

Agenda Item 5 (vi)

BCR NP GOVERNANCE GROUP - REPORT TO NP - March 2016

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) The Neighbourhood Partnership is asked to approve an addition to the BCR NP Working Groups Terms of Reference to allow remote decisions.

1) The Neighbourhood Partnership is asked to approve the way S.106 and CIL money will be allocated within the NP budget, as proposed later in this report.

Since the last report, the working group met once on 2 February 2016. The next meeting will be on 21 April.

Membership: Martin Fodor (Councillor), Roger Gimson, Alison Bromilow, Eileen Lepine (Chair), Andrew McGrath (officer).

Working Groups Terms of Reference

A question was raised at the last NP meeting concerning the Working Group Terms of Reference, and whether meetings had to be held in person. It was generally agreed by the group that it would be acceptable for 'virtual' meetings to be held, for example by exchanges of emails.

We ask the NP to discuss and approve the following addition to the Working Group Terms of Reference:

6.5 If a working group cannot meet face-to-face, it may reach a decision by exchange of messages, provided: all participants and others who may be interested are notified of the decision to be made; all participants acknowledge receipt of the notification; the chair can show there is a consensus amongst those participants expressing a view on the issue, and notifies participants and others of the outcome.

NP Plan Review

The group had a discussion about how to review the NP Plan to make it better suit the purposes of the NP. This review is under way at the time of writing, including an informal meeting of the whole NP to revise the NP priorities and Plan items.

Mayoral candidates views on Neighbourhood Partnerships

At its October 2015 meeting, the NP agreed to write to all mayoral candidates to find out their views on Neighbourhood Partnerships. Most candidates have now replied and their views have been shared on the BCRNP.org.uk website and with other NPs.

S.106 and CIL money

At the last NP meeting, the question arose of how allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be managed in relation to other spending. Following a discussion at our working group meeting, **we ask the Neighbourhood Partnership to approve the allocation process described below.**

Roger Gimson (pp Eileen Lepine) - 21 March 2016
(Eileen has indicated she now wishes to step down as Chair of the group)

BCR NP - Allocating S.106 and CIL spending

Sources of BCR NP income

BCR NP is allocated a budget by Bristol City Council. Some of the budget is an annual amount fixed by the Council. Other elements, in particular that arising from planning regulations Section 106 (S.106) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), vary according to the amount of development in the area.

Restrictions on S.106 and CIL spending

S.106 is money that developers of larger sites pay to the council to reduce the impact of the development. It is usually allocated to a specific use, so spending it depends on finding a compatible cause. It also comes with a deadline by which it must be spent.

CIL is a levy charged on all development over a certain size, or of new dwellings of any size. 15% of the levy is given to the local NP at the time that the development took place, and does not have time restrictions. It must be spent on:

- the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
- anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

Both S.106 and CIL funding are overseen by the BCC Planning Obligations Manager within the City Planning Team, who is able to arbitrate on whether a project matches the funding criteria.

Allocating NP spending

In BCR NP, we typically have two ways in which we allocate spending.

Firstly, we allocate money to our Working Groups to be spent, on behalf of the NP, on projects within their different areas of concern. This money is spent either in directly commissioning work, or via BCC services.

Secondly, we have a Small Grants group who is allocated a certain amount to be offered to community groups in response to successful bids for grants. This money is spent by the community groups to carry out their proposed projects.

Both forms of spending depend on getting approval, at the project level, from the Neighbourhood Committee.

Allocating S.106 and CIL spending

Rather than setting up different mechanisms for allocating S.106 and CIL spending, we propose that they are spent through the same Working Group and Small Grant processes. Any project, whether proposed by a working group or through small grant funding, may make use of S.106 or CIL money, assuming the project (or part of the project) fits the funding criteria. It is up to the NP Coordinator to verify with the Planning Obligations Manager whether the criteria are satisfied.

If S.106 money fits the remit of just one particular working group (e.g. Parks), it may be used to fund any qualifying spending by that group, as if it had been allocated from the general NP budget.

This means that there will be no special requests for S.106 or CIL money. In particular outside bodies, such as community groups applying for grants, do not need to know the source of funding. It is up to the NP as a whole, through their WG and Small Grant processes, together with the NP Coordinator, to ensure that as far as possible S.106 and CIL money is allocated to projects whenever their purpose matches the relevant criteria. In other words, whenever possible, projects will be funded from S.106 or CIL funds rather than from the general NP budget.

Since, at least at present, the total amount of S.106 and CIL money contributes less than a third of the overall BCR NP budget, it is assumed there will be no difficulty spending it without needing to find special projects on which to do so.

Summary

- S.106 and CIL money will be counted as part of the overall budget available for NP spending, and may be used towards the overall spending limits allocated annually to working groups and the Small Grants process.
- If S.106 money is for a specific purpose that falls within the remit of a working group, it will be counted as part of the spending limit for that group.
- Whenever funding is requested, either for direct NP spending on a project (usually via a working group) or for a community project via a grant, if the goals of the project match the criteria for either S.106 or CIL funding, then they will be used in preference to other sources.
- All projects funded by the NP, including those funded from S.106 and CIL, should have goals that are compatible with the priorities set by the NP.
- Only if there is no prospect that some S.106 or CIL money could be spent through the normal funding requests described above will it be given special consideration.