

Bristol Parks Forum

Date: 15th October 2011

BPF Question and Answer

Questions from Bristol Parks Forum Committee (Roland and Rob)

Answers from Richard.

Q1. An NP runs a publicity / consultation event in a Park, regarding issues concerning that Park. The Park Group is not informed or consulted. What are the Engagement Team's opinions and reactions after this event has occurred?

A1. In the first instance it would be the Area Environment Officer's (AEO) job to make sure this didn't happen. It could be inefficient, raise the possibility of conflict and be confusing to local residents that know the park group. If it did happen, after the event the AEO would meet with the park group, discuss the actions of the NP and the outcomes of the consultation and aim to be practical - would the group have done things differently, does it have other consultation evidence that is contrary or complimentary? The next step would be for the AEO to make sure the park group is fully engaged from this point on.

Q2. A Park Group has accessed a small grant for minor refurbishment of facilities in a Park. These facilities are not considered necessary under minimum provision standards, however environmental improvements to the Neighbourhood have not yet been budgeted or scheduled. What is the Neighbourhood Engagement Team's guidance to the Park Group?

A2. Without an agreed investment plan for the Neighbourhood Partnership, the scheme would need to be considered on its merits. The AEO would seek a decision from the Neighbourhood Committee if:

- the proposal requires devolved S106 money; or
- the AEO would know it might prevent an alternative proposal set out in the AGSP Ideas and Options paper (or a proposal emerging from work on an investment plan); or
- it would have an impact on locally influenced revenue budgets.

If these didn't apply, the Council could give the go ahead and I would ask an AEO to contact the Committee and inform them of this and the facts as above. If a Committee decision was required and time was limited, an AEO would set out the facts in a report and ask the Committee for a decision by email. Otherwise it would be at a Neighbourhood Partnership meeting.

Q3. A Park Group asks their Neighbourhood Engagement Officer for assistance on advancing a project, on the basis that all the Park group members are fully committed for the amount of time they have available for voluntary work, having established this many years ago when they set up their group. No member of the group is available for further long evening meetings, and prior to the advent of the NP the Group would have managed such a project between themselves and the Council. What does the Engagement Officer provide?

A3. The short answer is the AEO will help in any way you need them to. We can work with colleagues and the Group to do consultation, raise funds, carry out feasibility and costing work and take the project through the appropriate internal (BCC) and external (NP)

decision-making processes. Depending on the level of work required for the project, and the resources available within Environment and Leisure, it may be appropriate to programme the work after another project. Alternatively, some of the functions that would be provided by BCC such as project management could be sourced externally and the cost built in to the project costs.

Q4. Our group wants an area that has become overgrown with bramble cleared to return it to grass as it was five years ago, who do we talk to to get the work done?

A4. Your AEO. Depending on the method of getting the work done would depend on the AEOs actions. If it is a contractor task then the AEO will work with the Area Park Manager to get it done. It could be a Community Payback task and the AEO can either instruct this directly or via the Clean and Green budget (the name of this budget may soon change). If the group wanted to, the AEO may be able to arrange a volunteer action day.

Q5. Our group wants to restore an old flower bed, we are willing to plant the flowers ourselves and have raised some money to pay for them, who do we need to get permission from to do the work?

A5. Ask the AEO if it is in conflict with anything proposed in the AGSP investment plan. If it isn't, the AEO will contact the Area Park Manager and check if there are any operational, maintenance or budget concerns. If there aren't, go ahead. Out of courtesy and likely through a weekly update, the AEO will inform the Neighbourhood Committee.

If there *are* budget concerns however then the APM would need to set out what options there are for maintaining the bed - which may include by volunteers. The Committee would be asked for a decision. Again if a quick decision is required then this would be achieved by email.

Q6. Our group wants to raise some money from the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Your Heritage' programme to preserve the grade 2 listed chimney on our site. We would expect Bristol Parks to manage the project which we think will cost around £60k. We would want around £10k of match funding, which we think should come from S106 money. This work has been agreed as a priority in our Neighbourhood Partnership's Investment Plan. What procedure do we have to go through to make this project happen?

A6. We will agree and publish a separate step by step guide for projects/investment decisions for each Neighbourhood Partnership.

The above example should be a straightforward route. As it is an agreed priority, the AEO will advise Neighbourhood Committee members that the project is being progressed. He/she will work with colleagues to carry out any early concept development work needed to properly inform a project brief to pass to a project manager and to inform the Neighbourhood Committee decision needed to realise S106 funds. This may include some consultation, feasibility and costing work. If fundraising is required then this will also be supported by the Development Officer in the Neighbourhood Engagement Team.

