

Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime

An interim review and proposed next steps for delivery of the
Executive Action Plan

‘The narrative has changed – we’re now talking about trying to create a society free from paramilitarism – and able to highlight the NI Executive cross-party political commitment to that aim’.

- Delivery Partner (2019)

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to review just under four years of delivery by the Tackling Paramilitarism, Organised Crime and Criminality Programme and to offer a proposal for a refreshed approach to delivery based on learning from 2017 to 2020. The first part of the review reflects on delivery to date: achievements; challenges; and learning. The second part reflects on how delivery could be improved based on learning from 2017-2020. This includes reflection on the main factors required to make further progress:

- Tackling inequality and building on community strengths
- Clarifying and delivering against concepts - Lawfulness and Transition
- Resourcing for delivery
- Collaboration
- Transformational change and measuring impact
- Clarity and consistency of language

Significant feedback has centred on the scope and focus of the Programme. As has been consistently stressed by the IRC, it is clear that the end benefits will only be achieved with a fundamental transformation of the social and economic conditions within affected communities. This work needs to be underpinned by a whole of government, whole of society approach and priority in the PfG, and it will be important to ensure that there is continued engagement with the Executive, including problem-solving by Ministers on shared issues. The review explores the role of the delivery programme in that context.

Finally, the steps which are needed between June 2020 and the end of August are outlined. This will involve engagement with stakeholders and delivery partners over the remainder of the summer to ensure that the appropriate activity and projects are planned, and that the required processes are in place to monitor delivery and measure performance before funding is prioritised and released. There are three types of action to be taken forward in the next phase:

Outstanding Commitments

Some commitments in the original Action Plan that have not yet been fully progressed need to be delivered.

Enhancement and Better Collaboration

Some commitments have not yet been fully tested, such as the Communities in Transition Project (B4) and the WRAP and SYTES projects under commitments D1 and A4 respectively, and learning from these will need to be factored into proposals for the next phase. Some existing projects that are to be either amended, re-aligned or continued, are likely to require either extensions of contracts with providers or new procurement processes. So, in order to ensure continuity of delivery for communities from April 2021 the process of refinement and design of updated interventions will need to be complete by the end of August 2020 to enable submission, assessment and prioritisation of proposals against end benefits and in the context of available funding.

New Initiatives

In addition, new work is required based on learning from Phase One and gaps that have been identified. Planning is underway with stakeholders on these interventions but detail will need to be developed for the updated action plan to enable the step change required. This includes:

- an enhanced approach to support for vulnerable young people, building on delivery to date through commitments A4, A5 and B13. This will enhance connections across a number of initiatives, informed by project evaluations and the independent review of practice between the statutory and community youth sectors, PSNI and other community partners. The recent DOH led COVID 19 plan for supporting young people will also need to be factored in;
- a review of relevant place based initiatives and associated funding streams to align those with the end benefits identified for the next phase of delivery;
- family based interventions for young people at risk of paramilitary involvement and harm;
- developing and rolling out training for people and organisations to enable identification of, and support for, individuals and families vulnerable to paramilitary recruitment and harm;
- developing policy and protocols for dealing with issues which enable the exercise of coercive control;
- looking at language and tone in the context of the desired outcome and benefits of the Programme;

- developing proposals that build on pilot projects such as participatory budgeting and 'citizens assemblies' to enhance community participation and capacity in places with high levels of coercive control; and
- enhancing the focus on collaborative working on a locality basis through the task and finish group and the Community Safety Board to identify emerging issues, share knowledge and agree action across relevant partners.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to review just under four years of delivery under the Tackling Paramilitarism, Organised Crime and Criminality Programme and to offer a proposal for a refreshed approach to delivery based on learning from 2017 to 2020. This interim review has been written by the team responsible for coordinating the 38 actions within the Executive Action Plan which fell to the NI Executive. It is based on learning captured through the process of coordinating and monitoring delivery of the Executive Action Plan and accompanies two published reports by the Independent Reporting Commission, as well as two Gateway Reviews and independent evaluations of individual projects.

2. When the Executive Action Plan was published by the previous Executive, in July 2016, it may have been difficult to imagine that, as a result of the Action Plan, television advertisements and billboards would highlight the harm caused in communities by paramilitary organisations and associated criminality. As this review illustrates statutory delivery leads, community and voluntary sector partners and communities have achieved a great deal in challenging circumstances, including the lack of an Assembly and associated political drive and legislative progress. However, as the IRC has highlighted, most recently in its second report:

‘The task is a complex one that will require a sustained, long-term and holistic effort that combines a policing and justice response, side by side with a major and energetic tackling of the deep socio-economic issues facing the communities where the paramilitaries operate.’

3. The first part of this review reflects on delivery to date: achievements; challenges; and learning. At this point, as the IRC has clearly stated, the legacy of paramilitarism and its impact in communities remains a ‘stark reality’ and there are no grounds for complacency, particularly in the context of a global health pandemic and associated societal shifts and economic impacts. For Northern Ireland to become a thriving, diverse, economically stable and safe place for all, there can be no place for paramilitarism. Equally, tackling paramilitarism and associated criminality and harm effectively will bring these systemic transformations closer.

4. The second part of this review, therefore, reflects on how delivery could be improved in this new context based on learning from 2017-2020.

5. Alongside formal monitoring arrangements established in line with Outcome Based Accountability, the Programme has been subject to rigorous external scrutiny, from individual evaluations of projects to the overarching assessment of progress on every commitment provided by the IRC. There is also significant media interest.

6. The breadth of information and complexity of action needed to support a comprehensive and societal approach to delivering the entirety of the Executive Action Plan cannot be addressed appropriately in one document; throughout the review there is signposting to relevant published statistics, reports, surveys and research that have informed it.

Methodology

7. This review has been completed over the course of the last twelve months by the Programme Team, which has used a variety of qualitative and quantitative information including commissioned surveys and project evaluations.

The main sources are detailed below.

- **Review of Scorecards and project monitoring information:** Every project prepares a quarterly scorecard detailing the progress toward fulfilling the commitment in the Action Plan and with the relevant performance measures. These scorecards form the basis of the Delivery Update Report (see **Annex A**) which is published on the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme webpage on a quarterly basis.
- **Review of evaluations:** A number of the commitments within the Action Plan have been externally evaluated, in addition to providing quarterly assessments of progress. These evaluations are detailed in the section on the relevant delivery approach.
- **IRC reports:** The Independent Reporting Commission has been engaging directly with a broad range of stakeholders since 2018. It publishes annual reports (see **Annexes B and C**) which provide an assessment of progress on each individual action, make specific recommendations and highlight broader issues for consideration by the Executive now that it has been restored. A summary of the IRC's recommendations and the responses to date is attached at **Annex D**. Regular meetings with the Commissioners and monthly meetings with the IRC Secretariat have also informed this review.
- **Programme Board:** Minutes of Programme Board discussions record key issues and funding decisions to inform future progress.

- **Permanent Secretaries:** a session with Permanent Secretaries and IRC representatives in May 2019 highlighted the importance of a more transformational approach and coordinated locality working between the public sector and communities.
- **Gateway reviews:** two Gateway reviews were commissioned and made recommendations.
- **Issue based discussions:** some key issues and initiatives, such as developing the Lawfulness framework, the concept of transition, the public awareness campaign, and the proposed phase 2 of the Programme have had specific discussions and workshops over the course of the programme.
- **Subgroups:** Discussions over the life of the programme in three subgroups focused on communities, transition and learning; on promoting lawfulness and on communications have informed the review.
- **Evidence review:** evidence from elsewhere on analogous challenges and research relating specifically to Northern Ireland has been reviewed on an ongoing basis. Although all of this is not explicitly referenced in this document, a bibliography is included at the end.
- **Assessment of data:** The Programme Team has collected and commissioned data to understand the issues related to paramilitarism to inform delivery. This data is included in the section on the relevant delivery approach.
- **Other events and Project Boards:** Over the last two years many events and ongoing stakeholder engagement have helped to inform progress and to capture qualitative learning to augment quantitative data captured through routine reporting and evaluations. These have included, for example:
 - an insight group on paramilitary style attacks;
 - a 'Stop Attacks' forum and UU conference event;
 - meetings of the cross-party Political Advisory Group;
 - discussions with EA START project workers and community youth workers;
 - facilitated sessions by QUB and UU focused on vulnerable young people;
 - visits to Restorative Justice partners;
 - a public panel discussion on the first IRC report;
 - project boards for Aspire, Communities in Transition; PCTF/PSNI problem solving with communities; START; WRAP; and
 - task and finish sessions on locality working and on community safety.

8. Learning has also been captured through two conferences; discussions with stakeholder fora, including with the T:BUC Forum; in stakeholder events facilitated by Corrymeela; and with 44 CRC core funded groups. In 2020, during the current COVID-19

pandemic, the Programme Team has held phone calls and online meetings with the ‘one team’ of delivery leads, with a group of community and voluntary sector delivery partners and with other stakeholders (in groups and one to ones) to discuss delivery to date and understand wider views, concerns and ambitions for change.

Background

9. The Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme was established to deliver 38 commitments from the Northern Ireland Executive aimed at tackling paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime. The Executive Action Plan is the Executive’s response to the [2016 Panel Report](#) which was set up following the [Fresh Start Agreement in 2015](#) to make recommendations on the disbandment of paramilitary groups. A total of £50 million was pledged over an initial five year period to support delivery of the [Action Plan](#). Delivery involves Government Departments, law enforcement agencies, local councils and community and voluntary sector partners working together.

10. The focus set out in the 2016 Action Plan is on robust law enforcement, implementing long term prevention measures, addressing social issues that affect communities and building confidence in the justice system. The associated programme has sought to coordinate these four mutually reinforcing themes, while responding to IRC recommendations to adopt a ‘twin track’ approach encompassing robust law enforcement alongside transformational impact in communities. As noted earlier, the latter ambition has not yet been met and this is explored further in the section on key points of learning.

‘A Fresh Start’

11. ‘A Fresh Start – the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan’ was published by the Executive and the UK and Irish Governments on 17 November 2015. This followed intensive discussions in response to continued paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland. In the Agreement, they reiterated “the primacy and centrality of peace and the political process to the continued transformation of our society”. A key goal identified in that regard was the ending of paramilitarism “once and for all”.

12. The Agreement set out proposals for addressing some of the most challenging issues impacting Northern Ireland, including commitments to tackle the ‘*insidious influence of paramilitarism and reinforce efforts to tackle organised crime and criminality*’.

It made a firm commitment to achieving a society free of paramilitarism, working for the disbandment of all paramilitary organisations and their structures and challenging paramilitary attempts to control communities.

13. Building on the previous all-party commitment under the Ministerial Code and Pledge of Office to non-violence, support for law and order and support for policing and the rule of law, all parties to the Fresh Start Agreement further committed to:

- **Work collectively to achieve a society free of paramilitarism.**
- **Support the rule of law unequivocally in word and deed and support all efforts to uphold it.**
- **Challenge all paramilitary activity and associated criminality.**
- **Call for, and work together to achieve, the disbandment of all paramilitary organisations and their structures.**
- **Challenge paramilitary attempts to control communities.**
- **Support those who are determined to make the transition away from paramilitarism.**
- **Accept no authority, direction or control on our political activities other than our democratic mandate alongside our own personal and party judgment.**

14. Section D of '*A Fresh Start*' provided for funding to support this task. The UK Government committed to provide £25 million over five years matched by the Executive, giving a total of £50 million over five financial years commencing in March 2016.

The Three Person Panel

15. The Executive appointed an independent Three Person Panel to report to them with recommendations for a strategy leading to the disbandment of paramilitary groups. Following an engagement and research process the Panel reported on the 7th June 2016. It identified a range of potential barriers which, if addressed, "might go some way toward creating the conditions in which groups would abandon their paramilitary structures and peacefully support the rule of law" and provide "a new strategic approach to the discontinuation of residual paramilitary activity".

16. The Panel's work concluded that a strategy was required, championed and led by the Executive, to achieve the following broad objectives:

1. Promoting lawfulness
2. Support for transition
3. Tackling criminal activity
4. Addressing systemic issues

The 'Executive Action Plan for Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime'

17. During the short period from publication of the Three Person Panel report (June 2016) to 19th July 2016, 43 Panel recommendations were translated into a series of commitments in a high level action plan - the 'Executive Action Plan for Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality And Organised Crime'. Five commitments were to be delivered by the UK and Irish Governments. The remainder were to be delivered by the Executive and its partners.

18. The Action Plan proposed a collaborative Executive-wide approach to tackling issues associated with paramilitary activity, criminality, and organised crime. It indicated that programme management arrangements should be established to ensure that the work was given the focus and strategic direction it required. Individual actions were to be taken forward by departments, associated agencies, statutory bodies and third sector bodies and groups - with the idea that programmes and projects within the action plan should be tailored to take consideration of local contexts and to empower and support citizens.

19. The Independent Reporting Commission was established in August 2017, under the terms of the Fresh Start Agreement. Its role is to: (a) report generally on progress towards ending paramilitary activity, and (b) report specifically on implementation of measures of the UK and Irish Governments and of the Northern Ireland Executive ("the Executive"), including implementation of the Executive's Action Plan.

What was the 2016 Action Plan and associated programme aiming to achieve?

20. The Executive action plan is structured around the four high level objectives set out in the Three Person Panel report, and recognises that a combination of approaches is required to deal with the breadth of issues related to paramilitary activity and associated criminality. The Programme utilises these as priorities with associated long term outcomes:

Promoting lawfulness

- Outcome: The public support and have even more confidence in the justice system

Tackling criminal activity

- Outcome: Safer and more confident communities

Supporting transition

- Outcome: Support is available for those who want to move away from paramilitary activity and structures

Addressing systemic issues

- Outcome: Paramilitarism has no place

21. The delivery programme associated with the Action Plan aimed to work across government and other relevant agencies, with a key role for community/voluntary sector organisations as partners and with local communities most impacted by paramilitary activity. The Programme also sought to link the action plan to levers across the Executive that could support achievement of the programme outcomes.

22. In developing a programme of delivery for the 38 commitments which were the responsibility of Executive Departments and agencies, it was recognised up front that the four outcomes are not mutually exclusive and that associated workstreams will not be linear in nature from action to outcome. Each relates to the other and all are interdependent.

23. It was also recognised in the Three Person Panel report, and in the Executive Action Plan, that communities and community led programmes would be key to success: 'communities and citizens have a role in delivering the actions outlined in this plan, and new and exciting ideas will be put forward.' A particular focus on building community

capacity was sought through commitments to involve women in community transformation (B5), to enhance and extend restorative practice (A9) and to support ambitious community initiatives (B4), as well as in the values that underpinned the Action Plan.

24. In August 2016, in response to commitment B7 in the Action Plan, a small two person unit was established in the Department of Justice to encourage coordinated delivery across the Executive and to put in place appropriate governance arrangements and associated work streams for communications, impact measurement, financial assurance and stakeholder engagement. The delivery of the Programme was organised using PRINCE 2 methodology to ensure clarity and transparency in respect of:

- responsibilities for decision-making;
- delegated powers and authority;
- accountability and reporting arrangements.

Progress to Date

25. The following tables summarise progress made against each of the original commitments.

Long Term Prevention

Action	Title	Implemented	Underway	In Development	Delayed due to no Executive
A1	Promoting lawfulness		✓		
A2	Raising public awareness re culture of lawfulness	✓			
A4	Supporting young people at risk	✓			
A8	Review of protocols for engagement				✓
B7	A dedicated unit to coordinate delivery	✓			
B12	Supporting young men at risk	✓			
B13	Programme supporting vulnerable young people		✓		
D1	Improving educational and employment prospects		✓		
D4	Programme management	✓			

Building Capacity to Support Transition

Action	Title	Implemented	Underway	In Development	Delayed due to no Executive
A3	Engagement re/promotion of a culture of lawfulness		✓		
A9	Restorative justice initiatives			✓	
B1	Ex-prisoners - FETO 1998/Employers' guidance	✓			
B2	Ex-prisoners - improving access to financial services	✓			
B3	Ex-prisoners - visa applications	✓			
B4	Building capacity in communities in transition		✓		
B5	Women Involved in Community Transformation Programme	✓			
B6	Funding availability/rigorous enforcement			✓	
B10	Reintegration of offenders			✓	
D2	Reducing segregation in education and housing		✓		

Strategies and Powers to Tackle Criminal Activity

Action	Title	Implemented	Underway	In Development	Delayed due to no Executive
C1	Shifting focus – Paramilitary activity to Criminality		✓		
C2	Reviewing legislation				✓
C4	PSNI investigative capacity/PCTF	✓			
C6	Joint Agency Task Force	✓			
C8	Integrated approach/UK Government/Executive/Ireland		✓		

Building Confidence in the Justice System

Action	Title	Implemented	Underway	In Development	Delayed due to no Executive
A5	Visible policing	✓			
A6/A7	PCSPs/embedding a culture of lawfulness		✓		
A10	Reforming committal proceedings		✓		
A11	Committal reform/offences linked to paramilitary groups		✓		
A12	Case management improvements/ICP	✓			
A13	Expediting case progression		✓		
A14	Review of bail in respect of serious offences			✓	
A15	Referral of unduly lenient sentencing	✓			
A16	Review of sentencing policy			✓	
B8	Prisons: Review of the operation of separated regime				✓
B9	Prisons: Education and training in the separated regime	✓			
B11	Monitoring of 'paramilitary' offenders when on license			✓	
C7	Assets recovered from criminal activity	✓			

Achievements and Next Steps on Individual Commitments Made in 2016

26. This section provides an overview of what has been developed under the Programme and some of the achievements to date. It is clear that transformational change in this area will take time and a continued, relentless focus from influential leaders in Government and in communities. It is also important to reflect on progress that has been made in challenging circumstances without an Assembly and the associated political input or legislative progress that was anticipated in Fresh Start Agreement and the associated 2016 plan for tackling paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime. Positive progress can be seen in delivery against most of the original 38 commitments, but also in other innovative ways.

27. The following provides a summary of achievements against specific commitments made in the 2016 Action Plan and suggests next steps against each.

Long Term Prevention

28. The Action Plan made clear that communities need to be supported to build confidence in the rule of law and in the promotion of lawfulness. Moving to a society in which 'paramilitarism has no place' requires a cultural shift away from simply tackling unlawfulness and anti-social behaviour, towards creating a society where lawfulness is promoted and valued, and where law enforcement and the justice system are able to tackle harm and criminality in partnership with communities. This requires a connected approach, recognising that delivery needs to include the people most affected by these issues and that a vital contribution can be made by civil society and by the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors.

29. Within this delivery approach there were nine commitments, including actions around political commitment and changing attitudes, new services for people vulnerable to paramilitary activity and harm, and establishing new models of working.

Executive support for lawfulness	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
The Executive should make promoting lawfulness a key priority (A1)	Tackling paramilitarism and the promotion of lawfulness are included in Outcome 7 of the Outcomes Delivery Plan. The Ministerial Pledge of Office includes specific commitments to support the rule of law and challenge paramilitary activity and control over communities. The Northern Ireland Act 1998 was amended to include the requirement that Assembly members commit to support the rule of law and challenge paramilitary activity and control over communities. The New Decade New Approach document states that tackling paramilitarism will be a priority in a new Programme for Government: <i>'The parties reaffirm their commitment to tackling paramilitarism. Ending the harm done by paramilitarism will be a priority in the new Programme for Government.'</i>
Review of protocols for engaging with representatives of paramilitary groups (A8)	This commitment has not been progressed, and would benefit from Executive consideration.
Changing attitudes	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Raise public awareness of what people can do about criminality in Northern Ireland and promote active citizenship in building a culture of lawfulness (A2)	There are a 3 key commitments under A2 which seek to promote changes to attitudes towards paramilitarism and organised crime: 1. The Ending the Harm public awareness campaign 2. General communications activity – including annual conferences The Ending the Harm campaign was externally evaluated at the end of its first phase and compared against baseline research which had informed the development of the campaign. Independent Research has shown a reduction in the percentage of people who think that PSAs are justified/justified in certain circumstances from 35% in 2017 to 19% in 2019 as a result of the campaign.

