

## **Initial response to BCC proposal for the future of Neighbourhood Partnerships**

Overall the proposals need detailed discussion rather than responses to each of the individual options. None of the options are satisfactory in themselves. I would however highlight the following points that should be taken into consideration when further work is being done on the future processes. I look forward to the discussion sessions being organised for the near future.

### **Volunteering policy**

The successful neighbourhood partnerships in the city were built on a foundation of a strong volunteering base. Bristol City Council needs to review and develop its current Volunteering Policy.

This policy needs to be in line with other organisations such as the National Trust that utilise volunteers at all levels of the organisation. This will allow volunteering to be taken to a level that will allow some of the activities that you are proposing cutting to be undertaken by volunteers.

You cannot expect to retain your volunteers on an on-going basis without a process in place that manages, recognises and rewards them. With the expectation that volunteers will be introduced and developed throughout the organisation to fill the gaps this needs to be started now. You need to treat your volunteers better than you would expect to treat your staff.

### **Cost of decision-making**

Community Infrastructure Levy allows for up to 5% of the sums collected to be used for the managing of these funds. 3% and 1% are the amounts used in previous years. I would propose that on-going central management is maintained at 1% and an additional 1% is utilised to manage the devolved CIL funding. This along with a suitable volunteer base would alleviate the need to base your decisions on '*what is possible with future resources and funding*'.

### **Decision making and disbursement of CIL**

The one proposal that is given to have an annual funding jamboree is not acceptable. Can you actually envisage it? Messy.

The reason that you have given for squeezing it into one day is lack of funding and resource to do the work. Consider how else this might be done on a quarterly basis as we have today, through utilising volunteer resource and / or CIL based funding. Tell what the legal requirements are for the disbursement of money and then let us work with that.

It's also not acceptable to move the decision-making away from the local councillors as they have the local knowledge required. Neighbourhood funding needs to move to being agreed by neighbourhood councillors and community partnership members in public, not to a more centralised model.

Consideration should be given to engaging with local expertise such as Quartet to manage and distribute the money while keeping the local decision making process and engagement in place.

Investigations should be done how the 'large amount of paperwork required' to administer the current process can be streamlined. Processes can be amended if the base requirements are known. We are currently working up some proposals in this area.

### **Community Spaces / Forum**

I would suggest that the requirement from each area is evaluated and then the funding disbursed to support that. Starting point should be per councillor, as this should reflect the level of interest. Some NP areas will have single forum, others multiple, others multiple with sub groups. Others may prefer to run other types of events rather than the standard 'evening meeting'. The areas can then decide how they would spend the money allocated on community engagement.

You would need to be specific about what the money could or couldn't be spent on.

There is also no mention of the requirement for officer time at these meetings from areas such as transport, health, and parks. This needs to be factored in to any funding models that are developed.

### **Neighbourhood funding**

Giving funding to a 'local organisation' has its drawbacks, as pet projects of those organisations may then be the sole or majority recipients of the money. If this was done then the same public decision making processes that have worked well for us should continue as part of it. A mechanism for moderating these organisations would have to put in place. Again, an organisation such as Quartet could help set up, manage and distribute.

Neighbourhood funding is most often used for projects or ideas that are not eligible to be funded through CIL. Running courses, employing fundraisers, feasibility studies, leaflet production, holding meetings, providing buses, coaching and local public campaigns would be examples that would not be eligible. Therefore, even though NPs have access to CIL funds this does not mean that they will be able to continue to support their communities in the same manner.

Non-CIL funding needs to be provided to all NPs to disburse to their communities. This should be done on an equal basis across the city. This could be achieved by CIL rich NPs passing some of their CIL monies to another development pot that would allow non-CIL monies to be freed up. The level of funding that is available needs to be such that it is able to fund reasonable, non-CIL relevant, sized projects.

It has been mentioned elsewhere that communities would be able to undertake their own fund raising and then disburse the funds raised. It is not the norm for grant making trusts and other bodies to award funds to organisation to 'sub-award' for particular projects. This is a non-starter.

Regards

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