

Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Community Partnership

BCR CP Forum and Inaugural Annual General Meeting – Thursday 22 February 2018 – notes.

The meeting opened by welcoming over 65 local residents and traders, community group representatives, and local and adjoining ward councillors.

Cllr Eleanor Combley who had chaired the interim steering group explained that the group role had been to take the organisation from the former Neighbourhood Partnership, set up and supported by Bristol City Council, to the new Community Partnership organisation, the new resident-led networking organisation.

The meeting welcomed Andy Stamp, beat manager Redland, who confirmed that the local teams from Avon and Somerset police would be keen to keep working with the partnership to engage with the local community. He reported that there was currently no beat officer but PCSO Danielle Packer was on the Cotham Team; that there was a new beat officer, Sam Hewett in Bishopston and that he was the Redland beat officer, with Ellie Jeremiah as PCSO, but would be retiring in a couple of months. He confirmed that the Southmead Police Station was now closed, and the team was located in Bridewell, and also worked out of the small office just off Whiteladies Road. He provided written crime reports for the year and his contact details for people to raise individual issues.

The BCR Street scene group thanked Andy for his help over the years.

INAUGURAL AGM.

Under the new constitution, the community partners who had signed up to the Aims of the CP were asked to accept the constitution by a show of hands. 16 people who had already signed up as group or individual partners were present and an additional 7 people signed up on the night; this meant 23 people were eligible to vote. Partnership is open to any local person who agrees with the Aims of the CP and sign up forms are on the website bcrcp.org.uk/join The partners were asked to confirm the constitution with a minor change which set a quorum as 50% of the committee rather than 6 (50% of the maximum number on the committee of 12).

The vote for constitution adoption with the proposed change to the quorum to 50% was carried unanimously (23).

The meeting then went on to **select the committee**, from nominations from group partners and individuals. There are currently 17 Group partners, and 6 groups have put forward nominations for places on committee

- Alison Bolton, Friends of Bishopston Library
- Peter Browne, Gloucester Road Enterprise and Trade
- Alison Bromilow, Redland & Cotham Amenities Society
- Kevin Chidgey, Westbury Park Community Association
- Roger Gimson, Sustainable Redland
- Kevin Molloy, Bishopston Society

One individual partner, Sarah Nutchey has also been nominated. Sarah has volunteered to be the BCR CP treasurer.

As there are 8 group-member and 4 individual seats on the committee, all 7 were confirmed as the new committee.

All ward councillors are part of committee, but will not have votes, as they will be allocating the funding from Community Infrastructure Levy.

That concluded the AGM.

The meeting welcomed Cllr Nicola Beech, cabinet member for planning who had stepped up when the Mayor not able to attend.

Cllr Beech explained that she had joined cabinet in July and is an East Bristol (St George Central) councillor. Her main involvement had therefore been in East and in South Bristol where BCC development proposals were being worked on.

She has a planning background, and as well as South Bristol development she was also involved in the Local Plan review work. The Local Plan 2011 is a forward forecast for 20 years, with a 5-year refresher; it is also being updated to conform with the Joint Spatial plan, particularly to accommodate population expansion. She and Cllr Mhairi Threlfall, cabinet member for transport, from Bristol are working with neighbour councils South Glos and Bath and North East Somerset in the WECA, West of England Combined Authority, to shape infrastructure and housing provision as well as business growth

There is a housing need for 33,500 dwellings in Bristol, and affordable home need exceeds planning policy. She and Cllr Paul Smith are working on getting the development world to work with BCC to provide this. There is some funding from Homes England for affordable housing and it is important that this includes social rented housing, not just shared ownership.

She is also involved in discussions with the University of Bristol to understand their justification on student growth, which was announced without consulting Bristol City Council. Councillors Craig Cheney, is looking at the issue of lack of contribution of student residents through council tax exemption and Cllr Paul Smith is tackling the impact on housing provision as the university does not provide accommodation after the first year of study.