	An independent assessment of the media coverage of paramilitarism over the lifespan of the Programme concluded that: “The coverage of paramilitary attacks over the period is particularly striking, no doubt inspired by the public information advertising campaign. The weight of coverage and the number of editorials condemning the attack, most markedly in the Irish News is impressive. A light has been shone on horrendous practices and the narrative of coercive control is in the mainstream media.” As part of qualitative feedback DoJ’s Community Safety Division commented: ‘The narrative has changed – we’re now talking about trying to create a society free from paramilitarism – and able to highlight the NI Executive cross-party political commitment to that aim’. There is value in this work continuing, although it will be important to develop it closely with stakeholders and partners and monitor its impact.
	3. The development of curriculum materials for use in schools to promote and support the teaching of active citizenship as a way of tackling paramilitarism and promoting lawfulness CCEA report that ‘Post-primary teachers in NI are now more informed on how addressing issues of lawfulness, criminality and paramilitarism in classrooms meets the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.’ The Department for Communities and CCEA are working together to promote the use of post-primary resources amongst youth and community groups as a direct result of the programme. As a direct result of the programme, CCEA have developed the resources with input from stakeholders it may not have previously consulted with, such as the Youth Service, PSNI and the #stopattacks forum. There is value in this work continuing, although it will be important to develop it closely with stakeholders and partners and monitor its impact.
New models of working	
Broad Commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Capacity building for a partnership approach between teachers and	1. Capacity Building Circle of courage training has been delivered to 240 participants including all PSNI neighbourhood officers.

youth workers to engage with young people involved in risk taking activities, and to promote lawfulness through programmes in schools and youth clubs (A4)	36 schools participated in managing risk training, which explores sectarianism and paramilitary influence. Systemic approaches have been developed to planning and delivery as a result of partnership working in the programme. This includes a MOU between the PSNI and EA which covers significant issues regarding resource allocation, integrated service delivery and increased outcomes for young people, schools and communities. There are quarterly planning meetings between District Commanders and senior youth staff and processes in place between PSNI, community and youth service to provide scenario building. The youth service curriculum has been revised and updated to a strength based approach with the Circle of Courage Training being embedded in the entire youth service. 31 PSNI schools officers working strategically across NI with EA youth service in schools, EOTAS and youth centres. Youth Volunteer Academy joint programme delivered between PSNI and 'at risk' youth across NI. There is value in this work continuing, although it will be important to develop it closely with stakeholders and partners and monitor its impact.
	2. An Agile Response Fund has been developed to support (A4) partners to respond to local events and issues The Agile fund has resulted in a series of one off interventions at key points in time to divert young people away from situations which could have led to more serious criminal or anti-social activity. This has already enabled partners to respond flexibly to events and has prevented young people being exposed to risk. It should be continued and further expansion of this way of working should be considered.
	3. Multi-agency working in Derry/Londonderry (A4) The partnership working in Derry/Londonderry between the Education Authority, the voluntary and community sector, and the PSNI, has been evaluated and found to have 'been highly effective in increasing alignment on the challenges affecting the city, clarity on roles and responsibilities and the formulation of context specific solutions.' It also has reduced community tensions, as evidenced by the reduction in the number of petrol bombs thrown in the city from 425 to 25 and the number of arrests for paramilitary related activity from 38 (including 17 children) to 1.

	There is value in this work continuing and further development of the model in other contexts should be considered.
Multi-agency work to prevent vulnerable young people from being drawn into paramilitary activity and harm (B13)	Multi-agency working pilots have been developed in Belfast City Council and Mid and East Antrim Council to address issues associated with an individual's vulnerability to paramilitary involvement or harm. While there has been progress on coordinating effort through commitment A4 and some excellent practice has been developed (see Colm Walsh's 2019 report: '<i>Common Purpose. A proof of concept for targeted youth services in the Derry area.</i>' – attached at Annex E.), this work has taken time to develop and projects are not yet fully implemented. The pilot projects should be evaluated and decisions made on future funding should be based on those evaluations. Discussions on a connected programme of work across Family Support Hubs, Support Hubs, YJA, Restorative Practice and the Safeguarding Board for NI should be progressed.
New Services	
Broad Commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Supporting young men at risk (B12)	The Aspire Project commenced in September 2017. It is delivered by the Probation Board and its voluntary and community sector partners, and has provided services to 1,062 men between the ages of 16 and 30 who are vulnerable to paramilitary activity. When evaluated, 83% of Aspire service users said Aspire had helped them take a better path in life. Additional services are now being provided to Aspire service users as a result of the evaluation of the service This has been externally evaluated and the report is available: https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Aspire-Evaluation-8th-May-2019-Final.pdf This work should be continued.
START (a project under A4)	The START project commenced in April 2028. It is a youth outreach programme delivered by the Education Authority and its voluntary and community sector partners, and has involved 1121 young people in the programme, including 145 young people most at risk of paramilitary activity or harm. There has been a rolling programme of external evaluation of the START project which has been designed to capture early learning as well as the impact of the project on its participants. This is due to report in 2020.

	There is value in this project and comparative evidence from other contexts suggests it is the type of work which is important in addressing these issues. It should continue into the next phase pending the learning from the final evaluation report and wrapped into a more comprehensive approach to commitment B13.
Supporting Youth Through Engagement (SYTES) (a project under A4)	The SYTES project commenced in January 2020. It is delivered by the Education Authority in partnership with the PSNI to support young people. This project has not been running for long enough to have reported any outputs or outcomes at this stage. It should be evaluated and decisions made on future funding should be based on those evaluations.
Edges (a project under B13)	The Edges project ran from 2018-19. It was delivered by voluntary and community sector partners on behalf of the Department of Health, and the Programme supported 250 young people in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Council area who were on the edge of the care system, the criminal justice system, or excluded from school. 69% of people on the Edges project reported that they were satisfied with the service. The project was evaluated throughout its lifecycle as part of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme and the final evaluation did not find sufficient evidence to recommend continuance of the project. This work has already ceased.
Buy Social (a project under D1)	Buy Social is a project aimed at maximising the benefits of public procurement by providing opportunities for people who are long term unemployed or who have no substantial work experience. It has provided opportunities for 1590 people. 39% of participants in the Buy Social scheme have had a positive employment or educational outcome. This work has seen positive outcomes but the cohort is not drawn sufficiently from communities most impacted by paramilitary activity. It demonstrates value as support to PfG outcomes, but should no longer be supported under the programme.
WRAP (a project under D1)	The WRAP project has been running since September 2019. It is a pilot programme to provide wrap-around educational services to young people in a way which connects young people, their school, family and community. WRAP has provided support for over 130 families and over 650 young people. Initial feedback from the WRAP project indicates that participants have increased confidence, efficacy, and self-control, and increased understanding of educational topics.

	The project should be evaluated and decisions made on future funding and on the potential for greater alignment with the START programme and commitment B13 to bring a sustained focus on transformation of support for young people to enhance attainment.
Programme management	
Broad Commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Programme monitoring and co-ordination (B7 and D4)	A dedicated unit was established, under B7, in 2016/17, based in the DoJ. The remit of the team is to lead work to coordinate and implement the Programme. This also contributes to achievement of Commitment D4 in the Action Plan, which requires that strong programme management arrangements are put in place for developing and delivering the strategy. Examples of progress include: • new data on attitudes towards paramilitarism and criminality through the commissioning of a new module in the Northern Ireland Life and Times and the Young Life and Times surveys, which is available here: https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/results/comsafety.html • regular Programme updates which are available here: https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/executive-action-plan-delivery-updates-tackling-paramilitary-activity • Governance processes and co-ordination The processes put in place and associated governance mechanisms have been reviewed through two Gateway reviews which identified the need to build the current team. Recently its capacity has been expanded with the introduction of a research function. There is still a need for central co-ordination, focus on impact and a greater emphasis on research, development and collaboration in order to help meet expectations set out in the Action Plan. The dedicated unit should be enhanced to enable greater collaboration and shared communications across sectors and with communities most impacted by the legacy of paramilitarism to support transformational change. The IRC recommendation for a ‘hub’ approach to be taken to enhance delivery and accountability should be considered as the next step for the ‘one team’ approach.

Indicators for This Delivery Approach

30. Three indicators (see the charts below) are utilised for this delivery approach: the number of 'paramilitary style attacks', the number of people that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive accepts as being subject to paramilitary intimidation, and attitudes as to whether people think that paramilitary groups have a controlling influence in their area.

31. In terms of what this shows about the level of paramilitary activity:

- there is an overall downward trend in the number of paramilitary style attacks. Whilst last year (2019/20) saw an increase of two attacks on the previous year, it is too early to assess if this is a reversal of the downward trend;
- there has been a reduction in the number of presenters and acceptances as a result of paramilitary intimidation; and
- there is not currently enough data to draw conclusions about changing attitudes to paramilitary control, although existing information shows that attitudes have not shifted significantly.

Figure 1

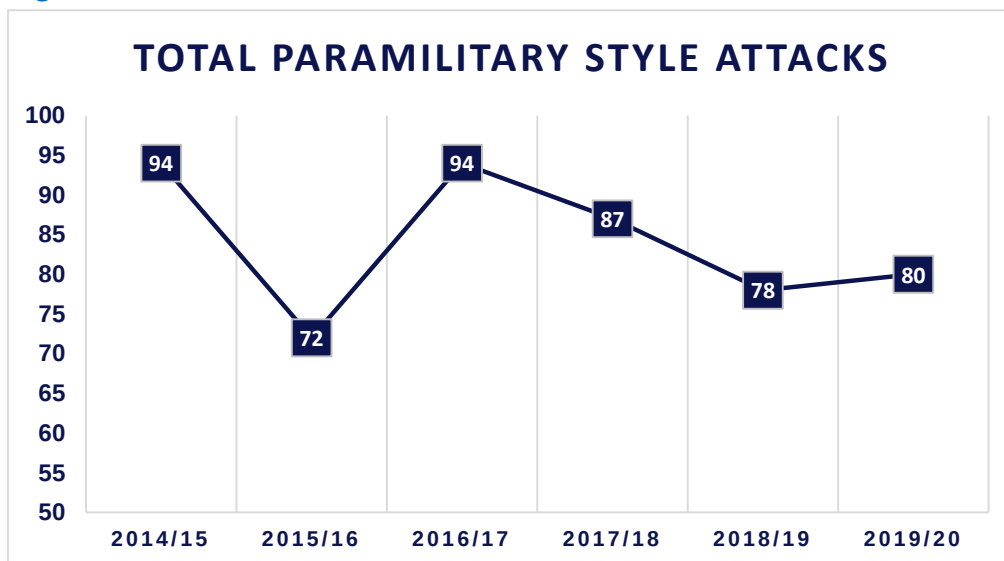


Figure 2

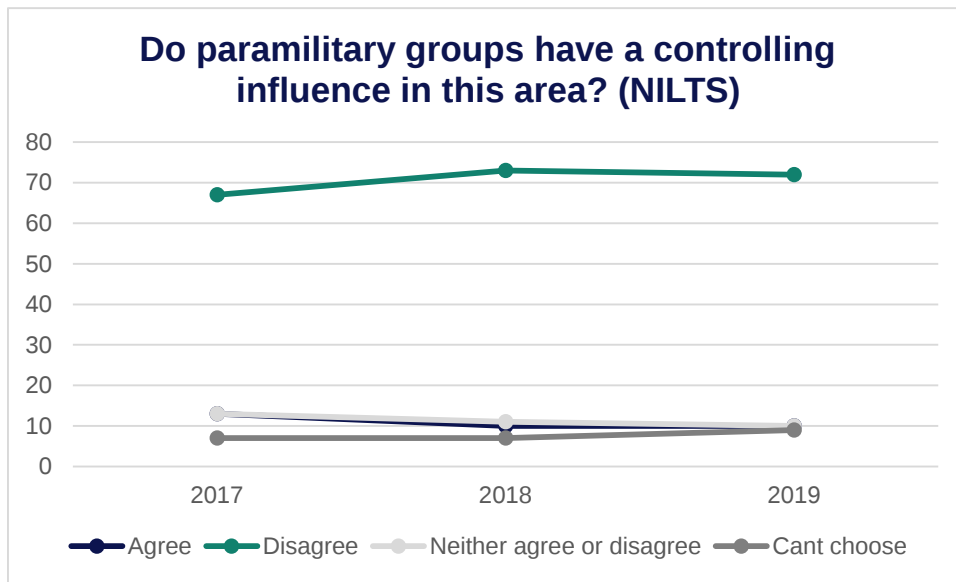


Figure 3

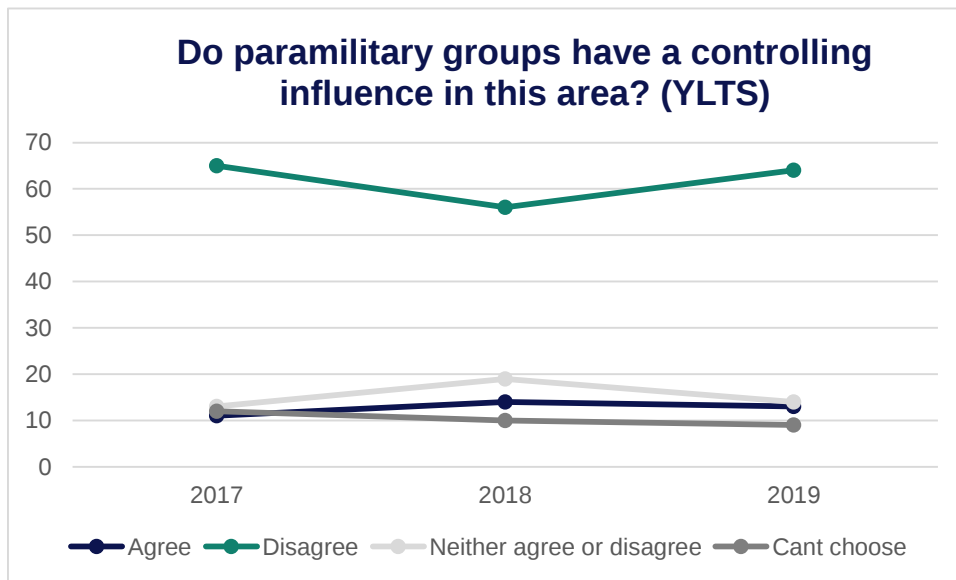
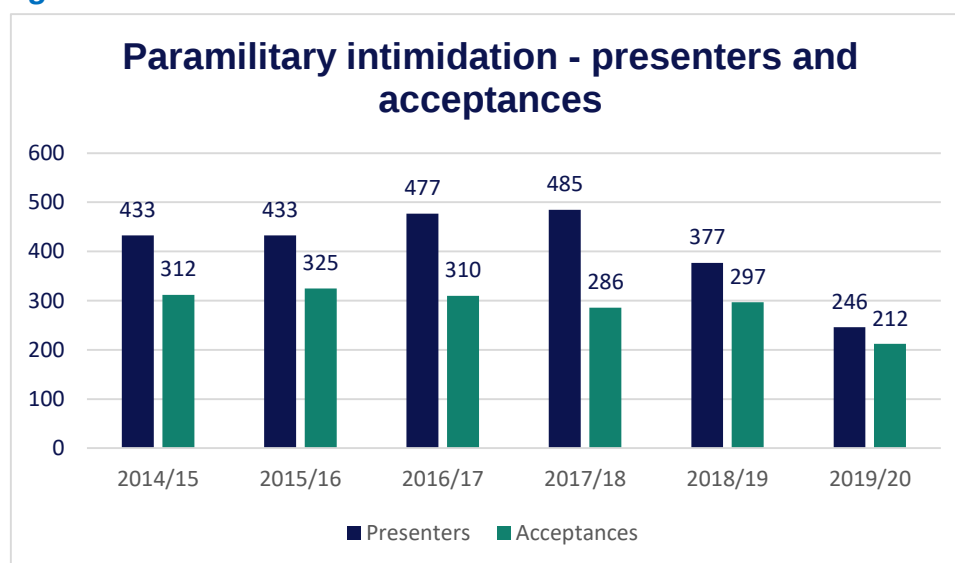


Figure 4



Building Capacity to Support Transition

32. The complexity and breadth of the task involved in building capacity to support transition is reflected in the number of commitments in the Action Plan which are active in this space. These include, for example, extensive efforts to promote a culture of lawfulness (recognising that good relationships between communities and law enforcement authorities are key to effective transition). Investment has also been made in building the skills, knowledge and confidence of women in the community to be able to support community transformation. The Panel recognised that it is important to ensure that barriers to transition on an individual level are addressed, and measures are included in the Programme aimed at addressing the needs of those who have had previous involvement in paramilitarism and who hold conflict-related convictions. The community based accredited restorative justice organisations have also been key partners in developing restorative capacity and practice, and further restorative practice measures are to be developed at a strategic level, as well as under the Communities in Transition (CIT) Project, as part of its area-based approach.

33. Focusing on 8 areas initially identified as being particularly vulnerable to paramilitary activity and control, the CIT project represents a significant element of the Programme's work to build capacity to support communities to transition away from paramilitary influence. Recognising that communities must be at the heart of this effort, time was taken to ensure that they have had a role in shaping appropriate and targeted

interventions across the 8 areas. While this work was being developed, other commitments under this delivery approach ensured that there were initiatives in place, impacting in the CIT areas to help create the conditions for transition away from paramilitary influence and harm in communities. The CIT projects commenced in November 2019 and 33 projects are now in operation. TEO is developing indicators and impact measures and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated in order to help inform appropriate initiatives going forward.

New Services	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Transformation programme for women (Commitment B5)	Women Involved in Community Transformation (WICT) A two-year WICT programme, led by DfC, has been delivered by a consortium of women's and peacebuilding organisations since October 2017. Phase 1 comprised a five module training programme and included an opportunity for accreditation (59% of participants). It involved 539 women and was delivered in 26 locations, including the 8 CIT areas. 439 women took part in phase 2, which sought to embed the participants' 'classroom' learning about community transformation into their everyday lives. Phase 3 recruitment has concluded and will involve 303 new women and 198 existing WICT participants.
	The Engage Programme is complementary to the main WICT programme. It specifically focuses on women currently within the justice system, both those in Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) custody, and those women in the community involved with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI). It has been particularly important in focusing on women involved in the criminal justice system with direct and indirect experience of paramilitarism who face increased risk of community isolation. 84 women have completed the programme to date. The WICT programme was subject to external evaluation; it has been shown to be delivering significant value for participants, and should be continued into Phase 2 with the potential to align effort across the programme and into other capacity building initiatives and community led projects to be explored.
Fund to support ambitious initiatives aimed at	The Communities in Transition project, led by TEO, was intended to support ambitious initiatives in eight areas where there has been a history of paramilitary activity and coercive control. The aim is to build the capacity of individuals and groups to address the vulnerabilities exploited by paramilitaries.

building capacity in communities in transition (B4)	Following the initial development of proposals for each of the 8 areas, a participatory design process, involving direct engagement with communities and key statutory stakeholders, was undertaken to refine proposals into a range of deliverable projects designed to be responsive to local context and need. A number of short term projects were delivered alongside the participatory design process; 7 are still under way. Seven key themes emerged: Community development; Health and Well-being; Addressing the needs of Young People; Community safety and policing; Restorative practices; Culture; and Personal transition. The first contracts were awarded on 14 November 2019, and there are currently 33 projects operational across the 8 areas. A high level theory of change for this project has been provided and is included at Annex F. The IRC report suggested that a stocktake of this action be prioritised in the year ahead. To this point the CIT project has not yet had the opportunity to be fully tested, so should continue the work which has been started to design and capture monitoring and evaluation of impact to inform future projects. Given the importance of community based initiatives to address vulnerability at a community level, learning from the existing CIT projects seeking to reduce community vulnerability should inform phase two. Re-imaging A commitment to extend the NI Housing Executive (NIHE) Re-Imaging Programme was also included in the context of commitment B4. The additional investment from the Programme (£498k in 2016-17 and £100k in 2017-18) helped to support transition in communities by enabling 20 new re-imaging projects to be implemented. NIHE has continued to encourage and develop re-imaging projects by working in partnership with local groups within communities most affected by paramilitarism. NIHE continues to fund additional re-imaging projects outside of the Tackling Paramilitarism programme.
Changing attitudes	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Promoting a culture of lawfulness (A3)	Supported through DfC, the NI National Citizen Service (NI NCS) Programme has engaged with approximately 200 young people. For the first time, a requirement to promote lawfulness has been mainstreamed within the design of the NI NCS programme.

	Supported through DfC, the Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) has established Action Groups in the Lower Shankill, Newtownards Road, St James' and Lower Falls areas of Belfast. These undertake structured community engagement events in line with a number of the principles set out in the 'Lawfulness Framework.' The success of these projects led to additional support through recovered proceeds of crime, through the DOJ Asset Recovery for Communities Scheme.
	Volunteer Now (in partnership with Sport NI and the Ulster University) has been delivering a citizenship programme (the Small Steps project). Phase 1 engaged with 473 Primary 7 school children from 16 schools in areas of deprivation / high levels of paramilitary activity. Due to the impact of Covid-19, phase 2 of the project has been cut short, but was delivered in full to 6 schools and in part to 2 schools, impacting a total of 246 children.
	The "It's Your Law" programme, delivered by the Attorney General and his staff in partnership with The Prince's Trust, is aimed at unemployed young people and those in school who are at risk of exclusion and are educationally underachieving. There is a particular focus on those young people who are at risk of influence from paramilitary / organised crime. 28 sessions have been delivered to date. An evaluation of the "It's Your Law" programme showed that the majority of the young people taking part had not had the opportunity to learn about Northern Ireland's justice system, or why it was important to support it, and welcomed the opportunity to do so. This is significant given that some knowledge of the justice system must be a precondition for sustainable support for it. These four projects have seen positive outcomes for participants. It will be necessary to look at the scale and scope of these initiatives in the context of other programmes and PfG priorities when considering inclusion in phase 2.
Policy change to support transition	
Broad Commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Support for ex-prisoners (B1, B2, B3)	Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998 - the legislation can now be progressed following restoration of the Executive. It will require primary legislative change - the process will take approximately 18 months. Employers' guidance for the NICS - the NI Civil Service (NICS) has implemented the Employers' Guidance, and all policies have been amended to adopt the change. Work is ongoing to promote the guidance to the wider public sector.

