

**Neighbourhood Partnership Residents' Forum**  
**Saturday 22/11/08, 10am-1.15pm**  
**The Greenway Centre, Doncaster Road, Southmead, Bristol**

Present: Steve Pearce (SP) Brislington, John Hooper (JH) St George, Virginia Rowan (VR) Lockleaze, Kay Armstrong (KA) Horfield, Lisa Blackwood (LB) St Pauls, Kwame Bennin (KB) St Pauls, Trevor Weeks (TW) Horfield, Kathleen Horseman (KH) Southmead, Matthew Symonds (MS) Voscur, Liz Gorman (LG) Voscur, Cllr Terry Cook (TC) BCC, Graham Sims (GS) BCC, Ariaif Hussain (AH) BCC

Apologies: Audrey Lennox (AL) Westbury on Trym, Ben Barker (BB) Bedminster, Tony Lewis (TL) Horfield

**Introduction**

Cllr Terry Cook, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Involvements and Graham Sims the newly appointed Executive Member for Neighbourhoods were welcomed to the meeting.

**Updates from Neighbourhood Partnerships**

VR (Horfield and Lockleaze). Partnership is very new. They are currently working with the Sustainable Development Team and have an event planned for 4 December.

SP (Brislington). Currently working through the Community Action Plan. Exploring how facilities at the new Brislington Enterprise College can be used by the community e.g. for employment training, with the Learning Communities Team.

KB/LB (St Paul's Unlimited). Service Level Agreement signed with Bristol City Council. Considering future for the Partnership as part of NP. Parks in St Paul's have been allocated investment for development. £250k for an adventure playground – a consultation taking place.

KH (Southmead) The Renewal Steering Group has limited support and resources but still active. The group are working towards meeting with Henbury. Attend PACT meetings – recently discussing allocation of housing and strategies for dealing with poor behaviour.

KA (Horfield). Rotating chairing duties between councillors was causing a lack of continuity. Councillors appear to concentrate on particular areas. Concern that one councillor dominated a recent meeting considering the structure for the Partnership. They determined the structure to be adopted by the group, without consultation. Felt no recognition of Manor Farm.

JH (St George). Had recently attended a PACT meeting and was concerned by talk of selling off green spaces, a feeling shared by others at the meeting.

TC: Clarified that there were no plans to sell off green spaces but that a consultation process aiming to rationalise green spaces was underway.

Money from any land sold would be reinvested to improve the quality of the most appropriate green spaces. The council would consult with residents and would then produce a draft plan for green spaces in neighbourhoods.

LB said St Paul's Unlimited have a development plan on the website, she suggested others might find it useful:

<http://www.stpaulsunlimited.org.uk/spnp/index.htm?PHPSESSID=fec0ec793cdcb318f26e0e2ceee3b585>

LB queried why investment in parks was not more phased.

GS - Funding is used for maintenance of parks but separate funding needs to be used to invest in improving parks. Land which has potential for housing also has to be identified, this is part of a nationwide assessment of land. Hopefully this piece of work will come through Neighbourhood Partnerships.

### **Framework for Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs)**

TC - NPs are central to the Council. The Council is not currently set up to serve the Partnerships, as it would like to. It is in the process of change.

TC: Bristol has had a NP way of working for a number of years. NPs will not replace community groups but will help them have a louder voice and a more strategic view. They were previously only in regeneration areas but will now be across the City. They are councillor centred but not councillor led (councillors have legitimacy as they have been elected).

GS: Government worried by lack of connection between community and democracy and want to engage and re-connect statutory agencies and councillors with communities.

There are various issues for NPs:

- No model for NPs exists to apply to Bristol.
- Groups are diverse.
- Some groups are long established, some new.
- Neighbourhood Management Schemes such as Hartcliffe and St Paul's are mature and successful, but there are now funding changes.
- In some areas Community Groups have come together to form NPs and they are struggling with identity. (TC would be meeting with some of these NPs).
- Varying levels of engagement by councillors – development training will be offered to address this.
- Change of mindset required by officers who are used to thinking citywide.

There are no fixed ideas about the structure that NPs should adopt, or about who should be involved. Public meetings required three times a year – but it is possible to have more meetings than this. GS said that BCC are hoping that NPs would define their own individual structure. However, where there are particular problems, the council could be more prescriptive e.g. steering group

with representatives from each community group. BCC would like all consultation that affects an area to go through the relevant NP.

GS said NPs should also include the NHS Bristol (formerly Primary Care Trust), police and schools. NPs will allow more integration/joined up approach and will be a place for agencies to hear from the grassroots. Will be an opportunity to influence statutory agencies.

