

REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY SAFETY SEMINAR JUNE 2011

' A report from the South Dublin Community Platform on their Community
Safety Seminar held on 28th June 2011

Executive Summary

The Community Platform is a network of Social Inclusion organisations in South Dublin. Some of our member organisations work in the area of environment and in particular community safety. The SDCP is working to ensure that communities are supported to actively participate both in local community safety initiatives and the community infrastructure in the county. In June 2011, we hosted a community safety seminar with a view to promoting the community safety infrastructure in the county to a wide range of actors including community garda, county councillors, community workers, youth workers, local residents, community drug teams and community platform and community forum members. The aim of this seminar was to promote the existing community safety infrastructure in the county to those working on the ground and identify ways of increasing participation in those structures especially from marginalised groups. We also aimed to identify ways of making the existing infrastructure more effective and identify new and emerging issues in the county with a view to influencing the work of the Joint Policing Committee and The Local Policing Fora.

The seminar was opened by Gus O'Connell, Chair of the Joint Policing Committee and saw presentations on the workings of the Joint Policing Committee, Tallaght Local Policing Forum, and South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum. We also had a presentation from Johnny Connolly Criminologist of the Health Research Board on 'Making community policing work for marginalised groups - the challenges and possible consequences of failure'

The speakers gave an overview of the community safety Infrastructure in South County Dublin. The Joint Policing Committee is on a statutory footing and works to address safety issues at a county level with the three recently established local policing fora reporting into the committee at each meeting. The Safety Forum in south west Clondalkin also feeds issues to the Clondalkin Local Policing forum and through the community platform into the Joint Policing Committee.

Johnny Connolly who acted as an advisor and was involved in the development of the structures at a national level, gave a history of community safety prior to the set up of JPC's in 2005, he spoke of community responses in the inner city and suburbs to the then emerging drugs issue and how he was involved in the setting up of the North Inner City Policing Forum. Since their set up, he sees currently a disjunction between the Joint Policing Committees and the Local Policing Fora. He recommended that the agenda of the Joint Policing Committees be set by the Local Policing Fora. He also talked about fear in communities as a result of varying degrees and levels of intimidation, the changing nature of illicit drug misuse, intimidation of families, and the emerging issue of very young children both acting as drug couriers and intimidating the wider community. He stressed the importance of maintaining the

environment, preventing areas from becoming no-go areas, the alienation of young people and the need to support those experiencing the highest level of intimidation to trust and engage with the existing services and structures.

In terms of ensuring effectiveness of the Joint Policing Committee and the local policing fora, he said it is positive that we now have an infrastructure to work with. He stressed the prioritisation of issues, to deal with the very serious levels of crime and intimidation, ensuring participation in an equal way in the structures, transparency in decision making and feedback on the issues to local communities. He also suggested an evaluation of the current structures so as to improve and build on what's there, and to evidence base all work carried out so as communities can be assured of progress. Finally he spoke of being realistic in terms of what can be achieved as the issues being faced are very complex in nature, in terms of poverty and social exclusion He said we now have an opportunity to use the available structures to benefit all communities especially those most marginalised.

The speakers were followed by themed workshops, these included, 'Engaging Local Communities in Safety Initiatives', 'Emerging Safety Issues in the County' 'Working together to make the best use of the Structures' and 'Combating Intimidation where do we start?' The aim of the workshop was for participants to devise a series of recommendations to the Joint Policing Committee. The recommendations included ideas for creating safe spaces for those most marginalised to participate, recommendations for improving the workings of the structures and issues that need to be put on the agenda of the Joint Policing Committee.

Having discussed the presentations and workshop recommendations the South Dublin Community Platform is making a series of recommendations to the Joint Policing Committee to improve the effectiveness of Community Safety Infrastructure in South County Dublin.

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1. Background to Seminar

South Dublin Community Platform is a network of community based organisations operating in the area of South County Dublin whose members have a focus on social inclusion and anti-poverty. Our membership is diverse in that we work with a variety of target groups including communities experiencing disadvantage, Travellers, new communities, women experiencing disadvantage, Drug Users, and youth. We work on a wide range of issues, some of which include Housing, the Environment, Community Safety, Health and Education.

