Communities in Transition

Area Research Report 2023

Carrickfergus

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Northern Ireland Executive

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

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The Executive Programme on Paramilitarism & Organised Crime

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ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

The Authors hope that the content of this Report offers a valuable insight into how people residing in Carrickfergus feel about a variety of issues associated with their local area.

INTRODUCTION

The Research Team involved in the development of this Report were tasked with developing Area Reports for each of the sites where the Communities in Transition programme is currently active. Communities in Transition is one strand of the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime. The Executive Office NI leads the policy development of Communities in Transition, in partnership with Co-operation Ireland and Queen's University Belfast.

The programme aims to support areas where there has been a history of paramilitary activity and coercive control. The primary objective is to support the transition of these sites to a point where paramilitary groups no longer exercise influence, and their activity is no longer as prevalent. To achieve this ambition, Communities in Transition funds a range of over 30 innovative and community focused projects. These projects are designed to increase the capacity of each area and are categorised under the following headings: Area Regeneration; Capacity Building; Community Safety and Policing; Environment and Culture; Health and Wellbeing; Personal Transition; Restorative Practice; and Young People. Our Area Reports will identify the on-going challenges that exist throughout each Communities in Transition site. We will also point to the key work that is aimed at stimulating sustained change in the areas.

CARRICKFERGUS

Communities in Transition activity in Carrickfergus is focused in and around Castlemara and Northlands. Previous research (Sturgeon and Bryan, 2020) has suggested that Carrickfergus features various types of inequality and deprivation. Over half of the residents of Love Lane (55%) have indicated that they have 'no' or 'low level' qualifications (NISRA, 2017). Northlands is within the 10% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. Moreover, Northlands is classified as being the 13th most deprived site in the region in relation to education, skills and training. It is also the 50th most deprived area in terms of income (NISRA, 2017). Other studies have pointed to the severity of drug and alcohol addiction in the area, while personal debt has shown to be high. The limitations of the current youth provision has also been identified (Co-operation Ireland, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

The focus of this Report is on presenting a 'bottom up' assessment of the key issues relevant to the residents of Carrickfergus. The focus is not on re-presenting the many very valuable pre-existing data sets that exist elsewhere. Such data sets provide important indications of the overall capacity of the area, but often fail to tease out the correlating lived experiences. In this Report, we wish to address this gap in our understanding of the Communities in Transition sites.

To appropriately engage with participants we designed a methodology that ensured their opinion was positioned at the centre of our work. We took a mixed methods approach that utilised PGIS Mapping Software, Qualitative Interviews and a Household Survey.

Participants were invited to identify and mark specific categories of place, such as where things are getting better, where things are getting worse, where they feel safe or unsafe using a 'spraycan' tool on a computerised map of the local area. The individual marked maps were then aggregated to generate a collective view of the site.

Recorded Qualitative Interviews were conducted in conjunction with the completion of the Spraycan exercise, allowing the Research Team to tease out the overall capacity of the area alongside correlating lived experiences, both positive and negative.

Participants in this qualitative element of our research were recruited with the assistance of Communities in Transition Delivery Partners. Interviews took place in local community settings in Spring 2022.

In this area 18 people participated the PGIS mapping exercise and 18 participated in Qualitative Interviews. Of these 14 identified themselves as Unionist and 4 as 'other'.

Household Survey – Overview

- 78 people from across Carrickfergus and surrounding areas took part in a Household Survey survey, which was carried out by market research company, Perceptive Insight.

- 68 participants identified themselves as Protestant and 10 identified as Neither.

- 40 participants were male and 38 were female.

- 68 participants were Unionist and 10 identified as 'other'.

- The participants were aged between 17 and 76.

Research Findings

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

In this section, we assess the ways in which participants feel attached to their local area.

Household Survey

Two key findings emerged from the Survey findings, which indicated that there was a strong sense of community attachment in this area.

- **68% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community throughout Carrickfergus.**
  The average response across all the CIT sites was 66%.

