

Belfast Interface Project

Annual Report

March 26th – December 3rd 2010

Policy: People & Places

Aim 1: To be proactive in linking and involving local communities in changing policy and in advocating for change that is of practical benefit to interface communities.

Objectives:

1.1. BIP will work in partnership to influence policy.

Actions:

1.1.1 Develop a policy network from BIP membership and the interface community sector.

Having secured funding through Belfast City Council's small grants process, we commissioned a piece of external consultancy work from Roz Goldie Partnership which will be completed by December 31st 2010:

- Document effective practice in the development of issue based policy networks and platforms.
- Gauge support for the development of a practitioners' forum offering a) peer-support and networking opportunities for community activists, groups and other stakeholders in the development of shared space, and b) a policy network through which to more effectively influence interface neighbourhood regeneration policy.
- RGP options paper and report presented to first meeting of key stakeholders group on November 11th and it was agreed to hold a further follow-up meeting on November 25th 2010.
- We intend to develop this project in early 2011 by holding four geographical workshops (North, South, East and West) which in turn will nominate to a citywide working group to progress the idea of a citywide interface practitioners forum.

1.2. Promote over a three to five year period the importance of an integrated strategy to transform interface communities into cohesive communities.

Actions:

1.2.1 Annual review of opportunities to influence policy areas by working in partnership with agencies and departments over a 3-5 year period

- BIP continues to be represented on the Interface Working Group (IWG) and the Interface Community Partnership group.
- Over this period, BIP was represented on the following: Community Dialogue Executive; board of Institute for Conflict Research.
- BIP staff are also on a number of significant regeneration projects across the city including; Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project (SRRP), Black Mountain Shared Space Project (BSSP), Cromac Regeneration Initiative (CRI) and Skainos.
- BIP have also formed a partnership with Irish Peace Centres (IPC) and Community Dialogue to fund and deliver the Inner East Outer West project.
- We have also as outlined in the report summary had a number of positive engagements with key stakeholders in the community, statutory and public sectors.

We are also attending the BCC interface consultation group (SD) and these meetings have included key discussions with SIB (Mary McKee), PSNI (Ass. C/C Alistair Finlay), Evelyn Hoy / Ricky Irwin (OFMdFM), MOJ (David Ford), and both junior ministers (Gerry Kelly / Robin Newton OFMdFM) (SD & PC).

1.3. Develop capacity to influence and reflect within the Interface Policy Network.

Actions:

1.3.1 Design and implement a programme with the policy network of facilitated sessions sharing experience, briefings to develop capacity for reflection and influence.

- This action will follow the completion of (1.1.1) above, if the consultancy report and discussion thereafter shows evidence of support for the formation of the policy network.

1.4. Develop knowledge base, aid reflection and influence action.

Actions:

1.4.1 Commission and disseminate research or surveys as agreed.

- 'Crossing The Line: key features of effective practice in the development of shared space in areas close to an interface': This research project was fundraised for and commissioned in early 2010. The final publication, highlighting some of the key features of effective practice was launched by the Lord Mayor in Belfast City Hall; copies will be posted in hard copy to members and key stakeholders by Dec. 2010.
- CRC have also agreed to part fund (£2,500) towards the total cost (approx. £10,125) of our Mapping Defensive Architecture project; we will continue to try and source the additional monies to complete this project.

1.5 Build on linkages with interface networks.

Actions:

1.5.1 Develop relationships with non-member interface networks: meet Management Committees of BCRC, NBIN, LINC etc. in 2009/2010 and thereafter formally twice per year.

BIP board members made contact with the Steering Group of BCRC and held two positive joint meetings which were useful in exchanging perspectives and in identifying areas of potential collaborative work. Regular meetings between BCRC Project Manager and BIP strategic director have also been initiated. Meetings between the strategic director and other key stakeholders such as SLIG, Intercomm, NBIN, LINC and BRN have also taken place, with board to board meetings planned for the near future.

1.6. Development of BIP and relevance of learning beyond Belfast.

Actions:

1.6.1 Formally explore the interface-related issues and needs being identified at specific locations outside of Belfast; enter into exploratory discussions about the relevance of expertise and information which could be shared.

