

# Citywide Neighbourhood Partnership Conference 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015

## Final report and meeting notes

### General

The event was attended by 102 residents plus staff. Overall satisfaction with the event 56% suggested that it was good or very good, 27% satisfactory and 17% poor most of which stated that this was due to the venue and that a different venue would have made it better. 87% of those that attended the governance workshops suggested it was informative or very informative, 100% of those who attended the S106/CIL very informative or informative. Of those that attended the Planning workshop only 3% felt that it was not very informative. Attendees also enjoyed the transport workshop, with only 5% finding it not very informative and only 4% found the communications sessions not very informative, however there was a feeling that it would have been better if it had been run by one of the communications team. There was a feeling that the Mayors session was too scripted and a request that at future events he would be available for a larger time to enable him to take part in some of the workshop discussions.

### Next City Wide Event suggestions –

Next time – 24<sup>th</sup> October @ the Mshed

### Recommendations from the feedback are

- Fewer topics per meeting/workshop would be more effective.
- No headline speaker unless they have something relevant to say.
- Ask the mayor to take part in the workshops and stay longer.

### Subjects suggestions

- More on Communications – showcasing best practice – websites, notice boards, social media, radio (will be present), how to get the papers involved. Need to capture the good practice into a how to guide.
- Communications presentation from a member of the BCC Marketing & Communications team.
- Street Scene (environmental action)
- NP Plans
- The structure of the City Council and how system works, & is managed. And how we can most effectively work with it.
- Update on how the boundary review affects the NPs.
- How to improve Forum meetings, build up diverse attendance and ensure issues raised in Forums are effectively communicated to NP.
- Showcasing best practice (all NPs invited to do a display of the things they are most proud of)
- Highways to talk about and discuss traffic calming and traffic flows?
- Transport again. Working with bordering neighborhoods, Council Authorities. Cross Authority Agencies (LEP, transport, police, ...).
- Parking Services
- Workshop on how NPs can be more inclusive and how to reach and include minority groups in NP work
- How can more NP's get real community centres, or if not equivalent facilities?
- More on Planning and discussion with planners - understanding how the system works, & is managed.

## Governance

### What is Governance?

- Strategy
- Set of good practice – rules and regulations and structures

- Clear understanding of who makes decisions
- Clear process for others to get involved.
- Accountability (but some feel that as Residents are not elected then accountability is difficult).
- Great two way communications. Feel like council don't always take notice of what NPs' feedback.
- Note, some NP undertakes activities outside the normal framework. (eg they deliver services/projects)
- Not sure when we should comment or get involved in consultation. Sometimes it's too late!

### **Would like**

Clarity of whether what's being discussed is a NP gift or NP committee decision.

Clarify on spending or influencing decision.

Clarity re how NP prove accountability.

Clarity about what power NPs have – what they can and can't do.

Clarity about how to NP's influence things centrally.

### **What are the success criteria for a great NP?**

#### **Financial**

- Devolved budget spent according to need
- Good financial decisions
- Ability to source additional funding and not depend on BCC monies.

#### **Governance**

- How do NPs prove they are accountable?
- Widespread participation across the demographic profile of the neighbourhood
- Make it compulsory for the population to serve a period of duty on NP.
- Competition to become members. (Elections?)
- A constitution
- Training

#### **Excellent communication.**

- Open, transparent – paperwork not coming out in council talk, include maps, enable residents to understand the information.
- Actively seeking views of wider population using a range of methods.
- High levels of Public awareness that NP's exist. – Bigger profile.
- Respect voices of people who don't come to meetings.
- Better awareness generally of NP by general population.
- Everything brought NP – BCC sign up, earlier information, interest of community – to be given the choice.

#### **Making it real**

- Decide something, not much decision making, not just about ticking boxes, or form of consultation.
- Dealing with things that really matter.
- Community lead agenda's
- Influential – doing things that are relevant.
- Accountability/Success reflected in role of mayor – NP have stronger voice!

#### **Clear identification.**

- Not just being a 'thing of the council'.
- What are we – what do we want them to be, independence, what tension, are we controlled by the council or independent.
- Valued and aware – doing good stuff.