	A website is now operational – www.reviewpanel.org. Outreach events were held in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. The Review Panel is currently developing a work programme for 2020/21 which will consider how to broaden engagement with the wider ex-prisoner community as well as employers. Outreach events are also being considered for 2020/21. Most of the commitments relating to ex-prisoners have been progressed as far as possible. It is possible that a focused piece of work needs to be undertaken to identify if further actions are needed in phase 2.
Research to inform interventions to assist offenders with links to paramilitary groups with reintegration (B10)	Learning from other Action Plan commitments, specifically Commitments B9, B12 and B4 will be relevant to this commitment. Plans are in place to commence an initial research project towards the end of the year. Work under this commitment has not been significantly progressed and should be further developed in phase two.
Building on existing strategies to reduce segregation (D2)	This commitment is centred on the headline actions in T:BUC in relation to shared education and shared housing and neighbourhoods. Progress continues across all strands; examples of progress include: • All ten shared neighbourhood schemes are now complete. neighbourhoods into wider community; • Funding has been agreed for 129 T:BUC camps during 2019/20 (4,900 young people aged 11-19 years scheduled to attend); • Letters of Offer issued for 40 Urban Villages community projects; the majority are already underway. • Phase 1 of the Peace4Youth Programme has ended and Phase 2 is being rolled out. • 6 projects have been successfully delivered under the Uniting Communities through Sport & Creativity Programme, with 54 young leaders and 535 children/young people taking part in the programme. • A further 26 shared housing schemes are being built, providing 815 new homes, 8 of which have already been completed. This commitment included planned work with clear linkages with Programme for Government outcomes, and there are links with other commitments in the New Decade, New Approach agreement. This commitment needs to be explored further in phase two to meet IRC expectations of transformational change.

Rigorous enforcement of funding rules (B6)	DfC continues to seek feedback on funding (and related governance issues) that are of concern to the Voluntary and Community Sector (this is wider than the Executive Action Plan commitment), the Department's Guide on Grant and Procurement is reviewed as required. A project to review governance issues (Government Accounting Guidance and Addressing Bureaucracy) is scheduled for 2020. This commitment is an important policy and culture change. However, it requires additional work to develop what it means in practice, and to manage and monitor any change as it relates to overall outcomes.
New models of working	
Broad Commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Restorative Justice (A9)	Centre of Restorative Excellence The Department of Justice has established a Working Group to assist with the further development of proposals for a Centre of Restorative Excellence. The community based accredited restorative justice organisations are essential partners in progressing this work, and their levels of core funding have been maintained to date, in order to support the organisations in further developing capacity and practice. A draft Adult Restorative Justice Strategy has been updated to take into consideration the newly functioning Executive and is ready for Ministerial consideration, although this has been delayed due to Covid-19. Restorative justice is important in achieving the outcomes of the programme. These actions should be rolled forward with an increased emphasis on delivery.
	Dedicated fund for restorative justice Work has not progressed on a fund. However, a regional restorative practice project has been commissioned by TEO that is valued at approximately £1.4m. The allocation of consistent resources as part of a cross-executive fund to develop restorative practice should be progressed to ensure consistent application of restorative principles across public funding streams and to ensure establishment and sustainability of a Centre for Restorative Excellence.

Indicators for This Delivery Approach

34. Indicators for this approach are being developed by TEO and the Cooperation Ireland Consortium as part of the Communities in Transition (B4) project.

Strategies and Powers to Tackle Criminal Activity

35. The Action Plan makes clear the commitment by the Executive to upholding the rule of law and tackling all forms of criminality, including placing a greater strategic focus on organised criminality with links to paramilitary organisations, so that communities and businesses can prosper without the threat of coercive control or intimidation. For those who persist in such activity, a robust law enforcement response is required. This delivery approach requires a range of stakeholders to assist in tackling the threat posed by organised crime, and to ensure that effective legislative and operational levers are available.

36. A (primarily) law enforcement response to tackling criminal activity is needed to complement the other strands of work in this programme in order to meet the long-term outcomes. To build community confidence it is important that there is impact ‘on the ground’ for those who choose not to transition or move away from the structures of the past. The intention is that there must be tangible and visible consequences for those who are not willing to participate fully in a lawful society.

37. Within this delivery approach, there were 5 commitments, including actions around new ways of working and new legislation.

New ways of working	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
A shift in focus from ‘paramilitary activity’ to criminality (C1);	The Paramilitary Crime Taskforce (PCTF) , consisting of the PSNI, NCA and HMRC, was established to provide a dedicated, co-located law enforcement response to tackle the particular issue of criminality related to paramilitary groups. Creating this dedicated investigative resource means that a long term consistent focus can be applied to the investigation of paramilitary groups.
Prioritisation of investment	The combined investigative resource of all 3 agencies has been focusing its efforts on:

in the PSNI's investigative capacity, including working with the NCA and other agencies to tackle criminality linked to paramilitary groups (C4); Collaboration to ensure that tackling organised criminal activity is an integral part of efforts to deal with NI related terrorism (C8).	• increasing understanding of the activity of paramilitary linked Organised Crime Gangs (OCGs) and their criminal enterprises and networks; • increasing the number of paramilitary linked OCGs frustrated, disrupted and dismantled; • increasing the number and quantity of cash seizures/confiscations from paramilitary linked OCGs; • increasing the number of paramilitary linked offenders subject to Serious and Organised Crime Prevention Orders; and • supporting wider community based strategies aimed at promoting a culture of lawfulness. Since its inception, the PCTF has (to March 2020): • achieved its first conviction for membership of a paramilitary organisation (the UDA - on 20th September 2018); • prevented nearly £4.5 million of revenue loss; • seized 43 vehicles; • seized 172 weapons; • seized £978,824 of drugs; • carried out 573 searches; • arrested over 274 people; • charged or reported 220 people to the Public Prosecution Service; and • secured 40 convictions/criminal justice outcomes. <i>(These statistics are from April 2016 to March 2020 and are subject to change)</i> Recent successes in targeting illegal drugs supply There have been some recent significant successes in targeting the importation and selling of illegal drugs by organised crime gangs/paramilitaries. At the end of May, officers from the Paramilitary Crime Task Force seized more than £600,000 worth of suspected cannabis following searches in north Belfast and Ballyclare. The raids were carried out by PCTF officers investigating criminality linked to the east Belfast UVF. At the start of June the National Crime Agency (NCA), in a joint operation with PSNI, made the biggest drug seizure ever in Northern Ireland when they recovered approximately 600 kilos of herbal cannabis with an estimated street value of between £10-12 million*. Speaking about the NCA seizure, PSNI commented: "This successful operation demonstrates the significant benefits of joint working with law enforcement partners and we will continue to work closely with NCA to
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	disrupt the nefarious activities of organised crime groups operating in Northern Ireland.” *Whilst this was a joint agency operation targeting organised crime in Northern Ireland, it did not technically fall under the remit of the PCTF and will not feature in their reporting data as a result. However, its impact on paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland cannot be underestimated. This new way of working has been welcomed by the NI Policing Board. In its ‘<u>Assessment of PSNI Performance 2017/18</u>’, it stated: <i>“Members welcome the collaborative approach taken by the Paramilitary Crime Task Force comprising individuals from PSNI, NCA and HMRC in investigations undertaken into West Belfast UDA, Belfast INLA, Belfast Action Against Drugs, South East Antrim UDA, East Belfast UVF, East Belfast UDA, South East Antrim, INLA Londonderry and criminal gangs that are involved in cigarette smuggling with links to paramilitaries.</i> <i>“Investigations have revealed that these groups are heavily involved in all forms of criminality, paramilitary style attacks, extortions, intimidation, drug dealing and money laundering. These groups do untold damage to their communities and the Board supports the efforts of PSNI and their partners in disrupting their activities.”</i> This work is a key strand of the programme, and has been shown to have significant impact; it should be continued into phase 2 with greater visibility and proactive communications to communities.
Include the NIEA, and the Environmental Protection Agency in Ireland, in the cross-border Joint Agency Task Force (C6)	The NIEA, and the Environmental Protection Agency in Ireland are now included in the Joint Agency Task Force, including the Operations Coordination Group. The Joint Agency Task Force Operations Co-ordination Group has been functioning operationally since April 2016 and since the establishment of this group extensive work has been undertaken to establish structures and arrangements to enable the various partner agencies to agree priorities and share information. The collaboration between the Police Service of Northern Ireland, An Garda Síochána and other partner agencies offers a solution to disrupt, dismantle and subsequently convict offenders involved in cross border serious and organised crime. Since its inception, there have been successful operations to tackle rural crime, child sexual exploitation, excise fraud, drugs, financial crime and human trafficking. This work should be continued.

New legislation	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Review of legislation relating to serious and organised crime in Northern Ireland (C2)	A review of existing organised crime legislation in other jurisdictions was completed and various models and options considered in respect of their potential application in Northern Ireland. Draft legislative provisions were agreed and, in March 2020, the Justice Committee endorsed the Department of Justice consultation document in respect of draft policy proposals and their intention to consult. This has not been launched due to the evolving Covid-19 situation but the intention remains to do so as soon as practicable. This work should be carried forward to phase 2.

Media Coverage

38. There has been significant positive media coverage in relation to the work delivered to date under this approach. The Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team commissioned media commentator Nick Garbutt to undertake research into media coverage stemming from the work related to the programme. In his 2019 report, *‘DOJ Print Media Analysis: Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Action Plan’* (see **Annex G**), he says:

“[The work of the Paramilitary Crime Task Force has] generated more coverage than any other [work relating to the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme]... Initial cynicism over the setting up of the task force appears to have dissipated as arrests and seizures took place.”

Indicators for this delivery approach

39. One indicator is currently being utilised for this delivery approach: the total number of security incidents per year. Figure 5 shows that there is a long term downward trend in the number of security incidents since 2014. Data captured by PSNI in relation to the impact of the PCTF across its range of activity (up to March 2020) also provides helpful indicators, as illustrated in figures 6 to 8.

Figure 5

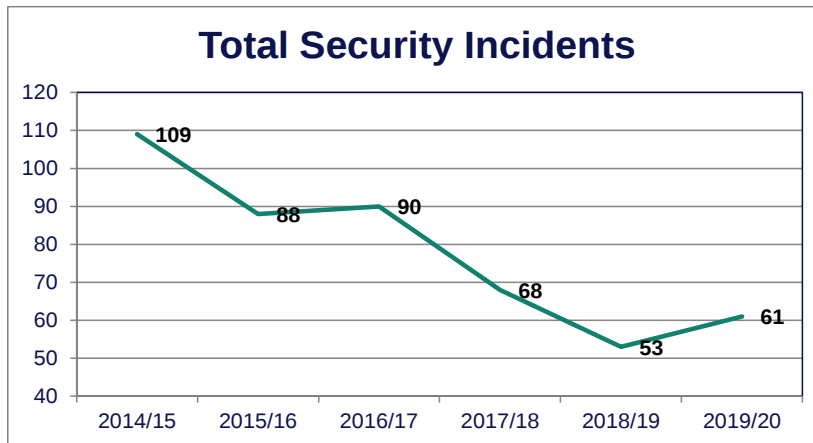


Figure 6

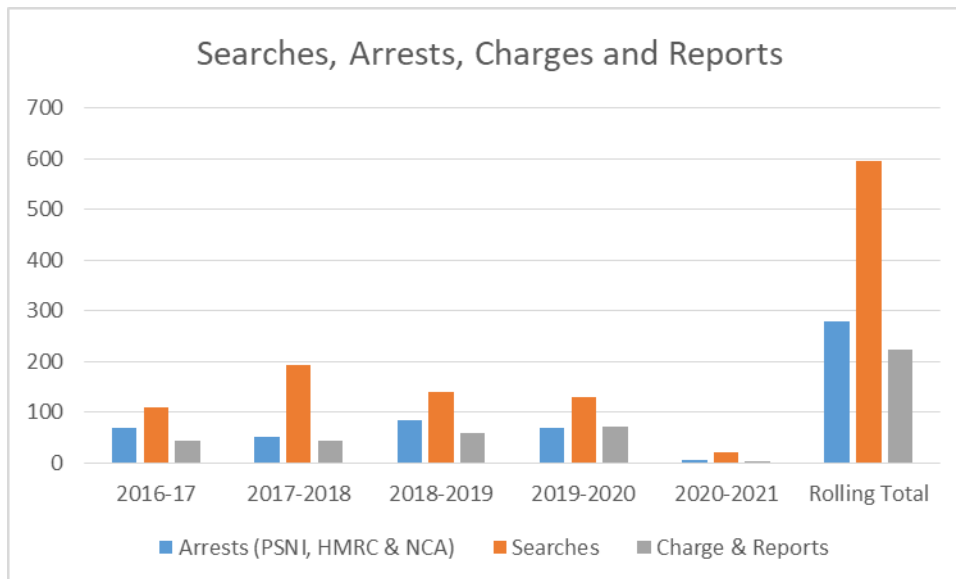


Figure 7

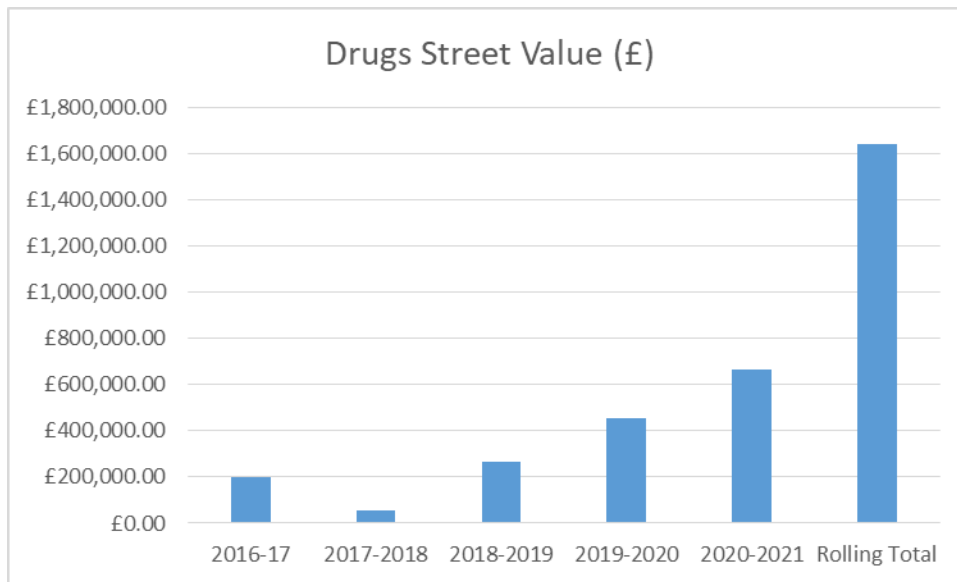
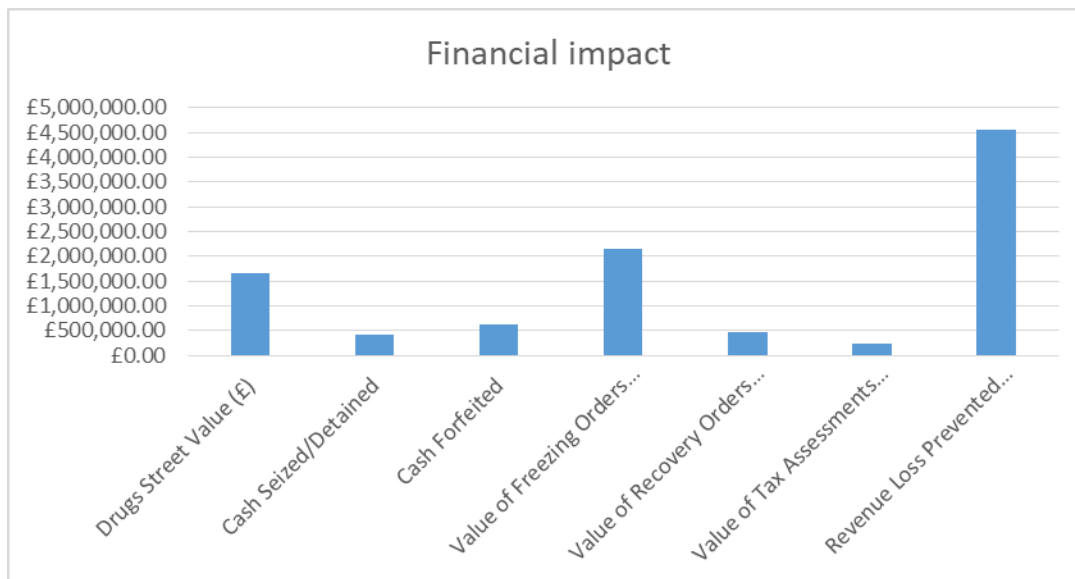


Figure 8



Building Confidence in the Justice System

40. This delivery approach is about continuing to build people's confidence in the justice system, particularly in those communities that may have become disengaged with justice and law enforcement institutions. It is important that people feel confident in engaging with the justice system, and that they do not feel they need to seek engagement with paramilitary groups as an alternative. The pace at which the justice system works is a key element in building increased confidence in the system, and was recognised as a factor in Section A of the Fresh Start Agreement and in the Panel report. Along with other steps to help enhance communities' confidence in justice, including a focus on the relationship between policing and communities, the Action Plan seeks to address head on some of the challenges that are faced. These include, for example, policy-led considerations of the use of committal in relation to the speed of the justice system; and 'on the ground' issues relating to community policing.

41. The Panel report made a number of recommendations that build on existing work to enhance the capacity of the justice system - and to develop the public's understanding of the effectiveness and role of that system in the life of communities. There are 13 commitments within this delivery approach in the Action Plan which build on the knowledge that the effectiveness, and perceived effectiveness, of the justice system helps to create community confidence. Actions include those around new services, changing attitudes, new legislation and process and system changes.

New services	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Review the resourcing and operation of policing in communities. Bespoke interventions and training to enhance confidence and trust between the police and communities.	Review of community policing - Following extensive consultation (4300 responses and 87 engagement events), an implementation plan for neighbourhood policing was submitted to NIPB in February 2020. (The Neighbourhood Policing Delivery Programme was, however, suspended on 19 March 2020 in order to prioritise resourcing for the national Covid-19 response. It is envisaged that the programme will recommence after the summer, however this timeframe will be kept under review.) Policing with the Community Interventions - PSNI have led the roll-out of bespoke interventions and training designed to enhance confidence and trust between the police and those communities still susceptible to paramilitary influence. This work has involved a multi-agency approach, working collaboratively and sharing experience across agencies.

