**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:* West Belfast

*Theme:* Community Development

*Date:* 24/01/19

*Number of attendees:* 12

1. **Proposed interventions discussed to address the issues identified in Phase 1 fieldwork?**
   Participants discussed the concept of a joined-up approach to community development, coordinated on a West Belfast basis but with bespoke local interventions implemented through bases in the Greater Falls, Upper Springfield, Upper Falls and the Colin area. Referring back to a proposal that was submitted for consideration in Phase 1, it was proposed that this would entail:
   - Family support;
   - Community employment and education pathways;
   - The coordination of youth provision;
   - Community education and personal development;
   - Drug and alcohol addiction, mental and physical health support;
   - A community safety and professional witness component, building on past experiences and current needs;
   - The development and coordination of the interventions and activities around environment & culture;
   - Restorative practices;
   - Engagement and dialogue with harder-to-reach constituencies.

   Participants also suggested that this would form part of an infrastructure that would link up with statutory providers in a meaningful way and look to harnessing the various strands of community and statutory work/funding towards better outcomes. It would also maximise impact for the money and resources in the area.

   It was emphasised that any such initiative should be led from a community base as it was felt that there was insufficient co-ordination of programmes,

activities and resource use. It was also argued that there was no real partnership between statutory providers and community sector and that attempts to work in partnership had failed because of reluctance of statutory providers to engage effectively.

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

There is a well-developed community infrastructure in the area and a willingness to work collaboratively with statutory providers to address all of the issues raised in Phase 1. It was suggested that there is perhaps a job to be done in terms of re-igniting residents' groups by giving them an incentive or focus for greater activity.

But the bigger issue raised was that of 'pilot' fatigue and the lack of sustainability/continuity for approaches that were shown to be effective in the past, some that were cited include Divis Intervention Project, community safety fora, drug intervention programmes, ISCYP, community employment programmes etc. It was argued that rather than focus on creating novel approaches, it was better to consolidate and extend what had been working effectively.

3. **Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?**
   - Tackle the systemic issues of socio-economic deprivation that has been identified as contributing to trends in drug use, anti-social behaviour, criminality and paramilitary activity;
   - Build the confidence of the community to engage with and support community-based policing:
   - Strengthen the capacity of residents to engage with community services and play a more active role in community life;
   - Strengthen the capacity, integration and reach of community-based services;
   - Strengthen the integration and partnership working between community and statutory providers, putting their services to more effective use and on a more sustainable footing.

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

As in Phase 1, participants emphasised the need for scorecards, where appropriate, and the monitoring of outcomes during and beyond the initial programme period. There are specific measures to be used for the purposes of the programme in terms of the numbers engaging with community and statutory services and community activities; and the numbers in employment, education or training. These can be linked to longer term outcomes in relation to the socio-economic indicators, the incidence of anti-social behaviour and criminality, the incidence of paramilitary style attacks and the number of people entering the criminal justice system.

Participants stressed the necessity of scorecards and the monitoring of outcomes across the Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime programme, with statutory and community-based providers held to the same standards and accountability within a transparent framework.

5. **Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?**
   - Community and statutory providers;
   - Marginalised and hard-to-reach groups in the community;
   - Residents.

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

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.**
      The proposed intervention would contribute to this objective by encouraging preventative and responsive interventions that move people away from the influence of paramilitarism and towards engagement with community-based services and activities.
   b. **Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.**
      Citizens and communities will feel safer and more confident where there are fewer people experiencing marginalisation, fewer people at risk of becoming engaged in anti-social behaviour and criminality or falling under the influence of paramilitarism, and that there are opportunities for people to engage productively in employment or community life.
   c. **The public support and have increased confidence in the justice system.**
      The proposed intervention would include a community safety component that builds on past experiences and current needs. It will look to provide a mechanism for those who are reluctant to engage directly with the police and criminal justice system, while simultaneously building the confidence of those people to move in that direction.
   d. **Support is available for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures.**
      The proposed intervention would seek to engage in dialogue with those who are linked to – or indicate support for – the actions of armed groups. At the same time, it will strengthen the capacity, integration and reach of community-based services that are working to support those who may wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures.

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

The success of any such programme would depend on the buy-in of the private sector and statutory agencies. Participants were confident that that private sector interests would support the proposed interventions on the back of past successful programmes. However, they were also less confident that the statutory agencies would come to the table and commit to the type of partnership working that they argued is necessary.

On a related note, participants repeatedly raised the perennial issue of sustainability, arguing that the proposed interventions need to be conceived within a longer term funding and strategic vision in order to have long term outcomes. In support of this, it was felt that proper thought should be given to getting the delivery infrastructure right so that the necessary linkages, relationships and coordination of resources can be developed.

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

See above.

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

Much of the discussion focused on the lack of clarity around how decisions around the Tackling Paramilitarism were being made, how funding had been allocated and what outcomes had been achieved to date. Participants were unclear as to how linkages were to be made between the various actions, particularly since actions concerning the statutory sector (EA, the PSNI) have been up and running for some time, while the Communities in Transition process has dragged on. In short, it was felt that the community has been treated as an unequal partner, despite coming to the table in good faith and repeatedly stating its willingness to work collaboratively with statutory agencies in order to get to the stage of delivering interventions on a sustainable basis. It is clear that a deep sense of frustration and cynicism has set in.

This brought the discussion back round to the need for a transparent accountability and delivery structure.

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

The discussion is likely to develop over the course of remaining thematic workshops, including a final feedback session. Progressing the interventions may require a separate conversation between statutory agencies and the community sector.