The Platform has a representative role on the Local Government Structures for addressing issues facing local communities, including the Joint Policing Committee.

Members of the Platform work directly with individuals and communities experiencing social exclusion and living in dense urban areas with low income and high levels of poverty. Consequently, there is a first-hand knowledge, awareness and understanding of community safety issues and how this impacts on people's everyday lives. When looking at the Community Safety Infrastructure in the County there appeared to be varying levels of community participation throughout both the county and the county infrastructure. In some areas of the county there was a high level of quality community participation and in other areas the level of participation was low or non-existent. In addition to this, some types of infrastructure facilitated better participation than others.

It appeared that there were a number of different statutory, community and voluntary organisations all engaging in the infrastructure, yet one group may not necessarily interact with the other and it was thought that mapping the safety infrastructure for everyone would support a cohesive plan for the county.

The ethos of the Platform is to ensure that those being affected by issues participate in the decision making processes that seek solutions to address the issues. We also believe that it is necessary to plan strategically so that the opportunity for long term change is optimised. The Platform made a decision to host a seminar that would bring all the key stakeholders together to examine and improve the effectiveness of the Community Safety Infrastructure in South County Dublin.

2 Seminar Outline

2.1 Seminar Aims and Objectives

The South Dublin Community Platform in planning this seminar aimed for tangible outcomes that would influence the effectiveness of existing community infrastructure and enhance and increase quality community participation throughout the various groups, fora and committees operating in the county.

In addition to this, we aimed to create awareness of the current safety initiatives through the provision of information. Furthermore we aimed to create a space for dialogue so that people could discuss safety issues, with a particular emphasis on intimidation. The seminar objectives were promoted to participants and key stakeholders as follows:

1. To offer participants an opportunity to understand the wide range of the current safety initiatives and Infrastructure in the County and how they operate
2. To explore how grass roots communities can engage within the current Safety Infrastructure
3. To identify emerging issues in relation to safety in the county and the ways in which existing structures and initiatives can work together to address these issues
4. To explore ways of engaging those most affected by crime and anti-social behaviour in current safety infrastructure

2.2 Key Seminar Participants

To ensure inclusion from all necessary stakeholders, the seminar was promoted to the following:

- Community Organisations engaged in delivering Community Safety Initiatives
- Statutory Agencies with responsibility for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Members of local Drugs Task Forces and their associate groups
- Members of the South Dublin Joint Policing Committee and Local Policing Fora
- Residents groups, Estate Management Groups and Environmental Groups who have an interest in community safety
- Youth Services and Garda Youth Diversion Projects
- Members of RAPID Area Implementation Teams
- Members of the South Dublin Community Platform
- Members of South Dublin Community Forum

2.3 Seminar Speakers

Opening Address- Gus O'Connell

- Gus O'Connell is the Independent councillor for Lucan and current chair of the South Dublin Joint Policing Committee

South Dublin Joint Policing Committee - an Overview

- Ann Byrne is a staff member of South Dublin County Council Community Department and part of her brief is the administration of the Joint Policing Committee

Brookfield/Fettercairn Local Policing Forum

- Sarah O'Gorman is a RAPID coordinator, SDCC with responsibility for the coordination of the Brookfield/Fettercairn Local Policing Forum.

South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum

- Bernadette Farrell CPLN Partnership coordinates the SWCC Community Safety Forum

Making Community Policing work for marginalised communities—the challenges and possible consequences of failure

- Johnny Connelly Health Research Board

Johnny Connolly is a criminologist with the Health Research Board. In recent years, he has researched, lectured and published widely in the areas of drugs and crime, illicit drug markets and community policing.

