

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: Culture & Environment

Date: 17/01/19

Number of attendees: 6

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

A long-term strategic intervention to build on the progress that has been achieved around issues of environment & culture. This would include:

- The coordination of cultural, educational and physical activities aimed at the productive use of public space, closely linked to planning around the built environment;
- The balancing of short-term diversionary activities with support for under-resourced community education initiatives that are about tying social, cultural and political history to long-term participation in community life;
- A community employment programme focused on engaging young people (see Young People workshop report).

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

Participants noted that contentious issues relating to bonfires have been successfully addressed in recent years, with tensions reduced and no bonfires in nationalist West Belfast in 2016. It was also noted that there are a range of activities which are either being delivered in a segmented fashion with no coordination or which receive little to no funding and therefore form an add-on to the core work of community organisations. People spoke of the rich traditions and creativity that exist in the area. Ultimately, participants agreed that it was necessary to 'move to the next level' in terms of how issues of environment and culture are thought about and managed.

Participants also noted that in the recent past Council employed local people to work as park rangers at key local sites and which (a) provided local employment, and (b) reduced ASB in parks. It was felt that renewal of such posts would also contribute to lowering rates of ASB.

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

- Supports the coordination of activities that put problematic spaces to productive use on a regular basis, rather than solely at particular times of the year;
- Helps to make sure that the connection between culture, community and the built environment becomes the norm;
- Provides children and young people with access to alternative community activities and employment pathways that moves them away from engaging in anti-social and criminal behaviours;
- Supports more people to play an active role in community life;
- Strengthens the sense of place and community particularly in children and young people.

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

- An increase in the use of problematic public spaces for the purposes of cultural, educational and physical activities;
- An increase in the number of young people involved in community organisations and activities;
- An increase in the number of young people in employment;
- A reduction in the incidence of anti-social behaviour and low level criminality.

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

- Children and young people who are liable to become engaged in anti-social behaviour and low level criminality, with a particular focus on identified hotspots e.g. Dunville Park, Falls Park, Black Mountain etc.;
- Children and young people who are liable to participate in forms of cultural expression that are linked to paramilitarism.

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

- Will provide a long-term strategic link between cultural, educational and physical activities, the use of public space, planning and the built environment;
- Will strengthen collaboration between community organisations;
- Will help to ensure that more people play an active role in community life, thus strengthening the community's capacity to address the issues raised during Phase 1.

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 more children and young people engaged in positive cultural, educational and physical activities, the less likely they are to fall under the influence of paramilitarism.

b. Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.

As in Phase 1, participants noted that citizens will feel safer and more confident when there is a tangible reduction in the incidence of anti-social behaviour and criminality in the area.

c. The public support and have increased confidence in the justice system.

It is envisaged that the productive use of public space and accompanying reduction in anti-social behaviour and low level criminality will free up police time and resources as well as those of the criminal justice system more widely.

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

The proposed intervention does not aim to engage this constituency in particular, but does seek to offer alternative activities and pathways for those who may be liable to participate in forms of cultural expression that are linked to paramilitarism.

8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

Participants agreed that the efficacy of proposed intervention would depend largely on statutory buy-in and on the capacity of a designated individual or agency to take the lead in terms of coordination of activities and making the necessary strategic linkages with planning and the built environment.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

N/A

10. Any other comments made by participants?

Speaking about the experience of past programmes, it was noted that the narrow postcode method of identifying target participants may not be appropriate in this context, particularly as the children and young people concerned are transient and do not necessarily live in close proximity to the identified hotspots. It was suggested that recruitment for the programme should not be as prescriptive, but instead allow for community and youth workers to identify and engage with target participants in collaboration with statutory agencies.

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

Participants agreed that it would be important to bring together a cross-section of young people to get a sense of what they would like to see included in any intervention.

It was also suggested that there should be an effort to engage with Irish language and cultural organisations in the area, as there is a feeling that they have been overlooked during the consultation.