INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

Black Mountain Shared Space Project

Peace Walls Attitudinal Survey
Summary of Results
October 2017

CONTENTS

The terms PUL and CNR are commonly used in Northern Ireland when referring to both communities. They have been used in this report:
PUL Protestant Unionist Loyalist
CNR Catholic Nationalist Republican

Foreword

Today, almost 50 years since the first Peace Wall was built, more than 100 physical structures remain as visible symbols of continued division and segregation. The IFI Peace Walls Programme is currently working with local communities impacted by approximately 66 of these barriers. There should be no place for physical separation barriers in a truly reconciled society but we have not yet reached that stage and, given that the risks associated with barrier removal processes lie almost exclusively with those residents and communities most impacted by their presence, it is right that we prioritise their views and concerns while supporting them to bring about positive change if and when they decide the time is right.

The vast majority of physical barriers are located within communities that have suffered disproportionately during the conflict. These interface areas continue to endure high levels of multiple deprivation including educational under-achievement, mental and physical health inequalities, inadequate facilities, poor delivery of public services, physical blight and neglect. Investment potential remains limited with significant Agency and political collaborative will and effort required to change this negative dynamic. At this stage in our Peace Process, and four years since the Together Building a United Community (TBUC) pledge on the removal of barriers by 2023, local communities deserve to know what is planned in terms of delivery, how they will be involved in the decision-making and what protections will be offered to them.

This Blackmountain Shared Space Project (BMSSP) baseline attitudinal survey report is one of six carried out in local communities impacted by physical barriers as part of the International Fund for Ireland's Peace Walls Programme. Unlike other studies, these surveys concentrate on the views of those most affected by change to the barriers, the people who live closest to them and who would be taking the biggest risks. The surveys show that fear continues to be a key issue for many, yet most want to see physical change in place for future generations. Positive change will only be enabled when agencies work together to ensure local voice is prioritised and after-care protection of life and property is in place and effective.

The findings from BMSSP include:

- While 58% of respondents are in favour of the barriers being removed within the lifetime of their children or grandchildren, only 3% want them removed now with a concerning 45% wanting to maintain the current status for the present time.
- Most respondents (84%) stated safety and security concerns (real or perceived) as the main reason for wanting to retain the status quo. Clearly, this presents a challenge to the Peace Walls Programme work and efforts to ease fears, enhance feelings of security and build confidence will be prioritised in the coming period.

- While 53% of respondents have regular contact with the other community, this falls to 18% when it comes to contact with people living on the other side of the Peace Walls. This indicates that there is a willingness for inter-community contact so providing additional opportunities for communities to meet locally across the barriers on a more regular basis may well help to build confidence and reduce safety concerns.
- The PWP is currently working hard to create shared space and new opportunities for regeneration for both communities and these efforts, while requiring statutory and political support, will help promote inter-community relationships in the coming period.

These results are significant and indicate that communities are willing, with support, to work towards positive change. While challenging, it underscores that if progress is to be realised, community goodwill and ambition must be met in full by tangible action from relevant statutory authorities backed by strong political leadership. Ring-fenced resources and funding is part of delivering change as is the need for a detailed and considered strategy that aligns the efforts of those who own the physical structures, including the Department of Justice, local authorities, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and others. Without this, we may ultimately be taking communities to a place where they cannot advance any further, causing frustration and anger and effectively negating progress made.

Adrian Johnston
Chairman, International Fund for Ireland

BMSSP Foreword

As Manager of the Blackmountain Shared Space Peace Walls Project, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who took part in the survey and particularly those residents in the Upper Springfield and Springmartin areas who gave their time to complete the forms. My thanks are also due to the staff and local volunteers for carrying out the survey on a door to door basis.

To bring about physical change, we need to engage those most directly affected by the peace walls and barriers. In undertaking this survey, we have gone some distance to try to give those most affected a voice. The survey results will now give us a better understanding of what is required to make our communities a better place to live in and how we best continue our peace walls work as we move forward.

