

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10A

BCR Neighbourhood Partnership Meeting 18th June 2012

Communication & Engagement Sub-Group Report no.1

by Nick Clark, Chair of Redland Forum and Chair of C&E Group.

Meetings are held every six weeks and are attended by: Alison Bromilow, Alice Darley, Nick Clark, Lynn Parfitt, Farhan Ahmed, Andrew McGrath, Cllr Bev Knott & Cllr Anthony Negus.

Aims of the C&E Group

The aim of the C & E group is to consider how best to communicate the NP and its goals to residents and local groups and to engage as many of these people as possible. As it is not possible to have all 30,000 residents of BCR attend Forum meetings we need to identify how issues and the views of those not attending can be collected. It is also important to inform residents of other 'engagement opportunities' - to encourage on-line reporting of issues, to publicise the BCC phone number, the police non-emergency number and www.askbristol.gov.uk. We can offer the opportunity (i.e communicate) but not expect engagement.

Electronic Communication

This is of paramount importance. We are looking to improve not just the quantity but also the quality of on-line communication. We are working towards communicating in a way that is visually attractive, written in plain English and easy to digest (i.e concise).

We are working towards a regular bulletin to be sent to everyone on the BCR NP e-mail list.

We are setting up our own BCRNP website and already have a facebook page. All BCRNP information including agendas, dates and minutes of meetings is on the BCC website. Details of forums also appear on the Police website.

Notification of meetings is e-mailed to all contacts on the BCRNP contacts list and also circulated to Neighbourhood Watch groups via Ringmaster.

An on-going challenge is that of adding to our e-mail contact list. The list is added to at forums, visits to local groups and via contacts initiated by the public. It is ever-growing.

The Printed Press/Posters/Leaflets

We publish reports of the forums and Neighbourhood Partnership in local community magazines - Bishopston Matters and the Redland & Westbury Park directory. We have designed a leaflet to be printed before each 'round' of meetings. It is delivered to waiting rooms and public buildings (libraries, waiting rooms and cafe's etc). Posters are printed and put up in strategically important places (this is done by our Community Development Officers and the police). Information is sent by post and by e-mail to schools and to other community organisations.

Format Forum Discussion

We have considered ways in which we can make meetings more 'dynamic' and also how to get different demographic groups to attend, such as the elderly and the young. The last two of Redland and Bishopston Forums have been based on the principle of having an interest-grabbing 'headline act'. In Redland we have had a 'carousel' activity in which the public have the opportunity to explore issues relating to Parks, the Police and Councillors etc. We are keen to move the focus of the forum away from reporting of issues and onto the generation of ideas and discussions on how best to improve our area. We also hope to introduce a peer-observation system which would allow us to learn from other forums.

May Fair and other events

Unfortunately the weather put paid to the May Fair this year and thereby denied us an excellent marketing opportunity. Clive Stevens and Farhan Ahmed manned a BCR NP stand at the Cotham Hill Street Party on 20th May and got some good enquiries.

We held a special drop in session on 28th May for those residents keen to find out more about the proposed changes to Lower Redland Road due to the conversion of the Police Station to a school. Clive Stevens, Andrew McGrath, Neil Harrison and Anthony Negus held quality conversations with approx. 16 residents. This has been followed up by an email to all on the list with the Planning number and deadlines.

Engagement with groups

Lynn Parfitt and Farhan Ahmed are our two Neighbourhood Development Officers, part of whose jobs it is to engage with local groups and to feedback to forum meetings with concerns and needs. They visit churches, mother and toddler groups, schools etc. They actively engage groups within the community, collect e-mail addresses, inform of the well-being funds and forum meetings, put up posters etc.

Task groups and affiliated groups we need to work out how these groups communicate.

Targets and measuring our performance

We consider the elderly, the young and Black and Minority Ethnic to be a demographic groups that are currently not engaged.

We need to consider ways in which we can measure both the quantity and quality of our engagement and communication. This is not straightforward as an on-line report or a call to the council or the police non-emergency number might be down to our work yet we could never know. Measuring our performance is done in various ways: Attendance at meetings, Feedback forms, Grant applications, Number of contacts on e-mail lists, Web-site 'hits', Feedback and reports from Community Development Officers, other 'anecdotal' feedback.

BCR NP parks report.

Short-term priorities for the four parks in our area were agreed at the last Neighbourhood Partnership meeting. There are still some outstanding issues which mean that it is not possible to bring forward the longer term priorities for NP approval but there is an urgent need to identify projects which the s106 developer contribution for 288 Gloucester Road, Bishopston £8,683.19 which is to be spent by 31 Jan 13 on the provision of improvements to Parks and Open Spaces within one mile of 288 Gloucester Road.

I therefore propose the following process be approved by the Neighbourhood Partnership at this meeting.

That the projects identified by the councillors as candidates for the £3.5 million capital expenditure on parks in April / May 2012, after discussion with the relevant planning groups, should be taken as the priorities for the parks eligible for the s106 funding from the 288 Gloucester Road development. That any of the projects that are not fully funded from the £3.5 million capital expenditure are brought back to the next Neighbourhood Partnership meeting and that a decision made by the NC at that meeting on which project should be allocated the available s106 money.

We still do not have an Area Environmental Officer in post for this Neighbourhood Partnership and the officer temporarily in post is on sick leave. The Area Environmental Team leader is therefore going to work with the groups to prioritise the individual park priorities, and meetings will be arranged for July - Sept with the intention of bringing the priorities forward for NP approval at the next NP meeting.

However, in view of the uncertainty about work in the Ardagh area, it is very difficult for the prioritisation work for BCR NP to be finalised. Until some clarity is achieved about this, we will find it impossible to move forward with the exercise of prioritising the projects for all the parks.

In order that we do not lose the s106 money, I therefore request that the proposed process for identifying appropriate projects be approved.