

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

RPS CONSULTATION REVIEW 14.01.14

BID CLIFTON VILLAGE FEEDBACK AND PROPOSAL

SUMMARY

BID Clifton Village (BID CV) thank the Sustainable Development and Transport (SD&T) Commission for their invite to the above meeting. The meeting proved to be particularly productive and provided everyone with a good opportunity to further raise their concerns about the proposed RPS plans.

As mentioned in the meeting BID CV do not believe the businesses of Clifton Village have been consulted with adequately and, the complex nature and makeup of the Village has not been suitably considered in plans and discussions.

BID Clifton Village ask that the following 4 items are adopted to ensure current plans are improved:

- i. Comprehensive Consultation is undertaken, it is possible for this to be fast tracked whilst remaining effective
- ii. Integrated transport links and improvements are put in place ahead of the any RPS plans being implemented
- iii. Suggestions proposed from the Clifton Village Business survey are considered for adoption along with suggestions from other groups
- iv. An impact study is undertaken on the final plans ahead of implementation

And finally

- v. One simple option is to consider the adoption of a two hour slot where only those with the appropriate permits are able to park in the zoned areas. This would prevent commuters using areas such as Clifton as a car park and be an efficient programme for the Council to adopt. If this option is teamed up with effective integrated transport links into the Village the issue of staff being unable to get to work would also be resolved. This proposal would do away with the current complicated and costly proposals which once implemented require a high level of servicing.

It is in the best interest of all parties that the plans adopted and implemented are as effective a proposition as possible. A review after 6 months is not a workable option for the businesses of Clifton Village due to the uncertainty about what changes may be adopted and the fact that 6 months is a long time in business:

- i. A lack of support for their employees (from improved transport links or more business permits) will mean that many organisations will be forced to put early plans in place to leave the area rather than lose their workforce.
- ii. Any reduced footfall from visitors and local employees will impact on the profits of small independent traders. These traders do not have the luxury of making losses over 6 or more months, they will be forced to stop trading. As seen on Whiteladies Road, one boarded up shop soon leads to another and another, within 6 months the business outlets on Regent Street or Boyces Avenue may look very different.

BID CV and the businesses in Clifton Village are keen to work with Bristol City Council to ensure final RPS plans maximise requirements for both residents and businesses in the Village. It is better and more efficient to get this right in the first place rather than incur costly reviews and adjustments after the initial implementation of inappropriate plans.

We propose that a working party which is appropriately scoped and which includes key representatives across the Village is set up. All issues, including those highlighted above, would be considered in an informative manner ensuring that the resultant RPS plans maximise the outcome for all stakeholders across the Village.

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DETAIL

1. Consultation

BID Clifton Village ask that further research and consultation is completed in order to achieve the best outcome for both Bristol City Council and Clifton Village.

The RPS consultation process for Clifton Village was condensed due to a wish by Bristol City Council to implement the scheme at the same time as Cliftonwood, where the consultation process was already well underway. Whilst it is understandable that two neighbouring zones are implemented at the same time the outcome of rushing the process for Clifton Village is a lack of upfront consultation and the resulting plans are not considered adequate or appropriate to the needs of the community. The proposed plans are not based on statistics that are empirical, independent or evidenced based, nor do they reflect the needs of the whole community.

Clifton Village's thriving community depends upon the support from all of its stakeholders in order to succeed. The Village is a vibrant area of the city with a unique blend of retail, commercial, educational, religious and leisure outlets, all within close proximity and all contributing to the economic output of the area and that of Bristol. As such, Clifton Village is a fragile community which through the support of differing parties has continued to function in recent difficult economic times however, if one aspect of the supporting structure is lost or overlooked this support network could collapse like a 'pack of cards' and along with it the economic makeup of the Village.