Some of the statistics that have come through from the survey have been interesting: 45% of participants taking part in the survey favour no change to the barriers in their current form. However, more positively, 58% of respondents are in favour of the barriers being removed within the lifetime of their children or grandchildren

With improved safety measures being ranked as the primary factor that could influence positive attitudinal change to the removal of the peace walls, increased engagement with statutory partners on community safety issues should see these figures change
Blackmountain Shared Space Project was established in 2009 to improve both intra-community capacity and well-being and cross-community relationships in the Upper Springfield Road/Upper Shankill interface area. As such, we have objectives including:

• Increase intra-community capacity and cohesion
• Build positive cross-community relationships at all levels across the Upper Springfield Road/ Upper Shankill interface area
• Create initiatives that improve the health and well-being of residents in both communities
• Develop and manage initiatives to address education, training and employability deficits in the area
• Act as the main forum for cross-community dialogue and peace-building in the Upper Springfield/Upper Shankill Road area
• Soften, remove or re-image ten interface barriers between the two communities
• Develop a social enterprise initiative to create local employment opportunities
• Develop a shared space centre for both communities to potentially include community, retail, training and leisure spaces.

To date, BMSSP has made significant progress on the above objectives. Following full reflection of the survey results, we have now undertaken a review of our strategy and developed an Action Plan for 2018 to help both communities going forward with inter-community work to build the confidence and capacity necessary to create the conditions for further positive change. This Action Plan requires support and resources from our Statutory Partners and we look forward to working with them to deliver the change needed. BMSSP looks forward with positivity to continued community engagement and relationship building.

Seamus Corr,
BMSSP Manager.

Introduction

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, considerable progress has been made to address the legacy of division with successive Northern Ireland Life & Times (NILT) surveys signifying public approval of improved community relations and a desire to move towards a fully-realised shared society.[1]

However, Northern Ireland remains a society dominated by the existence of the 'Peace Walls' with such structures providing a constant physical reminder of the divisions that remain.

The Peace Walls Programme (henceforth PWP) is an initiative developed and funded by the International Fund for Ireland (The Fund) since 2011/2012 to assist communities most impacted by the peace walls and physical barriers due to their proximity to these structures.

It aims to empower these residents to reach a position where they feel safe and ready to begin the dialogue necessary for the successful dismantling of interface barriers and have confidence in and a positive attitude to barrier reduction and/or removal.

The PWP operates within a policy context dominated by the 'Together Building a United Community' (TBUC) Strategy' (NIE, 2013). Central to this strategy is a policy commitment to remove all interface barriers by 2023 in consultation with those most affected (i.e. those living closest to the barriers) and the implementation of an 'Interface Barrier Support Package' to enable this to happen.

Gormley-Heenan et al. (2015) have highlighted that the TBUC strategy faces a number of difficulties regarding its capacity to realise this commitment. This is in part due to the continuing inconsistency as regards what constitutes a 'peace wall' with the figures differing between 53 (Department of Justice figures, 2013) and 116 (Belfast Interface Project figures, 2017).

Moreover, there is a lack of clarity in relation to the role communities can actually play in the process, how their viewpoints can be measured over time and how 'confidence' and 'consensus' can be considered to have been met.

Naming a deadline has raised a concern within some communities that implementation of the strategy will occur from the 'top-down' and be acted on without relevant consultation and input from those most affected.

Additionally, as of June 2017, the NI Executive has failed to agree on the value of an 'Interface Barrier Support Package' which underscores scepticism within communities that resources will not be made available for change to occur. These concerns are strengthened by the current political instability within Northern Ireland caused by the absence of a power-sharing administration at Stormont.