3. Summary of Presentations

The following is a summary of all contributors on the day: full speaker's notes are available by contacting communityplatform@gmail.com

3.1 Opening Address –Gus O'Connell Chair Joint Policing Committee

Gus O'Connell opened the seminar and made the following points;

- This seminar is about making South Dublin Safer
- He sees the local policing fora and safety fora as 'important vehicles to regain a sense of security and community'
- He talked about how much society has changed since he was a community worker in the inner city
- He said we need to 'befriend those who are marginalised' and encourage people to stop and think about the consequences of their actions
- He said this seminar will give us an opportunity to reflect on what can be achieved through the Local Policing Fora.
- He looked forward to the 'fruits of today's work' which is being strongly led by the Community Platform.

3.2 'South Dublin Joint Policing Committee an Overview'-

Presentation by Ann Byrne Community Department South Dublin County Council

3.21 Background to the establishment of the Joint Policing Committee

- They were set up under the Garda Siochana Act 2005
- They aimed to be Partnerships with a Collective and Co-operative approach
- Not to detract from or substitute for either regular day to day contact or consultation at ground level
- Providing opportunities to contribute to improved safety and



quality of life of the Community

Ann Stressed that the JPC was set up to allow Gardaí, the County Council and the community sector to work together in an informal way as possible to improve community safety in the county

3.22 Structure of the Joint Policing Committee

The Structure is prescribed by the JPC guidelines and has:

- 14 Local Authority Members
- 5 Members of the Oireachtas,
- 2 Garda Nominations,
- 3 Community Representatives
- The County Manager + 1 Nominated Official.

3.23 The Role of the Committee

The committee provides a forum where a local authority and the Senior Garda Officers responsible for the policing can consult, discuss, and make recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the area. The meetings are co-operative in nature and operate with the minimum of formality.

The meetings are strategic and action oriented, informed by an annual work programme, outcome focussed and constructive, Focus on issues such as:

- Drugs
- CCTV
- Public order
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Safer communities
- Vandalism
- Estate management
- The issue of Loose Horses in the County

3.24 Successes of the JPC's include

- Work done on establishing community CCTV in Tallaght which is being monitored '24/7'
- 'Reclaiming our Parks' report done by the Parks Sub-Group of the Joint Policing Committee

3.25 Communities Working with the JPC

- Through the Local Policing For a
- Through the Community Platform
- Through the Community Forum
- Through the membership, Gardaí, Elected Representatives, Council

3.26 Local Policing Fora

There have been three local policing fora established under the Joint Policing Committee. One in Brookfield Fettercairn, One in Clondalkin Station area and one in North Clondalkin. A report from each forum is given at each Joint Policing Committee meeting. The fora are in their infancy, and part of the work of the fora is to hold public meetings for communities to liaise directly with Gardaí and council officials. Ann finished by saying that the JPC and its structures are open, the structure is there to benefit the community and they are open to including people.

3.3'Tallaght Local Policing Forum'

Presentation by Sarah O'Gorman RAPID Coordinator, South Dublin County Council

3.31 Background and Set up of Tallaght Local Policing Forum

Prior to the establishment of the Tallaght Local Policing Forum establishment there was no community safety infrastructure in the west Tallaght area. The national LPC guidelines were used to support the development of the forum. While the guidelines refer to the role of coordinator of the LPC there were no resources to employ a person to take up this role. South Dublin County Council allocated a RAPID coordinator to support the establishment and development of the Tallaght LPC.

Work began with a community Survey of the 2000 households covered by the forum in May 2010. The Joint Policing Committee elected a member of the council to the forum. There are also 9 Community Representatives selected from local groups in the area, the Coordinator from the Tallaght Drug Task Force, the director of housing and Superintendent Dolan from Tallaght Station, the guidelines allow for other relevant groups and Fettercairn Estate management and CDI are also representatives. Members of the group remain anonymous to protect people's identity.

The survey form was included in a community newsletter and respondents could reply via phone, email or returning the survey form to a box in the local community centres. Results of the survey highlighted the following issues:

- Dumping
- Drug Dealing in Public
- The necessity for more Gardaí on the beat and more drug squad
- The issue of Garda response times
- Intimidation by groups of young people
- Turnaround time for vacant and boarded up SDCC houses

3.32 Public Meetings

Part of the processes of the LPC is to host public meetings. At the first meeting there were 200 people in attendance, people were upset and expressed concern on a number of issues locally. The service providers present agreed to a number of actions and agreed to report back to the next meeting.

