



Henbury and Southmead
Neighbourhood Partnership

Sam Parker

Community Development Worker

Community Engagement Team

sam.parker@bristol.gov.uk

Tel: 0117 9223029

1. Introduction

On the 31st March 2008, the Henbury and Southmead Neighbourhood Partnership was launched at the Wesley College. The aim of the event was to promote the Neighbourhood Partnership way of working, provide information and communicate what sort of improvements the partnership can achieve for the local area. It was also hoped to give local people the opportunity to have their say on what issues they think their local Neighbourhood Partnership should prioritise and address. There had been concerns raised before the launch over duplication of the good work being carried out by the existing structures and questions had been asked over the pairing of the two communities and whether this grouping was the most appropriate. So the event was also an opportunity for local people to come together to try and identify a way forward for the two communities to work as an effective partnership of benefit to everyone.

Andrew McGrath, manager of Bristol City Council's Community Engagement team gave a short presentation on Neighbourhood Partnerships from a council perspective with a focus on partnership working and how the two communities could effect change which would be beneficial to both areas, by working together. A copy of Andrew's presentation is available on request.

A total of 53 people attended, a mix of local workers and residents from the two electoral wards covered by the partnership. This in no way should be seen as being representative of the whole community. However it was a positive start to what should be an ongoing effort to consult with all members of the community. Equality groups were represented at the meeting, in particular members from BME and disabled communities as well as both older residents, young people and the local schools were present.

The four local councillors were present and the meeting was jointly chaired by Councillor Peter Hammond and Councillor Derek Pickup.

2. Local Governance

The intention in introducing Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) across Bristol is to provide an enhanced opportunity for local communities to have a greater say in the way services, and responses to local issues are managed by Bristol City Council, and other service providers. The role local councillors can play in providing this greater say is one of the core elements of the NP structure.

NP boundaries are based on clusters of two or three wards. Eventually there will be 14 NPs covering every part of Bristol. Membership of the NPs is likely to include residents, representatives from Voluntary/community organisations and service providers (police, primary care trust etc). Each NP is likely to develop its membership in ways that are reflective of local priorities and aspirations. However it is the intention that local councillors will be at the heart of each NP.

Action plans will be developed for each NP. These action plans will be very target and outcome driven, rather than merely being documents that set out communities' aspirations but with no 'teeth'.

In their early stages of development, NPs will be mechanisms for influencing and scrutinising service delivery and service providers. As well as there being regular opportunities for local people to meet with councillors and service providers, it is also intended that other ways of communicating with residents need to be developed as it is recognised that not everyone wishes to attend big public meetings.

3. Existing Structures

It is not the intention of the new NP structures to duplicate or replace any of the work already being done in any of the communities they are being introduced to. Indeed the intent is rather to build on and learn from the work already taking place in areas such as Henbury and Southmead, and share these experiences with the rest of the city.

It was recognised at the event that effective and comprehensive work is being carried out in both the communities covered by the NP which has been of great benefit to local residents. Information on the key groups from the areas follows;

Henbury and Brentry Community Council

The Community Council exists to link individual members of the community, voluntary organisations and local authority departments in a common effort to improve leisure, educational and social welfare opportunities for everyone in Brentry and Henbury.

The Council holds quarterly general meetings and sponsors a bi-annual community conference. Several sub-groups accountable to the council meet more frequently to pursue specific agendas on the environment and community events, etc.

*Taken from the Henbury and Brentry Community Council website;
henburybrentrycommunity.org.uk

Southmead (Neighbourhood Renewal) Steering Group

This group of residents and community workers (both statutory and voluntary organisations) have been operating together since the introduction of the Neighbourhood Renewal initiative in 2000. Southmead ranks among the ten most deprived communities in Bristol and as such was eligible to benefit from the initiative and receive funds and support from the Neighbourhood Renewal unit in Bristol. The steering group was formed to progress the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda in Southmead, and is an umbrella group for smaller task groups which also operate in the area.

Neighbourhood Renewal funding in Bristol was withdrawn at the end of March 2008 and as such the programme operating in North Bristol was closed. The group came to a decision to remain and progress as a comprehensive voice for the community representing the views of residents in both local and city wide issues, and continuing to push for future investment in the area.

There are of course other organisation with similar aims to these groups operating within both the communities, but none so comprehensive in benefit and representative as the two mentioned in this report.

It is hoped that these two groups will be the key partners within the NP structure and that the NP can work closely with them in order to be mutually beneficial.

4. Event Evaluation

Evaluation forms were given out at the event and people were given the opportunity to hand these back in to staff at the event or post back at a later date. To date (25th April 08) a total of 7 forms have been received. This figure equates to only 4% of attendees. The forms that were received showed that overall those who completed the forms were quite satisfied with the event.

5. Next Steps

During the event there was an opportunity for people to break into two smaller groups, to discuss issues of concern for the two areas and identify any areas where similarities arose.

It was reported that the following are issues for both neighbourhoods:

- Anti Social Behaviour
- Green Space and environmental issues
- Planning and Housing allocation
- Education

It was agreed then that there should be some consultation carried out over the summer in both communities to highlight the priorities and concerns for each area. Consultation in Henbury and Brentry will be facilitated at their pre-arranged bi-annual community conference to be held on Saturday 28th June from 09.30 at Wesley College, College Park Drive.

Consultation in Southmead will be carried out in partnership with the Southmead Steering group and NP staff and will be carried out in a series of smaller events targeting specific groups in order to be as representative as possible.

Once these exercises are complete NP staff along with ward councillors will look at the priorities and call a small group of representatives from each community together to look at similarities in priorities and whether a partnership approach would be of benefit to the progression of these priorities.

Decisions will also have to be made in partnership with the communities around the £5,000 per ward allocation.