Map 1: BMSSP Engagement Zone
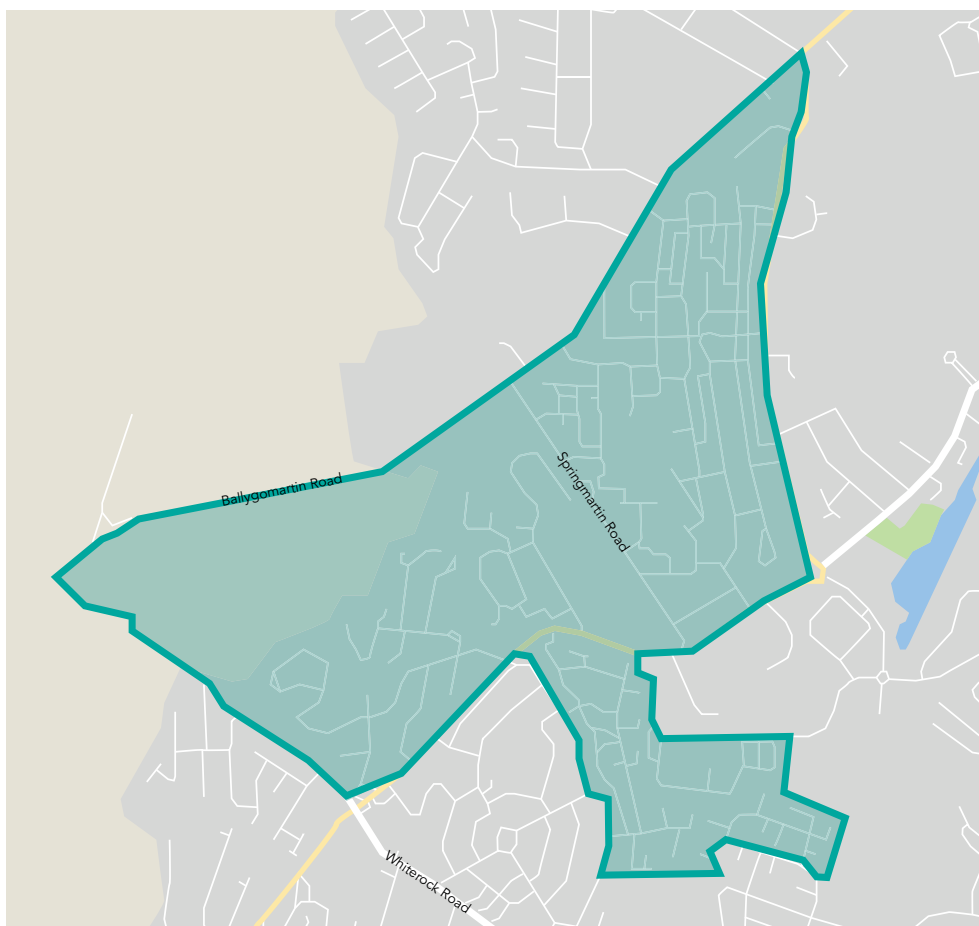
The Peace Walls Programme

Engagement with the PWP occurs through grassroots programmes aimed at developing and delivering a range of confidence and relationship-building interventions within and between interface communities. These are facilitated by community representatives in collaboration with relevant statutory agencies.

The Black Mountain Shared Space Project (BMSSP) has facilitated the PWP in the Upper Springfield/Black Mountain area since June 2013. It has identified nine peace wall structures located in this area and is developing proposals for the reduction, removal or re-classification of each.*

Respondents to this survey are resident across two Super Output Areas (SOAs), namely Upper Springfield (2) and Highfield (3). Both areas are ranked in the top 10% of most deprived areas in Northern Ireland according to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM) 2010.

The target area for the PWP in this area includes the Highfield, Springmartin, Springfield, Sliabh Dubh and Moyard areas of West Belfast. Change to date has been driven by consensus and achieved through consultation with residents. This regular engagement has resulted in a deeper understanding of the aspirations of those living in this interface area and is encouraging residents to become more active in leading and influencing change within their area.

BMSSP has reported significant progress at a number of sites:
- Removal of barrier at Moyard Crescent;
- Removal of security gate barrier at Springmartin Road;
- Re-Imaging of pedestrian gate at Highfield Drive with gate and adjacent fencing replaced and alleyway (which attracted anti-social and sectarian behaviour) designed out;
- Re-imaging of derelict space at Million Brick Wall; and
- Re-imaging of Sliabh Dubh barrier with community-led design of children's mural.

BMSSP is also at an advanced stage in developing a shared space centre at Finlay's site which would offer a range of services and amenities to local residents on a fully-integrated basis and has secured Belfast City Council support for a Peace IV application under the 'Shared Spaces and Services' theme to progress this further.

Additionally, BMSSP has developed successful relationships and partnerships with relevant local groups and other stakeholders alongside maintaining relationships with a range of statutory partners and local politicians from across the political divide. Maintaining and building upon these relationships is important due to the reported disconnect between residents/local groups and the statutory sector in the area.

Despite commitments in both the Programme for Government (2011-2015) and within the TBUC strategy document (2013) that change to the barriers will only happen in consultation with the communities most affected, there remains limited quantitative data on residents' views to such change.