- **70% agreed or strongly that they felt connected to their local area**
  The average response across all the CIT sites was 68%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **18 participants completed the Spraycan Mapping Tool.**

- **14 identified themselves as 'Unionist' and 4 as 'Other'.**

- **Figure 1 demonstrates the extent to which community space is segregated in Carrickfergus, on the basis of community identity.**
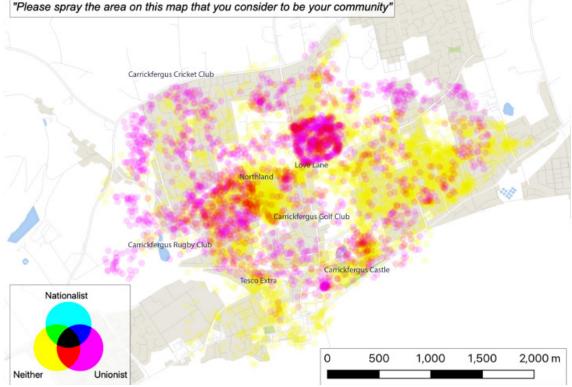
Figure 1: Community Attachment in Carrickfergus.

Qualitative Interviews

The majority of participants explained that Carrickfergus hosts a number of well-known families who have been long-term residents in the site.

There are few 'newcomers' in the area. It was suggested that where people do move to the site and have little family connections, they rarely stay long. This creates a significant turnover of residents throughout the area, outside of the collection of families who are long-term residents.

Participants who were associated with the families who were perceived to be long-term residents in the site, generally indicated that Carrickfergus was an area where there was strong levels of community spirit and cooperation.

However, where participants did not have established connections in the site, they indicated that it 'could be hard for newcomers to fit in'.

'I think the area is kind of set... if you know what I mean? It's very strong and very supportive of the people who they (community members) think deserve it... that might be because they're long-term residents or because they're involved in a particular (community) group.'

'It's a closed shop (for people who are new to the area).'

'I think there are good levels (of community spirit), but it's selective. It's not easy for people who are new to the area to assimilate.... But... here, it's not easy for people who leave either. I think if you leave

and then decide you'll go back... I don't think that's well received either.'

A number of participants indicated that they were concerned by a perceived decline in the quality and cleanliness of the physical landscape. This included a sense of frustration at the number of empty shops in central Carrickfergus and a belief that more could be done to promote Carrickfergus Castle.

'The centre... it's awful... really awful, it's just barren. The shops have closed up... so you've no one going there and anyone who does... I think they feel a bit unsafe, because there's such little footfall.'

'I think we should be so much further ahead than we are. We have the Castle, but if you go now... you can't even get a guided tour. I think if you go back... that was the hub... the Castle was a draw and the shops near it would get the benefits of that. Now, there's no one going there (to the Castle), so there's no one supporting the shops. There's no trade.'

'The Castle and the surrounding area are rotten. We used to get a lot of visitors from America and we'd take them (there)... they used to be blown away by it, but there's rubbish all round it and there's algae and slime all over the walls. It's such a missed opportunity. That should be the backbone of the local economy, but it needs a reboot.'

KEY FACILITIES

In this section we identify the key facilities that are important to participants. We probe how these spaces are utilised and ask whether there are places that people would like to use; but chose not to.

Household Survey

- **24% of our participants indicated they were involved with a Local Church.**

- **13% were associated with a Sports Club.**

- **15% were involved in a Local School.**

- **11% participated in Neighbourhood Associations.**

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **A large number of participants indicated that Carrickfergus Castle is an important landmark for most people living in the area. It is a recognisable feature of the landscape and is a major draw for tourists visiting the area.**

- **Most participants also felt that key supermarkets, such as Tesco Extra and Lidl, were popular destinations.**

- **The Carrickfergus Golf and Rugby Clubs were also popular and a number of participants marked key community spaces, such as Oakfield Community Development Centre.**
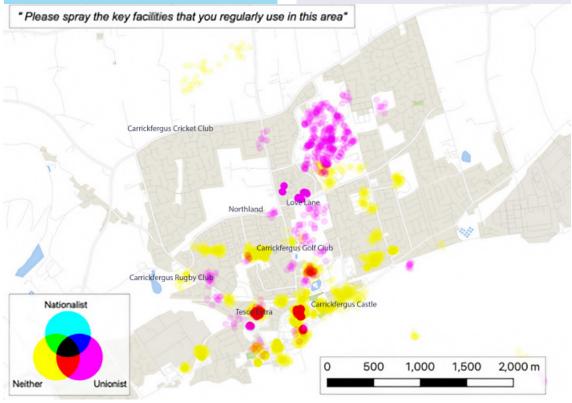

Figure 2: Key Facilities in Carrickfergus.