Initial and tentative contacts have been made in a number of areas outside Belfast with a view to exploring this area of work further during 2011/2012. We have also had a number of requests from councils outside Belfast to discuss interface issues and we will continue to engage with the Rural Community Network (RCN) amongst others on this matter.

Advocacy: Culture & Identity

Aim 2: To support interface communities and to advocate with agencies and others in order to address issues of safety in interface communities and safe access to work and services, through improved relationships between communities, increased labour mobility and the development of shared services.

Objectives:

2.1. Advocate the advantages of sharing taking into account the realities and difficulties which may apply.

Actions:

2.1.1 Promote sharing through large and small group discussions and the dissemination of successful models of practice in the creation of shared space, including Suffolk Lenadon Interface Group (SLIG).

The piece of external consultancy work which we have commissioned from Roz Goldie Partnership, mentioned at 1.1.1 above, includes 2 further aims:

- To carry out and record at least 12 interviews with practitioners experienced in the creation of shared space in neighbourhoods close to an interface;
- Based on the interviews, to write a new publication outlining key features of effective practice in the development of shared space in areas close to an interface, by June 30th 2010, and co-ordinate printing of 500 copies. This work has been completed and copies are in the process of being forwarded to members and key stakeholders.
- BIP are assisting Black Mountain Shared Space Project (BSSP) to access pathfinder funding to progress their shared regeneration project.

2.2. Promote accessibility of local services and facilities.

Actions:

2.2.1 On a pilot basis, proactively identify a number of clearly defined statutory services or facilities which are associated with access difficulties and, working inclusively with the relevant agencies, community and youth groups and residents, promote greater access to these.

BIP has been part of the MLK reference group (Maze/Long Kesh) on how best the future of this site could be developed as shared space.

2.3. Support member groups with practical support and involve in each others learning.

Actions:

2.3.1 Provide information and assistance on obtaining youth resources and crisis intervention.

We have agreed to submit a joint application (BIP/CRC) to SEUPB to deliver a youth intervention programme over a 2 / 4 year period and are currently working on the application and developing a consortium to support the bid. CRC will provide the financial support structure and BIP will deliver the operational project. This will initially pilot in 8 interface clusters and grow to 12 clusters covering the city by completion.

2.3.2 Build on labour mobility training project education.

We have continued to work with community groups and agencies in a range of interface areas across the city to build upon our successful IFI-funded Labour Mobility training project through which we offered anti-racism and anti-sectarianism training together with construction skills register (CSR) training and some forklift, pallet truck, and catering-related training to people aged 16-40, with the majority of trainees in the 16-25 age range. Through our Belfast City Council Peace 3 small grant-funded Interface Mobility project, BIP provided opportunities, this time on a cross-community basis, for employment-related and inter-cultural training, education and strategic planning for adults and young people in 3 different interface settings within the North, South and East of the city. We will continue to try and source funding to repeat this initiative and may be able to link it to one of our other projects.

2.3.3 Roll out youth mediation project - strategic planning for adults and young people in interface areas.

We have secured the funding to deliver the pilot youth/adult interface project (IEOW) and Irish Peace Centres (IPC) are currently tendering for the local delivery which will also be supported by Community Dialogue. BIP will chair this consortium and we are hopeful that if this model is successful that we will be refunded to deliver it citywide and over an extended period.

Conflict Transformation: Society & Structure

Aim 3: To support interface communities to develop positive relationships by encouraging and enabling co-operation, promoting articulation and understanding of key issues involved in sharing and division, and providing support through change.

Objectives:

3.1. Support conflict transformation, reconciliation and conflict management in communities.

Actions:

3.1.1 Advocate the development of a city-wide dialogue initiative complementary to the Interface Working Group/Community Partners group.

On the basis of the research carried out by the Roz Goldie partnership, two meetings were held with a wide range of interface practitioners from across the city. From these initial discussions it was agreed to hold a further geographically based (N, S, E & W Belfast) series of meetings in the New Year. These meetings would in turn nominate to a Belfast working group to progress this work and potentially develop a strategic plan.

