

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Proposal for a Pilot Scheme in Three Dublin Areas

WHOSE IDEA?

We are a group of community workers connected to Local Policing Forums in North Inner and South Inner City and West Dublin. What connects us is our concern for the impact on our neighbourhoods of Anti Social Behaviour and Criminality.

Anna Quigley Citywide

Peter O Connor North East Inner City Policing Forum

Maria Medcalf North East Inner City Policing Forum

Joe Donohue Canals Communities Policing Forum

Phillip Jennings Blanchardstown Policing Forum

Peter Dorman Community action Network

Johnny Connolly University of Limerick

WHOSE INITIATIVE – THREE POLICING FORUMS

- NORTH EAST INNER CITY POLICING FORUM
- CANALS POLICING FORUM
- SAFER BLANCHARDSTOWN

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS?

A Community Impact Assessment is a written statement of the evidence and consequences of current criminal and anti-social activity on a neighbourhood or a specific group of people

It is compiled by a partnership of the community concerned and relevant organisations such as Gardaí, Local Authority, Youth Projects, Drugs Projects, etc.

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS FOR?

Assessments are used to illustrate the reality of life for a community affected by criminality and anti-social behaviour

They are a focus for bringing attention and resources to a specific problem

They serve as a benchmark and, when repeated at intervals, as a monitoring mechanism of the outcomes of interventions

In other jurisdictions Community Impact Statements can be used in Court to influence sentencing, (similarly to Victim Impact Statements) or in relation to decisions made in charging and cautioning

WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM?

Tools such as this are used in a number of other jurisdictions including the UK, Canada and Australia

The Garda Inspectorate Report (Crime Investigation Module) 2014 recommends that they be used in Ireland

A measure is included in the New National Drugs Strategy providing for the use of Community Impact Assessments

WHAT CHARACTERISES AN ASSESSMENT?

Simplicity – easy to put together

Emphasis on a snapshot of the situation drawing on qualitative information and other sources of data

Comprehensive – includes a wide range of impacts

Compiled in a partnership arrangement with key stakeholders

The endorsement of all partners to the project with knowledge of the community

Discretion – the safety of participants is paramount. Confidentiality is highly valued

WHAT GOES INTO AN ASSESSMENT?

A Community is defined – either a geographical neighbourhood or a particular section of the local population

Testimony of members of the community – perhaps using a standard questionnaire and/or focus groups

Input from relevant agencies with knowledge of the area

Input and data from relevant statutory agencies

Relevant extracts from any current studies or other sources

Miscellaneous sources such as newspaper reports about the area, social media, unobtrusive observations etc.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN ASSESSMENT IS COMPILED?

Relevant agencies are convened to analyse the situation

A problem-solving approach is used to design and implement a plan which can be monitored. (Responsibility for delivery of strategy is shared by all relevant parties)

After a reasonable period another Assessment is compiled to monitor progress in addressing the issues

HOW WOULD THE PILOT WORK?

Three areas to allow for learning

Areas should have a suitably robust partnership structure such as a Policing Forum which can lead the process

A senior Garda with knowledge of the area and commitment to the project

18 months allowed for a benchmark Assessment, intervention and a second Assessment

WHAT IS TO BE GAINED?

A way of putting the impact on communities at the centre of the intervention

A way of including the voice of a community in the intervention

A way of building collaboration and relationship between community and key stakeholders

A way of understanding community priorities and focusing on the greatest need

Ensuring responses are informed by evidence

A way of measuring progress and outcomes

A way of highlighting resource and policy gaps

THANK YOU

We are seeking your support in this project which means –

- That you take an interest in the progress of the pilot and its outcomes
- That you make space on your agenda for consideration of a CIA taking place in your area
- That you use your influence to ensure strategies based on CIAs are supported