(Commitment A5)	This project has included research, and targeted local interventions, including those aimed at working with young people at risk; as well as an OU training course on Collaborative Problem Solving for Community Safety, which is now a requirement for all new entrant officers – completed by 3000 people to date). The role of neighbourhood policing in addressing issues associated with paramilitary coercive control is crucial and has been recognised and emphasised by the IRC in its reports. An evaluation of the Policing with the Community work will be undertaken in 2020. In phase two, there should be a renewed focus on these activities to build better relationships and confidence between police and the community and provide clear links to wider community safety discussions through the Community Safety Board.
Review of constructive activity in separated prison accommodation (B9)	In place since September 2019, this initiative has centred on a consultative review of constructive activity in the separated prison accommodation, and the development and design of a new model, focused upon positive educational and wellbeing outcomes. New constructive activity was commissioned after publication of the review, and. To date, 14 sports sessions have taken place as a result of this work; and a review of Distance Learning is being undertaken. This work has not yet been evaluated and evaluation should be used to inform ongoing delivery.
Changing attitudes	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
PCSP focus on building community confidence in the rule of law and embedding a culture of lawfulness (A6/A7)	Inclusion of lawfulness in PCSP strategic objectives. PCSPs are an important part of the community safety infrastructure and have an important role to play in ensuring that the programme's principles are implemented and outcomes achieved. The work of PCSPs has taken time to develop, given the need to build understanding and support; however, we are beginning to see valuable and positive initiatives to support the programme's outcomes, including drama, workshops, collaborative working, and pilot projects. Examples of progress include: • 10 of 11 PCSPs have allocated funding to the initiative aimed at embedding a culture of lawfulness;

	• Over £200k awarded to community projects with themes contributing towards embedding a culture of lawfulness in Derry and Strabane; the Derry & Strabane PCSP also issues a 'not in our name' civil society rejection of PSAs after every such attack in that district in the form of a statement of condemnation; • In Lisburn and Castlereagh the PCSP held 6 area/issue specific public meetings with a reported 98% increase in confidence in the police following the events; • Causeway Coast and Glens PCSP aims to work on early intervention initiatives, especially with young people, to divert them away from future criminal activity. The PCSP has facilitated 40 meetings to help influence the community to embrace a culture of lawfulness; • As part of a rolling programme, PCSPs have been delivering performances of the play 'Banjaxed' which has helped to engage local young people in schools and youth groups on paramilitary related issues such as the risks young people can encounter through contact with armed and organised crime gangs. Each performance has included a post-show panel discussion involving the PSNI, PCSP, Tackling Paramilitarism Team/Justice representatives and local youth organisations. 4000 young people have seen the play so far. Inclusion of lawfulness in community plans - Links have been made between the role of PCSPs and the Community Plans being rolled out across all District Council areas and, in this context, formal linkages have been made between DfC, DoJ, PCSP and Community Planning Partnership personnel to capture and share best practice. As such, there is now a shared community of interest established, including Council CEOs, PCSP Chairs and Vice Chairs, Community Planning Managers, PCSP Managers and DoJ, TEO and DfC colleagues; Phase 2 should build on the work that has been conducted to date and take advantage of the understanding and momentum which has been built. Opportunities to enhance the role of PCSPs in tackling harm and vulnerability should be identified.
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New legislation	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Reform of committal proceedings (A10, A11)	Reform of committal proceedings was delayed because of the absence of an Executive and Assembly. Plans are now in place to implement these reforms, with initial proposed completion dates in 2021. This project should be completed and monitored to ascertain the impact which it has on programme outcomes.
Referral of Unduly lenient sentencing (A15)	A Statutory Order came into effect on 1 August 2019. The Order brings hybrid offences linked to terrorism, paramilitary activity and organised crime groups within the scope of the unduly lenient sentence provisions.
Process and system changes	
Broad commitment	What has been achieved (to March 2020)
Roll out of the indictable cases process (A12)	This is a development deriving from an inter-agency 'Indictable Cases Pilot' (ICP) which operated in the Ards County Court Division during 2015, aimed at addressing avoidable delay through early engagement in a case. To date, over 200 cases have been taken through the ICP process, with the average processing time reduced by 174 days. An evaluation of the Indictable Cases Process is to be published in 2020. This should inform future delivery.
Speeding up Justice (A13)	The wider speeding up justice agenda has been showing results (e.g. encouraging early guilty pleas; the draft Committal Reform Bill; the implementation of a new case management practice direction by the Office of the Lord Chief Justice; the roll out of ICP). Over the course of the Programme, this has been a specific and important piece of work in the Justice System to understand and with which to align. However, a focus on wider issues of community safety, local problem solving, understanding of the criminal justice system, and policing with the community are likely to be more directly related to achieving programme outcomes. This is important work to be progressed through Criminal Justice partners with oversight by the Criminal Justice Board.

Review of bail decisions (A14)	This commitment is closely linked to the work on improving the speed of the justice system. Within PSNI, work is underway to develop a more consistent approach to managing persons on bail and DOJ is also exploring with the Lord Chief Justice the possibility of a practice direction on bail applications and providing PSNI with sufficient time to respond. This work should continue in phase 2 as part of a wider focus to build community understanding and confidence in the criminal justice system.
Review of sentencing policy (A16)	With the return of the NI Assembly, work to seek agreement for the commencement of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 was prioritised. The aim is to commence the provisions by the end of the year. Once fully implemented this legislation will enhance powers in Northern Ireland to tackle terrorist and organised crime groups, including through the availability of wider confiscation and civil recovery powers, such as Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWOs) and Account Freezing Orders which are not yet available to law enforcement in Northern Ireland. A Review of the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) was initiated, however, it has been agreed with Home Office that the priority continues to be the commencement of the Criminal Finances Act 2017. The ARIS review will resume later in 2020. This work should be allowed to complete before further decisions are made for phase two.
Prisons: Review of the operation of the separated regime (B8)	Commencement of the review work requires Ministerial consideration and approval. Some preparatory work has been carried out, including preparing draft Terms of Reference. This has been submitted to the Cross Departmental Programme Board. Unfortunately progressing this work is more difficult at a time when the prison service is responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. NIPS continues to manage the operational environment and engage with stakeholders in the interim. Commitment B9 (regarding education and training is being progressed as a 'pathfinder' for engagement in separation, and to inform the approach to this commitment. Subject to Ministerial approval, work on this commitment should be continued into phase 2.
Monitoring of paramilitary offenders when on license (B11)	DoJ has been reviewing options with statutory agencies to ensure a suitable mechanism for collective risk management. The development of a risk assessment tool is considered critical to inform that risk management.

	Contractual arrangements have now been finalised in relation to appointment of a provider to lead work to develop a risk assessment tool to inform risk management and monitoring arrangements. The methodology has been agreed and key stakeholders have been identified who will inform and contribute to the design (and evaluation) of the risk assessment tool. Stakeholders have agreed to participate in a reference group which will provide organisational views and expertise and provide a quality assurance role during the various phases of the project. Partners are currently collating information for case studies. This project should continue into phase 2 to ensure its full implementation.
Review and improve the Assets Recovery Community Scheme (C7)	The Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS) fund allows for some of the assets recovered from criminal activity to be used for the benefit of victims, communities and the environment. An amended ARCS scheme launched in August 2018 and had an unprecedented 187 applications. 62 of these are now being funded, to the total of £1.9m. Assessment of the ARCS scheme in the context of other funding streams should be undertaken to ensure maximum impact.

Indicators for This Delivery Approach

42. 'People feel that they are protected by the law and the justice system' has been identified as an indicator for this delivery approach; this is being measured via data from the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey and the Young Life and Times Survey (see figures 9 and 10 below). There is not currently enough data to draw significant conclusions.

Figure 9

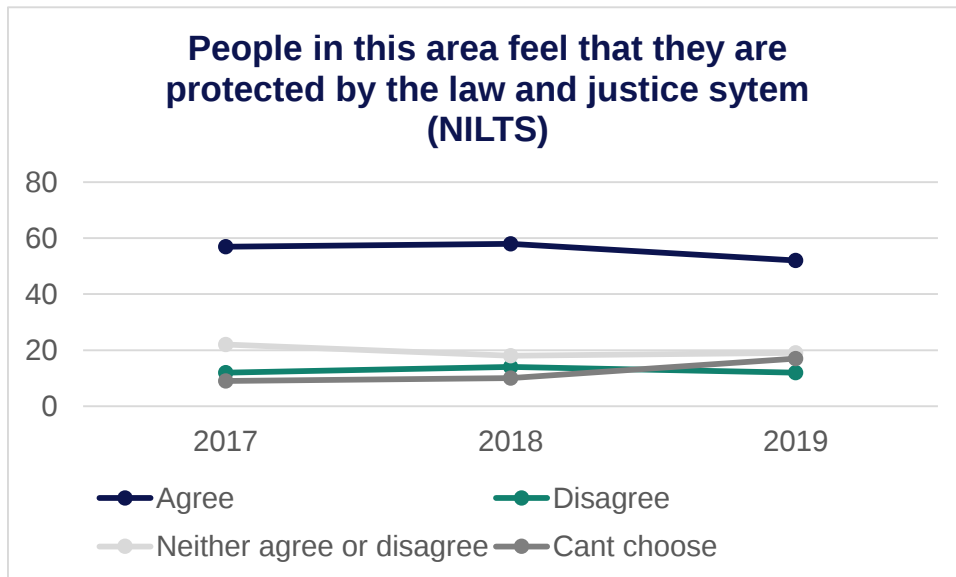
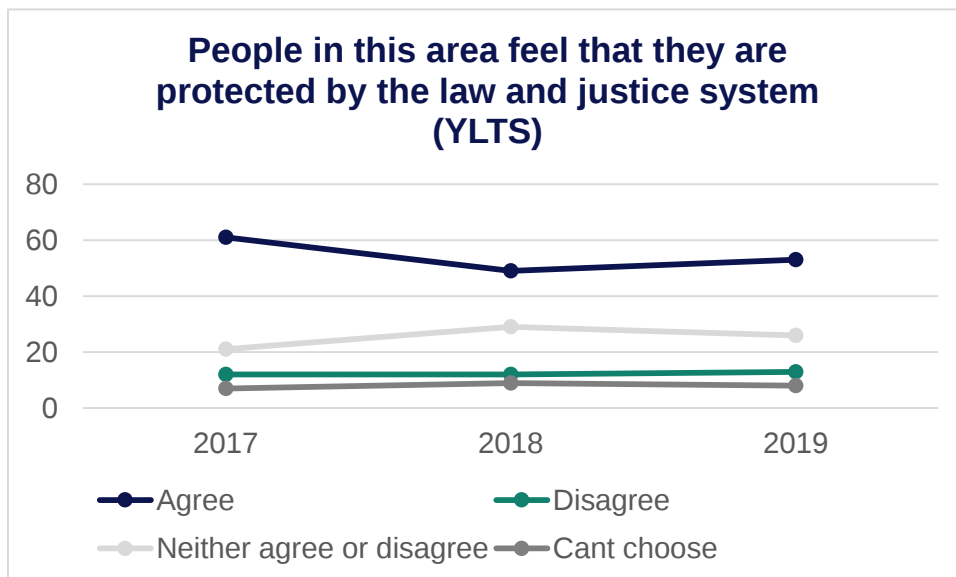


Figure 10



Additional Achievements

43. In addition to the specific achievements related to the original action plan commitments highlighted above, other factors have enabled success:

- The Executive Action Plan was the first time that paramilitarism – and, indeed, its link to criminality and organised crime - was given such focus at an Executive level. Due to the suspension of the Executive, **the benefits of having this focus have not been fully realised as yet; however, it has enabled coordination, public conversations and collaboration across Government departments and in communities.**
- The development of relationships on a cross-sectoral basis that have a specific focus on tackling paramilitary activity and the harm that it causes in communities has been a notable if quiet success of the Programme. These relationships have provided the infrastructure to share learning, advise on delivery and raise awareness of the key issues. Building on this success will ensure alignment across Government and in the private, voluntary, community and charitable sectors. Before the inception of this Programme, cooperation between agencies occurred on a case by case basis. **When the programme started there were around 11 statutory leads and no community partners. Today, more than 50 organisations are involved in the delivery of the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme: seven Government Departments, over 20 public and statutory bodies and 22 voluntary and community organisations.** That is outside the Communities in Transition project which has procured delivery of **28 community focused interventions that commenced at the end of 2019.**
- There have been **significant changes in how young people are supported to avoid, and be resilient to, paramilitary influence.** Much of this work has been led by the Education Authority which has worked in close partnership with the voluntary and community sector and the PSNI, among others, to problem solve in local areas and work together to keep young people safe.
- The development of a dedicated communications strategy for the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme has **started to change the nature of public conversations and media coverage on paramilitary activity and its impact.** The implementation of this strategy has moved the focus of conversation from one almost entirely around law enforcement to a broader narrative which recognises

the societal factors which continue to sustain paramilitary activity. **The need to engage multiple audiences in order to foster a sense of support and receptiveness around the action plan and in turn create positive momentum has been critical - and remains challenging.**

- Prior to the inception of the Programme there was no definition of paramilitary activity, so measures had to be established to inform delivery and to support conversations. An initial data dashboard was developed, with input from Dr Jonny Byrne and his January 2017 report, 'Evidence base for Fresh Start focused impact interventions'. The Programme team also identified a gap in the collective understanding of the views of communities on their safety, and the impact and influence of paramilitary activity. Since 2017, the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey survey has included a range of questions relating to community safety and perceptions of paramilitary influence, which can be viewed [here](#).
- Subsequently an overall dashboard has been developed with a range of partners including DfC, TEO, NIHE, EA, NIO and the Policing Board to support the work of the recently established Community Safety Board and to help align conversations and action in localities around emerging issues.

Feedback from Delivery Partners

44. This review reflects and incorporates much of the feedback given to the Programme Team by delivery partners. Some more detailed reflections from both statutory and community and voluntary sector partners are included at **Annex H**.

45. In summary, the importance of collaboration is a key theme in all the feedback that has been received. Stakeholders have, in most cases, welcomed the partnerships built, both between statutory agencies (*"departments and agencies that were making a contribution to the overall aims of the programme, but doing so largely in silos, are now working collaboratively"*); and between statutory and non-statutory organisations, where *"the risks taken to involve stakeholders in the planning and delivery of activity"* are acknowledged. It is recognised that *"a coalition of willing partners has been fostered and [that] evidence based solutions to some of [the] problems are emerging"*.

46. The Aspire project is one of those singled out as a success story for its work which allows the young men involved *"to live more settled lives and resist negative influences"*. One partner describes how it has been a *"platform for an innovative statutory, voluntary*

and community partnership... truly restorative practice in action - providing opportunities for shared working and shared case management". This model is seen as truly valuing "the contribution of community and the need for grassroots transformation".

47. The effort to support vulnerable young people is also noted, particularly for the "systemic approaches to planning and delivery as a result of partnership working in the programme" The work between the PSNI and EA is seen as particularly significant in delivering improved outcomes *"for young people, schools and communities"*.

48. Some other projects mentioned include the 'Ending the Harm' Campaign which has helped to *"change the public discourse around the issue of paramilitary style attacks"*; and the Communities in Transition project is welcomed as an initiative that is seeking *"to harness community energy and combined appetite for change and transformation"*. The work of the Paramilitary Crime Taskforce is also acknowledged – *"the dedicated and concentrated actions of the team have encouraged local people to change previously held perceptions; this is critical to community confidence in policing (particularly in areas where paramilitaries operate)"*.

49. In planning for the next phase, partners want to build on the collaborative working that underpins the Programme, and hope that *"the learning from phase 1 will be integrated into plans for phase 2"*. Some specific 'asks' include *"a specific commitment to design and test innovative earlier intervention activities that are based on high quality evidence specific to NI"*; a commitment to give the restorative practice work under commitment A9 immediate attention; and to ensure that *"the good work that is taking place is evaluated and the learning rolled out"*. One Restorative Justice delivery partner commented that *"communities are beginning to feel valued – and this changes behaviour. If the work that has taken place is not extended and built upon, there is a risk that community capacity building and goodwill will be lost"*.

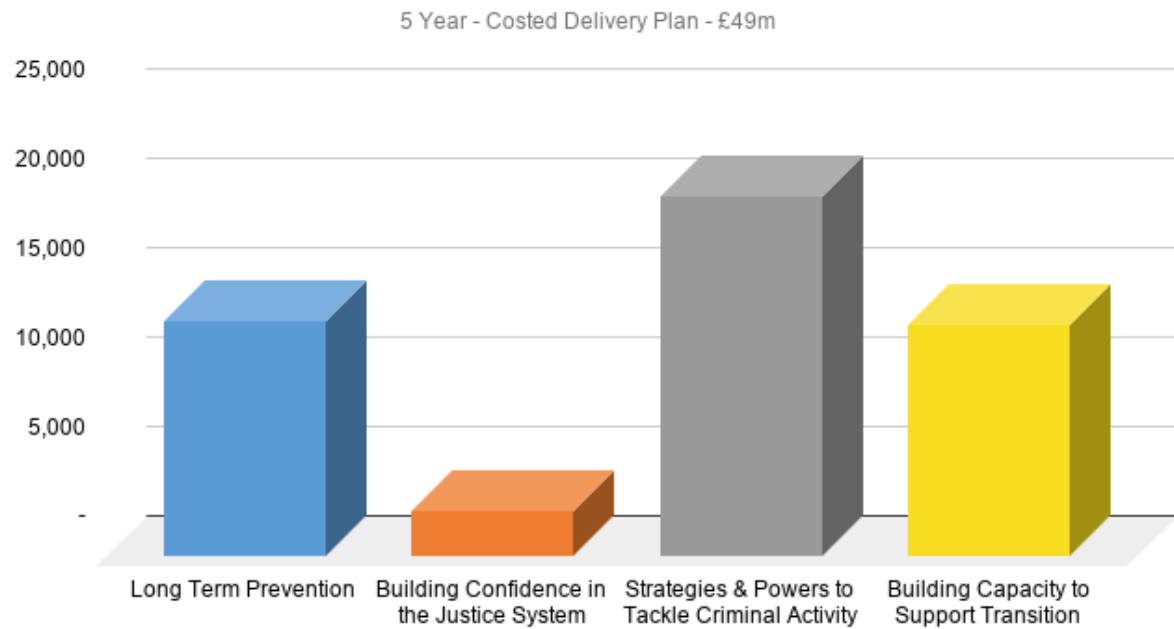
Funding

50. As mentioned earlier, £50million was made available by the Executive and the UK Government to support delivery of the Action Plan. This has been allocated by the cross-departmental Programme Board across the four mutually reinforcing delivery approaches, which seek to balance the delivery of robust law enforcement with measures to support long term prevention, efforts to build the capacity of communities to transition and work aimed at building confidence in the justice system. While some commitments

have been delivered without requiring funding, this section summarises the allocations made during the delivery phase from 2016/2017 to 2020/21.

Figure 11

Overall funding allocated per 5 year Costed Delivery Plan



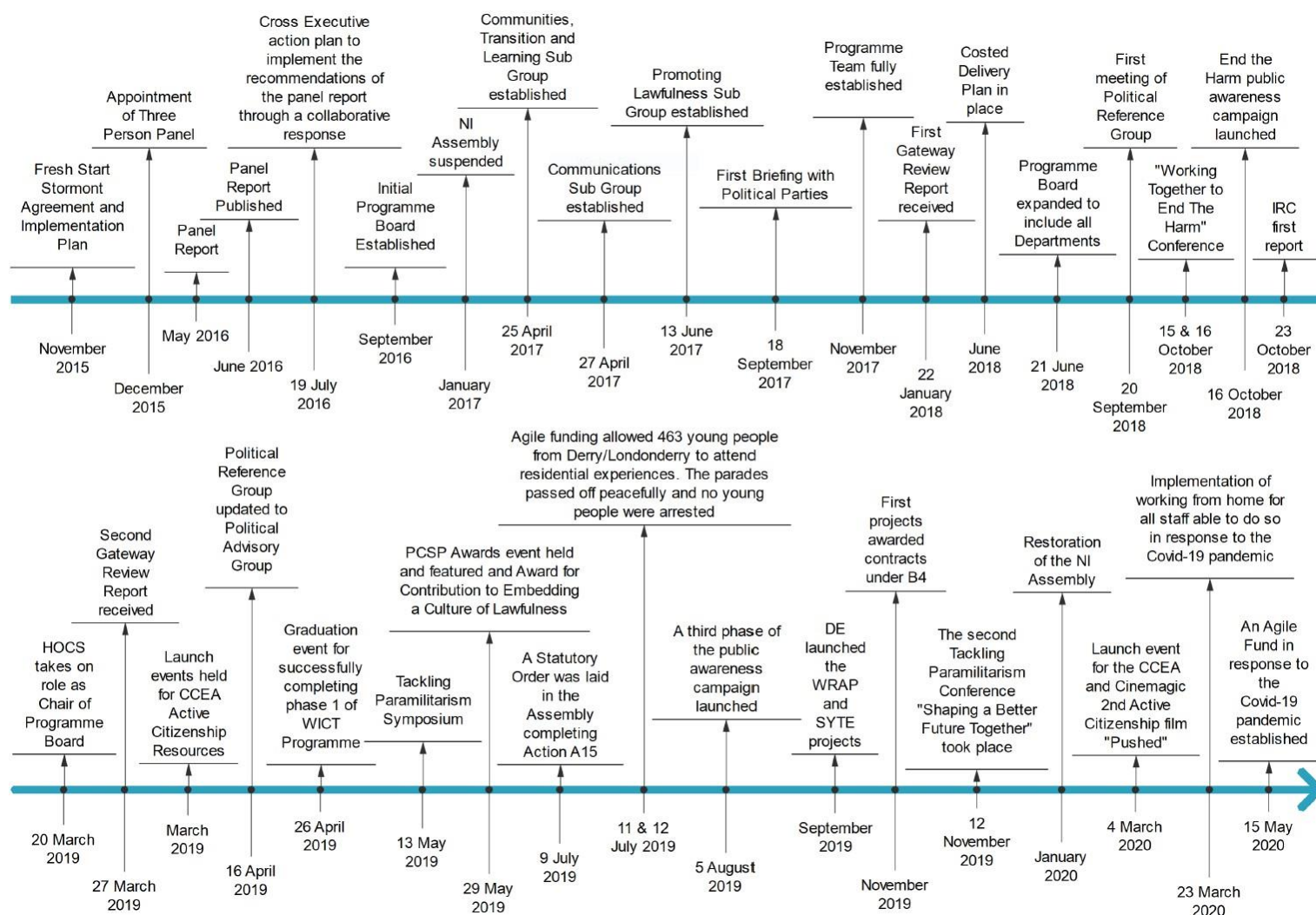
51. The chart above illustrates how funding has been allocated over this period. The majority of the ‘Strategies and Powers to Tackle Criminal Activity’ delivery approach has been invested in the establishment and running of the multi-agency PCTF which provides the visible outworking of robust law enforcement in support of programme outcomes. The PCTF will account for **41%** of the total programme funding over the current delivery period. Just over a quarter (**27%**) of the programme's budget is supporting ‘Long term Prevention’ projects, including the establishment of the PBNI led Aspire programme to support vulnerable young men.