Qualitative Interviews

As stated in the previous section, participants indicated that they were concerned by the large amount of empty shops in the area. It was suggested that this made residents feel less confident about moving around the area, due to the perception that area was 'less safe' than it may have been in the past.

'It's a bit like a ghost town... it sort of gives you the creeps. I wouldn't want to be walking round the centre of the town on my own.'

'I think in the absence of ordinary members of the public using that space (near the town centre), it has sort of become a strange place... you know... ah, you'll get some people just walking around like zombies... off their heads on drugs. Then I think you see people squaring up to each other and stuff.... Do you know what I mean?'

A number of participants indicated that the area lacked the type of community infrastructure that was necessary to deal with the various problems in the area that are referenced throughout this Report.

'We've really not had leadership to deal with most of this (different social/economic problems in the area). It's hard to get the politicians involved... and we don't have many community groups leading.'

Although a number of participants referenced the limited community capacity in the area, many also felt there had been improvements to the local structure. In this instance, the stated improvements were often connected to the presence of CIT in the area.

'CIT has done some really great stuff... I think when you think before it... we didn't have a community safety forum... or anything close to that. Now we have the community and police sitting together... coming together to try and find solutions. That's a massive thing... it really is.'

'For a number of years we didn't have anything... or at least we certainly didn't have enough, but there are improvements being made. I think there was a theory that even if you had a better infrastructure, people wouldn't fancy it... they still wouldn't want to be involved, but with CIT... I think you're seeing that people are really relishing having more involvement. They're taking full advantage of being able to engage with the police.'

'Having a fully functional community safety forum that everyone is bought into is a really big thing and that wouldn't be happening without CIT... so yeah, you've got to give the programme a lot of credit for that.'

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING BETTER

In this section, we identify the current community capacity that exists in Carrickfergus, with a specific focus on identifying things that have improved within the area.

Household Survey

- **84% of respondents indicated that they would know who to contact if they had a problem associated with their community.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 84%.

- **66% agreed or strongly agreed that they had the skills to help change their area for the better.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 50%.

- **34% of respondents felt the area would be in better condition in five years time.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 29%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **84% of participants largely struggled to mark many spaces where they felt things had improved in their area, but they did identify improvements along Marine Highway where some new shops had been installed (see Figure 3).**

- **50% of other participants marked the DeCourcy Shopping Centre and Sainsbury's supermarket.**

- **29% of participants marked the marina area.**

Figure 3: Locations in Carrickfergus where things have got better.

Qualitative Interviews

Participants generally struggled to reference many spaces were there had been improvements in the local area, but almost everyone felt that the creation and development of the community safety forum was a massive achievement.

Most credited CIT for leading the creation of this body.

'I think that's a big thing... the opportunity to get the police and the community is really invaluable. We weren't getting that beforehand.'

'We've had... ah... I'd say there's definitely been a gap... if that makes sense? Between the community and some statutory bodies... specifically the police... so we needed a platform to bring everyone together and the (community safety) forum is doing that.'

'If you were to ask most residents how the police were perceived or whatever... do you know how do they feel about them? I'd assume that most people would have concerns. I think a lot would say that they've been kind of an absent presence.'

'I think everyone involved in setting up the (community safety) forum deserve real credit. You're getting the police linked back in... you're directly confronting the concerns some people have had about their lack of visibility. I also think you're getting their explanation of what's happening... do you know what I mean? You're getting beyond some of the speculation that's out there, because I think sometimes

what they (the police) prioritise... I think the community might... ah, look at those things and think: 'that's not the problem, this is.' So, I think the engagement helps everyone to better understand each other.'

'It's a pretty incredible legacy for CIT and everyone involved.'

'I can't see that without CIT that would be happening.'

