Examining the *Audit of Interface Issues,* consistent themes arise across the city concerning the conditions within and between interface communities. There is a strong and frequently repeated perception that statutory agencies have neglected interface communities and have failed to deliver effective services and support to these areas.

Taking Question 1a as an example:
In your view how would you rate the attractiveness of the physical environment in interface areas throughout Belfast? (Where 10 is very high and 1 is very low)

The responses resulted in an average of 3.28.
In terms of themes arising from the question, 52% of the groups cited the physical blight of the areas and 60% said that physical conditions were adversely affected by statutory 'neglect' or 'abandonment'. This criticism of the statutories was a feature in response to many questions and has been a significant outcome of the survey.

Other key findings were as follows:

• 20% identified anti-social behaviour as negatively impacting upon the social vibrancy of their communities.

• Economic vibrancy was felt to be very low in interface communities across the city, with 60% identifying lack of investment at interfaces as a major problem.

• The issue of the extent to which interface communities have come to terms with the legacies of the past proved challenging for very many groups. If there was a point of concurrence it was that all appear to find this a difficult but very important area of work.

• The main theme arising from the issue of freedom of movement in accessing services and facilities was that fear is still a dominant factor in influencing patterns of movement and access.

• In relation to levels of inter-community tension/intimidation and violence, members reported that these fluctuate depending on area, the time of year and the bigger political picture, although a consistent ongoing level of tension seems to be the norm.

• 56% of respondents cited that levels of inter-community dialogue are higher than ten years ago. However there remain areas where it is very low or non-existent.

Members' needs:

The clearest and most consistent theme arising from Section Two, whilst there is a great deal of information in this section, is that BIP's membership sees the future role of BIP as a lobbying organisation on behalf of members, providing a collective voice to government, its agencies and to the political structures.

The secondary theme is that of BIP as a facilitator, or support provider, of dialogue projects amongst interface groups both in specific geographic interface areas, or around thematic issues which may be city wide. This is an area in which BIP has a proven track record of activity and experience, as cited by the membership, and which members wish to see continued and enhanced.

At twenty pages long the survey has produced a substantial amount of information and will strongly influence the development and direction of BIP.

The full survey report can be downloaded as a pdf file from www.belfastinterfaceproject.org

Belfast Interface Project Survey of Membership Needs (2004)

Executive Summary

Introduction:

Belfast Interface Project (BIP) is a democratically accountable membership organisation as constituted from 2000. There are three categories of membership:

- Community group members
- Associate members
- Individual members

BIP aims to promote creative approaches towards the regeneration of Belfast's interface areas and our overall vision is of a Belfast in which interface communities:

- Are free of intercommunity tension, intimidation and violence
- Have come to terms with the legacies of the past
- Are socially and economically vibrant, within an attractive physical environment
- Enjoy freedom of movement in accessing facilities and services

A Membership Support and Communications Project was established in 2003.
Under this project, BIP in conjunction with Community Evaluation Northern Ireland, developed and piloted a draft survey of membership needs in January 2004. In May and June the final survey was conducted with 25 respondents completing it.

The findings of the survey were presented in June 2004 to the first annual BIP conference entitled *'Moving on at the Interface?'*.

Survey structure:

The survey was structured in two sections. The first, *An Audit of Interface Issues,* examines perceptions of conditions and perceptions of change over the last ten years in interface communities across Belfast.

Questions, both quantitative and qualitative, were based around the following themes:

- Physical attractiveness of the interface areas
- Levels of social vibrancy
- Levels of economic vibrancy
- How communities have come to terms with the legacies of the past
- Perceptions of freedom of movement in accessing facilities and services
- Levels of tension, intimidation and violence
- Levels of intercommunity dialogue between areas

Section Two, *Members' Needs,* contains further qualitative questions examining what support BIP can give to membership groups. Could BIP support groups to address the legacies of the past or to improve freedom of movement in accessing facilities and services in interface areas? Later questions examine the training which groups receive to develop skills for their work, their key providers, and any gaps in provision that members reported.

Key findings:

Twenty five surveys were completed with 44% identifying their community as mainly unionist/protestant, 24% as mainly nationalist/catholic and 32% as mixed. However of that 32%, all but one group said they were 'mixed but segregated' eg. Duncairn or Greater Springfield area. Additionally, 80% of respondents said there had been an increase in ethnic minority representation within their community or across the city generally.

Belfast
Interface
Project