

BBEST Development Meeting Report 21 October 2017

Nineteen BBEST supporters attended a lively Development meeting. Eleven supporters send apologies.

Introduction by the Chair

Pete Marsh noted that currently BBEST was in discussion with the planning authorities about the full list of policies and the Design Guide.

Two issues are critical for the coming year, which would see the launch of the plan and the first public consultation.

Finance is crucial. No new grants have been available for the past two years, although it is possible that funding may be available this year. Following suggestions at the last meeting BBEST consulted BANG and the Broomhill Forum who did not feel able to offer support to BBEST from their own funds. After running costs and payment for professional consultation to finalise the Plan - all carried out at cost - BBEST has very little in the bank. In discussion it was agreed that the Chair should email all members asking for financial support over the next two years.

The next 12 months are critical for the Plan, and additional volunteer support is essential. A paper noting volunteering opportunities is now on the web pages and an email will be sent shortly to alert BBEST supporters to this. BBEST has tried to indicate the level and extent of commitment needed.

Discussion at the meeting centred on **Character areas** and **Community Actions**.

Character areas

Emily Pieters explained the role of the 'character areas' in the Design Guide which will form a supplement to the Plan. A description of the key characteristics of each area will be supplemented by a pro-forma, using the same ten headings for each area, outlining planning criteria for the area. The meeting was asked to comment on the accompanying documents so far.

The eight character areas are:

- Crookes Valley
- Hospital Quarter
- Residential South East
- Residential North East
- Retail Centre
- Residential South West
- Endcliffe

The ten key elements of each area noted in the Design Guide:

- Primary use
- Scale
- Density
- Boundary treatments
- Green spaces
- Important and character views
- Architectural details
- Colour palette
- Materials
- Signage

Small groups looked at documents relating to the character areas and discussion centred on the following points:

Crookes Valley: There was concern about maintenance of wildlife corridors in view of large scale building developments in the area and the need to maintain the tree cover.

Retail centre: Green areas are needed, making the greening work done for BBEST by ECUS important. The area around the junction of Fulwood and Manchester Roads is a possible location. For the shop fronts, consistency of signage would be welcome, as would a restriction to internal rather than external grilles and shutters.

It would be helpful to encourage participation, perhaps by having for example, a prize for the best shop front, or a local magazine.

Hospital Quarter: Encourage restoration of historic features during building/refurbishment. It was noted that should the hospital locations be moved, a return to the historic street patterns would be appropriate.

A query was raised about the key elements of vistas.

Residential South East (including hospital flats - to be added to list of sites of significance) The importance of maintaining mature trees and a valance of education hospitals and homes were noted.

Residential North East (Whitham Road/Parkers Lane/Pisgah House) Housing should remain the primary function of the area, with social housing to be introduced as opportunities arise. Wherever possible HMO's should revert back to single family occupation. The question of who would pay for the restoration of boundary walls was raised. Perhaps an incentive could be offered, such as time limited reduction in Council Tax. Other points raised included the visual importance of green spaces, even though they may not be heavily used and how to inform residents of the conservation regulations.

A discussion on guerilla gardening noted that in one area community planting had been killed by council clearing of streets.

Residential South West A discussion of the increase in educational use of buildings in the area over a number of years was noted. The schools maintain their buildings well, and this may not be so if buildings were used, for example as flats. However, residents felt that the balance should remain at current or reduced levels. It was noted that, given the restrictions on development, schools may decide to relocate. Would this be good or bad for the area?

In reply to a comment that innovative new buildings can be more pleasing than slavishly copying of older types. In reply, it was noted that the Character Area descriptions follow this view.

Community assets

Seven locations are currently noted as community assets:

It was noted that the University Drama Studio on Clarkehouse Road should be added to the list.

BBEST Community Actions

The Chair explained that these actions had formed part of the main Plan initially, but had been renamed 'Community Actions' in recognition of the fact that resource - financial or volunteer, or both - would be required for implementation. When the Plan is adopted, following the consultations and referendum vote, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money will be available. However, amounts are likely to be small. Supporters were asked to consider if there should be a priority order for expenditure.

Bin storage

This is a particular issue in the BBST area and the plan will require new developments to include space for bin storage. Discussion centred on the use of community bins and it was noted that where these have been tried, residents do not want the bin outside their property.

Transport

Public transport cycling and walking all need to be considered. It was noted that the Boulevard project is working to provide a more balanced use for the corridor from the university through Broomhill Centre. One of the maps in the plan will show protected cycling and walking routes.

To let signs

The Forum strongly supported the banning of To Let signs, but this is outside the power of the Plan and would require the Council to act. This would require significant pressure, and the Chair asked for views on how important this issue is. It was suggested that residents should continue to lobby local Councillors on this issue.