A small number of participants felt that the level of community spirit in the area had recently improved. They attributed this sense of improvement to the community reaction to the coronavirus pandemic. It was noted that people felt 'heartened' by the local reaction, which focused on looking after the most vulnerable members of the community.

Another small number of participants indicated that the Brexit related Northern Ireland Protocol had 'brought the area back together'. It was suggested that the matter had become 'a common problem for everyone in the area', which prompted residents 'to come together' to show their opposition.

'In this area... you'll have differences between groups... or different parts of Carrick, but that (Brexit related Northern Ireland Protocol) brought everyone together. When you see something like that... I think you set some of the internal problems aside for the greater good.'

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING WORSE

In this section, we identify some key problems that have emerged in Carrickfergus, which undermines the community capacity of the site.

Household Survey

- **Only 17% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had an influence over decisions that are made about their area.**
  The average response across all the CIT sites was 27%.

- **74% of participants indicated that in five years time, the area would be either in the same condition or worse.**
  The average response across all the CIT sites was 71%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Participants identified a large number of places within Carrickfergus that they felt had gotten worse, these included the majority of the town centre, residential streets (including Love Lane and Northlands) and the area near the marina.**

- **A small number of participants indicated that the introduction of large chain supermarkets had been detrimental to many local businesses in the area. This had a knock on impact on the town centre, which was now largely empty, as people felt that Tesco and Sainsbury's offered more value and options.**
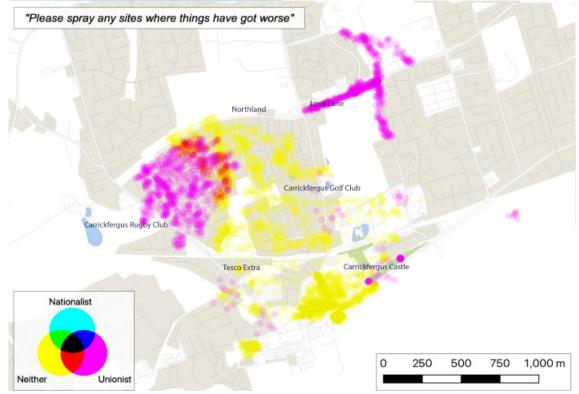

Figure 4: Locations in Carrickfergus where things have got worse.

Qualitative Interviews

Almost every participant indicated that they had significant concerns about the current condition and capacity of Carrickfergus. A number of these issues were linked to the presence and influence of paramilitary groups in the local area (see Pages 16 and 17 for more details), but many were also linked to the scale of deprivation that existed in the area.

Participants noted that they were worried about the poor educational attainment and the related levels of unemployment that existed throughout the site.

'The main thing we're producing in this area (via the education system) is a sense of hopelessness… we're not creating ambitious young people, who can feel that they could go anywhere in the world and contribute to other societies and economies. At age 16… 17… with most of their life ahead of them… we're telling them this is it… you've no qualifications… you've no family money… so this estate is going to be the height of your existence. They know at that age they're not going to do something that people will remember… they're invisible and their existence will be invisible.'

The prevalence of poor mental and physical health was also considered to be hugely problematic.

'The health system is overwhelmed, and people are going untreated. We've not been able to keep pace with the need that exists on a regional basis, but specifically in places like Carrick. There's a lot of conflict related trauma here,

but then you chuck in the level of worklessness and the fact that no one has money… then you see why people are self-medicating… and of course that then becomes another enormous problem.'

Participants were worried about the scale of alcohol and drug addiction that exists throughout the site.

'Awful. I found a bottle of vodka on my 13 year old about three months ago… aw… it was horrendous. We had to find out where it had come from… who would give a child alcohol. Eventually we got it out of him that some of the young lads associated with them (locally based paramilitary group) had given it to them. What do you do? I want to kill them, but my husband didn't let me go near them… you don't want to become more of a target.'

A number of participants felt uncomfortable and frustrated by the way in which the Loyalist community (and the Loyalism, in general) is presented within the media in Northern Ireland. It was suggested that this image is especially unfair, as there has been great effort taken in the local area to celebrate aspects of the Loyalist culture in a respectful and dignified manner.

'I think it's very unfair. The media is destroying our culture at a time when we couldn't be doing more to promote the positive messages associated with it.'

