

## BCR NP Streetscene Group report – January 2017

*The Neighbourhood Partnership is asked to note the following report*

As we have previously highlighted, the group has had a successful 2016. However, we have major worries about the present state of our Street environment as well as the group's future.

### Litter across the partnership area

As highlighted in the previous report, litter is still an escalating issue across the partnership area. This includes litter on routes to and from fast food businesses as well as litter that has been created by overflowing bins and side waste being left around them. We are still experiencing issues with recycling being dropped by collection crews and then left behind on collection days. Worryingly, a number of residents are reporting that streets are not being swept, despite issues being reported, which is a concerning trend.

We have recruited four new volunteers and have supplied them with litter picking equipment, bags and gloves. We are delighted to report, that the volunteers have already made fantastic contributions.

Collectively, our volunteers have removed 73 bags of litter from the streets since the start of October 2016.

We would also like to thank the volunteers across that partnership area that have removed 20 bags of leaves from roads and pavements. Volunteers have also unblocked gullies which has helped keep drains clear and reduce the risk of flooding. However, many of our roads are still full of leaves which are rotting on top of the weeds that were not removed this summer.

### Fly tipping

Fly tipping volumes have also been increasing. We are seeing more building and construction waste, electrical goods, moving in/out waste and trade waste dumped more frequently across the partnership area.

To give this some context, the highest number of fly tips reported by a single group member in a week is 41. In addition to this, 5 individual/business fly tippers were identified in a single week from waste deposited on The Prom alone. Information and evidence was provided to the enforcement team but as yet we are unaware if any action has been or indeed, will be taken. There is no published information about enforcement activity currently we only receive sporadic/informal updates.

With this in mind, we are concerned that we are not receiving an equitable share of the available support/resource from the enforcement team. Leaving the issue unaddressed effectively grants permission. Inevitably, fly tipping will continue to escalate.

## Tagging

The storage facility, has provided volunteers with easier access to paint and supplies. This has helped increase the number of tags removed as well as help shorten the window that the tag is left visible.

Unfortunately, tagging has further increased across the partnership area. This is both in terms of volume as well as scale of tags that we are seeing. Our major project areas have now moved into maintenance phase which means additional work for volunteers in addition to the core work of reporting and removing tags.

In the October report, we requested (and were awarded) £6,890 of additional funds to support the group. We have drawn down £2,890 of these funds which has been used to fund paint, equipment and materials for the group.

£4,000 was left in the NP account in preparation to pay for future work by Nordic products and services, which has been held back as part of Bristol City Council's spending freeze.

We have already identified a number of future projects which presents us with some difficult choices. Once our remaining funds, stocks of paint and materials become depleted we will not be able to deliver any of them or remove any tags.

## Wider engagement and education

- We were invited to the launch of the Mayor's Bristol Clean Streets campaign. However, the group's profile and achievements were not included in any of the launch PR. A great opportunity to use this PR to help raise the group's profile and as a tool to help recruit new volunteers has been missed.
- In a private meeting with Cllr Asher Craig, we were asked to help replicate street champions across the city. Given our current and forthcoming challenges, we do not have the resources or the inclination to support this.
- Cllr Martin Fodor connected the group with some journalism students from UWE. The students were producing a radio programme about fly tipping for one of their assignments. Rob Umphray held a walkaround with the students in early December. The students were flabbergasted by the number and volume of fly tips within 200M of pavement. Two fly tippers were identified on the walkaround. We have asked for a copy of the interview to help support our training and education programme.
- Our core twitter ID, Keep Bristol Tidy has had over 89,000 impressions and over 11,200 profile visits in the last 3 months.
- We have been tracking the #BristolCleanStreets hashtag on twitter. We are surprised that there have been so few tweets that show the results of volunteer activities.

## Fly posting

Part of the partnership area (Cheltenham Road and part of Gloucester Road) was included in the recent fly posting initiative. We have seen fewer posters since this action occurred.

To date, there has been no published information about any fines or sanctions that have been applied as a result of this activity.

## The Future

With the huge question mark over the future of Neighbourhood Partnerships and our future funding, we have been evaluating other funding options:

### CIL Funding

We requested matched funding to clean up parts of Gloucester Road. We were informed by the Neighbourhood Partnership that CIL funding could not be used for cleaning. This response did not seem to tally with the information provided in the CIL guide, which stated that CIL could be used for *“The provision, improvement, replacement and operation or maintenance of infrastructure”*

Bristol City Council’s Planning Obligations Manager contacted Bristol City Council’s legal team for clarification of this specific point.

Bristol City Council’s legal team responded with the following:

*“CIL is intended to focus on the provision of new infrastructure and should not be used to remedy pre-existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision unless those deficiencies will be made more severe by development. CIL can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing infrastructure if that is necessary to support development.*

*I understand the argument that the NP are putting forward, but I think that goes more to supporting the vitality and viability of the Gloucester Road by making it a more attractive place to shop than supporting new development for the area. So, I am of the view that the proposal would not meet the requirements of the CIL regs”*

We have since learned that two other Neighbourhood Partnerships are using CIL money for cleansing.

- Ashley Easton and Lawrence Hill – Have approved £27,000 from CIL to fund cleaning of St Pauls.
- Central, Clifton and Harbourside – Have approved £20,000 from CIL to fund cleaning of the Bearpit and City Centre.

At best, this is double standards.

## External Grants

We have been evaluating grants that may be available to volunteer groups. The vast majority of providers that we have looked at so far will not provide grants to organisations that are involved in the provision of statutory services. Many of the grants that we could apply for do not provide the levels of funding that we require. Many organisations require recipients to be registered charities

## Direct funding from Bristol City Council

We are aware that other areas in the city have had specific cleansing and graffiti removal projects funded directly (outside of the NP). Including, the cleaning of the pavements and specialist removal of graffiti on Stapleton Road and the funding for Cleaner Montpelier.

The Streetscene Group provides c375 days volunteering per annum about 80% of this time (300 days) is devoted to removing tagging. If Bristol City Council paid an external contractor to undertake this work it would cost £180,000 to deliver it. We are unaware of the costs to Bristol Waste; however, this number of hours would equate to greater than 1 additional full time employee per annum. Given the comparatively minimal investment required by the Streetscene group to deliver the same outcome and the precedent for direct funding of other projects, surely funding us directly is the most cost effective solution for the city? Let's not forget that Gloucester Road has been identified as an exemplar in how to manage graffiti. Without funding, us and this exemplar project will disappear. What other group delivers such a positive return on investment?

## Funding from other sources

We are exploring the possibility of securing funding from a trader group. These discussions are at the early stages, no scope has been discussed and we are not aware what restrictions will be placed upon us. If partner members can help us secure future funding from other organisations/commercial companies, we would welcome the help.

## Finally

We would like to thank all volunteers, council officers, councillors and NP members that have supported the Streetscene Group over the years. Collectively, we have achieved a great deal, addressed many issues, achieved behavioural change and encouraged active participation across the partnership (and wider areas). This hard work has addressed issues in our neighbourhood but has also helped improve the quality of life for many residents.

In lots of ways, it feels that we have been too successful and have created a perception that our partnership area is not affected by tagging, fly tipping, fly posting and litter etc. The simple fact is that we cannot continue to operate without funding and support. All we will be able to do is report; the costs and burden of all tag removal will fall to Bristol City Council/Bristol Waste.

Thank you again

Rob Umphray and Liz Kew  
BCR NP Streetscene Group