52. The COVID-19 pandemic will of course have some impact in the current year and it is likely that reallocation of any underspend will be focused on addressing short term vulnerabilities in communities.

53. One of the challenges in delivering the Action Plan in a coordinated way, especially on a geographical basis, has been the differing pace at which different components were

commenced and delivered. Figure 12 shows the timeline for key elements of the programme and provides an illustration of some of the external factors which impacted from 2017 to 2020.

Figure 12
Timeline for Key Elements of the Programme

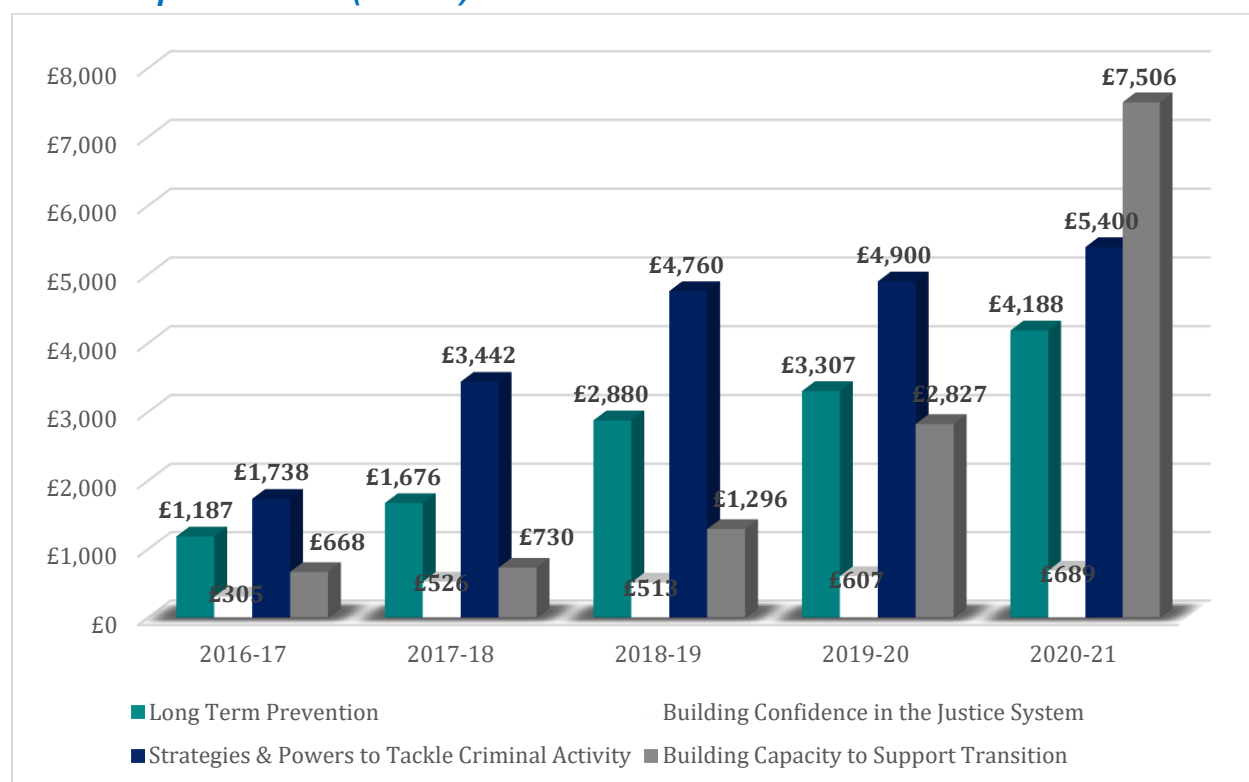


54. The funding profile will move to a more balanced position during 2020/21 (the chart below shows the spend profile in each of the five years of the programme). This reflects an increasing spend against 'Building capacity to support transition', through the delivery of the Communities in Transition project which has an allocation of c. £8.7m. The 'Building Capacity to Support Transition' approach, which also includes, for example, restorative

justice measures, and work to support women in the community, will ultimately account for an estimated **27%** of total spend. 'Building confidence in the justice system' will account for **5%** of the total programme budget, and includes initiatives aimed at supporting policing with the community and committal reform projects, as well as work undertaken by the PCSPs to promote a culture of lawfulness.

Figure 13

Current Spend Profile (£000's)



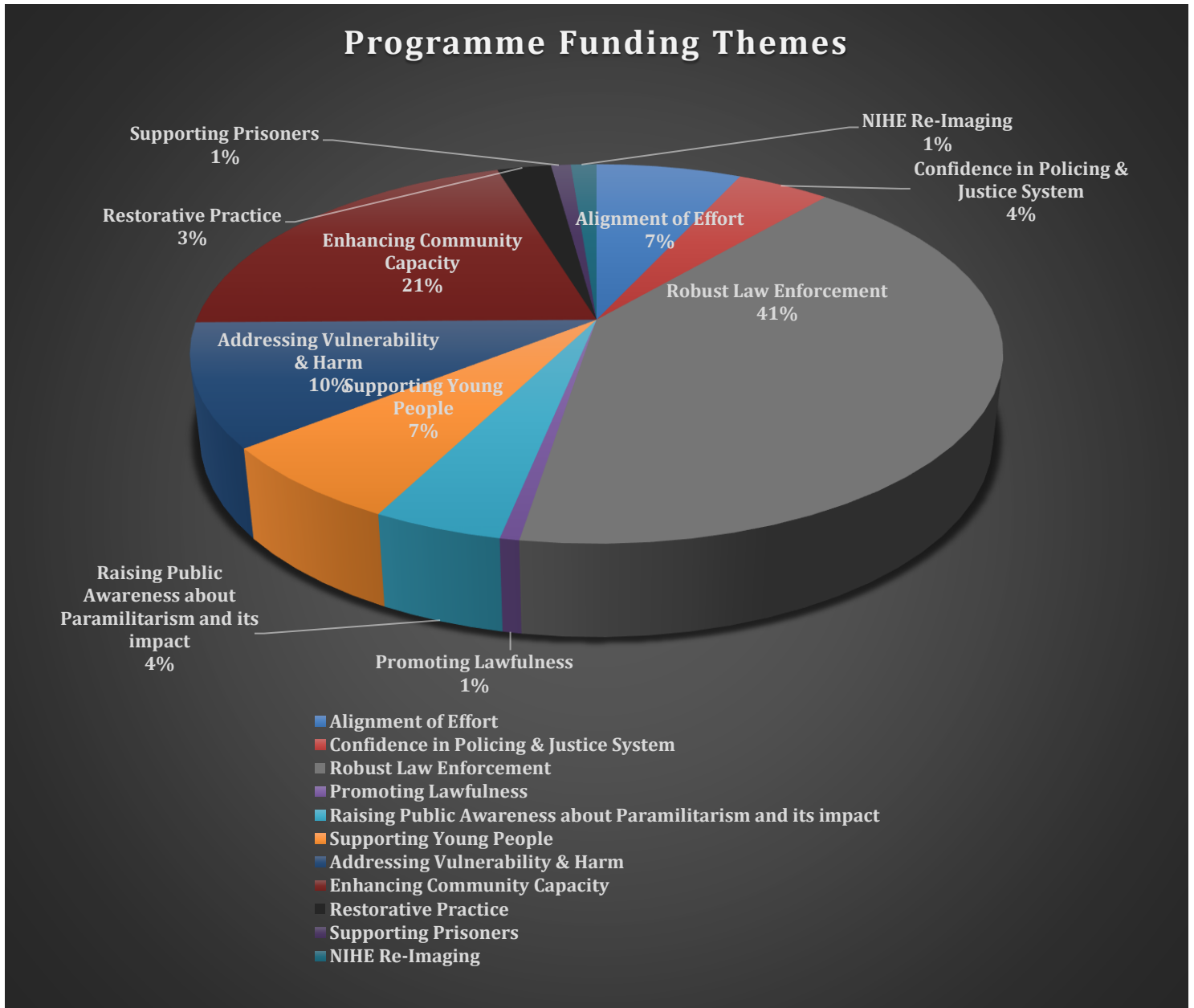
55. While the analysis by delivery approach above provides a useful perspective, this review also considered how funding has been allocated on a more thematic basis. A number of key themes were identified, as follows:

Alignment of effort	Actions which encourage collaboration and efficiency (C1, C8, A8, B7, B6, D2)
Robust law enforcement	Actions relating solely to law enforcement (C4, C6, B11)
Raising public awareness about paramilitarism and its impact	One action with two activities: curriculum material produced by CCEA and #endingtheharm (A2)
Addressing vulnerability and harm	One action, relating to a model aimed at systematically addressing the age related specific risks, experiences and needs of young men who have offended and are at risk of being drawn into crime and paramilitarism (A12)
Restorative practice	Actions relating to developing a centre for restorative excellence and an associated fund (A9, and part of B4)
NIHE Reimaging	Reimaging carried out by the NI Housing Executive (part of action B4)
Confidence in policing and justice system	Actions related to raising public confidence in policing and justice (A5, A10-A16)
Promoting lawfulness	Actions relating to the promotion of lawfulness (A3, A6, A7)
Supporting young people	Actions which specifically support those under 25 (A4, B13, D1)

56. The chart below shows the allocation of funding on a thematic basis, and helps to give a sense of the balance of delivery across mutually reinforcing themes. Whilst **41%** of the funding over the life of the programme will be used to deliver robust law enforcement, **43%** will support efforts aimed at the long term prevention of harm and addressing many of the systemic issues that impede the transitioning of people and communities. This includes **funding of almost £18m directly to community and voluntary sector partners** to help build community capacity and to deliver area-based interventions through, for example, the ‘Communities in Transition’ project. The remaining investment will raise public awareness about paramilitarism, criminality and the harm it causes and support measures aimed at building confidence in policing and the justice system, as well as the running of the programme.

Figure 14

5 year Costed Delivery Plan by Funding Theme



Learning, Challenges and Contradictions

57. Some of the successes of the programme were noted earlier in this review. The ambition of the Action Plan, combined with the complexity of the issues it was seeking to address, meant inevitable challenges and barriers to progress. Some of these were set out in advance in the Three Person Panel report, others have emerged as the context has shifted and delivery has progressed.

58. This section includes an assessment of some of the main challenges that have been faced, and of issues on which there is not agreement on the way forward. This has been captured as part of an analytical approach to reviewing progress and identifying proposals for Phase Two and is informed by regular stakeholder and delivery partner engagement over the last 12 months, as well as a review of all of the data collected during the life of the programme (including independent evaluations, two Gateway Reviews, quarterly project 'scorecards' and two IRC reports).

Initial challenges

59. Two points in particular are worth noting as they presented initial challenges. Firstly, the way in which delivery leads were proposed in the Action Plan for specific commitments; and secondly balancing the need to deliver at pace, with taking the time to develop a robust theory of change to support the scale of transformational change that was desired.

60. The Three Person Panel report was not specific about which Department or Agency should lead on progressing specific commitments, although in some cases it suggested that 'The Executive' should lead. Initially, in some cases, the allocation of multiple Departments to specific commitments in the resultant Action Plan contributed to a slower start on some actions and a lack of clarity or ownership in terms of responsible departments (or indeed named people within those departments who had accountability for delivery).

61. There was also an immediate requirement to balance the need to deliver at pace with the substantial tasks of establishing a Programme Team, designing and implementing appropriate governance structures, establishing a shared conceptual framework for delivery of 38 discrete commitments and building, then managing, many complex stakeholder relationships to support lasting change. This means there was

pressure to spend before any associated planning or delivery structures or strategy were in place.

Absence of the Executive

62. The suspension of the Assembly had a significant impact on implementation of the Action Plan since a functioning Executive was intended to be the key driver in providing impetus and direction. The suspension of the Assembly also had a direct impact on the delivery of some specific commitments, largely linked to the need for Ministerial and Assembly approval for legislative changes (as shown in the table on progress against each commitment earlier in this review).

63. As well as this direct impact, the loss of sustained engagement by Ministers and other elected representatives on some of the more challenging issues related to continuing paramilitary activity, criminality and coercive control constrained the potential for dialogue about solutions, as highlighted by the second IRC report (November 2019):

‘Our assessment remains that the greatest encouragement to the effort underway to end paramilitarism would be the return of political-decision-making to Stormont. The issues involved are so deep-rooted and multi-faceted that only a process actively and vigorously led by those with a democratic mandate at political level can deliver on what is needed’.

Language

64. Feedback has consistently highlighted the pros and cons of referencing paramilitarism so prominently and as noted earlier in this review there is no single view on what paramilitarism or a paramilitary is in contemporary times. Stakeholder discussions suggest that at a societal level, an awareness around language is important. For example, the interplay between the terms, “paramilitary” and “community worker” or “paramilitary” and “criminal” (including the way in which these terms are used differently in Loyalist and Republican communities). Some suggest it can be hard for someone to break free from the label they have acquired within their community, and this can be a barrier to transition. Others believe that, to the average citizen, the terms “paramilitary” and “paramilitarism” translate to “criminal” or “criminality”. However, there is also recognition that transition is a process, and that some people want to identify as “paramilitary”, but want to play a positive role in their communities and do not want to engage in criminal activity. At the same time, there are individuals who may want the “status” of being identified as a “community leader”, but who are unwilling to give up

coercive control of that community. This undermines work to support those who truly do want to move away from coercive control and criminality.

65. A number of questions have been posed by stakeholders over the life of the programme, in focused sessions on the concept of transition and, in recent months, in planning for the future. Is it time to address the perpetuation of the label, “paramilitary”? How do you distinguish between “paramilitary activity” and “organised crime”? Does using language such as “coercive control” better explain what is happening? Should we try to better understand the dynamics of behaviours where there has been or is coercive control? Does this entail an examination of harm and threat? Should the focus be on the harm being done, not paramilitaries in and of themselves?

66. Some delivery partners on the CIT project had more specific concerns that the term paramilitarism might dissuade communities from connecting with interventions in funded programmes designed to engage communities.

“Consultations undertaken through the CIT project found that ‘there is no shared understanding of what ‘paramilitarism’ is. For example in some areas, despite statistical evidence to suggest that there is significant coercive control by armed groups we were told that ‘there are no paramilitaries in this area’, whilst others made a distinction between ‘paramilitaries’ (with a positive inference) and ‘criminals using paramilitary labels as a flag of convenience’. Alongside ‘lawfulness’ and ‘transition’, the terminology used within the programme has made it more challenging to engage communities in the programme. Using the full title of the programme: “Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime”, at all times is important in making this point. Finding a way to frame these issues appropriately with communities will be crucial to building on the progress already made during the first phase of the programme¹.”

67. Others have argued that naming paramilitarism continues to be important as it remains a particular factor in communities which is more complex than influence exerted solely through organised criminality or gangs.

68. A number of constructive suggestions have been made by stakeholders, including shifting the terminology firmly to ‘criminality and organised crime’ over time. There is a question therefore about the extent to which a continued focus on ‘paramilitarism’ is helpful and how the term is used as time goes on. There are also practical considerations

¹ Response from TEO to a stakeholder session in May 2020.

including how to ensure that there are still distinct measures of harm caused by violence linked to paramilitary groups that would be lost if they were grouped in with other forms of violent assault on a person. Given the breadth of opinion, this issue needs further thought and will require a specific focus in the next phase of delivery (see paragraph 91).

Measuring impact

69. One of the fundamental challenges from the outset was the lack of specific data about the nature, scale or impact of paramilitary activity. Indeed, throughout the delivery period to date and as highlighted above, there is no agreed view on what constitutes paramilitarism although there is consensus on the outworking of paramilitarism through specific impacts such as housing intimidation and violent assaults. This has meant that providing tangible measures of progress towards the long term outcomes has been challenging. Added to this, the sensitive nature of these issues meant, initially at least, even having discussions about them was difficult. The Programme began, therefore, with a clear sense of paramilitarism as a pervasive, insidious issue within Northern Ireland, but with no clear means of measuring it, or, in some spheres, even talking about it.

Expectations

70. The Panel report suggested that addressing the barriers identified through the actions recommended ‘might go some way toward creating the conditions in which groups would abandon their paramilitary structures and peacefully support the rule of law and provide a new strategic approach to the discontinuation of residual paramilitary activity’. In that sense, it was recognised at a point in time that the action plan contained a series of untested proposals which sought to change the conditions sufficiently to support the discontinuation of paramilitary activity. There was no suggestion that delivery of the recommendations would definitively support the sort of transformation needed.

71. Despite that acknowledgement, the expectation has been that during the life of the initial funding period there would have been transformational change. While this review demonstrates a great deal of progress on specific commitments and provides evidence of encouraging signs of change, there has been an extremely short delivery period within which to design and connect actions across four mutually reinforcing themes and to begin to make informed judgments about the utility of individual actions. As discussed above, a lack of reliable baseline measures for issues relating to paramilitarism has contributed to these difficulties, although there are now key indicators in place.

Changing Mindsets

72. Due to the sheer scale of these issues, there has also been a requirement to change mindsets, both externally and with delivery partners and other key stakeholders. Despite the clear steer from the IRC, initial views reflected that the Action Plan and associated programme of work was ‘just another Programme’ of stand-alone interventions with a ring-fenced budget which would naturally come to an end at a specified period at the end of a budget phase. The reality is that this remains a challenge. Achieving the level of attitudinal change required to create a society where paramilitarism has no place will take many years and a dedicated focus supported by delivery of much broader interventions through a Programme for Government and associated social and economic strategies. It will also require continued willingness to prioritise ongoing work and integrate it into wider thinking rather than boxing it off as a stand-alone set of interventions.

Key Themes to Underpin Progress

73. The following section suggests the main factors required to make further progress.

Tackling Inequality and Building on Community Strengths

74. The complexities of addressing the wide-ranging societal factors that contribute to ongoing paramilitarism and criminality and the associated vulnerabilities and harm are well documented. The IRC has articulated its desired response as a ‘Twin Track’ approach:

‘We note again that paramilitary activity is most prevalent in communities which also suffer serious social and economic deprivation. In these communities, there are major problems of poverty, unemployment, educational under-attainment, drug and alcohol addiction, and poor mental health. If the goal of definitively ending paramilitarism is to be achieved, therefore, we continue to believe that this will require the Twin Track approach we set out in our First Report – namely a policing and justice response side by side with a fundamental and sustained tackling of the systemic, socio-economic issues facing the communities where the paramilitaries operate.’

75. With an Executive and Assembly now in place, the potential from the proposed anti-poverty and economic strategies and a refreshed Programme for Government can be better realised. It is, however, hard at this stage to factor in the impact of the recent pandemic on the development of a refreshed Programme for Government which prioritises tackling paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime as highlighted in the NDNA agreement.

Clarifying and Delivering Against Concepts - Lawfulness and Transition

76. The Panel report provided the Executive with two underpinning concepts: 'transition' and 'lawfulness'. Both of these concepts were introduced following the community engagement undertaken by the Panel but it became clear early into delivery that they did not have widespread support or understanding, particularly amongst some of the named statutory leads and community and voluntary sector partners. Through the implementation of the Action Plan, the operational outworking of these concepts has been tested and discussed, leading to the development of high level frameworks (on transition and lawfulness – see **Annexes I and J**) by programme subgroups. These were tested with delivery partners and with the Political Advisory Group in order to seek to build a shared platform for progress. While progress was made, both concepts still create discussion and debate and generate mixed views on their value or potential contribution to long term outcomes.

77. Consistent feedback, in particular from participants and delivery leads for the CIT project and the Women Involved in Community Transformation programme indicated that '**lawfulness**' is disliked as a concept. The IRC reported that lawfulness is considered by some to be patronising and disempowering. This reflects feedback that the Programme Team has received from stakeholders, some of whom also argue that it has connotations of class bias. Conversely, there has been value in discussing lawfulness, as it has allowed issues around community safety and societal attitudes towards paramilitaries and other illegal activity to be aired. The CCEA curriculum materials, now utilised in 20 schools and with online resources available for anyone to use, explored the concept and framed it in the context of citizenship. PCSPs also engaged, over time, with the idea and embedded it into work plans. As the Programme moves into the next phase, the key tenets of the concept of lawfulness will be promoted, including within the context of active citizenship.