GS - BCC is a two star council with three beacon awards. Overall, however, services are not good. Things need to change but we need to be realistic about timeframes for changes. Some changes can be instant whilst others are more strategic and will need more planning and money. Not a lot of funding available at present, but this may increase.

MS asked what resources will be made available to engage more residents in the NPs?

SP said there is a need for more Community Development Workers and more publicity.

GS agreed they need to work on publicity. The next "Our City" newspaper will feature NPs and Partners And Community Together (PACT). There will be a regular feature on NPs in Our City.

AH said the community development team are developing and implementing a publicity strategy. People in the room are the biggest asset.

KH said in her area some people have dropped out already due to lack of direction in the NP.

GS said he will assume full responsibility for the Community Development Team in January and is currently looking into arrangements for NPs in other parts of the country and at their resource levels (although these are not necessarily appropriate for Bristol). Every NP should have an allocated Community Development Worker and an allocated Senior Officer who should attend meetings.

GS questioned whether all funding (for NP) should come from the council – what about the other statutory agencies?

The meeting talked about the problem of getting representatives from schools to attend meetings and engage with NPs. TC/GS suggested that Community Governors should be at NP meetings.

SP said the previous Extended Schools Partnership (ESP) Manager attended all NP meetings but replacement does not. Resources held by schools are important to the community. We need to sort out how different models fit together.

TC said ESP Managers should be involved in NPs. Takes time to filter through. MS confirmed that all schools should receive the NP e-bulletins,

including private schools. MS will invite ESP representative from BCC to the next NPRF meeting in January.

There was a discussion around the responsibility of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Bristol's LSP (the Bristol Partnership) has not worked in the past and has been re-formed. Neighbourhoods will be a key element in the new LSP.

GS stressed it was important not too overload NPs but important to connect up so that there are not numerous discussions about the same thing. The Police have agreed to rationalise the number of PACTS and they will be based around ward boundaries from April 2009.

### **Councillors**

GS said that the need for training regarding NPs and the councillor's role has been identified – considering an external trainer. GS can only encourage councillors to engage.

KH said Single Regeneration Budget involved regular meetings, working relationship with Henbury, cross-city collaboration. She said that the weakness in some NPs so far lack of enthusiasm on part of councillors.

KB said that they are fortunate as they do see their councillor regularly and their NP is councillor centred, not councillor led.

TC said he was speaking with councillors regularly for updates on their NP.

### **Community Development Workers**

LB was concerned that their Community Development Worker (CDW), Penny Germon, has now been moved to a different NP and now has more areas to cover, with different issues.

TC replied that CDW's have been asked to move from their traditional areas, Penny's role would now be to help NPs to set up across the three wards.

KB questioned why CDW's were being moved from an area with no NP to an area which has an established NP.

TC acknowledged that this was a valid point.

GS said it would be good to have one full-time worker for each NP. But at the moment it was problematic to double resources.

### **NP Action Plans**

TC said that NPs Action Plans need to be realistic and measurable. These plans may need to be centrally reviewed. He appreciated that this is a new way of working for some NPs.

LB commented that to involve local people in developing action plans using externally facilitated consultation could be expensive and unnecessary. She suggested that NP's involve volunteer residents and young people.

TC agreed it is not necessary to use external organisations to draw up action plans. Council will take information in action plans and challenge/question it if necessary e.g. "There is not enough for young people to do". NPs should be able to report back on the progress of the Action Plans at public meetings.

VR asked how would they tackle the lack of communication with South Gloucestershire (or other neighbouring local authorities) who NP's should work with.

TC said that currently NPs should concentrate on Bristol. But they might consider working across unitary authority boundaries later.

### **State of the City Conference**

MS informed the meeting that the State of the City Conference was taking place at the Council House. One of the themed workshops at the conference will be on "A City of Thriving Neighbourhoods" including NPs.

There was strong feedback from the group that information about this event had not been circulated to all those present or to NP's. MS said he would feed this back to the organisers.

MS circulated the Bristol Partnership Goals. SP said he felt that these were very unambitious goals, repetitive and not about devolving power. The group felt that NPs should be able to feed into all the goals and be represented on all these boards.

A discussion followed about who should represent NPs on these boards. Alternative goals proposed by the meeting were:

- Inter-agency work that supports family, controls anti-social behaviour and crime.
- Education and Lifelong Learning.
- Good Public Transport.

MS would contact people again for further suggestions.

### **Items for the next NPRF Meeting**

Quality of Life Report.  
Representatives from Education.  
Police.  
NHS Bristol

Next meeting: **Tuesday 27 January 2009**, 6-8.30pm at the Council House