



Redcliffe Futures

David Farnsworth: Society representative on Redcliffe Futures Group

This is the third year since the formation of the Redcliffe Futures Group in the autumn of 2001. From the community's point of view, this is the first year of tangible results.

The community group comprises elected or nominated, permanent representatives of 15 independent organisations including four local resident associations, cross-city voluntary groups such as the Society, public service providers such as the Fire, Police and Health authorities, local businesses, City Council ward councillors and Council departmental officers.

The agreed purpose is to find and build a consensus on the actions necessary to rebuild and improve the economic, social, townscape and transport environment of the Redcliffe neighbourhood.

Why 3 Years?

After some difficulty in the early days in persuading the City Council to adopt a "bottom-up" community agenda rather than a "top-down" City Council agenda, the Group itself published in November 2002 a comprehensive programme for the rebuilding of Redcliffe that integrated action across the local economy, townscape, urban design, local transport,

housing and social and health facilities, all under the title of a "Neighbourhood Framework" (see the January 2003 Newsletter).

While strongly supported by the Sustainable Projects Department of the Council, who assigned a full time professional officer to help the Group, 2003 saw further delays to the implementation of the Framework proposals because of inter-Departmental disagreements within the Council. Not until the end of 2003 did a combination of appeals to the Scrutiny Commission of the Council and the intervention of leading Council members, instruct Departments to cooperate and direct that progress be made without further delay.

Two Steps Forward

2004 saw two major steps forward that potentially have significance right across Bristol:

A Consensus Neighbourhood Plan

The first step forward was in May 2004. To a brief agreed with the Redcliffe Futures Group, the City Council appointed consultants to translate the Neighbourhood Framework directly into a formal planning statement called a Supplementary Planning Document.

This will have legal force when it comes to the Planning Authority deciding on planning applications and is one way for the vision produced by the community to be implemented.



A comprehensive neighbourhood plan

More Effective Community Involvement

In the second step, boosted by the publication during 2004 of Government guidelines and regulations for the new planning system, Group members including the City Council have been able to agree that everyone can work together constructively *within* the system.

Regulations under the Planning Act 2004 require community involvement in decision-making in