78. **Transition** has been similarly complex as a concept to apply in practice, because it remains contested as an idea. The Programme team, along with community stakeholders, undertook facilitated conversations to explore the concept of transition and

what it means at an individual, community, and societal level starting from the high level framework developed by programme subgroups in 2018.

Focus to Date - Personal Transition

79. Under the Programme, work in this space has been focusing on the concept of personal transition - one of the four outcomes of the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme is that “support is available for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures”. The Programme Team has been engaging on the issue of personal transition with representatives of relevant statutory agencies and with a cross-section of individuals in the community and voluntary sector. This builds on the work done in 2018 which led to some consensus around the assumption that transition needs to happen at three interconnected levels: within society as a whole, within neighbourhoods and places, and for individuals or specific groups of people.

80. Recent engagement on the issue of personal transition has attempted to explore what is understood by the concept and what support might look like for those who want to move away from paramilitary activity and structures. Generally, it is recognised that, for transition to occur, there is a need to build community resilience and cohesion and to help people feel safe (including through effective policing). There is consensus around the need for support with specific issues such as: accessing education and training opportunities; accessing employment opportunities; addressing physical and mental health issues; accessing welfare services and a trauma-informed approach to care; addressing poverty; addressing the prevalence of drugs within communities and meaningfully addressing the legacy of the past.

81. It is clear that the issue of transition is not one problem. There is, however, a desire for a system of support that is able to get alongside those on the transition “journey”, and discussions have shown that there is an appetite for some public conversations about this issue (but not just for the sake of it). There is also recognition that work to support transition cannot happen in isolation from policing, and that effective policing (and an effective wider criminal justice system) is vital in freeing the space for communities to accept and access support.

82. Based on the conversations to date, consensus is not evident around what the concept of transition might mean, or how it might form a major building block of a programme. This does not mean it is not important for some individuals and communities; however, it is not clear how to operationalise the concept and many of the activities associated with it could be better described in other ways.

Organisational Transition?

83. The IRC has highlighted the concept of transition as an important dimension of its analysis. In their most recent report, published in November 2019, the Commissioners argued for a “wider, deeper and more realistic understanding around what is required for a definitive end to Paramilitarism”. They recognise that the task is a complex one and their analysis is that “there is a spectrum of people involved in paramilitarism, at one end of which are those who [they] believe are sincerely engaged in supporting transition to peaceful, democratic politics, and at the other those who use paramilitarism as a cloak for criminality”. They recommend that “the time has come for consideration to be given to a dedicated transition process for paramilitaries themselves to bring paramilitarism to an end”, suggesting that the specifics of how such a transition process would work would be a matter for both Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive.

84. The Commissioners recognise, however, that there is no consensus on the issue of transition, and that their raising of it in their report may be “a matter of controversy in itself”. They acknowledge that “there are a range of complexities to be addressed and resolved such as the impact of legacy, sensitive legal questions, and what “success” would look like in relation to disbandment or its alternatives”.

85. This will need to be resolved. Phase two of the Programme will explore the issue of ‘transition’ further, including in the context of commitment A8 (review of protocols for engagement with representatives of paramilitary groups), however, this work will benefit first from further engagement at a political level.

Resourcing for Delivery

86. It is important that there is appropriate investment in the infrastructure to support delivery and to maintain a dedicated focus on this work across the public sector, in communities and with other partners. It is essential to allow people to have the time to engage effectively in this work and also to build knowledge and experience. As both Gateway reviews indicated, it is also important to build and sustain greater resilience and expertise so that loss of key personnel does not negatively impact on delivery and undo the important benefits generated to date (for example, the knowledge and expertise built up through working on this subject matter and the key relationships developed and maintained).

Collaboration

87. The Programme Team and, over the last eighteen months or so of phase one, the 'One Team' approach that has been embedded has been crucial to delivery; these structures and relationships should be capitalised on for phase two. The IRC previously recommended a "hub" approach to properly coordinate activity and to ensure that there is appropriate priority in the PfG.

88. This review has highlighted the important added value of collaboration through the programme and, in some areas, it has changed practice and delivered measurable impact, especially in relation to alignment of effort around young people with vulnerabilities linked to neighbourhood tensions or community safety issues. It is vital that this continues and that the opportunity to refocus some work, make better connections between projects, and create a more cohesive overall programme is taken.

89. In addition, the informal cross-sectoral relationships and networks established during this initial phase of the Programme have been crucial. Having closer working relationships between all delivery partners through shared problem solving, such as on the locality task and finish group, could serve to consolidate collaborations and ensure duplication or divergence of effort can be avoided. Enhancing the current relationships with the community and voluntary sector to build geographically-tailored interventions and leverage expert knowledge from across NI and beyond would be a valuable step forward, building on learning from delivery to date. The support for young people, for example, was enhanced by local groups such as Corrymeela facilitating an exchange of learning with international experts. This focused on preventing harm and tackling gang violence, and involved youth workers from the statutory and community sector with community activists, such as the Stop Attacks Forum and Restorative Justice organisations. This model of collaboration and shared learning will be further developed in phase two.

Transformational Change and Measuring Impact

90. It is important that the programme management approach used facilitates fully the ability to identify, prioritise and measure the changes that need to happen for the vision of the Programme to be realised, and its impact to be readily evaluated. Phase One of the Programme was established and managed under Prince2 methodology. Following advice from the Programme Board, other programme management options have been explored that might more readily allow for the management of the extensive collective efforts under the Programme. Having looked at other approaches it is proposed that

phase two of the Programme should adopt a benefits management approach. Further detail on this is set out in paragraphs 103 - 107.

Language

91. As discussed earlier (see paragraphs 64 – 68), the issue of language emerged again as a theme in recent stakeholder conversations (as it has consistently over the course of the Programme). The points made are in line with discussions on this issue over the life of the programme to date. The next stage of delivery will include an action specifically looking at language and tone in the context of the desired outcome and benefits of the Programme.

Focus of The Programme

92. The most fundamental feedback has been on the scope and focus of the Programme. The IRC's view is that the outcomes will only be achieved with a fundamental transformation of the social and economic conditions within affected communities, which includes addressing poverty, educational achievement, health inequalities and so forth. The implication of this position is a significantly different type of programme (or potentially no programme at all).

93. A similar position is articulated by those who believe that most of what is delivered through the programme should be part of 'business as usual'. Keeping people safe and preventing harm should be part of the day to day business of agencies and community organisations working in areas where paramilitary groups are active; the protective and risk factors which impact on an individual's vulnerability are not significantly different from those that predict other types of harm. One view is that the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme should be seen and managed as a change management programme to move to that position.

94. There is also an ongoing debate about whether there should be a distinct focus on paramilitarism, or whether it should be framed as a programme to address general organised crime and criminality. On one side of this debate are those who argue that framing the discussion in terms of general criminality and community safety allows more people to feel like they can be involved in the conversation. On other hand, the New Decade New Approach document clearly states that the priority should be on 'tackling paramilitarism' and 'ending the harm done by paramilitarism'. Those who see it as important to maintain a focus on paramilitarism argue that, while paramilitarism can be

seen as a subset of wider organised crime, it also poses particular challenges which organised crime gangs (OCGs) do not. In general, OCGs in Northern Ireland do not seek to exercise coercive control of communities, have smaller membership structures, do not engage in the active recruitment of young people, do not have large legacy memberships, and cannot rely on the passive support of some community members through activating narratives around identity and culture.

95. Finally, the tension between a time bound programme and the long term nature of the issues to be addressed has been frequently on show. This has been manifested in a number of ways: the sense of a cliff edge as the initial funding period comes to an end; the lack of a consensus about how quickly success can be achieved; and what success actually looks like.

Building from Delivery to Date

96. The preceding paragraphs have attempted to capture the scale of the task set for the Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme, the progress achieved, the challenges faced, and the lessons learned over the last four years. It is important now to look to the future of the programme with ambition and determination.

97. The IRC, recognising the “disparate, multi-faceted and complex nature” of the issues involved has noted that “it is only by taking a strategic, holistic approach that combines all of the dimensions in question that ending paramilitarism can be achieved”. They stress that “the necessity of ending paramilitarism remains of as much importance for the continued transformation of society in Northern Ireland today as it did in 2015 – and indeed even more so now with the passage of a further almost five years since the Fresh Start Agreement”.

98. The Commissioners argue that efforts to end paramilitarism need to be located “at the heart of the Programme for Government” so that there can be a “vigorous and ambitious tackling of the huge endemic socio-economic issues facing communities where the paramilitaries operate”. They would like to see “an aggressive, ambitious programme for the transformation of those communities... including the tackling of educational under-achievement, poverty, unemployment, investment in jobs, drugs, mental health etc., all of which should run alongside the other justice/policing parts [of the Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme]”.

99. There is consensus that these are, indeed, the issues that need to be tackled, and it is welcome that the New Decade, New Approach agreement by the UK and Irish Governments and agreed by all the parties has indicated that tackling paramilitarism should be made a priority in the PfG. However, as already mentioned, it does raise issues for the scope of the Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme. The Executive will, no doubt, take the opportunity to discuss and agree how this wider ‘whole of society’ approach can be realised, but, in the meantime, the rest of this document sets out proposals for a broad programme of activity that will take the Programme into a next phase, building on shared effort and collaborative practice, and which will, if embraced, continue to build the conditions in which paramilitarism has no place and communities are safer and more resilient to coercive control.

Programme Outcome

100. Given the importance of a transformational and ‘whole of society’ approach, consideration was given to the adoption of one overarching outcome for the programme which would give effect to the long term goal - as set out in the original Executive Action Plan - that “paramilitarism has no place”. Feedback from the CIT Project, in particular, has, however, suggested that it might be better to have a more positively-framed outcome, recognising the strengths within communities. This is in keeping with an ‘assets based approach’ to community development that has been utilised in best practice place-based regeneration for the last decade and which emphasises sustainable development of communities based on strengths and potential. A refreshed single outcome would also broaden the focus to better reflect the fact that the Programme is charged with tackling, not just paramilitary activity, but also the associated criminality and organised crime. It is, therefore, proposed that the Programme adopts the following over-arching outcome:

Safer communities, resilient to paramilitarism, criminality and coercive control

101. In practice, working towards this outcome would mean that, by 2024 (a time period designed not just to replicate or repeat what has gone before but to amplify and embed the outcome) continued progress will have been made to: tackle wider systemic issues; reduce paramilitary and other criminal activity; empower communities to reject paramilitarism; and keep people safe from the harm caused by paramilitary and criminal groups. Achieving this will require:

- a deliberate focus on addressing the harm caused by paramilitary and criminal groups;

- preventative work to help people and communities to become more resilient; and
- strategic work, at a societal and leadership level, to reduce the space in which paramilitaries and associated criminality can operate.

Refreshing the Programme Management Approach

102. As mentioned earlier, one of the lessons learned from phase one is that the programme management approach needs to provide for the effective management of the collective efforts under the Programme, ensuring that benefits can be readily identified and tracked throughout its life.

103. In reflecting on the way forward, fresh consideration has been given to the programme management approach used, and it is now proposed to move to a **benefits management approach**. This involves identifying, planning, measuring and tracking benefits from the start of a programme until realisation of the last projected benefit. It aims to ensure the desired benefits are specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time bound (SMART). Benefits management is often viewed as the common thread between programme and project delivery and successful change management and is in keeping with the OBA methodology employed throughout the public sector by embedding a focus on impact.

104. A benefits management approach involves identifying, prioritising and describing the changes which need to happen for the vision to be realised. All of these changes should be measurable, with benefit owners (delivery partners) responsible for reporting on the method of measurement and the baseline and target values, as well as dates for reporting.

105. More fundamentally, having reflected on feedback from delivery partners, it is likely that a benefits management approach would deliver a more readily understandable narrative. This approach allows the story of collective efforts to be told more effectively and, importantly, maps and proactively facilitates the pathways and intermediate steps/benefits that lead to the outcomes the Programme is trying to achieve. As highlighted earlier, a coherent narrative is very important and it is hoped that adopting this approach will enable those involved in managing and delivering the Programme, and its constituent parts, to tangibly feel the connections across the entire Programme. It should also help with articulating impact, including the contribution of each of those constituent parts to the Programme's end goals.

End Benefits (Objectives)

106. Through strategic planning sessions, and engagement with delivery partners, we have collectively identified two objectives or end benefits for the future Programme. If these objectives are met, the overall outcome would be achieved:

- **People and communities are safe from the harm caused by paramilitarism**
- **People and communities are more resilient to paramilitary influence and involvement in paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime**

A third, essential, transformational benefit is to **address systemic issues in communities** but that is beyond the scope of a programme to deliver in isolation. Prioritising action in the PfG as proposed in the NDNA agreement would however help to create the conditions for maintaining a clear focus on that task.

Workstreams and Associated Benefits

107. **These objectives will form the basis of two rather than four programme workstreams**, and will provide the overall structure of the programme in the next phase. They relate to the four delivery approaches from Phase One as follows:

- ‘Safer and more confident communities’ becomes ‘People and communities are safe from the harm caused by paramilitarism’. The focus of this workstream would be widened from activity that is solely law enforcement or criminal justice, and seek to energise what the IRC has consistently referred to as ‘Track One’ of the ‘Twin Track’ approach.
- ‘Paramilitarism has no place’ is now reflected in the overall outcome for the programme and the workstream that was associated with it becomes ‘People and communities are more resilient to paramilitary recruitment and involvement in paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime’. This workstream aligns with activity described by the IRC under ‘Track Two’: in particular, much closer alignment with Programme for Government outcomes and associated interventions (with ambitious, wide ranging plans to transform communities impacted by paramilitarism).
- Commitments currently within ‘People have even more confidence in the justice system’ and ‘support is available for those who wish to move away from

paramilitary activity and structures' move to whichever workstream better describes the effect of related projects.

108. Additionally, a number of actions have been reallocated to an Enabling Framework (see below). This has been developed to describe the necessary actions that the wider system must undertake to be successful, and to recognise the importance of actions that are not project specific.

Enabling Framework

Increase effectiveness of government, community, and wider civil society interventions to create safer communities, resilient to paramilitarism, criminality and coercive control

109. During the first phase of delivery, partnerships and collaborations were developed formally and informally to deliver projects, services, and create shared narratives for change. This has been a major strength in some areas of the Programme to date and the next phase should see partnerships and collaboration 'designed into' the process. This will be enabled by investment in the infrastructure which supports delivery, which promotes and enables collaboration, and which builds confidence between delivery partners and communities.

110. Challenges in achieving transformational change and overcoming tendencies towards 'siloed' working are significant constraints on both achieving the objectives and realising the ambition of the programme. The challenge (discussed earlier) of achieving a cultural shift in society and communities is mirrored by the need for a cultural shift in how departments, agencies, ALBs, and community sector partners work together.

111. The benefits maps associated with each of the two workstreams detailed below show the connections, but must be supported by new ways of working in order to realise the out-workings of those connections. In order to be effective, leaders need to actively and visibly promote and nurture both change and collaboration. Activities to stimulate collaboration, and to promote and sustain momentum on joined up approaches, will also be critical to the success of the programme.

There are six inter-related themes which will build the necessary conditions to support delivery. These are:

- leadership;
- communications;
- programme management and governance;
- partnerships and alignment;
- locality working; and
- research and the promotion of best practice.

Leadership

112. The first phase of the Action Plan was implemented during the period when there was no Executive or Assembly. The Programme will benefit from leadership at three levels: political; statutory; and community. Leadership is an important enabler of other work within the Programme as it provides the space in which partners can deliver services or engage in difficult conversations; it creates momentum; and it builds confidence between partners and with the wider community.

Leaders should aim to:

- reduce the space in which paramilitary groups can claim support and legitimacy;
- change public attitudes so paramilitaries can no longer claim support and legitimacy; and
- increase the resilience of communities, organisations, and society to the effects of paramilitary activity.

Some of the ways in which these aims could be realised are:

- demonstrating the commitments in the Ministerial pledge of office and the undertaking of Assembly members;
- making mutually reinforcing, consistent statements on paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime;
- role modelling attitudes and behaviours;
- creating convincing narratives on the need for and possibility of change; and
- driving appropriate changes of behaviour to reduce the space in which paramilitary groups can operate and claim legitimacy.

Partnerships and Alignment

113. The benefits of the two workstreams will not be realised unless there is a consistent and concerted effort to develop further existing partnerships, build and maintain new

collaborations, and align effort. This needs to be a whole system approach, with communities, particularly in places most impacted by paramilitarism and criminality.

Partnerships should aim to:

- refresh the approach to investment and action in communities through a more connected focus on place (and recognising the interdependencies between physical regeneration, community development and good relations);
- problem solve and improve outcomes for individuals through existing mechanisms (e.g. Support Hubs and Family Support infrastructure);
- use existing resources and better align programmes to ensure that more tailored work is supported through dedicated funding;
- understand and resolve conflicts and competing agendas;
- ensure that duplication is minimised or eliminated; and
- ensure alignment with other Programme for Government outcomes.

Some of the ways in which these aims could be realised in practice are:

- refreshing stakeholder engagement and subgroups to share best practice, make connections, and identify opportunities to work together;
- strengthening cross-sectoral partnerships to deliver services and programme activities and enhancing the role of people with lived experience;
- Ministers convening specific and focused sessions on shared challenges;
- Programme Board working collaboratively to problem solve and align effort;
- Community Safety Board enabling partners to work better together to resolve emerging issues and long standing problems in particularly affected areas;
- building on the 'One Team' approach as a cross-Departmental delivery and co-ordination structure; and
- developing matrix management, with the potential for part-time co-location of the 'One Team'.

Communications

114. A good communications strategy is key as it will help to 'tell the story' in a clear and unambiguous way, ensuring that the various, sometimes disparate, elements of cross-Executive effort are brought together into one coherent and compelling narrative for the public. Public knowledge, understanding and backing is vital to its success.

Communication is an important way of building momentum for the Programme, creating a sense of shared effort across partners, and building confidence within communities and with people most affected by paramilitary activity and criminality. It is also important to

take ownership and drive a narrative forward about things that are unacceptable in a confident and forward-looking Northern Ireland.

Communications activity should be refreshed to:

- ensure a joined up approach across the entire Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme to create one single compelling narrative to the public;
- develop and implement a shared language across government and partners so that there is one unified and clear voice which calls paramilitarism for what it is, rendering it socially unacceptable behaviour which has no backing;
- identify new and unique ways to get messages across;
- continue to change attitudes towards paramilitaries and associated harm; and
- change attitudes towards issues which enable paramilitaries to operate.

Some of the ways in which these aims will be realised are:

- a communications strategy which allows all projects to highlight their successes and get their voice heard as part of an overall story;
- regular, scheduled communications activity to generate momentum around the work delivered across the programme;
- multi-platform awareness campaigns;
- supporting those in leadership roles to effectively perform their role;
- supporting vulnerable people to understand the issues and risks and how to get help;
- stakeholder engagement; conferences and wider conversations.

Locality Working

115. The implementation of the first phase of the Action Plan showed the importance of partners working locally to take action in terms of **service provision**; **mobilisation**; and **participation**. There are also wider issues that have been raised in communities about how ‘the system’ functions (for example, in terms of separate funding streams and one year funding cycles). A ‘one size fits all’ approach is unlikely to deliver effective locality based working because it ignores location driven issues and dynamics. However, the actions outlined below might usefully underpin spatial working regardless of location.

Locality working should have the aim of:

- preventing harm and keeping people safe from the effects of, or involvement in, criminal behaviour;

- providing an effective, timely response to serious incidents that cause or might cause significant harm to individuals and the community; and
- engaging those who are close to the issues and who can give an informed view on impacts and mitigations of any statutory response.

Some of the ways in which these aims could be realised are:

- long term prevention through a public health approach, including diversionary activity and wraparound services for young people;
- building on emerging joint working with a focus on place;
- enhancing restorative practice based on shared principles and a cross-executive funding model for accredited groups; and
- ensuring appropriate supporting infrastructure for individuals via Safeguarding policies and practice, support hubs and family support hubs.

116. Statutory partners are seeking to improve locality working, in line with these aims and principles. This is taking shape through greater focus on data analysis and data driven interventions. This includes the development of a more detailed understanding of emerging issues specific to localities and the use of bespoke responses where needed (such as focused diversionary activities or new youth worker provision in areas of increasing paramilitary influence). The newly established Community Safety Board is also providing added oversight and direction, with statutory partners collaborating to more effectively work across organisational remits and funding streams to address shared issues.

Research and the Promotion of Best Practice

117. As the Programme has developed there has been learning developed through projects delivered. There has also been greater awareness of the issues which need to be addressed and the evidence base which could apply. There is a clear need to bring that fully to bear to develop initiatives which test some of that evidence and best practice in the Northern Ireland context.

The research function should have the aim of:

- promoting greater understanding of complex issues;
- agreeing and measuring the scope of paramilitary activity;
- identifying new solutions;
- identifying local areas and issues; and
- generating new learning.