- Separate rights to exist. (Bedminster model)

### **Proving success**

- Only doing stuff that works.
- Promote what NPs are done, delivered.
- Quality of Life survey
- Sharing different practices.

### **Member Packs**

**Parts of the members pack are to be Citywide, whilst others are negotiated locally**

### **Responses from the workshop**

- Good that role of the chair is specified clearly.
- Role of Chair should be same for every NP.
- Be nice to see structure diagrams of the process.
- Good to see roles and responsibilities, although risk the more prescriptive it is, less likely lots of people get involved.
- Formal recording process for discussions etc.
- Needs to be consideration of the other ways/activities people can get involved with.
- Worry it will be hard to find people who can afford the time to take on these roles. What will we do if we can't find people who are able a willing to take on these roles.
- Sometimes there are people who just won't be a figurehead, but not take on the rest.
- Asking the volunteers/General public to take on a lot!
- Council officers getting fewer – more work for people!
- Could we look at Co-Chair as well as vice chair!
- Clarify links with Forums and how they work.
- Important to ask people to look at packs who don't know anything about NPs, see if is clearly.
- Emphasis on importance of maps, that is up to date and easily available.

### **Recommendations for the future**

- Continue development of the Tool kit to include, suggested elections process and paperwork and to address the requests mentioned above in the meeting notes.
- NPs to work up their new Terms of Reference and roles and responsibilities with their Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator over the Summer
- All NPs to adopt the new Code of Conduct.
- New members to be provided with information (contained within the toolkit).
- Terms of reference for subgroups to be developed
- Proper written equalities Impact Assessment on reports required
- Re-launch NP membership, anyone who lives or works in the area, citywide. Common terms using same language – a joint approach between NPs with BCC support.
- Information on website, needs to enable others to see what other NP's are doing, however need to remember that not all have the use of computers.

### **Training requests –**

### **General notes**

- Use independent people to run the training – VOSCOUR, Planning network, trade unions
- On line training
- Short sessions – more graphic material
- Make sure that packs and training don't put people off

### **Training**

- IT
- Chairing skills (mandatory for all chairs even if they have had previous experience)
- Team working
- New members to be given opportunity for shadowing existing members
- Council Structures and Staff

- How to sit on a board
- Case studies – what has worked
- Informal sharing between NPs and forums (Would be nice to attend other NP meetings to see how they do it)
- Locally agreed topics for discussions across the City
- Equalities, how to answer the question in wellbeing applications, how to involve equalities groups. Should be taken more seriously, important subject, changes to wellbeing grant, thing about equalities question, help to understand needed.
- Encourage Cllrs to attend training

## **Section 106 and Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) - Jim Cliffe**

### **Overview**

- Capital funding only
- CIL does not have to be spent on Council property/infrastructure ...i.e. could provide towards 3<sup>rd</sup> party infrastructure such as a surgery/police/academy school .
- Social wellbeing projects are a bit of a grey area – test would be does this support growth of local area .
- Examples open access advice service – poss. play group – yes .
- Updated lists for S106/ CIL every month can see on BCC website.
- Q. What rights do NP/BCC have on bordering authorities spend if affecting our NP areas ? Stockwood/BANES?
- S106 BCC officers consult with neighbouring authorities, particularly around highways schemes. The neighbouring authority could ignore our suggestions.
- S106 concessionary tree planting sometimes it is too restrictive – need to have wording “within 1 mile”
- Council standard wording is “within 1 mile” but developer may disagree and say Park and Green space.
- If building use, can offset floor space with GL contribution.
- If empty/vacant cannot be offset
- Social landlord contributions
- Mandatory exemptions – don’t pay CIL .
- Mixed development pay CIL for the property for sale .
- Small schemes can be just as resource intensive as large schemes . Staff capacity an issue.
- Can NP have say before planning on what highways scheme might be needed/wanted .
- Yes developers should consult prior to putting in planning. Pre app consultation .
- Should be made aware of large applications come in so can feed into them.
- Tree replacement firstly on site or if not poss. within a certain area.