To address this and in order to aid planning and development of the second phase of the PWP, BMSSP gathered survey data from 100 of the most impacted residents at these nine identified sites. The objective of the survey is to baseline attitudinal positions from residents of both community backgrounds in order to establish an area-specific profile and provide PWP staff with information to aid the development of future initiatives from an evidence base.

This research briefing paper outlines some of the key findings from the survey in relation to residents' key concerns about the peace walls, their current attitudes towards the role of the peace walls, the current status of community relations in the area and views on the future status of the barriers. They are presented in relation to results from all respondents and from both communities (when relevant) and are discussed in greater detail in the remainder of this briefing paper.

They indicate both the opportunities and challenge that BMSSP face in meeting the aims and objectives of the PWP within this area.

Community Safety

Community Safety And Security Remains A Central Issue In The Area And As Such Both Communities Continue To Value The Presence Of The Barriers.
72% of all respondents have lived in the area for over twenty-five years.
70% feel 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' living in the area.
84% of all respondents express safety and/or security issues as their key concerns at the barriers.
77% of all respondents feel that the key functions of the peace walls are their security and safety functions.
45% do not want change to the barriers in any form at the present time.
57% state that retention of the peace walls would have a positive impact on community safety.
'Improved safety measures' is ranked as the primary factor that could influence positive attitudinal change to the removal of the peace walls.
82% of CNR respondents feel 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' living in the area compared to 57% of PUL respondents.
93% of PUL respondents express safety and/or security issues as their key concerns compared to 73% of CNR respondents.
One-fifth of the CNR community has 'no concerns' about the barriers which elicited a zero response rate from PUL respondents.

> 73% of the PUL community believes that the primary functions of the walls are to protect people, to 'keep the peace' and/or to make people feel safe in comparison to 65% of the CNR community.
>
> 76% of the CNR community name the key positive of the peace walls being that they 'make people feel safer' in comparison to a still significant 40% of the PUL community.

A key finding within the data is that community safety and security remains a central issue in this area and as such provides an obstacle to the reduction and/or removal of the peace walls and the progress of the PWP.

Even though 70% reported that they felt safe living in this area, there is a sense from the data that residents believe the peace walls continue to play an important protective role in their lives and continue to value the presence of the barriers. A huge 84% of all respondents named safety and/or security issues as their key concerns, be they actual violence, fear of future violence or change to the barriers.

Of eight identified safety/security concerns, only three (ASB, attacks on property and trouble at the interface) can be considered 'actual' safety and security fears. The remaining five concerns can only be linked indirectly to safety concerns as they are concerned with 'fears' of possible violence at the interface and/or the impact on community safety should the barriers be removed.

Additionally over three-quarters of respondents (77%) identify the functions of the barriers in terms of their safety and security mechanisms. Within this figure, 31% believe the walls 'protect' people, 26% believe that they help to 'keep the peace' and 11% believe they make people 'feel' safer.

This suggests that the earlier reported levels of 'feeling safe' may be in part reliant on the existence of the peace walls. This need to 'feel' safe is understandable given that 72% of all respondents have lived in this area for over twenty-five years and in that time may have witnessed sectarian violence, civic unrest or seasonal tensions.

The peace walls across Northern Ireland were first constructed as a response to inter-community sectarian violence and as a means of protecting the two communities from each other. The data also indicates that a significant number of respondents (31%) continue to view the function of the peace walls as existing for this initial purpose and, as such, hold particular issues of trust relating to barrier removal.

It is clear there remains a strong belief amongst respondents that the peace walls are a trusted form of protection. This is supported by the strength of feelings relating to the positive impact retention of the peace walls would have on community safety (57%) and the significant percentage of respondents not wanting 'any' change to the barriers (45%) at this time.

The current reality is that widespread inter-community violence is not a feature of daily life in this area. BMSSP have reported that there have only been two sectarian incidents in the area in the past two years. A continuation of this mindset that the barriers are the only trusted means of protection presents a major obstacle for the PWP in moving towards their

removal or reduction in this area. This is made doubly so because this perception is both emotional and intangible. It may be based on past experiences, poor interaction with the other community, a lack of understanding and 'fear' of the other or fear of what change might bring and, as such, it will be more difficult to transform.

Although both communities reported high instances of safety and security concerns, overall this data indicates that these exist slightly more strongly within the PUL community. Additionally there were significant differences between the two communities regarding a number of key safety/security concerns.