The second public meeting about 150 people attended, Philip Jennings of Blanchardstown Local Policing

Forum Facilitated the meeting and the service providers reported on actions agreed at the first meeting.

Both the first and second meetings were held in Fettercairn and the third was held in Brookfield. There were 60 people in attendance in Brookfield, and there were a number of reasons told to the coordinator as to why attendance was lower here, including 'intimidation' or the fact that people 'could not be bothered.

3.33 Issues at this meeting included:

- Anti-Social behaviour by different groups of young people- aged between 9-10 years and 15-16
- Drug Crime and open Drug Dealing
- Elderly people in fear in their homes
- Littering and Dumping
- Frustration at procedures within the council to tackle some of the issues
- No evictions in the communities object to a particular family
- Garda Response times
- Burglaries
- Loose horses

3.34 Response to issues at meetings:

- Reports from SDCC Housing Department and Environment Department
- Reports from Gardaí on CCTV, Crime Rates, Drugs related operations and Case Management
- Presentation from Crime Prevention Officer
- Commitments given to individuals after meetings

3.35 Plans for the future

- Continue with Management Committee and Public Meetings
- Report to South Dublin JPC
- Joint actions with other Local Policing Fora
- Raising awareness through newsletter etc.
- Explore possibility of expanding to other areas of Tallaght

3.4 'South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum'

Presentation by Bernie Farrell South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum Worker

3.41 Background to South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum

Safety Forum has been ongoing for the past 7 years with the majority of original members still participating.

- The South West Clondalkin forum is one of two in Clondalkin funded by the Dept of the Environment
- This funding comes down through SDCC, originally to the local CDPs. It is a mainstreamed drugs Task Force initiative.
- Our forum now comes under CPLN Area Partnership
- The project worker organises and supports all work of the forum and ensures that members receive agendas, minutes etc; in plenty of time prior to meetings
- The forum is built on a partnership approach between service providers, locally elected representatives and the community members.

3.42 The Community Planning Group and Community Forum

Community planning group consists of the local residents groups who are supported in their participation by the forum worker. In an area where no residents groups are active we work with identified individuals to support their involvement in the forum but encouraging them to identify other residents in that estate to form a structured constituted group. Other members of the planning group include Local Drugs projects, Clondalkin Carers Association, Housing Association reps and the Youth Services.

The planning group is a safe space where local people can discuss local issues that affect them and their community. They feel complete ownership of this space and work together to prioritise the issues for the forum agenda. They also clarify among themselves possible responses to these issues to put to the service providers.

The forum itself meets every six weeks, always the week after the planning group. Dates are set in early January and only one forum date has ever been changed in 7 years.

This ensures that everyone involved the Gardaí, SDCC, local councillors and the community can commit their time in advance. We feel that this structured planning has helped to keep people involved and

committed.

3.43 Issues discussed at forum meetings range across a wide spectrum of safety concerns both in Local Authority and Private Estates.

- Different levels of ASB and its effects on communities has always been one of the issues for our forum.
- safety in local parks due to drug misuse and drinking
- bus services being affected by kids throwing missiles
- poor street lighting causing people to feel unsafe and vulnerable particularly in winter
- Dumping and Litter issues.

All of these issues are discussed at forum level and possible solutions put forward, these are kept to clear practical and realistic actions. Any agreed actions from service providers are written up on a flip chart and fed back at the next forum meeting. Tea and Coffee are always available in the same room so that the community and service providers can network, we find this works really well as people do stay to talk and interact.

The strong organised community voice within the forum has been built through a variety of training. Examples of this include chairing and mediation training.

This in turn has helped the community understand the processes through which agencies work and helped them to be more realistic about what can be achieved. This realism in turn helps build relationships between the community, local elected reps and service providers.

