

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

May 2008

1.1 About Green Issues Communications:

Green Issues Communications (GIC) is a specialist Community Consultation consultancy. Established 10 years ago GIC has considerable expertise of managing and devising exemplary community consultation programmes, including managing some of the largest and most controversial consultation programmes in the country. GIC's experience spans both private and public sector organisations and ensures its consultation builds-on and surpasses with local and national consultation best practice.

1.2 Introduction:

GIC have been employed by St Modwen and The Bird Group to devise, manage and implement an extensive programme of community consultation in connection with their proposals for the eco-town at Middle Quinton.

This document begins this process by identifying and establishing an exemplary programme of community consultation.

It is clear that public consultation, information and engagement must be a central tenet of these proposals and in recognition of this GIC's detailed programme proposes an intense and pro-active consultation process. The consultation programme is based on the following key principles:

1, **Early consultation.** It is essential that consultation begins at the earliest possible stage. Therefore, we propose commencing the consultation from 1st June. Once the consultation is underway it will continue throughout the summer.

2, **Exemplary.** Rightly, consultation is a central tenet of eco-town promotion. We therefore need to develop an interactive programme of consultation and engagement. This means the programme will need to reach out to people, including



hard-to-reach groups and will need to ensure there is a wide range of mechanisms for stakeholders and residents to truly get involved in the consultation process;

3, Openness and Transparency. We should ensure, at all times that our consultation is open and transparent; that we seek to consult as widely as possible and that our channels of consultation are easily accessed. We must also ensure that a clear audit trail for our consultation is in place so that feedback and views given during the consultation are recorded transparently and openly. This feedback should be easily accessed by anyone who wishes to see it and should show what has happened to the feedback and its impact on the consultation;

4. Excellent information. It is essential that the proposals are communicated thoroughly and widely. Residents, stakeholders and interested parties should have easily accessible, regular and non-technical information available to them.

1.3 Consultation Mechanisms:

It is essential that a variety of consultation mechanisms are employed; different people and different groups are motivated and engaged by different forms of consultation, therefore, it is essential we recognise this and reflect this in our wide-ranging programme. Green Issues believes that the consultation programme needs to reach out to residents and stakeholders alike, therefore, our programme will be a highly mobilised and pro-active programme of consultation e.g we are not just going to propose one static exhibition and think this is satisfactory. Below are listed the wide-ranging means and mechanisms of consultation we are proposing;

- **A site-specific website** – this will be a ‘front-door’ for many residents, especially ‘hard-to-reach’ groups. The website will provide information and have opportunities for residents and stakeholders to give their views. This website will be ‘living’. By this we mean that it will be regularly updated, ‘interactive’, with feedback mechanisms, downloads etc and it will be easily navigable.
- **Telephone Hotline with 24 hour recorded message and recording systems.** A dedicated phone line, widely advertised will be in place throughout the consultation programme. Furthermore mobile numbers, for a project manager will be advertised to



allow out of hours questions by key stakeholders and residents over weekends and evenings as necessary.

- **Newsletters** – We would envisage a number of newsletters being produced and distributed both at public events, to key stakeholders (e.g all parish councils, councillors, M.P's, local groups etc) and available on-line and at libraries for members of the public to easily access.

- **Public Exhibitions** – These will be an important part of our overall public consultation element, but not the sole element. They will enable residents to view the proposals at convenient locations (both for the site and for major populations i.e Stratford-upon-Avon residents, Evesham residents etc), ask questions of the expert project team and give feedback. Site visits and tours are also to be encouraged and facilitated to enable residents to thoroughly understand the details of the proposals.
 - **Roving exhibition road show** – Due to the size and controversial nature of the proposals we would recommend a series of roving exhibitions. In other words we envisage the exhibitions taking place in a variety of locations, for example: Stratford-upon-Avon, Evesham, Chipping Camden etc.

- **One-to-one briefings** – As has been mentioned, it is important to recognise that different groups, audiences or individuals may wish to be engaged in different ways. Therefore one-to-one briefings are an essential part of the overall consultation strategy. We therefore propose an extensive period of one-to-one briefings, both in person (by Green Issues and others) and in writing. These briefings will be with key stakeholders, local groups, parish councils etc and will be both information giving and information/feedback gathering. The exact details of those we will be proposing to meet will be identified and outlined at a later stage, however , they will include:
 - Political groups/individuals - MP's, District and County Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and Regional and national politicians/bodies as appropriate;
 - Community groups – Stratford Voice, Stratford Society, BARD, Residents Associations etc;



- Business groups – Stratford Town Centre Partnership, Evesham Market Town Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Retail Associations etc
- Other groups – Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, RSC, Stratford College, youth forum/council, key workers groups, Trade Unions etc
- **Surveys and polling** – It is essential our consultation reaches-out to residents who may not traditionally come to public exhibitions. Consultation must be highly mobilised and pro-active. Therefore Green Issues' propose a series of surveys which could include key workers, schools, colleges etc.
- **Workshops** – These can be an extremely effective means of undertaking detailed round-table discussions on key topics and themes and can help to give qualitative feedback to add to the qualitative data that will be collected during the consultation process. Green Issues would envisage hosting a number of workshops. Topics for workshops may include transport, employment opportunities, environment and waste management etc.
- **Citizen's/Stakeholder Forums** – Citizen's or Stakeholder Forums are extremely effective mechanisms through which comments can be directed and channelled. They can supplement workshops, which may discuss specific topics, and act as a regular feature during the consultation. Green Issues would envisage these forums comprising a variety of stakeholders, managed, minuted and organised by Green Issues. The membership will need to be determined but could include a good cross-section of community groups, organisations and representatives. We would envisage the forums running on a regular basis (monthly/bi-monthly) throughout the projects early life.
- **Static displays.** Green Issues will be exploring the possibility of having a series of static displays located in various locations in the area. These displays though not manned will be a point of information for residents who may, for some reason miss other consultation opportunities, or would prefer to visit static displays and browse uninterrupted at their leisure. We would envisage these will be in easily accessible locations such as town centre council offices, libraries etc (This will of course be subject to agreement with, for example, the Local Planning Authority).



DVD - DVD's can tell a story, or set a scene very well. They can be used effectively during our one-one briefings and our workshops.

1.4 Consultation Timeline and actions

June 2008	
Action	
Begin process of extensive – one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders, local groups, individuals etc.	
Review and update website to ensure it is 'interactive', with clear next steps, easily accessible information etc	
Prepare and send first newsletter and written briefing	
Prepare for first public exhibition and 'consultation kick-off' week. We envisage this will outline/principles/concept etc. Begin detailed consultation processes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of exhibitions in a variety of locations e.g Stratford, Evesham etc. • Surveys which could include key-workers, schools, colleges etc. • Static exhibitions to be agreed and established 	
Establish membership, organise and host first <i>Citizen's Forum</i>	Membership is to be confirmed. The forum is likely to meet regularly probably monthly.
Series of media releases – to inform the wider public	

July 2008	
Action	Comment
Exhibition feedback analysed and report produced, issued to attendees and stakeholders and placed on website etc	
Workshops to commence on specific topic areas e.g Jobs, Sustainability, Transport etc	



One-to-One briefings continue throughout July e.g parish councils (groups of), MP's, local groups etc	
Pro-active media information programme continues	

August /September 2008	
Action	Comment
Further Citizen's Forums	
Further newsletter	
Further workshops	
One-to-One briefings to continue as necessary and appropriate	
Possibility of further exhibition in Autumn to provide more details and responses to early consultation	
On-going updates of website	

