

## **Greater Bedminster Community Partnership Collated notes and feedback from the facilitation discussion on 9/11/15**

### **1. What are the strengths of our existing structure?**

- An independent community group
- Simple to manage, not too bureaucratic
- Allows people to get on with it – we signpost people on appropriately
- Manages budgets/bids for community projects; coordinate community chest
- Open and inclusive
- Wide range of stakeholders
- Equality
- Mutual respect
- Cheap to run
- Volunteer led
- Committed members willing to take on responsibilities and make things happen.
- Share views – don't have to be an expert
- Flexible
- Can involve groups and individuals
- We understand the current structure
- Doesn't compete with existing groups
- Forum for sharing good practice and knowledge with members of the partnership
- Under the umbrella of BCC
- Relationship with councillors
- Affiliated to the Council, with Councillors playing an active part = democracy
- Believable/secure –linked to BCC.

### **2. What are the weaknesses of our existing structure?**

- Vulnerability if BCC closed down Neighbourhood Partnerships.
- Impact of ward boundary changes
- Used by council to give/gain views of local interests
- Self-selecting – not representative of community
- Different groups, looking out for their group
- Do we have sufficient financial control/rigour? Does this put off some funders? (Funds low at the moment so low risk)
- Can't apply for funds outside of BCC
- Funding from council being cut
- Unlimited liability of the board – they have no protection
- External ambiguity about what we are/confusion about status
- Reliance on volunteer time, only as strong as the determination of the most willing volunteers

### **3. Why are we considering changing our structure now?**

- Better opportunities for attracting different funders, additional funding streams

- Change would enable us to have more control of more money
- BCC funding cuts
- Enter into contracts
- Legal liability for contracts
- Reduce risk of personal liability
- Is a risk that change might be thrust on us
- Impact of change of ward boundaries – lead to a smaller group?
- Keen to drive local decision making
- Could still exist without Neighbourhood Partnership structure
- If NP's come to an end – GBCP would be able to continue
- Because we have been asked to be former Secretary Ben Barker, who feels he has a strong case for change
- Not sure, but I think because some members feel the current structure is a restriction on the partnership being able to generate/secure future funding.
- Setting up a more formal incorporated group would involve more paperwork and legal requirements
- Becoming incorporated would create more focus on running the organisation rather than gathering local groups to improve the local area.
- It depends what GBCP wants to do in the future – what if BCC were to devolve more powers and services to local groups?

#### **4. What are the questions/concerns/opportunities this discussion has raised?**

- Would change impact our relationship and status with the council?
- How will a change effect our status with the community?
- Would the local community regard us as representative, or just a bunch of private individuals who have set up a company to make decisions about Greater Bedminster?
- How would change impact other neighbourhood partnerships?
- Need clarity around funding
- Will it change our ability to raise money?
- What does GBCP want to be/do in the future – what else do we want to do, what can't we do now?
- We need to re-assess our neighbourhood plan and priorities, and the projects/funding we need to manage here and now before we look to the future
- What are our priorities?
- What is it that we want to do differently?
- Fundamental question of purpose of GBCP (fundraiser or facilitator)?
- Do we have enough people with time and commitment to deliver a change?
- How to cope with extra responsibilities/ paperwork
- Do we have the right structure/people involved?
- How do we involve/encourage a wider spectrum of the community to be involved in the decision making process?
- I am newly concerned about liability issues: for the steering group and for the public engaged in any of our projects
- Why take on more responsibility as a volunteer?
- Implications of making things more formal – moving away from a “voluntary” group
- Conflict of interest for directors if become incorporated?
- Why are we changing?

## 5. What are the things that we need to think through further/find out more about?

- What it is we are actually trying to achieve? Out of that may come what we should look like organisationally.
- Need a lot more info about roles and responsibilities within different structures as well as legal status and procedural obligations that will have an effect on budget requirements and time.
- More information on legal matters
- Funding -where will it come from, what is it for?
- Relationships
- Risks of current status
- How do we ensure that we still have the flexibility to provide what the local community need/want.
- Continuity needs to be maintained.
- Need to explore the different options in more detail. What other NP models exist in the city?
- Extra work for what is essentially a volunteer group: will others come on board to share the load?
- Could we 'bolt on' a commercial arm to deal with these?
- Can we deal with the liability issue as we are now? (via our insurance for instance)
- Council thoughts on this?