Of the eight safety/security issues named, only one (violence at the interface: PUL=11% to CNR=12%) received similar levels of agreement. Both communities had issues with personal/family safety but this was stronger in the PUL community (24%) than in the CNR community (17%).

A number of key concerns were named by one community but barely by the other. The PUL community had greater issues with ASB (27%) and future violence (no reason given) (11%) but the former was expressed by only 2% of their CNR counterparts and the latter by 5%.

Conversely, the CNR community had greater concerns about fears of future violence at contentious times of year (20%) and attacks on property (10%) in comparison to only 4% and 2% within the PUL community. Additionally one-fifth of the CNR community had 'no concerns' about the barriers which elicited a zero response rate from PUL respondents.

This data suggests that the PWP needs to consider the reasons behind each concern being reported so prominently in one community over the other before they can consider what can be done to address them. This may mean the PWP prioritising different factors within the two communities and across the nine identified sites rather than a 'one size fits all' approach to progress the work of the programme. This finding indicates that single identity work may be key to addressing concerns within each community and resolution of area specific safety and/or security concerns may lead to greater movement towards barrier removal.

Moreover, both communities believe strongly in and welcome the capacity of the barriers to provide safety and security functions. The CNR community is particularly strong in voicing that the barriers protect them (37%) whilst one-third of the PUL community highlighted their capacity to 'keep the peace'. Both communities highlight strongly that the key positive aspect of the barriers are that they make them 'feel safer'.

Given this strident belief in the functions/strengths of the peace walls, future work needs to address the psychological impact that the barriers have on the both communities in order to reassure them that the removal of the barriers will not cause a decline in community safety. Respondents clearly named 'improved safety measures' as the primary factor that could influence them to being more open to the removal of the peace walls which indicates that the barriers may be less attractive to respondents if alternative security arrangements were in place.

Building greater trust in the positive aspects of barrier removal and providing evidence of alternative security arrangements is essential for progress to be made which underscores the necessity for the TBUC Barrier Interface Support Package to be agreed and put in place as soon as possible. The PWP will also need to offer alternatives to the walls that may provide similar levels of safety and security, whether real or psychological.

There are challenges for the PWP in that 'feelings' of safety are both subjective and open to influence and willingness to remove the barriers is low in the area. However, as the PWP is facilitated at a grassroots level, BMSSP is in a position to gauge how they can most effectively address these safety fears and security concerns.

Interaction and Community Relations

Aligned with these findings is the differing role that residents believe the peace walls play in maintaining community safety. Whilst respondents indicate that the peace walls retain a security role, the practical aspect of the barriers in allowing access to other areas and services is the reported main function of the walls (47%).

However, the PUL community also report a much stronger confidence in the ability of the barriers to 'protect' them and assuage safety and security concerns, whilst there exists a level of ambivalence within the CNR community that this is the case. They feel more strongly that the barriers play a psychological role rather than an actual protective one.

Almost one-quarter (23%) of the PUL community believe the primary functions of the barriers are either to prevent attacks on property (8%) to 'keep the peace' (9%) and/or to make people feel safe (6%). As regards the 'positive' aspects of the barriers, 57% of this community agree that they make people feel safe (37%) and help 'keep the peace' (20%).

Whilst the CNR community agree to a similar extent that the function of the barriers is to 'keep the peace' (9%), they do not believe as strongly that they act to make people feel safe (3%) and/or prevent attacks on property (2%).

As regards the 'positive' aspects of the barriers, 44% of the CNR community agree that they make people feel safe but a much smaller 8% believe they help 'keep the peace'.

Key Finding 2: Interaction With The Community On The 'Other Side Of The Peace Walls' Is Poor And Significantly Poorer Within The CNR Community
53% of all respondents state they have contact with the 'other' community on a regular basis but a further 27% state that this rarely or never happened.
This declines to 18% of all respondents reporting regular contact with the community on the 'other side of the peace wall' and a significant 58% state such contact rarely or never happened.
74% of all respondents report that interaction is 'always' or mostly positive with only 1% reporting interaction as being 'always' negative.
20% of all respondents indicate that such interaction is neither positive nor negative.
60% agree that no change to the barriers would have a negative impact on community relations.
31% of the CNR community report that they 'rarely' or 'never' interacted with members of the other community in comparison to 23% respondents from the PUL community.
47% of the CNR community report that such interaction never occurred with those living on the other side of the barriers compared to only 23% of the PUL community.
CNR respondents are less likely to meet at choice based activities such as cross-community events (23%) or groups (16%) in comparison to 50% and 39% respectively within the PUL community.
The CNR community report higher levels of positive experiences regarding interaction between the two communities (86%) in comparison with 62% within the PUL community.