Bristol has more Houses in Multiple Occupation HMO in the city than anywhere else in the country; Cllr Anthony Negus brought in Article 4 which controls the development of HMOs in certain areas when he was in office, but this does not cover the whole of city, so parts of the city are protected but others are not.

The increase in student numbers has led to a large number of purpose-built student accommodation developments in the city; BCC is seeking to introduce a new planning policy will means developers will have to build 50/50 mixed development, split with accommodation for key workers or retail type uses at ground floor level.

BCC consider that the University will have to take more responsibility and build on their own land eg Arena island, and hope this will stop developers being able to outbuild other types of use. In order to make a robust case, additional funding was allocated in the recent budget.

Questions from the floor:

It was noted that the demise of Neighbourhood Partnerships had led to the loss of community ability to influence council decisions on transport schemes and traffic issues in their areas.

Q1 to Mayor: Please give an explanation of how communities were able to have a say in traffic and transport decisions.

This area has local active volunteer groups, there has been a change in how easy it is to interact with the council with the demise of NPs; the council is making volunteers feel like an irritant rather than

valued. We have to get permission to spend money we have raised for local amenities such as parks but there is no route to do so now NPs are gone.

Q2 to Mayor: When will council reach steady state and when will we be able to work with council officers to achieve things locally?

Q3 to Mayor: How can communities now get answers and hold people from the council to account without the NPs?

How is CIL allocated? There is still no clarity on how to campaign for CIL projects, and how decisions will be made.

Q4 to Mayor: What is the process proposed for CIL allocation decisions and community involvement in those decisions?

Repair of potholes in the Gloucester Road area has been of poor quality.

Q5 to Cllr Mhairi Threlfall: What is the process for ensuring better quality road repairs including failure of service providers' repairs after excavation works?

CIL is not an effective tax.

Cllr Beech pointed out that this is a national not local decision, and makes developers pay for infrastructure necessary to support their developments. Bristol CC has no power to change this.

A list of Major strategic projects is set out in the medium term financial plan, the council is looking forward, and working with WECA and regional mayor Tim Bowles to get money from government, to support local improvement projects.

The Bishopston and St Andrew's traffic and parking group are working with councillors to raise local highways safety issues. In December they met with Cllr Mhairi Threlfall and made suggestions on amendments.

Q6 They wanted to ask the Mayor

- **how to take this work forward?**
- **what are the next steps?**
- **how do we keep on top of safety issues?**

They are planning a conference in summer which MP Thangam Debbonaire will attend.

Cllr Beech told the meeting that this project was well up the list. Cllrs Mike Davies and Martin Fodor are pushing this project, and MP Thangam Debbonaire is advocating.

Peter T, **Church of Good Shepherd** is possibly being declared redundant; there is an issue of loss of community use. Rev. Rod Symmons, area dean, confirmed that the decision had not yet been made on this.

David E, the **20-mph rule** is good. There is a wealth of evidence, and it is noticeably easier to cross Glos Rd now. Why is there a review when we know it's the right thing to do? Cllr Beech, it was a Manifesto promise; and enormous number of people in Bristol did not support 20 mph. Many people thought it was a waste of money, and ineffective with no policing (people in meeting said they had been caught and fined for exceeding the 20-mph limit, so enforcement was happening). The review outcome is not yet published.

Chris J, Kingsdown, why is there **council tax increase, and revenue support grant cuts**? Is it because central government doesn't like local govt? A. There is a stated aspiration to reduce council support grant to zero.

How does Bristol solve **local housing shortage**? Is 3-year housing a remedy? Cllr Beech: It is better to have permanent housing, council are working to get homeless people into accommodation. Self-build housing is being supported through Local Plan policy; the council don't want people living in vans.

The community thanked Cllr Beech for attending and for her contribution to the meeting and asked her to take back their concern about the lack of information about why the Mayor had failed to attend this community event or apologise. The community felt that the Mayor had shown that he is ignoring in the BCR community. There is a perception locally that he doesn't come here, he has interacted with traders, but failed to visit community groups.