It appears that current advisors do not understand the neighbourhood sufficiently, and the current plans are not practical for day to day operations. Clifton Village is densely populated with a mix of businesses, the number and size of these have not been understood in the proposed plans and their requirements have not been adequately reflected alongside those of the residents, 'officers have no idea how many businesses are in the area proposed, let alone how they may be affected'¹

To ensure plans reflect the true mix and requirements of all stakeholders BID CV propose that an intense programme is put in place to better inform the RPS plans for Clifton Village, its neighbouring areas and the City: Effective consultation is required which includes representation across the community and which is supported by evidence based data

Whilst it is not possible to please everyone there is ample opportunity to improve on the original parking scheme proposals. With a planned approach and suitable consultation, a working party would understand the impact of certain actions and the resulting proposals would be better informed and applicable to the requirements of the whole community.

2. Integrated transport improvements

The peculiar infrastructure of Clifton Village with no car parks, no train service and only a limited bus service should be appreciated and integrated transport links, ideally with an integrated transport plan, should be put in place ahead of any parking scheme being implemented.

The peculiar geographic nature of Clifton Village doesn't help with the proposed RPS plans:

1. with a gorge and open countryside (The Downs) forming 2 sides of its perimeter, parking is naturally restricted/impossible other than in the heart of Clifton Village
2. being on top of a hill doesn't help with Bristol City Council's proposed options concerning cycling - riding a bike from south of the area is not a practical option for many of the transient population for the Village...there are few 50+ year olds that could or would chose to climb Park Street or Constitution Hill on a bike...

¹ Bristol City Council Resources Scrutiny Commission 27.06.2013, Appendix 1, Page13, Point 8.

Larger employing organisations in the Village are concerned about the impact of RPS on their employees particularly with few or no alternative forms of transport being made available to assist their employees getting to work in Clifton. Recent interview numbers for potential positions within such organisations are already down as a direct result of concern about the ability to park/get to work.

If employees take the option of using current Park & Ride options as advised by BCC their journey to work will, as a minimum:

1. cost them an addition £1,050 each year
2. take up an additional 10.5 full days of their time

Such options are not practical and will impact upon the number of staff joining or staying with employers in the Village.

Putting integrated transport links to Clifton Village in place ahead of RPS being implemented is essential for businesses in Clifton Village.

3. Consideration of Business survey

BID Clifton Village conducted a survey across the 320 businesses in the Village and it highlighted a number of suggestions for consideration in order to improve the outcome across all stakeholders. BID Clifton Village ask that each of these suggestions are used to help better inform parking plans:

1. Permits (number of business permits, hours of operation and, cost of business permits ('income from commercial permits is not material compared to that received from residential permits'² ...yet they are budgeted at £50 and charged at £240?))
2. Pay and Display (time limits, number of dedicated bays, rate £)
3. Impact on Business (trade and employees)
4. Alternatives (integrated transport links and improved services)
5. Further consultation (representation from key stakeholders)
6. Other issues (missed opportunities, disability parking and monitoring)

4. Impact analysis

An impact analysis is completed on proposed plans to ensure ideas are beneficial across the Village. Current suggestions being currently considered may initially look attractive but the overall impact may be very different, e.g.:

1. All day parking permits for tourists and day visitors is a positive suggestion.
2. One hour parking limits may enable more people to visit the Village but this does not allow enough time for the general needs of visitors and will impact on trade:
 - In a recent survey with visitors to the Village, everyone visiting from outside i.e. non-residents planned to stay for longer than one hour.
 - More than one hour is needed for: a dentist appointment, client lunch, hair appointment, school visit, client meetings with accountants, estate agents, designers, surveyors, etc...
3. Zoned parking for south and north of the Village needs to be considered further, the actual impact on the varying types of business may not be as beneficial as imagined.

5. Simple option

One simple option is to consider the adoption of a two hour slot where only those with the appropriate permits are able to park in the zoned areas. This would prevent City commuters using areas such as Clifton as a car park and be an efficient programme for the Council to adopt. If this option is teamed up with effective integrated transport links into the Village the issue of staff being unable to get to work would also be resolved. This proposal would do away with the current complicated and costly proposals which once implemented require a high level of servicing.

² Bristol City Council Resources Scrutiny Commission 19.07.2013, Agenda Item No. 17, Point 16.