Although the peace walls were first constructed to address safety and security concerns, such structures also need to be considered in relation to how they perpetuate segregation and division of communities by reaffirming territorial 'no-go areas' and subsequent beliefs that there is no need for communities to interact with each other or build better community relations.

Despite better community relations overall throughout Northern Ireland, research by Ulster University (2012, 2015) indicates that interaction with the 'other community' remains lower at interface areas.

At present, whilst regular levels of interaction (very often/ fairly often) with the 'other community' overall in this area are promising (53%) they do decline to 18% when considering regular interaction with those on the other side of the peace walls. Instances of no interaction rise from 27% as regards the 'other community overall' to 58% in relation to those on the other side of the barriers.

When considering interaction based on community identity, interaction by the CNR community with both the other community and their PUL neighbours is significantly lower. It is worrying that almost half of all CNR respondents (47%) report 'no' interaction with those living on the other side of the barriers. Such low interaction may be linked to the existence of segregated services in the two communities with no necessity and few opportunities for the two communities to meet while using shared services or facilities. This presents challenges for a range of stakeholder agencies as well as the BMSSP PWP.

These findings indicate both challenges and opportunities for the PWP. They indicate that a future focus of the PWP is the need to address the significant percentages of respondents in both communities who have little or no contact with those on the other side of the barriers through increasing relationship-building measures. They also indicate a need to place specific emphasis on increasing CNR involvement in the Programme. This may be aided by the high levels of interest expressed by the CNR community to learn more about it and become more involved.

Relationship-building and greater understanding of the 'other' may increase the potential for positive change in attitude to the peace walls. It is essential that respondents and their children receive opportunities to meet each other at community or social activities if such trust is to be developed. Avoidance of the 'other' community can only act to exacerbate current mistrust and fears and if unaddressed could lead to the progress of the PWP being undermined within this area.

Positively for the PWP, 27% of all respondents already meet at community groups and this rises to 36% at community events. More community activities and events aimed at bringing people together with a view to building good relations and reducing levels of fear/suspicion is within the capacity of BMSSP and other partners to organise.

A further encouragement for the PWP is that when interaction does happen, respondents expressed the opinion that it is overwhelmingly a positive experience with only 1% stating that it was 'always negative'. Additionally, the CNR community is more 'positive' about such interaction so increasing opportunities may be a pathway for improved community relations. BMSSP should also remain mindful of the sizeable one-fifth of respondents who reported that interaction was neither positive nor negative which indicates that sustained interventions to increase interaction could have a corresponding positive impact on this figure.

Additionally, there is strong awareness in the area that the retention of the peace walls is an obstacle to improved community relations and that increased community facilities and shared spaces such as that which BMSSP is currently developing could act as a catalyst towards the removal of the peace walls.

Looking to the future

Key Finding 3: Respondents Across Both Communities Do Not Favour Change To The Barriers At This Time But Are More Hopeful In Relation To The Future
45% of respondents want the barriers to maintain their current status at the present time.
3% of respondents want the barriers to be removed 'now'.
28% want this to happen 'sometime in the future' and 22% are content to see them reimaged or providing greater accessibility.
52% of respondents cannot envisage a time when the barriers would not be there but 26% were unsure and 22% could envisage this scenario.
58% of respondents are in favour of the barriers being removed within the lifetime of their children or grandchildren.
47% of all respondents name 'keeping the two communities apart' as the main negative of the barriers.
There is a level of ambivalence regarding the positive impact removal of the walls would have on seven of eight key factors.

46% of the CNR community report that they want to retain the status quo for now compared to 44% of PUL respondents.
4% of the CNR community want to see change happen to the peace walls 'now' compared to 2% of PUL respondents.
36% of the CNR community would like to see the barriers removed 'sometime in the future' in comparison to 19% of PUL respondents.
The PUL community are more open to change regarding appearance, accessibility and declassification (35%) than their CNR neighbours (10%).
The PUL community is less optimistic about envisaging a time without the barriers (13%) in comparison to 31% of CNR respondents.
Both communities want to see the barriers removed within the next generation (PUL=60% and CNR=56%).
The CNR community do not believe as strongly that retention of the peace walls would have a negative impact on daily living conditions.