Cllr Beech was asked to press the Mayor for an explanation for this perceived lack of respect for the BCR community.

LIBRARY CLOSURES REPORT: Cllr Anthony Negus Neighbourhoods Scrutiny chair.

The meeting was being held in the latest and probably last library built in Bristol.

In the budget consultation, the proposal was to scrap 17 and keep 10 libraries. This was option 1. The majority of consultation responses were 'none of the above' and included suggestions about how more libraries could be kept open.

The Scrutiny Commission, Task and Finish group, had examined options to take libraries out of council control, through mutual not-for-profit companies, quite a few councils have done this, and have even opened new libraries. This had been approved by cross party scrutiny, was presented to cabinet member, and as a motion to Full Council, which won despite the Labour majority.

Cabinet decided in November to put a stay of execution on funding being withdrawn. However, it has since emerged that consultants have been commissioned to carry out a study on the basis of keeping 10 core libraries. The brief for this study has not been made public and the scrutiny commission had to submit a Freedom of Information request to see the brief. A redacted version was provided, and the chair was allowed to read this under officer supervision!

The mutual process will use resources spread over a possibly larger number of libraries, using volunteers and other funding pots, eking out input from paid staff. Some buildings would be 'extended access' i.e. card entry, not manned. Libraries would need to attract a wider range of people to ensure their survival, but it should be noted that a library is more than a book store. The council needs to work in partnership with volunteers and communities through a 'social enterprise transfer' model.

A future provision is likely to be 10 fully staffed libraries with possibly plus 3 extended access, Stockwood, St George, Westbury. There will be minimal support for the rest, and they will not be network-linked to the rest of the libraries. Setting up as volunteer-run community hubs, as Muller Road, would not get support for municipal library support e.g. network of book supply, access to website lending process. Under a Community Asset Transfer model, the community would have to sustain buildings, buildings like Redland would be too expensive to run.

NORTH BRISTOL BATHS UPDATE: Cllr Martin Fodor

When the baths closed, there was an opportunity for development of building and car park and public toilets, new home for GP, flats and library to replace Cheltenham road library. The developer failed and there have been issues with the poor-quality workmanship. The council still owns the Bath buildings, flats above library now finished, Bath building part was planned to accommodate a GP practice, hydrotherapy pool and chemist etc. The Cheltenham road library site has sold and developed.

Cllr Fi Hance and Martin have met up with property dept and have finally had an update; nothing has been done to complete conversion. The future of many council assets is in question; possibly the Baths building will be sold as it is, or BCC may finish it or find alternative use. The property dept is suggesting putting it on the market.

Martin and Fi are still on the case.

GREAT BRISTOL SPRING CLEAN, 2 to 11 March: Kathy, Bristol Waste Co.

Bristol Waste will supply bags, litter pickers, vests, and paperwork. They are now fully subscribed for the two weekends, 32 across city. Locally there are Friends of Horfield Common and RCAS events organised.

BCR Street Scene Group do litter-picking all year round, so anyone who is interested in getting involved contact info@bcrcp.org.uk

WALK TO HEALTH UPDATE: Mick Broggio

Some new walking routes have been added, north to Southmead Hospital via Horfield Common, and fitness routes round Horfield common. Walk to Health have joined forces with Southmead Hospital, who have provided extra funding, and added 3 more walks round hospital. They are called Let's Walk North Bristol; there are printed and pdf versions, will be on the BCRCP and other community groups websites.

HMO UPDATE: The Council are currently consulting on extending licensing for 3 or more unrelated people sharing accommodation to ensure quality and safety. Locally a retrospective planning application to extend an HMO from 5 to 7 has recently been refused and is being strictly enforced.

GLOUCESTER ROAD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT: BID: has a 50k pa income, BID arrangements cover projects for traders and community projects, can spend the levy to support communities and projects who live, work or carry on in the district. The current BID lapses in May 2019, and the current BID may want to extend up the Gloucester Road.

BCR CP is encouraged to work with the BID as they could use money for local projects of mutual benefit.