Some of the ways in which these aims could be realised are:

- research and best practice papers;
- collection and analysis of data;
- commissioning new experimental initiatives more in keeping with the original ambition of the Action Plan to seek and apply innovation.

Workstream 1

People and Communities are Safe from the Harm Caused by Paramilitarism

118. Paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime causes harm to individuals in multiple ways, which include: physical violence; extortion; supply and distribution of drugs and illicit substances; intimidation; and involvement in illegal activity. Much of the harm caused by paramilitarism is illegal activity connected to organised crime. Paramilitary activity also has some crossover with activity in the national security space.

119. Evidence suggests that keeping people safe from this harm involves targeted measures to identify the harm; problem-solving around why individuals are vulnerable to that harm; and establishing interventions to mitigate its effects or to prevent it from happening. Experience gained from implementation of the Programme has also identified a need for agencies to work together to provide effective support for victims of paramilitary harm. There are already numerous best practice examples and developing initiatives under the Programme, and beyond. As has already been said, achieving this objective involves a 'whole system' response, not just a law enforcement and criminal justice response. This is articulated further under workstream 2.

Activity Related to this Workstream in Phase One

120. In phase one, the programme sought to:

- improve the Government response to paramilitarism through a multi-agency task force, new legislation, and policy changes;
- support 'Policing with the Community' activity;
- develop and support community-based activity to meet needs identified by the community;
- introduce multi-agency pilots to problem solve around individuals vulnerable to paramilitary harm;
- develop a Centre for Restorative Excellence;
- work with PCSPs to embed a culture of lawfulness;
- develop 'speeding up justice' activity; and
- increase the offering of constructive activity in the separated regime in prison.

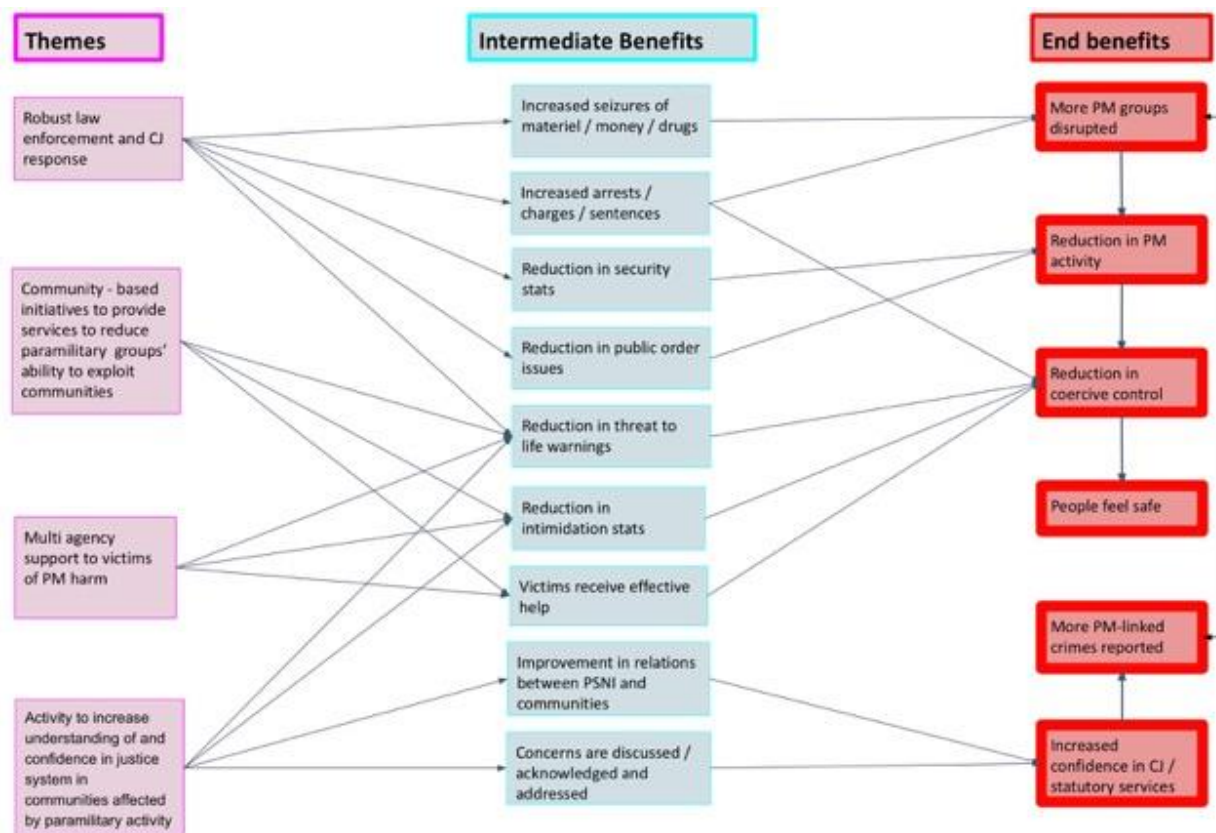
Proposed Activity in Phase Two

121. For phase two **four interrelated themes** of activity are proposed:

1. a **robust law enforcement and criminal justice response** that effectively tackles the harm caused by paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime;
2. activity to **address confidence in and build collaborative working between statutory agencies** in communities affected by such activity;
3. **community-based and community led initiatives** in areas which are being exploited by paramilitaries or to respond to paramilitary activity and reduce general community vulnerability; and
4. **multi-agency responses** to support people who are victims of the harm caused by paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime.

The following benefits map illustrates the associated benefits for this workstream.

Benefits Map for Workstream 1: People and communities are safe from the harm caused by paramilitarism



Associated Actions

122. The specific activities that will be delivered under this workstream will be set out in a detailed action plan that will be informed by learning from the delivery of the Programme thus far, as well as engagement with stakeholders and delivery partners. Some of this will be the continuation of proven or incomplete initiatives from phase one; some will be activities begun under phase one which merit continuation with some adjustment/further development; and some will be entirely new interventions, building on progress in phase one and/or filling gaps in delivery that have been identified.

Measurement

123. Full detail on the measurement strategy will be included in benefits profiles developed alongside the Action Plan for the next phase. However, at a high level, measurement will occur on three levels:

Project outputs: These will be defined on a project by project basis but would be expected to include operational measures of activity based on outcome based accountability where appropriate.

Intermediary benefits:

- Increased seizures of material / money / drugs
- Increased arrests / charges / sentences
- Reduction in security statistics
- Reduction in 'threat to life' warnings
- Reduction in public order issues
- Reduction in intimidation statistics
- Victims receive effective help
- Improvement in relations between PSNI and communities impacted by paramilitarism
- People's concerns are discussed, acknowledged and addressed

End benefits:

- More paramilitary groups disrupted
- Reduction in paramilitary activity
- Reduction in coercive control
- People feel safe
- More paramilitary-linked crimes reported
- Increased confidence in criminal justice and statutory services

Constraints

- The difficulty of achieving widespread cultural shift
- The willingness of individuals and communities to buy into the programme

Workstream 2

People and communities are more resilient to paramilitary influence and involvement in paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime.

124. As noted earlier, the first workstream is about proactively addressing the harm that is caused to people and to communities and building on strengths and assets that exist to support safer communities. This will mean continuing the robust law enforcement and

criminal justice response; addressing confidence in and building collaborative working between statutory agencies in communities; and supporting community-based and community-led initiatives to bolster positive influences in areas which are being exploited by paramilitaries. It will also require enhancement of multi-agency responses designed to support people who are victims of the harm caused by paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime.

125. The second workstream will complement this effort by addressing the factors that make people and communities vulnerable to paramilitary groups and associated criminality and control. It will seek to strengthen the protective factors and reduce the risk factors for individuals.

126. There is a reasonable body of regional and international evidence relating to young people in analogous situations and to the reintegration of members of gangs.

127. It is recognised that the role of the family, and of a person's peer and friendship groups, as well as the community/civil society response are of primary importance in reducing risk. So, too, are factors such as education and health. For a young person, their relationship with their school will also be an important factor. (The monitoring material from the existing CIT projects that are seeking to reduce community vulnerability will be useful in informing the next phase of the Programme.²)

² The participant baseline assessment has been finalised and will be completed by each participant on each project, as well as by a representative of each organisation taking part in project activity. It was originally intended that baseline assessments for individuals involved in CIT projects would be complete through face-to-face interviews. This has not been possible during covid-19 restrictions and baselines are therefore being completed online with support from delivery partners or the CIT consortium on Zoom or by phone. Data from the baseline assessments is still being collated for analysis and will be available at the end of June 2020. A mid-term evaluation of the whole CIT project is expected in August 2020 and learning from this on projects seeking to address vulnerability should inform this workstream.

Activity Related to this Workstream in Phase One

128. In phase one the programme sought to:

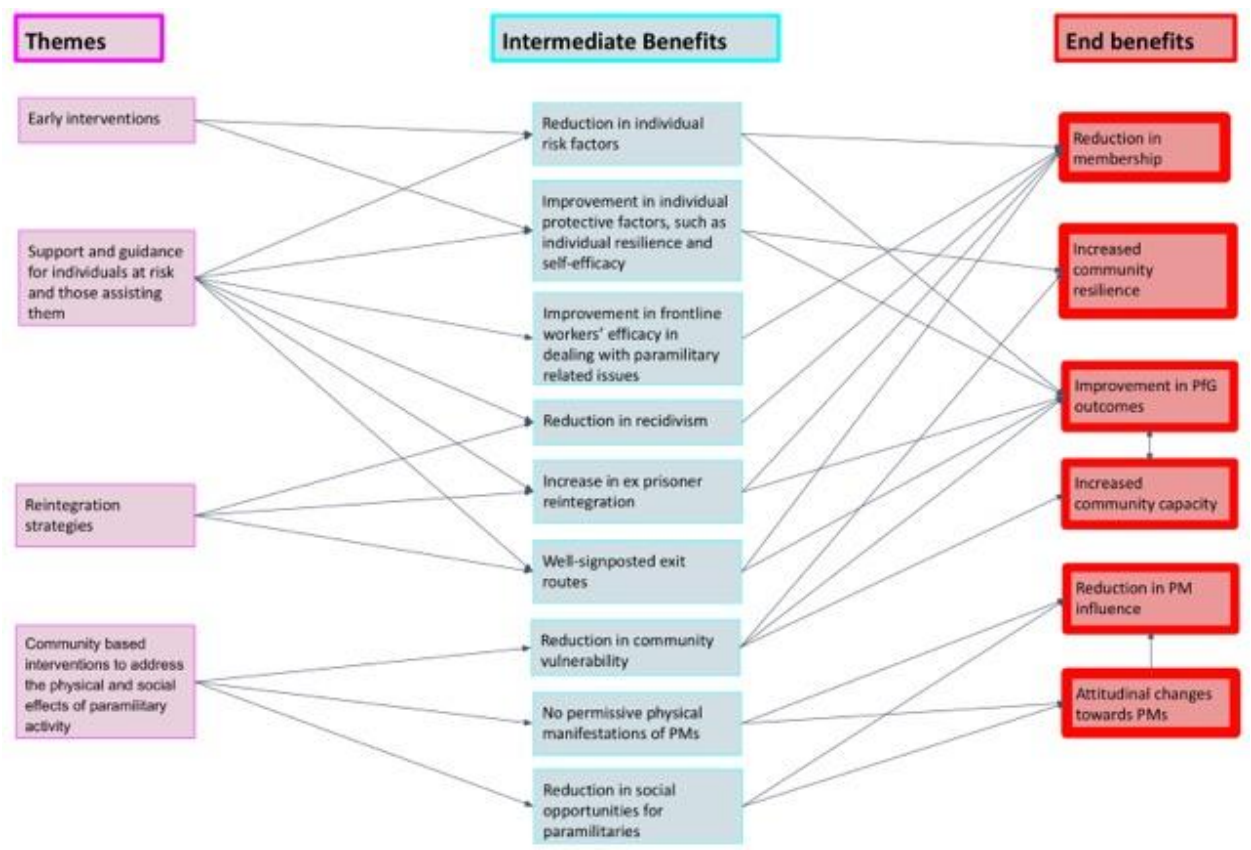
- establish new services for individuals vulnerable to paramilitary influence (primarily young people and young men);
- pilot some early intervention educational based initiatives;
- promote policing with the community initiatives;
- improve the capability of educators to work with young people at risk;
- develop and support a women's programme to improve the skills of women to engage effectively in their community;
- develop citizenship resources for use in schools; and
- fund the communities in transition project to build the capacity of communities to address vulnerabilities exploited by paramilitaries and organised crime groups.

Proposed Activity in Phase Two

129. For phase two, **four interrelated themes** of activity are proposed:

1. **early intervention initiatives;**
2. **targeted support and guidance** for individuals at risk and those assisting them;
3. **interventions to promote the reintegration of prisoners**, the effective **monitoring** of prisoners on license, and **support for those who wish to exit paramilitary groups;** and
4. **community based interventions** to address the physical, social, and leadership effects of paramilitary activity.

Benefits Map for Workstream 2: People and communities are more resilient to paramilitary influence and involvement in paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime



Associated Actions

130. As with workstream one, the specific activities that will be delivered under this workstream will be set out in a detailed action plan that will be informed by learning from the delivery of the Programme thus far, as well as engagement with stakeholders and delivery partners.

Measurement

131. Again, full detail on the measurement strategy will be included in the benefits profiles that will be developed alongside the Action Plan. However, at a high level, measurement will occur on three levels:

Project outputs: These will be defined on a project by project basis but would be expected to include operational measures of activity based on outcome based accountability where appropriate.

Intermediary benefits:

- Reduction in individual risk factors
- Improvement in individual protective factors, such as individual resilience and self-efficacy
- Improvement in frontline workers' efficacy in dealing with paramilitary-related issues
- Increase in ex-prisoner reintegration.
- Reduction in recidivism
- Well-signposted exit routes and support available
- Reduction in community vulnerability
- No permissive physical manifestations of paramilitarism
- Reduction in social opportunities for paramilitaries

End benefits:

- Increased community resilience
- Reduction in paramilitary membership
- Improvement in PfG outcomes
- Increased community capacity
- Reduction in paramilitary influence
- Attitudinal changes towards paramilitarism

Constraints

- Challenges in reaching those who are at risk
- Controversial nature of programmes with similar aims elsewhere (particularly PREVENT in GB)

Whole of System, Whole of Government Approach

132. The approach that is proposed reflects all of the learning to date and recognises that dedicated resources need to be directly focused on delivery of benefits. This will facilitate a clearer and more consistent narrative and create the conditions from which to build further collaboration. The intention of both workstreams is clear and unambiguous. However, while this refreshed approach will enable resources and effort (both financial and human) to be better directed, it will not be possible to deliver the outcome without drawing on the benefits of wider, systemic impacts to be achieved through the Programme for Government and associated investment and strategy.

133. In broad terms, the Programme will continue to provide additional resources and promote and enable focused multi-agency working in places most impacted by paramilitary influence, and for individuals who are particularly vulnerable to the coercive control of paramilitary and organised crime groups. That will need to be accompanied by a refreshed approach to locality through:

“...an ambitious programme for the transformation of those communities where paramilitaries operate ...” (IRC)

134. Recognising that the task is complex, the IRC has asked that the Programme take a more ambitious approach to this aspect of its work, and develop detailed plans including those for “the tackling of educational under-achievement, poverty, unemployment, investment in jobs, drugs, mental health etc, all of which should run alongside the other justice/policing parts of [the Programme]”.

135. That level of ambition can only fully be achieved via the effective out-working of the Programme for Government, and so this Programme will redouble its efforts to leverage the collective effort, at both a strategic and operational level, of all those charged with delivery of the PfG.

136. To this end, and in keeping with the commitment given in NDNA to prioritise the tackling of paramilitarism, the Action Plan for the next phase will make specific ‘asks’ of every relevant Department and Agency, as well as of the Community and Voluntary sector, aimed at achieving the level of societal transformation sought by the IRC to underpin the objectives of this Programme.

Next Steps

137. In order to plan for the next stage of delivery from April 2021, the proposed work streams and the associated activity will be worked up into an updated action plan. This will involve engagement with stakeholders and delivery partners over the remainder of the summer to ensure that the appropriate activity and projects are planned, and that the required processes are in place to monitor delivery and measure performance before funding is prioritised and released.

138. All of this needs to be underpinned by the whole of government, whole of society approach and priority in the PfG, and it will be important to ensure that there is continued engagement with the Executive, including problem-solving by Ministers on shared issues.

139. There are three broad types of project to be taken forward in the next phase:

- a) outstanding commitments from the Executive Action Plan that have either not been delivered or have been partially progressed but which will contribute to end benefits;
- b) existing commitments that need to be enhanced or realigned and where greater collaborative effort is required to deliver end benefits; and
- c) new projects, identified as gaps in delivery.

Outstanding Commitments

140. Some commitments in the original Action Plan have not yet been fully implemented or developed and need to be delivered. These include some that are underway, some that are under development (such as commitment A9 – Restorative Justice Initiatives), and some that have been delayed awaiting the restoration of the Executive and Assembly (such as legislative changes relating to serious and organised crime under commitment C2).

Enhancement and Better Collaboration

141. Some commitments have not yet been fully tested, such as the Communities in Transition Project (B4) and the WRAP and SYTES projects under commitments D1 and A4 respectively, and learning from these will need to be factored into proposals for the next phase. Some existing projects that are to be either amended, re-aligned or

continued, are likely to require either extensions of contracts with providers or new procurement processes. So, in order to ensure continuity of delivery for communities from April 2021, the process of refinement and design of updated interventions will need to be complete by the end of August 2020 to enable submission, assessment and prioritisation of proposals against end benefits and in the context of available funding.

New Initiatives

142. In addition, new work will be required based on learning from Phase One and gaps that have been identified. Planning is underway with stakeholders on these interventions but detail will need to be developed for the updated action plan to enable the step change required. This includes:

- an **enhanced approach to support for vulnerable young people**, building on delivery to date through commitments A4, A5 and B13. This will enhance connections across a number of initiatives, informed by project evaluations and the independent review of practice between the statutory and community youth sectors, PSNI and other community partners. The recent DOH led COVID 19 plan for supporting young people will also need to be factored in;
- a **review of relevant place based initiatives** and associated funding streams to align those with the end benefits identified for the next phase of delivery;
- **family based interventions for young people** at risk of paramilitary involvement and harm;
- developing and rolling out training for people and organisations to enable identification of, and **support for, individuals and families vulnerable to paramilitary recruitment and harm**;
- developing **policy and protocols for dealing with issues which enable the exercise of coercive control**
- looking at **language and tone** in the context of the desired outcome and benefits of the Programme;
- developing proposals that build on pilot projects such as participatory budgeting and 'citizens assemblies' to **enhance community participation and capacity in places with high levels of coercive control**; and
- enhancing the focus on **collaborative working on a locality basis** through the task and finish group and the Community Safety Board to identify emerging issues, share knowledge and agree action across relevant partners.

Impact of COVID-19

143. The COVID-19 'lockdown' began on 23 March 2020, and has had a significant impact on the delivery of public services across the board. This Programme is no exception. In the last few months, many activities have had to be re-prioritised or put on hold as efforts are focused on key services. A wider issue has also emerged in relation to how paramilitary groups are operating within this context – whilst some have been involved in ostensible 'pro-social' efforts to assist communities (through, for example, the provision of PPE; supplying food to vulnerable people; and initiatives to support the NHS), paramilitary style attacks, intimidation and other forms of coercive control continue within communities.

144. Whilst partners continue to deliver on commitments wherever possible, the need for working from home, where possible, and the social distancing regulations have had a significant impact. Inevitably, the need for social distancing has had a greater impact on projects providing more intensive support to communities and individuals including, for example, interventions within schools. However, despite the challenges, some partners have been able to adapt and are finding innovative ways to maintain, and sometimes even increase, the reach of services through technology and other means of communication.

145. Some brief examples of the impact of Covid-19 include:

- The **PCTF** has had some notable successes in this period, and the review of legislation on serious and organised crime continues, with a public consultation due to be launched shortly. However, the **Neighbourhood Policing Delivery Programme** has been suspended since 19 March in order to prioritise resourcing for the Covid 19 response. It is hoped that this can be re-instated soon.
- Some of the **Communities in Transition** projects have been able to adapt, with recruitment, meetings and health checks being carried out online. However, this may become problematic from September onwards, if social distancing restrictions remain in place, as many projects will require individuals and groups to come together for project activity such as social action/civic engagement projects.
- Training for participants involved in the **WICT** programme continues through online provision, with up to 20 online classes taking place weekly. However, feedback reflects that a lot of women who live in households where paramilitary coercive control exists are finding it harder to find support in WICT and the wider services it had previously provided on a direct basis. The programme has provided a range

of signposting to other specialist organisations, and a scoping exercise also took place to look at addressing the potential barriers to accessing online activities.