After funding is secured a Project Manager will be appointed to the project and will take it through to completion. This will involve drawing up and consulting on more detailed plans.

Please also refer to **A3**.

Q7. We know that a local resident has asked for a memorial bench to be installed in our park, our group thinks the location is inappropriate. Who do we talk to to make sure the bench is placed in a better position? Can we be sure that we will be consulted about any future requests?

A7. Talk to the AEO. We can then talk to the applicant with alternative suggestions. We should routinely consult with or inform park groups on changes or non-routine maintenance going on in the park. We expect AEOs to have working arrangements in place that ensure they are completely up-to-date with operational matters.

Q8. The Green Space Investment Plan for our area has not yet been agreed but we would like to get our swings restored in our play area, can we access some S106 money to get this done.

A8. Please refer to the principles in **A2**.

Q9. Our group thinks that the grass on part of our site should be left to grow long as a hay meadow next year. How do we make this happen.

A9. Contact your Area Park Manager.

Q10. We are organising an event next year and we think it would be good for our Community Park Keeper to be there so he can talk to people who use the park. Who do we approach about this?

A10. Contact your Area Park Manager. They are responsible for the management of operational staff. The park keeper may be an employee of Bristol City Council or a contractor - permission may therefore be needed from their employers. Flexibility for this type of request is within the contract. Obviously, depending on what is required, if the role can also be done by another officer they may be available as an alternative.

Q11. We would like to discuss some ideas for work to be done on our site with our Community Park Keeper, is it possible for her to come to one of our evening meetings?

A11. Please refer to the principles in **A10**.

Q12. We are worried that our Neighbourhood Partnership is going to make decisions about our park without consulting us. Can you assure us that we will have a say in any decisions about our park?

A12. It is not 100% certain that a Neighbourhood Partnership or Committee would fail to consult with a park group before agreeing something. However, local ward councillors would be very conscious of this. The AEO should take responsibility for producing a report for any decision that affects Environment and Leisure services so that members are properly informed. Should a park group not have been contacted this would be stated in the report. AEOs will consciously act to ensure the interests of park groups are sought and raised when decisions are being taken.

Q13. Why doesn't our park have its own webpage on the Council website like some other parks do?

A13. I don't know! If you want this to be the case your AEO will work with the Council's Communications and Marketing team to discuss practicalities and the criteria for web page content. Should there be no objections (and I can see no reason why there would be unless Environment & Leisure has a web page limit or capacity limit of some kind) the AEO will work with the group regarding content.

Q14. We are unhappy grass cutting on our park, who do we talk to?

A14. Your Area Park Manager. Your AEO will still deal with it if you contact them.

Q15. The noticeboard at the entrance to our park has been covered in graffiti, who do we contact to get it cleaned off and how quickly will it be done?

A15. Removal of graffiti is the responsibility of the new waste contractor, May Gurney. The correct reporting method is via the customer service centre **0117 9222100** or email **customer.services@bristol.gov.uk**. There is also a web form you can complete. The graffiti should be removed within 48 hours. Again, your AEO will still deal with it if you contact them.

Q16. Our group has been donated some money for a new litter & dog waste bin, who do we contact to get the work done?

A16. Contact your AEO in the first instance. The installation of individual bins is not a consideration at the Neighbourhood Partnership investment plan level. However the AEO would seek a decision from the Neighbourhood Committee if the installation would have an impact on locally influenced revenue budgets. If this didn't apply, the Council could give the go ahead and I would ask an AEO to contact the Committee and inform them of this and the facts as above. If a Committee decision was required, this would be requested by email.

Q17. We have done the Health & Safety Training for working in parks, we used to agree the work and get the form signed by our CPO, who do we contact now?

A17. Contact your Area Park Manager. It is important with risk assessments that they are signed off by a competent and experienced person who is able to understand the risks involved and the control measures that might be put in place. This is the least that would be expected if an accident were to occur and be investigated. It may be that some AEOs would be competent persons but not all are at this point in time.

Q18. Our slide needs repainting, if parks could supply the paint we are willing to do the work, who do we approach in parks and do they have a budget to pay for the paint?

A18. Contact your AEO in the first instance. He/she will advise on the future of the play area in terms of the Neighbourhood Partnership investment plan - the project can still go ahead if the group wishes it to. The AEO will contact the Area Park Manager and check if there is an operational budget to support this. If not, funds could be sought from the Clean and Green budget through the Neighbourhood Partnership.