The community is now in a strong position to have some influence on policy. We do this by writing submissions to SDCC, Dept of Justice and others. Delegations are also organised to the council for community members to meet with different departments on a variety of issues and concerns. Submissions and delegations always have the support of the local councillors and other forum members.

Access to the county structures has been built through relationships with the Community Platform and this creates a process for moving issues that cannot be resolved at the Safety Forum.

Representation on the local Policing Forum by two community members also acts as a mechanism to highlight issues of concern in the community.

The worker also holds a seat on the Policing Forum for the Local Drugs Task Force.

A feeling of ownership of the forum as a place to clarify and prioritise their issues has given the community members a sense that their voice is being heard and listened to and that service providers

will work with them to generate possible solutions to safety in their areas.

This is not to say that frustrations and tensions don't arise and service providers are often challenged strongly but respect for everyone has always been paramount in the forum

Creating a safe place for people to discuss these type of issues can be difficult and often it is the most marginalised and the most in need of support that can be the most difficult to engage with.

This often involves working at whatever level people are comfortable with and whatever type of community activity they want to engage in, we find that Environment work in estates is usually the first step to engagement. This can be a slow process and people may not be ready to move into forum level for some time, this level of engagement is crucial and needs to be resourced by a development worker.

We believe that the Community Development approach used in the creation of the South West Clondalkin Community Safety Forum has;

- Created strong community ownership of the forum
- Has ensured the ongoing commitment of the community to the forum
- Has proven that solutions to issues being brought by the community can often be found within that community
- Has created and provided a unique opportunity for the local authority, the Gardaí and the elected representatives to hear at first hand the issues on the ground from the people who are living them.

3.44 Suggestions for using this model in other communities

- Time to build relationships and trust between the community and the service providers is crucial, if the community don't feel safe they won't participate
- Ways of ensuring personal safety of community members needs to be found, without this they won't participate
- Community people participating in fora should wherever possible be tied into a residents group
- This is needed to ensure that the fora hears not only the issues and concerns of the individual but the views and concerns of the wider community
- To set up residents groups in areas where no one is engaging takes time and commitment and needs to be prioritised.

We all need to remember that community safety is not solely a Garda issue, we all have a responsibility in this; We do recognise that NOT all areas have an employed worker and where this is the case we would urge that the work of residents active in their community be recognised and supported by service providers. We believe the partnership approach and everyone having an equal voice is key to the success of any forum

To finish off we would like to acknowledge the work of a number of safety initiatives operating around the county. We propose that wherever this work is happening it be supported to tie into Local Policing Forum in that area.

3.5 'Making community policing work for marginalized communities – the challenges and consequences of failure'

Johnny Connolly Criminologist, Alcohol and Drug Research Unit, Health Research Board

3.51 Background

Johnny introduced his presentation by confirming that he was involved in the setting up of the structures of the Joint Policing Committees and that prior to 2005 there were no statutory structures governing Garda Community Relations. He was also involved in the establishment of the North Inner City Policing Forum, and that there are currently 11 local policing fora of this kind nationally located in Drug Task Force Areas. He also helped draft the guidelines for LPC's and acted as an advisor to the Oireachtas committee responsible for the development of the Joint Policing Committees and their sub-structures particularly in relation to community involvement.

He is of the opinion that there seems to be a *'disjunction between the local policing fora and the Joint Policing Committees'*, and that the LPS's should be driving the agenda of the Joint Policing Committees. In the past despite the absence of structures and supports in place for communities, they managed to mobilise against the growing drugs issue, it was a good time for community engagement and we need to examine how we create that same level of engagement with the current structures.

Johnny went on to talk about the reality of intimidation for many people, and that this issue is not often carried by the media, or officially recorded it is understood best by groups and organisations working on the ground.

3.52 The Changing Issues of Illicit drug markets

The nature of drug markets and drug dealing has changed in recent times particularly in relation to technology and the use of mobile phones some drug misuse, transactions can be more hidden. Also drug related intimidation of families for alleged drug debts has an impact not only on parents, grandparents, and siblings but on the wider community. Drug related intimidation has also become more violent, with those involved are getting younger.

