

OMCA meeting 16th May 2013

Notebook: OMCA

Created: 18/05/2013 08:51

Updated: 20/05/2013 17:29

Location: City of Bristol, England, United Kingdom

Tags: OMCA

URL: file:///

Trinity Community Centre, Bristol

Chair: Paul Bradburn

Speakers: Paul Bradburn - PB (OMCA Chair), Clare Wilks -CW (Neighbourhood Planning Network), Eva Stuetzenberger -ES (Destination Bristol), Leighton deBurca - LdB (Place Making Director)

Apologies: Rebekah Formosa, Willie Harbinson

Present: Hibaq Jama - HJ (Lawrence Hill Bristol City Councillor), Mathew Winterbottom (OMCA Trustee), Spencer Cartwright (OMCA Trustee & minute taker), Ben John (PCSO)

1) Minutes from last meeting

These were made available at the start of the meeting for review and comments. None had been received by the close of the meeting and therefore were agreed.

2) Actions arising from previous minutes

None were raised at the start of the meeting, nor by the end of the meeting.

3) Agenda item 2 - Report on OMCA (PB)

OMCA has been a registered company since June 2012; Registered not for profit charity from August 2012. Financial balance £4,515.25 cr.

Current trustees: Paul Bradburn, Spencer Cartwright, Stephen Baker, Matthew Winterbottom, Marc Griffiths (treasurer).

Current committee members as of last AGM (DATE?): Paul Bradburn (chairman), Mark Mullens (vice chairman), Leighton De Burca (director town team and place maker), Peter Badger (director planning group), Rebekah Formosa (planning group), Steve Baker, Matthew Winterbottom, Marc Griffiths, Pete Gibbs, Ali Bulut, Esther O'Callaghan, Vas Anwar, Manzoor Unar, Artur Kidacki.

PB highlighted the planned OMCA AGM planned for autumn 2013 and at that meeting it would be good to have a good representation and hopefully more people stepping forward to volunteer.

4) Agenda item 3 - OMCA Neighbourhood Plan and Forum update (PB & CW)

PB explained the background to the Neighbourhood Plan and its context:

Stems from the Localism Act and allows local residents, traders and the community to have a say in the local environment and neighbourhood. The current group got together approximately two years ago with help from the Princes' Foundation and began working on the Neighbourhood Plan. Once the plan is submitted to the Government and been approved, it then helps to inform and shape the Council's planning policy and decisions.

PB outlined the current status of the plan:

The plan has a designated area. PB referred attendees to the map on display.

Currently there is an exhibition in the Trinity Centre explaining the Neighbourhood Plan and other local area projects which was coordinated and managed by LdB. It has been seen by a wide section of the community and has been positively received. This has helped with the

community engagement agenda.
Application for a designated forum is under way.

CW circulated copies of the draft plan to attendees and explained: 'Wish cards' had been circulated and collected from local people both at the exhibition and beyond in order to gather people's views on what needs doing most . Responses can be brought under four main headings which have formed the structure of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Getting Around Better
- Attractive Old and New Buildings
- Better Shops, Housing and Local Facilities
- Streets and Open Spaces

As a result, 25 projects are now being consulted on. OMCA is now working with local people to priorities these via a questionnaire.

First major project that is underway is the improvements to Old Market Street. Future Council planning decisions will be shaped by the plan and there will be a referendum on the plan after the Government approval stage.

PB outlined the benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan
Local people have a say about the development of their area and decide actions on key issues such as road functions.

10% extra Infrastructure Levy will be applied to projects into the area and this extra is then feed back to the local community to be used to fund projects.

CW explained in response to a question from the floor the timescale for the plan's approval and that the turn around period for different stages is usually a minimum of six weeks.