3.1.2 Respond to requests and provide independent facilitation, mediation and mentoring support at local interfaces and develop a mentoring programme

- a) BIP provided a mentoring service to SLIG over this period.
- b) Provided facilitation support for a SLIG/Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project (SRRP) joint planning day on October 5th.
- c) BIP facilitated and co-ordinated the design and delivery of a Tigers Bay Community Relations Consultation Strategy, working with the Tigers Bay Community Relations Working Group. The strategy included generation of local news-sheets and posters, hosting of local workshops in various venues, delivery of a door-to-door survey, plus news-sheets and public meeting to announce findings.
- d) We have agreed with IPC that they will resource BIP to provide facilitation, mentoring and mediation for our membership and others who may request support.
- e) We have met with Concerned Residents of Upper Ardoyne (CRUA) to see how we could support them to deliver local inter-community work.

3.1.3 Actively develop strategic partnerships with facilitation / mediation / dialogue and training organisations to support activist and residents to encourage dialogue and grow facilitation skills.

- a) BIP has been represented on the management group of a Mediation Northern Ireland-led training partnership - the Belfast Mediation Capacity Building Project – alongside Belfast Reconciliation Network, the North and West Belfast Parades and Cultural Forum, and Tides Training Consultancy. The project offers basic and advanced training in mediation skills to activists in interface areas.
- b) BIP has also been represented on the management group of a Workers' Educational Association-led training partnership - the Belfast Divercity Project – alongside Mediation Northern Ireland (MNI) and the Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC). The project offers a programme of training and support for organisations who wish to explore the development of collaborative working relationships across organisational boundaries and cultural differences.
- c) BIP signposted groups to training providers, funders and other conflict transformation resources such as Intercomm, North Belfast Conflict Transformation Forum, LINC, Ulster People's College and others.

Governance: Management & Administration

Aim 4: To ensure that membership remains reflective of interface communities as changes occur and that the organisation is managed efficiently and effectively.
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Objectives

4.1. *Ensure that membership remains reflective of interface communities.*

Actions:

4.1.1 Consult, support and continually develop BIP membership to reflect the changing interface communities

We have been actively addressing our membership accessibility and are currently updating our application form and online application process.

4.2. *Increase the visibility of interface communities in promoting positive change and cohesion; increase visibility of BIP.*

Actions:

4.2.1 Produce and distribute the Interface news-sheet.

We hope to progress this electronically in 2011

4.2.2 Develop the website as an interactive tool.

David Fox Website Coordinator (Transition Training IT student) is currently on placement with BIP, updating the website which we hope will be ready for the AGM.

4.3. Organisational effectiveness: Accountability and Strategy.

Actions:

4.3.1 Independent monitoring and evaluation

We are currently looking at costing in relation to monitoring and evaluation and we may need to source funding to provide this work.

4.3.2 Commission an annual audit

2009-10 accounts have been prepared by auditor JL Grant. These were signed and returned to auditor for final signatures, printing and availability at AGM.

4.3.3 Hold an annual AGM

BIP held its (9th) AGM on 26th March 2010

4.3.4 Hold an annual team building and forward planning residential.

BIP's annual team building and forward planning residential was held in the Galgorm House Hotel on 27th/28th Sept., 2010.

4.4. Organisational effectiveness: Human Resources and Finance.

Actions:

4.4.1 Update policies and procedures as required.

Policies and procedures have been reviewed and amended and we are currently in discussion with NICVA to update our policy and procedures manual.

4.4.2 Maintain an effective staff team

Regular staff meetings are held and staffing requirements are continually reviewed.

4.4.3 Produce and review 5 year rolling budget annual budget and projected cash flows.

a) Budget to March 31, 2014 drafted to accompany new Strategic Plan. Reviewed by board of directors and finalised in February 2010.

b) Cash flow reports reviewed monthly by board.

4.5. Organisational effectiveness: Board development.

Actions:

4.5.1 Develop an annual board development programme

We hope to put this in place after AGM in Dec 2010. Strategic director and John McQuillan (board) have completed CAPT training programme, PC will be part of second phase. Any other board members looking to be part of this programme should contact the director.