### **S106/CIL**

- Weakness –NP need to know how they can influence spend of S106/CIL need to create mechanism so this can happen
- How do you proceed with getting match funding from S106/CIL
- Should NP be a statutory consultees for planning application ?
- Neighbourhood development plan is long hard process to get through . Not much public sector funding to help with the work.
- Council mapping system Pin Point “know your place” excellent .
- What’s the lower limit can ask for ? No lower amount the work to officers is same for £2000 or £100,000.

Change of use – no CIL if was being used , Yes if wasn’t being used

## **Planning and Neighbourhood Partnerships – Sarah O Driscoll and Alison Bromilow.**

- Are Site Plans easier to set up ?
- There is a possibility of building this into developments.
- Linked applications but submitted separately

- This is a challenge
- National Planning Guidance Still v.new , not yet fully tested
- 2.30pm
- Brown field sites – These are included in the site allocation document
- Neighbourhood Development plans
- Not within N.P.s
- Planning Groups Develop links with BCC, NP etc
- The Plans capture our development aspirations

## **Communications Workshop - support for Neighbourhood Partnerships from Bristol City Council – collated responses from NP members**

### **What does BCC currently do/provide for your Neighbourhood Partnership?**

1. Arrange meetings (only goes to NP members)
2. Internet messages about meetings and provide feedback
3. Council website /Council officers in attendance
4. Provides a central website. Not everyone has a computer. Our area supervisor is very supportive. Books venues.
5. Central website/council personnel/devolved funds/admin (sets up meeting, minutes etc)
6. Arrange meetings/Coordinator/Provide paperwork
7. Arrange meetings /books venues/publishes the results afterwards on line
8. Nothing I am aware of

### **What works well?**

1. The Coordinators
2. The above works well for some
3. –
4. He provides paperwork, runs the calendar. Usually works well. Open to change.
5. Having staff dedicated to 1 or 2 NP's only.
6. The above
7. The coordinator meeting works well

### **What doesn't work? /What are the problems?**

1. Not enough known about NP's not communicated to residents – don't know what they do. Same group – same people in sub groups
2. Emails do not work for those people (elderly, disabled, poor etc) who do not access computers. They are increasingly left out of information communication
3. No money for promoting the NP – advertising meetings needs finance
4. Central website /funding for communications/lack of publicity for NP's
5. Advertising of meetings (timing of adverts) and response to enquiries/problems
6. When coordinator is not around /if you don't attend a meeting you miss out/no way to register an interest/meeting agenda is council led – NP topics are added too late – meeting too long.
7. Not enough local people know about NP's

### **How can BCC help NP communications? What's your wish list?**

1. Bill Boards/ Hand-outs with .../More communication
2. The answer is NOT free lessons & cheap computers. It is another form of communication e.g. flyers/posters/information with council tax forms
3. A decent budget – no strings attached and BCC could promote the NP better.
4. Central info given to nominated communications point for distribution in NP (or one size fits all and can change as appropriate)  
Data sharing – not exclusively NP or BCC data. Ideas at NP level & design at BCC level and printing done by BCC.
5. Provide different sources of information /advertising/quick response to enquiries /problems. Report back on situations. Have up to date contact lists (direct not through the switchboard).

6. Leaflet with council tax/funding for local newspapers – the best way for our neighbourhood/dedicated council communications person for NP./electoral roll.
7. Billboards/noticeboards/leaflets in council mail outs/a4 posters in surgeries & libraries

**Of the wish list which would be your top three asks (of BCC)? (share)**

1. To educate people into joining /To educate people about what it is does and what they can do
2. See above
3. Partnership achievement awards
4. As above and advertise the NP on the buses – on the back, inside, everywhere –
5. Quick response/report back /up to date contact lists/ NP bank acct.

**What would you like to achieve? If we get the communications right what will happen?**

1. Internet, libraries, schools, Doctors surgeries, Pigeon, Radio, local TV, buses
2. NP would hopefully be attended by a greater variety of people instead of 'same old, same old' as is the case now. Even after 10 years a lot of people don't know about them or what they do locally.
3. Adequate funding stream/wish list – actioned leading to results – good work acknowledged and good will acknowledged –
4. Why not put an A5 flyer in with Council Tax – the last small mention in the booklet was not good enough.
5. Greater attendance at meetings
6. Pinpoint on website

**Next steps**

Penny Germon to complete the BCC Supported communications strategy.