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF BELONGING

In this section, we identify how participants feel about the issue of community safety in Carrickfergus, with a specific focus on locations where people feel safe.

Household Survey

Respondents to the Survey were largely positive about the spirit of the community, regarding how it addressed incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.

- **64% of respondents felt that local residents abided by the rule of law.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 61%

- **77% felt that improved lighting and alleygating would make them feel safer, while 59% said improved relationships with the PSNI would also help.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 60% & 59%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Despite identifying a large number of problems with the area (identified elsewhere in this report), most participants indicated that they felt largely safe as they moved around Carrickfergus 9 (see Figure 5).**

- **When researchers probed this apparent contradiction, participants explained that some of Carrickfergus is unsafe, in general terms, but they felt confident in their ability to assess relevant risks and avoid sites well known for being unsafe.**
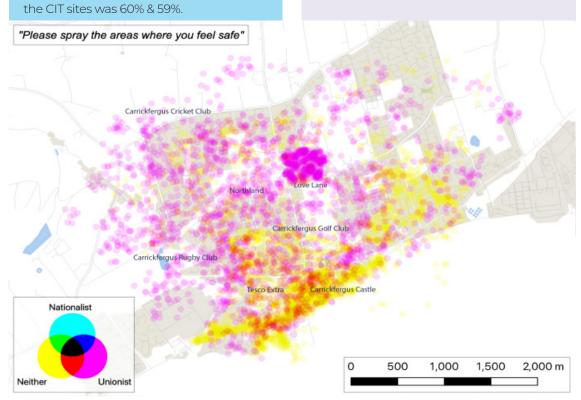

Figure 5: Locations in Carrickfergus where people feel safe.

Qualitative Interviews

Despite identifying various problems associated with their local area that frequently made them feel unsafe (identified elsewhere in this Report), a number of participants stated that they felt 'generally safe' as they moved around the site.

Participants generally indicated that there were two reasons for this apparent contradiction – both were associated with their familiarity of the area:

1. Participants indicated that they knew a large number of people in their local area and if was something was to happen to them, they would know where to get support.

2. Participants stated that they knew 'how to keep themselves safe'.

'I think Carrick probably is an unsafe place, in general… but when you've lived here for a long time… I think you grow to understand the problems. You understand the people and that brings you together. I think adversity bonds people. It might not be for the best reasons, but it's there. I would bet there's better… closer community togetherness here than where you live (directed at the researcher).'

'It is odd that (the stated contradiction that the area has a number of community safety related problems, but a large number of participants feel safe), but I suppose my feeling on that would be that most local (residents) they'll know where to go… where to avoid… what to wear… what not to. It's different for tourists or whatever. I think it's probably a problem for people moving into the area… even if you're coming from somewhere similar.'

'We (participant and her husband) immediately got it into the kids… as soon as they were old enough to understand, how they should get about the area. It's difficult, because you're not looking to scare them, but you definitely don't want them to be naïve… you don't want them to be soft and get trapped into something.'

A number of participants also stated the symbolic landscape helped them feel as though they were in a place 'where they belonged' and 'part of a community that was proud of it's past'.

'I do feel connected to the area… and I think as you walk around the area, you'll see a community that takes great care in respecting the past. That's very important to me and a large number of people in this area. I'm proud of my heritage and I'm proud that we can celebrate it. I think sometimes… that's where the tension comes from. What do I mean? Well that we should compromise all of this for the good of the peace process. Take down all of the things that are important to the community and live in a barren, blank space so that other people can feel safer.'

'I think they (symbols) are important… they're the things that link us to the past and that shape the cultural message for the future. You know… people don't live forever, so stories get lost and messages go untold, but symbols bond us… they'll bond me to the people in my family and area that came before me… and they'll bond with me all the generations that come in the future.'

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF THREAT

In this section, we identify the feelings participants had about the issue of community safety in Carrickfergus, with a specific focus on locations that made them feel unsafe.

Household Survey

While the respondents to the Survey indicated a number of concerns about their local area throughout their responses, there were two significant issues identified by a significant number of respondents:

- **70% felt ASB was a problem in the area.**
  The average across all the CIT sites was 55%.