Johnny referred to recently published study in Limerick which indicates what happens in communities when social issues are not addressed.

- The control exercised by gangs in numerous ways

- Children acting as ‘eyes and ears’ of the gang
- The particular vulnerability of certain groups
- The whole community is affected not just the individual families involved

3.53 The consequences of not engaging those most marginalised in decision making process of the structures, he also spoke of

- The importance of maintaining the environment so as not to allow places to become ‘no go’ areas thereby creating a loss of control over areas
- The ways in which stigma can set in, in relation to certain places and the impact this has on communities
- how problems in urban areas can manifest quite differently, and problems can be quite specific to a particular street/locality
- The development of gangs, and how young people see a level of respect and access to resources available to them through involvement with gangs
- The alienation of young people
- The need for a sophisticated model to address these issues part of which is maintaining the physical environment and avoidance of no go areas and (the broken window theory)

3.54 Joint Policing Committees

He went on to say that there is now an infrastructure to respond to the issues that people are facing. There is some work done to identify how the structures are interacting with each other. Some emphasis needs to be put on establishing how the agenda of JPC’s are set and the need to break down the functions and prioritise those issues that are most urgent. While traffic and parking are of concern, they are not having the same impact for example as open drug dealing. JPC’s also need to ensure that the most serious issues are addressed.

Making the structures work, an example of the ‘North Inner City Policing Forum’

- Clear and agreed aims and objectives
- Leadership and coordination
- Local community engagement
- Problem identification and prioritisation
- Transparency
- Monitoring and evaluation

Residents and communities experiencing the issues need to lead out on formulating solutions. There is a need to examine how to create a safe space to discuss and resolve the ‘most crucial issues’ This will be achieved by ensuring, Transparency, open communications and feedback. This has been happening over the last few years. There are limitations that need to be acknowledged. There is a huge demand for drugs and a need to look for long-term solutions that focus on the key individuals controlling the

drugs problem.

Johnny went on to talk about the Key elements of Good Partnership as evidenced by a UK Home Office Study

- Clear and agreed aims and objectives
- Leadership and coordination (coordination needs to be resourced)
- Local community engagement
- Problem identification and prioritisation
- Transparency
- Monitoring and evaluation

There needs to be a focus on the issues that most affect people; what are the underlying causes and how will we address them? If you want communities to take the risk of becoming involved then you need to be able to show evidence of the results.

Johnny acknowledged that some meetings can be quite tense and said it's a good starting point for people to get *'things of their chest'* then work together to deal with the issues.

He stressed the need to constantly evaluate the work- and the need *'to prove'* the outcomes- people want tangible results and evidence is needed to verify that situations are progressing in a positive way.

3.55 Relationships between the JPC's and The LPS's

Finally Johnny said that: The LPC's should be setting the Agenda of the JPCS and there is a need to be realistic about what can be achieved, the issues are hugely complex and are to do with poverty and social exclusion. However he was positive that the structures can deliver. The Joint Policing Committee is about solving problems not shifting them.

4.0 Workshops

The second element of the seminar was facilitated through workshop discussion groups-The following is a list of workshops titles:

1. 'Engaging Local Communities in Safety Initiatives'
2. 'Emerging Safety Issues in the County'
3. 'Working Together to make the best use of the Structures'
4. 'Combating intimidation where do we start?'

Due to the high level of attendance two groups discussed workshop 1 and workshop 4 titles

Summary of Workshop discussions and recommendations

Workshop 1'Engaging Local Communities in Safety Initiatives'

Recommendations

Dissemination of Information and two way communication with Local Communities

- **LPC's to continue with or introduce newsletters to inform local communities as to what is happening –Celebration of community**
- **Suggestion box in community centres to allow people input into the process**