More needed as part of the tool kit to assist NPs to market themselves. – to continue the theme at the next Citywide NP.

**Transport Workshop**

- a) **How do you find out about strategic projects ?**
  - CB Bedminster – last minute not enough time for consultation .
  - Accidental , eg cycle in Bedminster . It seems like most BCC input is into cycling .
  - Reading Evening Post
  - Online media
  - Highways officers – reactive. Secretive. reluctant . Demotivated. Could they tell us more. They don't always know.
  - Occasional – being asked for support . If supported, hear, if not, not.
- b) **What is the balance between strategic and local interest from NPs (need to catch it early – pm)**
  - Hengrove and Stockwood– discussions v. local – but would like more input into, eg Temple Zone
  - BCR – concerns about local hills & older people
  - GF Officers need to hear from local , eg sticking out at bus stops in GF.
  - Cabot – congestion – local needs strategic support.
  - Want more support from police on cycling safety & enforcement .
  - BS10 – not a balance at moment – no support for local initiatives
- c) **How should NPs engage with strategic projects ? (Why should we ? What's the point ?) – resident led groups**

**Scrutiny Commission Forums – NPs to take part ?**

- Visits to see things that are working ?
- Health should be combined with transport
- Want to influence buses – how can citizens do this ? (fares and controls)
- Want to make walking more high profile . Govt funding is focussed on cycling. – Why more focus on cycling . NPs could have impact by id key opportunities
- NP influence on street initiative.
- NPs to engage – need to be given weight properly ., eg petition in GF . NPS currently not a stat consultees

**Needs to be a stat consultees**

- NPs could feed in to scrutiny plans – with feedback.
  - Transport Workshop 2
  - Not everyone can cycle
  - Communication
  - Accessible to all cycling a good thing
  - Can be 1D
- a) **How do you find out about strategic projects ?**
- Can be hard to understand – inc decisions being made.
  - Great difficulty , have to go looking, not proactive – newspapers
  - Not alerted or engaged with, have to make effort.
  - Wen formal NPs do get asked.
  - Greater Bedminster – metro bus case & when have to
  - IN DV – for SM link
  - Random – what , when , what stage & what influence we might have.
  - Also random response to progress . Want whole list of schemes .
  - GF – felt marginalised and ridiculed .
- b) **What is the balance of interest between strategic and local interest from NPs**
- GF- feels strategic projects locally & concerns about local implementation
  - Clifton – lots of local interest when big schemes are implemented
  - NP stuff – doesn't get presented in strategic context – needs to be more joined up – officers need knowledge.
  - Want walking to be a strategic
  - Want citywide view of local projects plus other areas
  - Can be difficult to get balance between strategic & local e walking and cycling Use subgroups
  - AELH transport group looks at both.
  - Henleaze school travel group – good eg of link – active travel along strategic route. Need to work together
- c) **How should NPs engage with strategic projects and at what stage?**
- Clifton MS – want to influence quality of work & feedback on the work & feedback into the work.
  - DV- like SB link – good engagement – Stat consultees – Needs links with other funds eg the CCG to health
  - Transport group AELH – looks at strategic
  - Transport can provide info , about strategic to NPs – need better comms
  - GF – ridiculed and marginalise . fishponds high street . Slick at bus stops LH turn HL

#### **Need to let NPs (all of us) know what the projects are .**

- Need info on council website - better public visibility
- All residents need to know – if NPs were better source, residents would come.
- Mobility Scooters GM
- On pavements
- On roads
- Parking
- Policy/guidelines required

#### **Request**

1. Ability of NPs to input into strategic transport planning pre consultation phase
2. Bringing NPs together to look at strategic transport planning
3. Scrutiny of strategic transport projects via NPs
4. NPs being statutory consultees at an early stage in the development.

#### **Next Steps**

Peter Mann will go back and look at potential for NPs becoming more involved in strategic developments