- **78% believed that drug related crime was also a problem in the area.**
  The average across all the CIT sites was 57%.

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Participants indicated a number of specific locations with Carrickfergus where they felt unsafe.**

- **As identified earlier in this report, most participants had concerns about the current condition of the town centre. It was noted that there was less footfall in the area than there had been in the past and this led to a sense of unease for people who passed through the site.**

- **Participants also often stated that the potential of some of the area's assets was being compromised due to a local perception that they were unsafe – some parks and other**
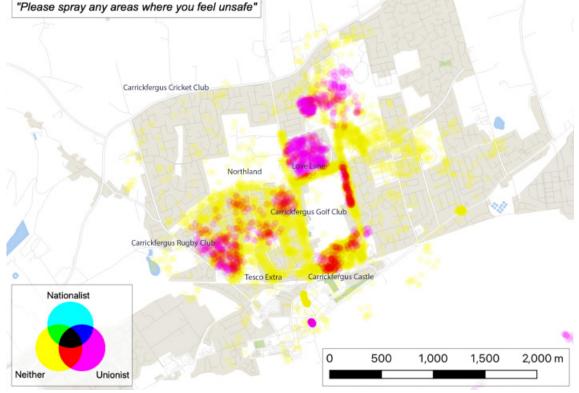

Figure 6: Locations in Carrickfergus where people feel unsafe.

green spaces were specifically referenced. For example, a number of participants indicated that they were not visit Carrickfergus Mill Ponds on their own or with their family due to a locally held believe that there is a large amount of ASB occurring in and around the site.

Qualitative Interviews

Although participants identified a number of ways in which they felt reassured about their levels of safety throughout Carrickfergus in the previous section, there were still a large number of issues that were considered to be points of threat.

Almost every point of threat could be traced back to the presence and influence of local paramilitary groups in the area (see Pages 16 and 17 for more details), but participants also referenced other aspects of the area that made them feel unsafe.

'I would say that more people are now disobedient… I don't mean kids… not young kids… I think you're just more likely to see things now that you might not have done in the past. I mean I wouldn't go near the town at the weekends… sometimes you just see ones bashing each over the head… fighting in broad daylight. You wouldn't have seen that… not in the past.'

'Drugs are so bad. I just don't want to encounter anyone when I'm going to the shop and back or whatever, cause if they're off their heads… they wouldn't even know if they done something to you.'

Participants stated poor relationships with the police and a lack of confidence in the justice system led to them feeling unsafe. It is also meant that a number of incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour went unreported.

'You're dealing with an area where people are seeing stuff and hearing stuff all the time (issues relating to local criminality), but they're not telling anyone. Why? Because they've no confidence that the police would do anything… and the big thing is that they know that the paramilitary groups definitely will. If those groups hear of something they'll be round and worse… worse than that… if they hear you're chatting to the police, before going to them or if you had spoken to the police about them… well… you're in trouble. You're in really serious trouble and the police aren't beating it round to give you a hand.'

'We're living in an area with a large amount of paramilitary activity… okay… we can agree on that. We also live in an area where there's a lot of crime… some of that is done by them (paramilitary groups) and some of it just happens like anywhere else. Now, the mad thing… the thing I 100% can't get my head round is that if there's an issue… if something has happened and the police can't immediately pin it on someone… the first people they go to are the local paramilitary groups. Just let that sink. Can you imagine? Your job is to defend the community from crime and the first place you go… the very first place… is to the local paramilitary man for advice. Well… you might as well take the justice system and throw it in the water, because you are done. You are 100% done with the ordinary member of the community… you've destroyed the credibility of the other community groups who aren't affiliated and you're complicit in building the influence and status of the paramilitary men. And the maddest thing… even madder… if you say this to them (the police)… they'll defend it (the approach taken) and say it's the best place to get information.'

INFLUENCE OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND/OR ORGANISED CRIME GANGS

In this section, we present the ways in which participants felt that paramilitary groups and/or Organised Crime Gangs have an influence in Carrickfergus.