Creating a Safe Space for participation or engagement

- **Strategy to introduce community reps –need to be mindful of labelling of groups so as to protect people**
- **Use informal ways of engaging people-'coffee and a chat'**
- **To take a pro-social approach to terminology and language so as to create a positive space to deal with the issues- e.g. work with young people around the issue of horses not 'confiscate the horses'**
- **Timing of meetings –ensure that timing of meetings is appropriate to ensure everyone has an opportunity to attend**
- **Celebrate Communities in order to bring people together and reclaim communities through environmental action**

Accountability to communities by Service Providers and community reps

- **Prioritise a structured agenda for open meetings and the need to have action following on from issues in order to ensure accountability**
- **Ensure a mechanism for community representatives to feedback to the community**
- **Suggest smaller (more focused) meetings with perhaps one public meeting per year**

Workshop 1 A ‘Engaging Local Communities in Safety Initiatives’

In this workshop participants discussed who was engaging in the local safety structures, their experience of that engagement and what made it possible to participate. There was also a discussion on who was not participating and why. Even though there was a separate workshop on intimidation, it was very relevant to the discussion and people identified intimidation as a primary factor in preventing participation in local structures.

Recommendations

Making it Safe for people to engage

- **To find alternative ways of communicating as opposed to public meetings e.g. Leaflets, small focus groups**
- **Create familiarity with the authorities and the forums**
- **Fun/non threatening activities to build trust and peripheral relationships between residents and authorities**

What has worked? What do we need to do differently?

- **Highlight concrete evidence of positive results**
- **Dial to stop drug dealing has worked well**
- **Show quicker response times**
- **In order to increase residents participation you need to increase trust**
- **Develop structured groups of residents to feedback into the community**

Workshop 2 ‘Emerging Safety Issues in the County’

A list of emerging issues highlighted in the discussion at this workshop

- **An increase in younger people becoming involved in crime**
- **Suicide rates increasing and the issue of mental health in Young People**
- **The issue of Headshops**
- **New locally manufactured drugs**
- **Mobile Phones making it easier to hide drug dealing as does social networking**
- **Young people seeing crime as a ‘career option’ (primary school children)**

- Parents becoming indebted as a result of intimidation by drug dealers
- A decrease in 'moral values'
- Racism and discrimination on the increase

Other issues

- Easier access to weapons
- Violence has become 'normalised'
- Apathy towards social conscience
- Fear amongst some members of the community leading to isolation particularly older people
- Lack of community spirit in some areas

Recommendations for the JPC

- **Evaluate the current Structure and impact it has to date**
- **Increase community representation and involvement in the Joint Policing Committee**
- **Put Racism and Discrimination firmly on the agenda of the JPC**
- **Put the issue of Young People and Crime on the Agenda of the JPC and in particular look at ways to improve Garda relations with young people**
- **Put the issue of Suicide on the Agenda of the JPC**

Workshop 3 'Working together to make the best use of the structures'

The group discussed the impact of intimidation on participation of members of the community in community safety structures. In some areas of the county there is a lack of participation as a result of intimidation. It was also felt that there was an imbalance in terms of community representation on the JPC and while it was acknowledged that this is prescribed by the guidelines it was felt that it needed to be addressed. It was also mentioned that the loss of CDP's has had an impact on engaging local communities in engaging with and participating in local structures.

Recommendations in terms of improving effectiveness of JPC and LPS:

- **Put intimidation on top of agenda. Intimidation is not only drug related**
- **The JPC's from the four local authorities should come together to seek solutions in a countywide way and this to be fed nationally. Recommendations on dealing with issues especially intimidation should be made.**
- **Community Representation should be increased and issues that are fed in from the community should be top of the agenda.**
- **Supporting the capacity building of the community to participate in the structures by providing training and support especially in the case of local policing fora**

- **Main question is “How do we deal with Intimidation and Anti Social Behaviour’**

Workshop 4 Combating Intimidation where do we start?

Intimidation happens at various levels in communities and at varying degrees, from the individual to individual, from gangs to individual, against particular vulnerable groups and to the wider community be it street, estate or area.

The issue of intimidation is presenting in many forms in the community, it is primarily drug related . It is having multiple impacts on those directly involved, their families and the wider community. Other forms of intimidation include racially motivated anti-social behaviour and in some instances physical attacks. Women and older people in particular are vulnerable to intimidation.