An important finding for BMSSP is that 45% of all respondents do not want to see change to the barriers in any form, be that reimaging, reduction or removal. Political volatility (as is currently happening) can often cause greater levels of anxiety within segregated communities and lead to greater concerns about changing the status quo. This may be happening in the area but, as noted above, there are also longer-term issues of segregated services, poor inter-community interaction and mistrust between the two communities in the area.

There is much wider agreement among residents that more permanent change needs to happen within the next generation which indicates that hope for change exists within the area but does so side-by-side with current safety and security concerns, fear of the other community and worries about what change might lead to. Moreover, once again respondents

are aware that the peace walls impact negatively on community relations by keeping the two communities separated.

When stratified by community identity, the overall data is strongly suggesting that neither community is embracing change towards the removal of the peace walls at the present time but that both harbour greater optimism about change for the future.

Although both communities report similar wishes that the barriers be retained at present, a much larger 36% of CNR respondents wanted to see them removed 'sometime in the future' whilst a near identical percentage within the PUL community are in favour of changes to the barriers (re-imaging, accessibility, declassification) in the interim. This provides a clear direction for BMSSP regarding which approach to progress is favoured by the two communities in this area.

The PUL community are also much less optimistic about being able to envisage such change and imagining the area without the peace walls (13%) than their CNR counterparts (31%).

It is clear that at present, there are low expectations in both communities that alterations to the barriers will have any great impact on their lives or living conditions. An average of 9% of CNR respondents reported that retention of the barriers would have no impact across eight factors linked to living conditions and access to services, compared to a much higher 22% of PUL respondents. Respondents to the survey also indicated that environmental/physical improvements to the area and regeneration with jobs and investment would be the secondary and tertiary factors to positively impact on attitudinal change to removal of the barriers.

This provides BMSSP/PWP with an opportunity to highlight the positives that such change could bring to this area by continuing their support for regeneration work particularly as such change would be considered advantageous in changing attitudes.

Whilst evidencing the positive outcomes that change could bring for the people living in this area is essential, doing so also presents a challenge for BMSSP PWP. Given the substantial size of some of the structures in this area (e.g. the Million Brick Wall), the deprivation present and the lack of regeneration to date, BMSSP would also require significant and long-term political and stakeholder buy-in to transform these barriers and this area.

Conclusion

The survey data provides clear challenges for BMSSP PWP in developing its work in this area but also offers a baseline position to both extend their work and measure future attitudinal change as a result of targeted initiatives developed by them and other key stakeholder agencies to deal with the pressing concerns raised by residents in the area.

The greatest challenge for the PWP in the Springfield/Black Mountain area is the continuing mindset that the barriers are essential for residents' protection and safety and that lived experiences are impacting negatively on the desire to consider alternatives to the barriers. This is clear from the significant percentage of all respondents (45%) favouring no change to the barriers and the lower but still significant levels of respondents stating they do not want to see change within the next generation.

Moreover, the extremely poor interaction levels with those living directly beside them but on the 'other side' of the barriers need addressed, particularly within the CNR community if negative attitudes towards the 'other' are to change.

The findings indicate that the communities living here are yet to be convinced that change to the barriers will bring positive change to their area as a whole in terms of community safety and regeneration. This interface community remains isolated from wider attempts to modernise Belfast and as such has locked residents into continuing deprivation.

This underscores the reality that attitudinal change to the removal of peace walls in this area may be dependent upon much longer-term 'holistic' (political, social, economic and cultural) change. This is tempered with the reality that the PWP cannot deliver this in isolation and any such change will require greater inter-agency collaboration and support for this work, particularly in relation to regeneration work requiring cross-party political and agency support and engagement.

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Footnotes

1. Morrow, D. et al. The Long View of Community Relations in Northern Ireland: 1998 − 2012 (2013) p.1.

2. Ulster University have carried out such studies in 2012 and 2015.

3. Safety concerns are included in this as qualitative evidence from the surveys indicates that this is a fear of potential violence rather that actual violence.

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To view an electronic copy of this summary report or the full
survey findings for all projects in the Peace Walls Programme visit
www.internationalfundforireland.com or contact the local
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