Household Survey

- **24% of respondents felt that young people living throughout Carrickfergus were under too much influence from paramilitary groups.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 32%

- **40% felt that paramilitary groups create fear and intimidation in the area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 34%

- **26% felt that paramilitary groups had a controlling influence in their area.** The average response across all the CIT sites was 27%

Spraycan Mapping Tool

- **Almost every participant indicated that paramilitary groups are active throughout the entirety of Carrickfergus.**

- **There was some degree of debate regarding the exact type of activity the groups were involved in.**

- **Moreover, there was a split regarding to what extent this activity was at the behest of the local community. Most participants indicated that the groups had little community support, but some did suggest the groups were a necessary deterrent for young people engaging in anti-social behaviour.**
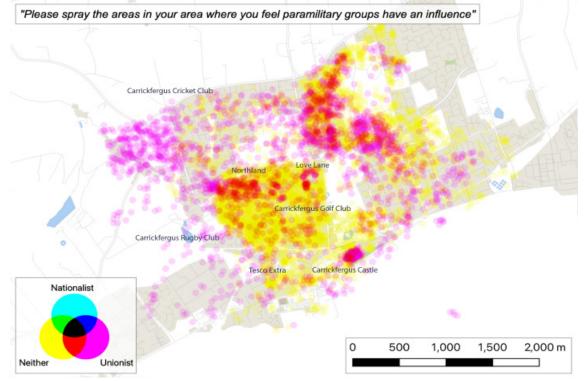
Qualitative Interviews

Figure 7: Influence of Paramilitary Groups and/or Organised Crime Gangs in Carrickfergus.

Every participant stated concerns about the presence and influence of locally based paramilitary groups in the Carrickfergus area.

Most participants stated that the activity the groups were involved in was destroying the area, though a very small number of participants did indicate that the organisations were effective in dealing with local problems that statutory bodies often struggled to resolve.

'Paramilitaries really do have control in this area. Right through the estates… Castlemara… Sunnylands. How do they exert that control? (It) can be anything. I mean it's always to do with making money and extorting people, but basically beyond that… it's an issue of control. So, they'll be looking for threats to their control. They'll see what people are doing and then swoop in and look to turn it over or take it over.'

'I would say most people have had enough… or they say they've had enough, but people still go to them. If a fella smacked their daughter or kicked over their elderly mother… that's where they'd go. Go to the police and it might never be dealt with… it'll get tangled up in the courts or the police will lose interest. Take it to the lads (associated with the locally based paramilitary group) and the fella, the perpetrator will know all about it.'

A large number of participants were concerned that locally based paramilitary groups were 'grooming' young people to become members of their organisations in the future. It was suggested that the most common ways in which this occurs is by the groups letting young people take drugs and alcohol without paying for them, with the understanding that 'they can do something in return' for the groups in the future.

'Their tactic… and it's always been this way is to trap someone… reel them in… be the nice guys who can get things done or look after things and then snap… you're in and you didn't even know it. They'll tell a young lad not to worry about paying up (for drugs/alcohol) and then they'll have him do something… a run to a house up the road (to drop off drugs) and again… without knowing it that child has just committed a criminal offence. These fellas know that and they don't care… I think that's why you're now saying we need to put a child exploitation angle on this.'

'It doesn't stop at the school gates anymore. They're in there as well.'

'One of the scary ones we're seeing now is the amount of young people having to join on behalf of a parent, because that parent is up to their neck in debt and the only way out is to offer to do stuff for them or have their kids do something for them. That's been scary, because in the past it was the other way round… they might have said to a parent… 'look, your wee lad has been up to all sorts and he's going to get a kicking… or get done… we'll let this go, but you and your brother will need to come round and see us.' That was very common, but to think about it the other way round… it's pretty sick. You've parents putting their addictions and their debt ahead of their own kids.'

ENDNOTE 1: Household Survey

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

1. 66% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong sense of community throughout their area.
2. 68% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt connected to their local area.

KEY FACILITIES

3. 13% indicated they were involved with a local church.
4. 14% were involved in a local sports club.
5. 9% were involved in a local school.
6. 5% were involved in a neighbourhood association.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING BETTER

7. 84% indicated that that they would know who to contact if they had a problem associated with their community.
8. 50% felt that they had the skills to help change their area for the better.
9. 29% felt that their area would be in a better condition in five years time.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY – GETTING WORSE

10. 27% agreed or strongly agreed that they had an influence over decisions that are made about their area.
11. 71% indicated that their area would either be in the same condition or worse off, in five years time.

