

BBEST Development Meeting and Annual General Meeting (AGM), 7th November, 2015.

Report of the Development Meeting

Over 60 BBEST friends and supporters attended a lively meeting to discuss the progress of the BBEST Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

*Comments from the floor are in square brackets eg [comment]

Welcome and introduction by the Chair of BBEST

BBEST Chair, Pete Marsh welcomed those attending.

BBEST has been fortunate in the past year to receive additional funding both from the Broomhill Festival and from the local Councillors through the 'ward pot'. Such funding helps to progress BBEST's development activities.

As the BBEST Neighbourhood Plan is currently under development, BBEST cannot yet comment on local planning applications. However, experience with recent applications will inform the Plan.

When the Plan is in force, BBEST will be in line to receive a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which the Council receives on most new developments, to fund appropriate Community projects.

The five BBEST themes were addressed briefly.

The **Environment and green and open spaces** strand will seek to protect urban wildlife and specifically will try to ensure the maintenance of wildlife 'corridors' within new developments. Enhancement and maintenance of public spaces and trees form an important focus of this theme, together with work to ensure that water management and drainage are successfully maintained.

[Points noted during the meeting included the need to ensure that gardens of rented properties are adequately maintained, and that development of land around properties does not adversely affect drainage.]

The **Sustainable and balanced community theme** seeks to ensure that our past, present and future are represented within the population of the BBEST area. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of existing and future properties in the area, through the use of national standards on space and 'lifetime homes', will improve the environment for all residents.

[Points raised included the 'right to trade' for rented properties which are not adequately maintained, and landlords limiting access to rental properties to students by advertising year long tenancies some 6 months before the access date. In response to a comment on whether space standards would make new properties more expensive, it was noted that the standards recommended are adequate but not over generous, so this should not be an issue. Another point raised was the need to ensure that appropriate educational opportunities are available for local children beyond the current infant level provision. In response to a query about whether

students are occupying homes that might otherwise be available for families, it was noted that some years ago the University sold some properties with a covenant to make them available for family occupation. It was also noted that in some areas of the country multiply occupied property has been bought by the community for subsequent sale to families.]

The **Retail Centre** strand seeks to improve pedestrian space and the public realm and to reclaim space for 'pocket parks' and potential market stalls. Improved landscaping, and a shop front design guide constructed with local businesses, would improve the visual appeal of the centre, and restructuring of car parking may bring more visitors.

The **Active travel** theme seeks to enhance the experience of using the BBEST area for all travellers – see Boulevard Project below.

The **Development and Conservation** theme seeks to preserve and enhance the existing character of the BBEST area and to encourage high quality new development where appropriate. The production of a Design Guide, identifying important views and conserving community assets, forms part of this theme. The BBEST area is characterised by three conservation areas, which should help to ensure the high quality of future developments. Interest in the architectural heritage of the area will be encouraged through the development of walking and running guides, and various forms of information about listed buildings. See project report below.

[In reply to a query about violation of the conservation area requirements, residents were advised to bring these to the attention of the Planning and Development Department through an 'enforcement enquiry.' This is not retrospective although it does cover work less than four years old.]

Three BBEST projects were outlined

The Boulevard Project

The aim of the Boulevard project is to enhance the experience of all users, but particularly pedestrians and cyclists, on the route from the Brook Hill roundabout, through the Broomhill Centre and on to the Endcliffe Village and through to Endcliffe Park. Much of this route carries traffic from the A57, which is and will remain for the present part of the strategic road network. Nonetheless the experience of other areas has shown that the aims of the project should be achievable: improved experience in the shopping centre, improved air quality, a pleasant walking corridor, improved cycling provision, improved setting for quality buildings, a greater priority for pedestrians, and a decrease in the number and severity of road accidents.

BBEST is already talking to the Council and the University about this project, which fits in with the council's 'Gold Route' from the station and the University's Campus Masterplan route from this to the Arts Tower.

Improvements can be in several categories: changing the relationship with traffic, including shared space, more space for pedestrians and cyclists, and changes to car parking.

Clearly, finance is restricted at the moment, and current plans include the development of an annotated map of possible measures, to provide opportunities should development become possible.

[Discussion centred on the following points: if shared space could not be available all the time, could it be at certain times of the day or at weekends, the impact of shared space on visually impaired people, and the possibility of using the small site on Fulwood Road for car parking. In response to a query about one way traffic on Western Bank, it was noted that this area is outside the BBEST boundary.

Oriel House – Community Hub Project

The BBEST area does not have a space dedicated to community activities. The development of the Broomhill Community Library over the last year has focussed attention on this and shown that there is a demand amongst local people for such a facility. The focus has centred on the development of Oriel House – the Broomhill Library building and its garden, which was designed in the 1930's by the noted landscape gardener Percy Cane.

A group of Architecture students have completed a project to prepare a brief for the redesign of the building, incorporating the garden, lower floor and attic space to create spaces suitable for community activities. The report of their work was received with enthusiasm by those present. They designed a cafe at the rear of the building both to provide income and to incorporate the external space for play and relaxation. They had looked into provision of a lift, and built a 'doll's house' to show the present and potential organisation of the building. This will remain in the Library.

[Comments from those present covered:

- The garden could provide an important addition to the limited outdoor public space in the BBEST area. The front garden is already looking more attractive.
- All age groups would use the space, but it would be particularly important to encourage secondary school students to use it.
- A proposal had been made to link directly from the Scout Hut, but the land between is currently used as a builder's yard with no access.
- Noted that the garden at Broomhill Infant School has been developed to provide outdoor space for the children, and has been highly successful.]

Running walking and viewing guides

The presentation outlined the large number of listed buildings within the BBEST area.

Note: This list, and associated text covering a good number of the buildings, will be added to the BBEST website following the meeting.

[Discussion centred on:

Suggestions from the community as to what other buildings might be proposed for listing buildings. Suggestions at the meeting included: Taptonville Crescent, Hallamgate Road, and The Red House.]