It was felt during the discussion that the Gardaí have little power to deal with the issue of young children (under 12's) intimidating other children, young people individuals families and the wider community.

There is a particular frustration at the inability to tackle the issue as it is presenting in reality. This issue instils fear, anxiety and Powerlessness.

Recommendations for the JPC

Prevention

- **Implementation of prevention measures including education, awareness ownership and role models**

Communication and Empowerment

- **Building ownership of the issue by communities**
- **To develop ways of creating safe spaces by which the community can report issues , use local services and public representatives**
- **Support the development of residents groups in a safe and effective way**
- **There is strength in numbers, initiatives that build communities to be united and bring people together in a safe way will counteract intimidation**

Other Areas to Look at

- **Up skill the Youth Service to Deal with Gang Related Intimidation**
- **Enhance the knowledge and skills of people on the ground working on this issue**
- **Continue to build trust between the community and Service providers**
- **Training for Gardaí in dealing with intimidation and supporting families experiencing intimidation**

Workshop 4 A Combating Intimidation where do we start?

This group spoke about fear of complaining to the authorities for fear of reprisal, and the hierarchies involved in intimidation. They were concerned about poor outcomes for those reporting intimidation and the fact that if people are to trust the authorities there needs to be a building of trust. They also spoke of feeling intimidated by Gardaí in terms of having reported and pressure felt by having Gardaí calling to the door which makes them feel more unsafe.

The impact of this in communities is an acceptance of violence and intimidation, creation of ghettos a feeling of powerlessness and a fear of some people wanting to 'fight fire with fire'. Also it was felt there was a very slow pace in terms of identifying and dealing with the issue and that those who are experiencing intimidation are less likely to participate

Recommendations for the JPC from this workshop

Interagency Work to combat intimidation

- **To develop a multi-agency response to the issue of intimidation**
- **To ensure that the current structures of the JPC and LPC facilitate the development of multi-agency responses to intimidations**
- **Provide range of responses to the issue by a range of agencies**
- **Put Intimidation on the Agenda across the board**
- **Address the imbalance of power in the JPC – increase community participation**

5.0 Community Platform Conclusions and Recommendations

The issue of intimidation was a key discussion topic across all of the workshops. The level and degree of intimidation varies within communities and has a serious impact on people's participation in community safety initiatives. It also has implications for personal safety and can debilitate how individuals interact socially which in turn has a wider impact on the community in general.

The Platform has formed recommendations into themes so as to be reflective of the workshop discussions.

Intimidation as Theme

Recommendation

That the JPC set up a task force to deal with intimidation and put in place measures that will reduce intimidation and its effects on local people in their own communities. The task force should be made up of the relevant stakeholders including the Gardaí, Local Authority, Community Representatives etc.

The role of the Task force will be to develop alternative innovative methods that will support a cohesive approach when addressing intimidation. This should be done through measurable actions with clear performance indicators.

Participation within the structures as a Theme

The success and effectiveness of the JPC and its sub structures hinges on the active participation of the local communities.

Recommendations

- 1) That the JPC have an action in its work plan that seeks to ensure highest levels of participation of communities in the Local Policing Fora, that this action is regularly reviewed and monitored and is an agenda item on the JPC meetings
- 2) It is recommended that the JPC encourages the Local Policing Fora to develop other methods of communication with the local community in addition to public meetings.
- 3) It is recommended that the Local Policing Fora engage in small focus groups, newsletters, text alerts to build the relationship with the whole community. A specific focus on the most marginalised, i.e. young offenders, older people, families of those affected by addiction and

those in addition.

Maximising the impact of the Local Policing Fora as a Theme

It was evident from the discussions that the potential of the LPC's to inform and influence the Joint Policing Committee could be built on and improved.

Recommendation

- 1) That the JPC and representatives of the three LPC's come together to devise a strategy that will utilize the information gathered through the LPC participation processes and thereby ensure that critical issues are identified as early as possible.