5) Agenda item 5 - Planning Update (PB & ES)

EV explained the following grant amounts that have been awarded and their associated planned use:

- A) £300,000 for traffic improvements
- B) £70,000 for cycling infrastructure
- C) £50,000 for signalling improvements
- D) £4,500 for benches and tables

A) Traffic Improvements

Phase One of the traffic improvements utilising the Local Sustainable Transport Fund is the restructuring of the traffic and bus lanes in Old Market Street. By reducing traffic lanes by one in either direction and taking the buses to the south side, the pavement can be widened on the north side. The intention is that this will then enable space for markets and events. Work has been going on to facilitate this change for the past 18 months. There have been discussions with the Mayor about it, who is in general agreement. Currently the proposal is being subjected to traffic modeling in order to determine the effects of the changes on traffic flow.

Next steps - modeling continues until Oct (although early indications are positive); adjust the plan in light of feedback and look at possibilities for match funding, possibly from City Hall.

Phase Two of the traffic improvement plans (outside the £300,000) could be the West Street/Lawrence Hill junction.

Comment from the floor (resident) - highlighted the need for there to be a safe environment at night, including a safe night bus service and a taxi rank in order to encourage the night time

economy of the area, especially users of the LGBT establishments.

Comment from the floor (trader) - The issue of the introduction of Pay and Display parking in the area was raised. This subject diverted the meeting from the agenda and was returned to several times. It is dealt more fully in Section 7 of these minutes.

E) Cycling infrastructure

5000 cyclists are using the cycle track and lanes in the Lawrence Hill area everyday. However, there is a need to link up the end of the Bristol/Bath cycle track with Bristol Temple Meads more effectively. This would provide opportunities for the area to benefit from a more cycle friendly environment, increasing potential customer base for traders and more desirable for residents.

Comment from the floor (resident) - There is a need to work with Avon and Somerset Police, British Transport Police and the Community Safety Partnership to establish safer routes for people during the night time economy. Perhaps look at the possibility of company sponsored signage. Minute taker's note: Community Safety Partnerships were replaced by Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) on June 1st 2012)

PB commented that elements of this were being worked on.

ES commented that the Legible City Scheme has funded three signs in the area, but the money ran out last year.

C) Signaling improvements

Signaling in the area is due to be refurbished as part of the Council's ongoing replacement and maintenance programme. The OMCA has been approached to explore how these improvements can be in line with the group's aspirations.

c) Benches and Tables

Seven benches and two tables have been funded by a grant secured by the Place Making Director. PB invited attendees to mark on the available map where they felt these ought to be placed.

Comment from the floor (resident) - is this all just related to Old Market?

PB explained the geographical range of the Neighbourhood Plan (which extends beyond the immediate Old Market area) and referred attendees to the map and exhibition.

6) Agenda Item 5 - Planning Group Update (PB)

A walk and talk tour was undertaken in March with Alison Straw and Ben Burke which identified recent planning applications that they felt were not working e.g. shop sizes that are now too small to be viable as a retail unit.

Current planning applications

1. 13/01926/F Conversion of ground floor shop to shop and self-contained flat, and associated external alterations. 75 West Street St Philips Bristol
2. Planning permission (ref: 05/01308/F) was granted in 2008 for the conversion of Globe House, the construction of a four storey extension and the erection of a detached three storey building to create a mixed use development comprising 3 no. offices; 8 no. live work units; 43 no. flats. The applications will shortly expire and therefore the client has retained Aspect360 Ltd to submit an application for an extension of time for the application. Given the uncertainty around current market conditions and the impact that this has had on the viability of the scheme, together with the reluctance of banks to provide funding, an extension of 5 years will be requested.
3. 42A and 43 Old Market Street. Creation of 9 Class B1 office units through the alteration and extension of the first floor of the above address.

7) Additional item - Introduction of Pay and Display

This item was discussed at length following the comment from the floor listed under Section 5. PB explained that there is a six month window after the scheme's implementation to assess its impact and report back to the Council.

ES suggested that the issue needs to be raised with the council since it is a Bristol City Council initiative

LdB suggested that traders who believe the scheme will have a negative impact on the area should attend the Business Engagement event on 22nd May with the Council to voice their concerns.

HJ explained the elected Mayor's powers and role and that the group ought to lobby the Mayor's Office and work together to effect a solution.

Comment from the floor (resident) - there has been a decline in the area in terms of businesses but praised the group for coming together to do something about it.

