suggested that the value of relationships can be measured in terms of situations/issues getting resolved without becoming an official police statistic.
- A longstanding issue with measuring anything related to policing and the criminal justice system (internationally not only in this area) has been the focus and dependence on statistical measurement to gauge the effectiveness of policing. Participants pointed to the need to appreciate the value of people not becoming measurable police statistics, and the value of community attitudes and interactions with policing.

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

- Police officers (both community and non-community officers)
- Local community groups
- Residents groups
- Community representatives
- Statutory agencies

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

- Participants maintained that a current issue within the community, was the intergenerational legacy and experiential narrative, which requires attention in order to engender the conditions necessary to invest in building the capacity of the community.
- By mandating community engagement and participation into systemic policies of police and statutory agencies, participants felt there would be more consistency of relationships rather than being dependent on certain officers and community individuals as it is 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.**
- This question did not elicit much, if any, response from participants. However, there was a general view that programme aims required commitments and cultural change within statutory organisations (for example the attitudes of a minority of police officers towards communities and the working culture of statutory organisations which tends to follow traditional working hours which is amenable to community engagement).

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

- A significant proportion of “good” policing is down to personnel, rather than being systemic or institutionalised, meaning that any changeover in personnel can (and does) impact on community and policing relationships.

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

- Participants believe that there is a legacy of statutory bodies (excluding community police in the area) failing to “step up to the plate when needed.” Participants felt that the ‘9-5 nature and culture of many statutory departments’ means that they fail to engage with the community beyond these hours (at evening events for example). Participants argued that

there needs to be an organisational culture change to engender the possibility of meaningful and effective community engagement.

- Funding application forms have increasingly become over-complicated and inaccessible to even the most capable community groups and individuals. Police and council attendees noted that when groups are unable to access funding or are unsuccessful, it can have a negative impact on relations between the community and statutory bodies - especially the police and council who interact with the community regularly.
- Prevailing perception that the community are too far removed from this project.

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

- Participants queried how influential the workshop and programme itself could be in shaping what is taken forward, given how unrepresentative the attendees were of the Shankill.
- Participants believed there was something missing from the consultation process and stated that the events had been poorly advertised.
- Participants pointed to the community perception that 'community groups were best run independently of the PCSP' as if they do engage, then they are subject to doing things at the behest of the PCSP, who they feel have a hidden agenda.
- The issues throughout the Shankill are so diverse and nuanced that they vary street-to-street and can change month-to-month.
- The best ideas come from the community and they should be consulted with directly.
- Participants discussed the role of 'gatekeepers' within the area and suggested that realistically 'that is how things operate in the real world', and those structures and processes must be engaged with.
- According to some participants, the community feel that when they do things (activities/programmes) on a voluntary basis for the benefit of the community, it is undervalued. In contrast, when outsiders/ "experts" come in, many felt that their input is often viewed as more credible and reliable.
- Participants argued that the statutory sector tends to rely on the goodwill of the community/voluntary sector to deliver work/training sessions for free – which they would not expect of other organisations. This is indicative of a desire to see a change in organisational culture, to one which places greater value on the work conducted within the community/voluntary sector.

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