



OFFICE FOR CIVIC IMAGINATION LIVERPOOL

REPORT MAY 2018

This is the first report on the Office for Civic Imagination Liverpool (OCI), an urban governance project with the aim of increasing civic participation and fairer management of commons. It follows the successful model of cities like Bologna, Amsterdam and New York.

The Heseltine Institute of Public Policy and Practice in collaboration with Engage Liverpool pilots these innovative ideas in the Dingle neighbourhood of Liverpool, an area marked by high levels of deprivation but also a long history of active citizenship, particularly in the education and vocational sector. In this first stage of the project, our aim is to map the existing organisational and civic structures and dynamics in Dingle. This report sums up key developments to date.

Lead Investigators:

Alan Southern, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy and Research and Management School
University of Liverpool

Gerry Proctor, Engage Liverpool

Researchers and interviewers:

Matt Thompson, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy and Research

Paul Hepburn, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy and Research

Julia Zielke, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy and Research

Advisors:

Rhiannon Corcoran, Institute of Psychology, Health and Society, University of Liverpool

Methods

This first stage yielded nine interviews from nine different key figures and organisation in the Dingle neighbourhood of Liverpool. Sampling and access was facilitated through the 'contact books' and insights of two key gatekeepers in the community. Interviewees covered topics ranging from the rich history of Dingle in the late nineties and early noughties to coping with austerity measures and rising social problems in the neighbourhood. The appendix shows the detailed themes of the interviews so far.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured fashion and lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. The guiding interview question at this stage was: **what can you tell us about your organisation in the Dingle and who do you connect with?** Interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed. The research team adhered to ESRC's six key principles to ethical research, which stresses the transparent and non-coercive nature of the research process. Consent was actively sought in the form an information sheet and consent form. Further ethical approval was attained through the University of Liverpool's Research Ethics Committee.

In addition to traditional interview methods, the research team used a map drawing exercise. Creative methods are appropriate when dealing with complex historical and geographical topics and can aid participants' memory and sense making, thus yielding richer data. The map drawing had two stages: i) a geographical map, where participants were given a google map print-out of their neighbourhood and were asked to draw the boundaries of where they *feel* the Dingle is, ii) a conceptual map, where participants drew a diagram of how their community connects with others.

First insights

Reactions to the idea of generating more civic participation were generally favourable. We identified a number of emergent themes:

Better communication

There seems to be a general lack of communication, both in terms of inter-organisational and organisation-to-public communication. Participants pointed out the need to connect the individual dots of already great work into a better organised whole and felt disconnected and uninformed in regards to other organisations' activities and services. For

example, two organisations offered the same IT course. While one charged £5 for it, the other organisation secured funding and offered the same course for free. Better communication might mean that money can be invested more wisely.

Inter-generational prospects

We also observed that each of the organisations cater for a specific demographic group. While this means that services can be targeted to the needs of its users, it also misses the potential for inter-generational learning. One of the key problems of the area is youth anti-social behaviour. We see potential for connecting the youth with the elderly, in respect to vocational and education training, social care and a heightened sense of kindness, inclusion and connectedness in the community.

Resistance

Interestingly but not unsurprisingly we came across a degree of sarcasm and resistance towards our project, as we were seen as outsiders. One political key figure in the area reported an explicit mistrust in the idea of shared decision making and more participatory governance structures. This meant that a lot of funding decisions were motivated by favours and nepotism while smaller organisations “need to be weeded out”. This level of resistance is to be expected and highlights the importance of grounding our research in the community and allying with key people in the area.

Other themes

Other potentially interesting themes that might flesh out in further stages of this research are: housing, health and wellbeing, socio-economic inequalities and social capital, and trust in each other.

Next steps

The second part of this first stage must further explore these topics. Initial research questions are reiteratively refined to address the emerging dynamics in the area. We see great potential for the smaller, less well-known organisation in the area, whose insight into specific demographics and communities can help make the neighbourhood more inclusive. In the second stage of this research we therefore concentrate on these actors, like schools, churches, sport clubs, hobby clubs and activity centres.

Appendix: detailed overview of some interviews

	Who and when?	What do they do?	Who are they connecting with?	Key themes in interview
Roger O'Hara	Roger O'Hara, Interviewed by Julia, November 2017	Retired now, expansive address book with contacts, referred to as 'Mr Dingle'	Actors who were active in the time around Dingle 2000	The history of Dingle and what sort of funding it has attracted over last 30 years
Riverside Learning and Education Centre	Paul Feaver, Manager, interviewed by Julia and Matt, November 2017	Offering learning support for young adults.	Employers, Schools, Town Hall, A.L.S., Rialto Neighbourhood Council, Florrie, MPs, (two illegible names on chart)	History of Dingle funding, pressure through council
Dingle Community Learning Project (DCLP)	June Jackson, Manager, interviewed by Julia, November 2017	Own the premises of an old pub and rent it out to local organisations and trainings. Offering a number of community services for residents.	LivPac, Home Start, Vineyard Church (Grow Baby, Messy Church, Youth Service), L.A., ADHD Foundation, SAMS Social Club, St Cleo's Café and Church, Jeff Thompson, Belvedere Community Centre, Southern Neighbourhood Council, Wheel Meet Again,	Neighbourliness of area
LivPac	Donna, board member, interviewed by Julia, November 2017	Helping families and carers of children and young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Same premise as DCLP	CAM HS, DCLP, Autism in Motion and other Autism and disability groups, Knowsley PCF, LA, NNPCF, Sefton PCF, CCG	People help each other
Mark Clarke	Mark, interviewed by Julia and Matt, November 2017	Inactive now, used to be Riverside Learning and was a Founder member Dingle 2000	Dingle 2000 members and early involved groups	Critical of our engagement, Political background and personal stories of involvement in Dingle

Wheel Meet Again (and South Central Community Hubs as Parent Organisation)	Lynn Richardson, Project Manager, interviewed by Julia, January 2018	Essentially a transport service, picks people up from home so they can join different services or go shopping in Dingle. Organise trips, activities and social gatherings.	Dare to Care, Florrie, Park Palace Ponies, DCLP, Tesco on Park Road, Toxteth Hall, Schools (St Silas ad Holy Family), Social Landlords, GPs, Steve Munby and Gerard Woodhouse, St Cleopas (Church), SAMS Social Club	Social problems in Dingle, how to keep an organisation alive
St John's Youth Centre	Rob Riviera, Centre Manager and Youth Worker, interviewed by Julia December, 2017	Youth centre offering different activities, support and a safe space to hang out for teenagers and young adults.	Fire Fit, Team Oasis, Connexions, SNC, Riverside detached team (outreach), Florrie	Social problems in area and gang problems, little support from elsewhere
Liverpool City Council	Steve Munby, interviewed by Julia and Matt, January 2018	Has access to funds and has organised different regeneration projects in Dingle.	Knows most, connected to Florrie, DCLP, Southern Neighbourhood Council, and a range of individuals	Critical of our engagement, myth of empowerment
Park Palace Ponies	Paul Haywood, retired GP, treasurer of PPP, interviewed by Julia, January 2018	Bringing affordable horse riding to children in this converted theatre. 36% come from L8 rest from L17, L18, L19, L15	Wheel Meet Again, SNC, Royal Court Theatre Liverpool (does all their marketing and design for free), Keith (founder) is very well connected in Dingle for example Louise Elman, housing association (get cheaper rates for residents), British Horse Society, Mersey Care,	Different supporters in area