Comment from the floor (resident) - get the Mayor at a meeting to help him understand the issues and the impact of the policies.

PB proposed that in the near future, OMCA to invite the Mayor to meet the group in order to put a case forward. This proposal was put to the floor and was supported by the majority by means of a show of hands. There were no objections.

~~**ACTION:** PB to (at a time yet to be determined) contact the Mayor to invite him to an engagement event/meeting.~~

ES asked if HJ could continue to pursue the matter of Pay and Display at Council level.

8) Agenda Item 6 - Town Team Update (PB & LdB)

PB outlined the Portas Pilot project origins, objectives and remit. £10,000 had been awarded to help regenerate the area and LdB had been engaged as a Place Making Director to facilitate, coordinate and implement changes.

LdB picked up on the previous Pay and Display discussion stating that - parking and being 'car unfriendly' is a contributory factor to current difficulties for business. The Community Access Transfer Scheme allows public and private underused land to be used for purposes that benefit the community. One solution maybe to explore how this scheme could be used to improve parking facilities in the area. There are also resident parking schemes that could be considered. However, there needs to be a gathering of information from residents and businesses in order to inform the group and to work together to lobby the appropriate people and groups.

It was at this point that one attendee (trader) was asked to leave the meeting due to disruptive behaviour and was directed to do so by the PCSO.

LdB raised the issue of metal shutters on the outside of shops. He explained that Council policy wants them removed. The group can argue retrospectively to retain them since many have been in place for many years before the policy. New business are often obligated by their insurance to have shutters installed. Being a conservation area, restrictions apply to the fitting of external shutters; internal ones are acceptable but are more costly to fit.

PB proposed a vote to attendees "OMCA should not allow new tenants to install shutters on the outside of their premises". By a show of hands, the majority of attendees voted in favour.

EW commented that you cannot oppose shutters purely on conservation grounds and that there needs to be compromises made.

LdB commented that by not allowing the installation of external shutters on new businesses will

have a knock on effect and that he knows of three business that would not move into the street if this were the case. In addition, where does that leave establishments that already have shutters? Should they be removed?

Comment from the floor - it would be useful if new traders and business were informed of the stance of fitting external shutters to premises in the area.

LdB suggested that a list of issues from residents be drawn up and the OMCA to make decisions on those issues in order to give a clear remit to help him in his Place Maker role to liaise with traders more effectively. The lack of clarity and apparent inconsistency surrounding some issues is a limiting factor in some cases.

LdB proposed a survey to engage with landlords, traders and residents to identify issues and to seek clarity for appropriate issues in relation to Council policy and conservation regulations. This proposal was accepted

~~**ACTION:** LdB to draw up a survey to engage with the relevant parties to identify the issues that are causing most concern.~~

Comment from the floor (resident) - need to promote the safe angle. The area is safe and ranks of metal shutters down the street give the wrong impression.

Comment from the floor (trader) - explore other solutions e.g. CCTV. Are shutters really necessary?

Comment from the floor (trader) - high value shops with high value stock will require shutters. If the area is restricting what they need, they will look elsewhere to establish their business.

LdB highlighted the need to look at a proactive strategy. Windows do get broken; shop shops cannot function without shutters. The struggling traders and the need to rejuvenate the high street means there is a requirement to work on a quicker timescale. LdB asked for more clarity in direction from the OMCA. He also spoke of the need to engage the local landlords more and to encourage them actively invest in their buildings to help attract more tenants.

Comment from the floor (resident) - people living in and around high streets help to support and maintain the regeneration.

LdB reminded people that the following day (17th May) was the designated painting day when volunteers will be painting the outside of many properties in West St. It was a big success last year. Traders do not have to pay for the paint due to donations including £150 from Lloyds TSB.

9) Meeting Closure

PB thanks all those that contributed to this evening's meeting and to those that attended. It was suggested that the date of the next meeting be set as soon as possible following this meeting.

Meeting Close

Summary of Actions

1. PB to (at a time yet to be determined) contact the Mayor to invite him to an engagement event/meeting.
2. LdB to draw up a survey to engage with the relevant parties to identify the issues that are causing most concern.