- The **Department for Education and the Education Authority** have had to stand down all face to face work directly with young people, unless absolutely necessary. However, the START programme is continuing in a modified form, with youth workers providing support to young people on the scheme through socially distanced means. The Community Safety Board has established an emergency COVID 19 response group to ensure that there is a shared focus on vulnerable young people and summer interventions.
- PBNI staff are now working remotely from home and therefore no longer routinely seeing individual **ASPIRE** service users face to face. This is also the position for PBNI partner agencies, NIACRO, NI Alternatives and CRJI. However, they have been maintaining contact with service users through telephone and video calls.

146. Whilst the impact is manageable at the moment, the inability to deliver direct interventions is likely to have a greater effect as time progresses. The lack of diversionary activity may also have a greater impact as we enter the summer months. As protective measures are relaxed, we will continue to monitor delivery and attempt to mitigate where possible.

Agile Response Fund

147. In order to provide some immediate mitigation of the impact of COVID-19, the Programme Board has established an Agile Response Fund to support delivery leads and partners in their efforts to be responsive to emerging issues and needs within communities vulnerable to coercive control. The fund can be deployed anywhere in Northern Ireland where there is an identified issue with paramilitary activity and will, hopefully, enable partners to identify potential issues and intervene at an early stage.

Achieving Transformation

148. As has already been highlighted throughout this review, the effective delivery of the Programme for Government is critical to achieving the outcomes of the Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme. As the IRC has stressed, success in the long term will be determined by the PfG's ability to effect transformational societal change through the collective effort of the whole of Government. Making Northern Ireland a more equal society, giving our children and young people the best start in life, ensuring we live long and happy lives, and creating a shared, welcoming and confident

society that respects diversity, are all key in creating **safer communities, resilient to paramilitarism, criminality and coercive control.**

IRC Report Recommendations and responses to date

IRC First Report - October 2018		Response
1	<i>Additional approach to enhance delivery of Executive Action Plan</i> – provide impetus and galvanise efforts towards successful delivery of the action plan. This could include the establishment of a cross-Departmental hub of officials. The added value would be more joined-up working and officials working exclusively on the Fresh Start projects.	The need to build on efforts to strengthen collaborative working is recognised. In relation to the suggestion of a co-located team, it was felt that the existing delivery model, with refreshed authority from HOCS and Permanent Secretaries, was more likely to enable collaborative links to be made between this programme and wider Executive programmes that will support the societal transformation required. As a result of this recommendation, HOCS assumed Chair of the Programme Board, and held a symposium with all Permanent Secretaries to mobilise greater collective and collaborative effort In refreshing the programme, further consideration will be given to the recommendation for a ‘hub’ approach, and/or a ‘matrix management’ approach across all the delivery partners, as well as the potential for more ambitious possibilities that might facilitate greater collaboration and alignment across sectors as well as Departments.
2	<i>Advisory Board to the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Board</i> – to establish an advisory group of political representatives. An Advisory Group that meets on a more regular basis could provide more useful input to the Programme Board.	The former political reference group, which included representatives from the five larger parties and met on a quarterly basis, has been formalised into a Political Advisory Group meeting monthly. With the restoration of the Assembly, consideration is being given to how best to engage at this level going forward.
3	<i>Whole of Society approach/Shared Responsibility</i> – that steps be taken to ensure a wide public debate on all of the	Work on this continues as part of the Programme’s Communications and Engagement Strategy, including associated online content in relation to the public awareness campaign.

	issues involved so that there is public buy in and public confidence in the measures needed to ensure sustainable success.	There have also been a range of events, including workshops, conferences, community discussions, and wider engagement via PCSPs and stakeholder fora. The Programme's Communications and Engagement Strategy is being refreshed in anticipation of Phase 2 of the Programme, and engagement will, hopefully, be enhanced by the involvement of Ministers and the Executive.
4	Neighbourhood Policing – that the PSNI and the NIPB have regard to the feedback we have received that visible neighbourhood policing has a key role to play in tackling paramilitary activity – there are not enough dedicated and visible neighbourhood police officers serving those communities most adversely impacted by paramilitary activity.	The Chief Constable announced in September 2019 that he planned to increase the number of officers dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing by 400 officers. An implementation plan for neighbourhood policing was submitted to NIPB in February 2020. The Neighbourhood Policing Delivery Programme was, however, suspended by PSNI on 19 March 2020 in order to prioritise resourcing for the national Covid-19 response. It is envisaged that the programme will recommence after the summer, however this timeframe will be kept under review. In phase 2 of the programme, it is anticipated that there will be a renewed focus on actions to build better relationships and confidence between police and the community and provide clear links with wider community safety.
5	Sustainability of measures – that the Programme Board considers options for longer term sustainability beyond the period for which Fresh Start funding is available, of those Actions which are assessed to be effective in tackling paramilitarism. Exit strategies should also be designed for those Actions which are not effectively tackling the issue.	In undertaking the refresh for phase two of the programme, the need for a longer term sustainability is recognised, while maintaining a focus on collaboration and co-ordination.
6	Possible role of Local Councils in the Delivery of Fresh Start – that serious consideration be given to the role local Councils could play in implementing these measures more broadly. We believe that local Councils	There has been considerable engagement with, and participation by, councils on delivery of the Programme, particularly around the promotion of a culture of lawfulness. Membership of the Programme Board now also includes a representative of SOLACE.

	have an important role in delivering many of the programmes, with their infrastructure being key to long-term, sustainable delivery.	Multi-agency working pilots have been developed in Belfast City Council and Mid and East Antrim Councils to address issues associated with an individual's vulnerability to paramilitary involvement or harm. There remains potential for further collaboration with councils, particularly in relation to community planning, around delivery under the building capacity to transition and long term prevention work.
7	Governance of funding arrangements – that funding for the measures being implemented is carefully manages in line with best practice and accountability arrangements to ensure propriety and public confidence in the process.	Robust governance and financial management arrangements are in place, including MOUs between the Programme team and lead partners which include a commitment to apply the revised Ministerial pledge and associated programme values to all funded activity. The allocation of funding under commitment B4 has given rise to new measures (including a behaviours framework) to ensure that appropriate accountability mechanisms are in place.
8	Enhanced use of Assets Recovery powers – that law enforcement agencies utilise fully the range of civil and criminal recovery powers currently available to them. We urge DoF to consider a more flexible approach to enable unspent monies recovered under ARCS to be carried over into the next financial year.	Law enforcement agencies continue to utilise fully the suite of civil and criminal recovery powers currently available to them in targeting those involved in criminality. An End of Year Flexibility (EYF) scheme does not exist at Northern Ireland block level, with only a very limited level of resources able to be carried forward across financial years under the Budget Exchange Scheme. Due to these restrictions it is not possible to operate EYF schemes at departmental or individual project level. The Department of Justice will, where possible, consider an internal mechanism for allocation of receipts received late in the financial year, in the following financial year. This will be considered on a year by year basis. DOJ has reviewed the operation of ARCS and introduced changes to improve its effectiveness, including taking a three year strategic view to the allocation of funding. This will facilitate financial support to a number of projects that span multiple years. The Department will continue to work with finance colleagues and DoF to consider what action

		can be taken to ensure the effective operation of ARCS.
9	<i>Speeding up Justice</i> – that the DoJ ensures the preparatory work, including and reviews and consultations required, is taken forward so that a future Justice Minister can progress these without further delay.	Several measures relating to speeding up justice, including reform of committal proceedings, were delayed in the absence of an Executive and Assembly. Work is now proceeding, and will be progressed through Criminal Justice partners with oversight by the Criminal Justice Board.
IRC Second Report – November 2019		Response
1	<i>The comprehensive tackling of paramilitarism must become an expressly stated and dedicated outcome of the PfG</i> – If we are to achieve the end of paramilitarism “once and for all” we must tackle the systemic issues facing communities where paramilitaries continue to operate – tackling paramilitarism must be integrated into mainstream, long-term Government policy.	The New Decade New Approach document states that tackling paramilitarism will be a priority in a new Programme for Government. The redraft of PfG to reflect NDNA has not yet been completed, and it is unclear how COVID 19 will impact on that process. In the meantime, the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme is reported on under Outcome 7 (and a few projects are included elsewhere). The Executive is committed to this issue, and the development of a refreshed programme will create the opportunity for focused discussion.
2	<i>Civil Recovery of Criminal Assets</i> – Consideration should be given to establishing an agency solely focussed on civil recoveryIn the interim, greater emphasis must be placed on the use of asset recovery powers ... <i>Unexplained Wealth Orders</i> – The asset recovery regime could be further strengthened by the use of Unexplained Wealth Orders and other new powers set out in the Criminal Finances Act 2017. We recommend that these Orders, and the additional powers under the Criminal	With the return of the NI Assembly, work to progress the commencement of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 was prioritised and continues. The aim is to commence the provisions by the end of 2020. Once fully implemented this legislation will add to the tools available in Northern Ireland to disrupt terrorist and organised crime groups, by introducing new and enhanced powers to tackle the proceeds of crime and the financing of terrorism. The Criminal Finances Act 2017 has introduced the ability to revisit confiscation orders and has created new civil powers, such as Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWOs) and Account Freezing and Forfeiture Orders which are not yet available to law enforcement in Northern Ireland. A Review of the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) was initiated, however, it has been agreed with Home Office that the priority continues to be the commencement of the Criminal Finances Act 2017. The ARIS review will resume later in 2020.

	Finances Act 2017, are extended to NI as soon as possible....	
3	Increased provision of dedicated neighbourhood policing teams should be fully resourced. Models currently piloted in some of the areas where paramilitaries operate should be intensified as a policing priority – We reiterate the importance of neighbourhood policing and recommend that increased provision of dedicated neighbourhood policing teams should be fully resourced.	The Chief Constable announced in September 2019 that he planned to increase the number of officers dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing by 400 officers. An implementation plan for neighbourhood policing was submitted to NIPB in February 2020. The Neighbourhood Policing Delivery Programme was, however, suspended on 19 March 2020 in order to prioritise resourcing for the national Covid-19 response. It is envisaged that the programme will recommence after the summer, however this timeframe will be kept under review. More widely, Programme Board appreciates the centrality of neighbourhood policing to tackling paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime. There are other recently initiated workstreams under the A5 commitment that are intended to improve police links with the community, particularly young people. The Programme also plans to pilot better community safety locality based working models in three areas across Northern Ireland, and these will engage neighbourhood policing teams.
4	Abolition of Committal Proceedings – It is widely accepted that the abolition of committal proceedings is key to speeding up justice in NI. We are concerned that the renewed focus of law enforcement on tackling paramilitary activity could adversely impacted by the time it takes for the disposal of criminal cases as a result of the committal process. New Offences to Tackle Serious and Organised Crime – We call for progress under Action C2 of the Executive Action Plan to be expedited without further delay.	Measures relating to speeding up justice, including reform of committal proceedings, were delayed in the absence of an Executive and Assembly. Work is now proceeding, and will be progressed through Criminal Justice partners with oversight by the Criminal Justice Board. With regard to C2, a review of existing organised crime legislation in other jurisdictions was completed and various models and options considered in respect of their potential application in Northern Ireland. Draft legislative provisions were agreed and, in March 2020, the Justice Committee endorsed the Department of Justice consultation document in respect of draft policy proposals and their intention to consult. This has not been launched due to the evolving Covid-19 situation but the intention remains to do so as soon as practicable.

5	<i>That a dedicated Transition Process for paramilitaries be developed and implemented</i> – We believe that the time has come for consideration to be given to a dedicated transition process for paramilitaries to bring paramilitarism to an end.	This is a challenging and sensitive subject. Various forms of support are already available under the Executive Action plan to individuals who wish to transition. However, the development of a transition process for paramilitary groups would be a significant departure from current practice and could conceivably fall outside the devolved sphere. There has been some initial work under the Programme on the issue of transition and this may help to inform a more considered engagement at a political level, which would, in turn, benefit from Executive consideration.
6	<i>The need for a major public debate on ending paramilitarism, as part of a wider societal conversation</i> – We believe it is time to amplify the public discussion on all the issues involved to ensure public confidence in efforts to tackle paramilitarism.	Substantial progress has been made, as evidenced by recent research conducted on the Ending the Harm campaign. The second annual Programme conference, ‘Shaping a Better Future Together’, engaged a wide variety of stakeholders from across statutory and voluntary agencies and provides a positive springboard for deepening the scope of the debate. This engagement will be built upon in the next phase of the Programme.

Feedback from Delivery Partners

The following are some reflections, from a number of both statutory and community and voluntary partners, on the delivery of the Programme to date, and on their aspirations for the next phase.

Dr Colm Walsh, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast

'I have been involved in various aspects of the TPP and in particular, with the **B13** programme. There have been genuine efforts by a dedicated team to engage people across Departments. **Leadership has been shown and risks have been taken to involve stakeholders in the planning and delivery of activity** and crucially, there has been real engagement with evidence (e.g. the review of administrative data) and novel solutions tested (e.g. Derry). The objectives of the Action Plan were ambitious. Progress has been made. Communities are engaged, **a coalition of willing partners has been fostered and evidence based solutions to some of these problems are emerging. However, there is more to do.** I hope that the learning from phase 1 will be integrated into plans for phase 2. I hope that there will **be a specific commitment to design and test innovative earlier intervention activities that are based on high quality evidence** specific to NI. I hope that these approaches would contribute to measurable decreases in higher harm and organised violence by identifying and addressing the root causes. This commitment would align with the Public Health approach to violence prevention that offers real potential for interrupting pathways into paramilitarism and organised crime.'

Corrymeela

We have **welcomed the partnerships** built between statutory and non-statutory organisations in the collective campaign to bring paramilitary activity to an end in Northern Ireland. We look forward to being part of a process which no longer provides space for criminal and violent behaviour to continue as 'normal'. **This collaborative approach which seeks new voices to the table is deeply encouraging.** We believe together is better in creating a safe and healthy Northern Ireland.

NIACRO

NIACRO have been involved in the **Aspire project** since November 2017, working with young men to reduce their risks of becoming involved or further involved paramilitary activity and criminality. Those we work with have experienced a range of difficulties

including, drug/alcohol misuse, drug debts, poor mental health and anti-social behavior with many facing barriers to settling within their communities.

Mentors on the project work intensively with the young men on a range of issues including health (physical & mental) and wellbeing, help with stabilizing accommodation, assistance with accessing benefits, social isolation, family relationships, personal development etc. With the right supports in place it allows for these young men to live more settled lives and resist negative influences.

Throughout the delivery of the Aspire project, **we have developed strong relationships with our project partners, and developed relationships with a range of services with the aim of supporting people to gain access to the right supports at the right time.** In order to continue and build on the successes of the project, **it will be important to continue to build on the partnerships** within the project as well as continuing to develop connections to supports in order to improve collaborative working. By sharing our learning and best practices throughout the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme we will be better able to support those needing help.

NI Alternatives

Overall I think the Tackling Paramilitarism Programme has made a **significant contribution to innovation, partnership working**; delivery on the ground and provided a mechanism to bring statutory, voluntary and community organisations together.

One of the success stories of the Programme is recommendation B12 – the **Aspire model** focusing on young men who are at risk of becoming involved, or further involved, in paramilitary activity. **The platform for an innovative statutory, voluntary and community partnership has been significant** with opportunities for shared working and shared case management. **This is truly restorative practice in action** as relationships are being nurtured and developed at a partnership level impacting positively at a grassroots level. **This model truly values the contribution of community and the need for grassroots transformation.**

The **'Ending the Harm' Campaign has been a true success story** of TP as the media campaign reached into every home and began to change the public discourse around the issue of paramilitary style attacks. Communities and individual who had never encountered this issue before began to have a voice and an awareness that paramilitary is alive and well and needs to leave the stage.

Communities in Transition - recommendation B4 - was slow to hit the ground but definitely has been **successful in helping harness community energy and combined appetite for change and transformation.** Again, the positive focus of this Programme is that it is building partnerships at a local level and bringing on board groups and individuals that would otherwise have been on the fringes and not part of the mainstream. CIT is **taking some measured and calculated risks and in building the peace and**

transforming communities, appropriate risks need to be taken. CIT and TEO should be commended for this.

The **challenge with CIT is the danger that it becomes overly complex** in nature and lacks clarity around roles. The level of scrutiny and governance shouldn't be allowed to suffocate creativity and innovation as too much energy needs to be given unnecessarily to management and not delivery.

Recommendation A9 needs to sit with one government department and requires immediate action.

It is **imperative that the good work that is taking place is evaluated and the learning rolled out.** Communities are beginning to feel valued – and this changes behaviour. If the work that has taken place is not extended and built upon, there is a risk that community capacity building and goodwill will be lost.

Department for Communities

Some of the highlights have been the relationships and partnerships that have been formed (where none previously existed) through the 'one-team' approach. This has included, for example:

- Collaboration with CCEA to promote the use of CCEA's Active Citizenship resources to the Voluntary & Community Sector, and using our partnerships with NICVA and the Community Faiths Forum; and
- Co-ordination of CED colleagues to take part in the evaluation of TEO's 'Communities in Transition' project Tenders.

DOJ Community Safety Division

The narrative has changed – we're now talking about trying to create a society free from paramilitarism – and able to highlight the NI Executive cross-party political commitment to that aim.

The work of the Paramilitary Crime Taskforce is sending a strong message that criminals masquerading as 'loyalists' or 'republicans' will be actively pursued and prosecuted. **The dedicated and concentrated actions of the team have encouraged local people to change previously held perceptions;** this is critical to community confidence in policing (particularly in areas where paramilitaries operate).

Departments and agencies that were making a contribution to the overall aims of the programme, but doing so largely in silos, are now working collaboratively.

We are engaging with PCSPs, Cllrs, community representatives, youth workers, young people living in areas under paramilitary coercive control and a range of stakeholders to explore what this means.

Working to deflect young people away from recruitment by paramilitaries or coming to harm as a result of being drawn in to criminality associated with such groupings **is now talked about openly as a cross-Departmental/inter-agency objective**; we didn't say this previously.

We are now having discussions with people about a range of issues whereby issues of coercive control and paramilitarism are openly named and discussed as one of the issues that need to be addressed. We also sense more appetite from colleagues in other departments to be engaged on the issue where there was previously significant reluctance to even use the term.

There is an increasing openness to join the dots on issues related to trauma, harm, vulnerability and offending. I don't think this can be put down entirely to the Programme, but it has helped bring together the right voices on issues which impact across the criminal justice system, not just in relation to paramilitaries.

Education Authority

Systemic approaches to planning and delivery as a result of partnership working in the programme. This includes a MOU between the PSNI and EA which covers significant issues regarding resource allocation, integrated service delivery and increased outcomes for young people, schools and communities.

For example:

- 31 PSNI schools officers working strategically across NI with EA youth service in schools, EOTAS and youth centres
- All PSNI neighbourhood officers receive training on circle of courage
- Processes in place between PSNI, community and youth service to provide scenario building
- Youth Volunteer Academy joint programme delivered between PSNI and at risk youth across NI
- Quarterly planning meetings between District Commanders and senior youth staff
- The youth service curriculum has been revised and updated to a strength based approach with the Circle of Courage Training being embedded in the entire youth service
- Targeted services have resulted in reduced community tensions in Derry

DOJ Reducing Offending Division

Definitely better working together amongst departments and increased awareness of what each other are doing and who each other are working with in the community.

Much better working with partners from voluntary and community sector and funding making an impact in those areas with increased capacity via Tackling Paramilitarism funding.

Things may have been slower to start than we all would have liked but my sense in the last few months is that work is progressing more quickly and things are starting to happen on the ground.

CCEA

Post-primary teachers in NI are more informed on how the addressing issues of lawfulness, criminality and paramilitarism in classrooms meets the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

CCEA post-primary resources developed for Active Citizenship are being disseminated for use amongst youth and community groups via links with Department for Communities as a direct result of the programme.

The themes for CCEA's resource development for year 2 of the active citizenship programme has been informed by input from other stakeholders it may not have previously consulted as a direct result of the programme, such as Youth service, PSNI, NIO and #stopattacks forum.

Attorney General's Office

One of the strengths of the programme has been the **opportunity for the Attorney General to explore young people's understanding of, and views on, the justice system, the rule of law and the influence of paramilitarism and respond to their questions.**

The **emphasis in the programme that the law/justice system *is ours*; that it exists for our collective benefit**; that our law/justice system needs our support; that it can be changed and that we can all influence that change was a new perspective for most participants.

It is clear from the evaluation that the majority of the young people taking part had not had the opportunity to learn about Northern Ireland's justice system or why it was important to support it and welcomed the opportunity. This is significant given

that some knowledge of the justice system must be a precondition for sustainable support for it.

PSNI (Policing with the Community)

In general terms, successes from our perspective as follows:

- **Multi-agency approach.** Collaborative working/information sharing/shared experience across agencies.
- **Increased investment in early intervention, problem solving and prevention** above and beyond the criminal justice model of policing.
- **Research locally and nationally** in terms of what works and how we can better support communities. (Community impact assessments, Merseyside model)

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