COMMUNITY SAFETY – POINTS OF BELONGING

12. 61% of respondents felt that local residents in their area abided by the rule of law.
13. 60% indicated that changes to the local environment (including alley gating and/or extra street lighting) would help make people feel safer in their area.
14. 59% suggested that improved relationships with the PSNI would also help.

COMMUNITYY SAFETY – POINTS OF THREAT

15. 55% indicated that anti-social behaviour was a problem in their area.
16. 57% indicated that drug related crime was also a problem in the area.

INFLUENCE OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND/OR ORGANISED CRIME GANGS

17. 32% felt that locally based paramilitary groups had too much influence on young people living throughout their area.
18. 34% indicated that paramilitary groups create fear and intimidation in their area.
19. 27% noted that paramilitary groups had a controlling influence on their area.

ENDNOTE 2: SPRAYCAN MAPPING TOOL/PGIS SOFTWARE

The 'Spraycan' software constitutes a Participatory GIS (PGIS) interface that permits participants to answer spatial questions by drawing onto a Google map (or satellite image) using a 'spray can' (or 'airbrush') tool, as opposed to using traditional map-based drawing tools such as points and polygons.

The significance of this approach to participatory mapping relates to the way in which members of the public typically think about the world around them, and how this contrasts with the way in which we typically store these places in GIS software. People tend to think about the world in terms of places, which are typically vaguely defined, in that universally accepted and unequivocal boundaries cannot be determined for them. This is because places are defined by the individual perceptions, experiences and cognition of the participants, and so the extent of an area will necessarily vary between them.

Place-based models contrast with the space-based approaches that are used in typical GIS software, which require precision in the location and boundaries of these places. The use of such space-based representations for vague places enforces an 'artificial precision' (after Montello et al., 2003) onto them, resulting in a poor representation of the place in question – which will impact upon any subsequent interpretation and analysis. It has also been shown that people find it difficult to convert their place-based thoughts and feelings into spatial representations in this way, meaning that the imposition of this 'artificial precision' also acts to reduce the quality of the data.

In order to avoid these negative effects, and the resulting challenges from incorporating findings into policy, we can use alternative map interfaces that are designed 'for purpose', of which the 'Spraycan' is a prominent example. In this case, participants can add data to the map without consideration of precise boundaries, as well as allowing them to change the density of the 'paint' (denoting variation in strength of feeling, for example). This approach facilitates either qualitative (e.g. Huck et al., 2019) or quantitative (e.g. Huck et al., 2014) interpretation, and has been applied to a range of environmental and socio-cultural problems worldwide, by a variety of organisations, governments and universities.

FURTHER READING

More information about the software and its motivations can be found in the following publications:

Huck, J.J., Whyatt, J.D. Sturgeon, B., Hocking, B., Davies, G., Dixon, J., Jarman, N. and Bryan, D. (2018). Exploring Segregation and Sharing in a Divided City: a PGIS approach. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 109:1, 223-241

Huck, J.J., Whyatt, D. & Coulton, P. (2014). Spraycan: a PPGIS for capturing imprecise notions of place. *Applied Geography*. 55, p. 229-237

Evans, A. J., & Waters, T. (2007). Mapping vernacular geography: web-based GIS tools for capturing "fuzzy" or "vague" entities. International *Journal of Technology, Policy and Management*, 7(2), 134-150.

Montello, D. R., Goodchild, M. F., Gottsegen, J., & Fohl, P. (2003). Where's downtown?: Behavioral methods for determining referents of vague spatial queries. In *Spatial cognition and computation* (pp. 185-204). Psychology Press.

Co-operation Ireland (2018) *Building Capacity to Support Transition in Carrickfergus* and Larne and *NISRA deprivation figures.*

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Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) (2017). *Education, Skills and Training Indicators.* Belfast: NISRA.

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) (2017). *Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure.* Belfast: NISRA.

Sturgeon, B. & Bryan, D. (2021). *Communities in Transition: Mid-term Review* (Belfast: The Executive Office NI).

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