



revitalising industrial sites

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Consultation Strategy, The British, Abersychan

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This report illustrates the pilot application of the REVIT stakeholder engagement Toolkit in the REVIT partner area Torfaen



Content

This report include the following annexes:

Annex 1: The British, Master Plan & Reclamation Strategy; Stakeholder engagement and public consultations briefing [stage 1]	13
Annex 2: Master Planning – Stage 1, Briefing & Consultation	19
Annex 3: The British - Stakeholder Briefing Workshops, Structure and Outputs	24

1. Purpose

This document is intended to be a working document that will be reviewed and updated during the whole of the masterplanning process. There will be three stages to the consultation strategy:

- 1. A series of briefing workshops with local stakeholders (Landowners, local community representatives, statutory authorities, utility companies.)Autumn 05**
- 2. A co-ordinated series of workshops with the same groups to highlight the options for the reclamation and redevelopment of the site and their impacts and benefits. Spring 06**
- 3. A public Exhibition and presentations to the general public illustrating the preferred development strategy. Summer 06**

The purpose of the consultation strategy is to:

- Provide interested parties with information regarding the proposed re-development of The British at key stages.
- Engage stakeholders in order that concerns and issues can be raised and captured to inform the development of the Masterplan for the British.
- Reduce the likelihood of unforeseen objections arising creating expensive delays and having a negative impact on the consent process.
- Ensure that the statutory consultation requirements necessary to secure the approval of “Supplementary Planning Guidance” for The British MasterPlan have been adequately addressed.

2. Scope

The scope of the overall project over and above the masterplanning process will be limited to the following:-

- Proposals affecting the area of the former British ironworks and coal mining operations and associated land-holdings as defined in the draft Scoping Report by Powell Dobson Urbanists, June 05.
- The development of the MasterPlan for the site required to secure Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- The development of the coal extraction and reclamation strategies in conjunction with the Masterplan.
- The EIA that will be required to address the impacts that may arise from the reclamation and redevelopment processes.
- Stakeholders will be able to express their views that could influence changes but they will not be able to make decisions affecting the documents to go forward for consent.
- The budget for the consultation exercise is estimated to be in the region of £15,000 – £20,000
- Consultants will be engaged to plan, organise, implement and review different stages of the consultation strategy as appropriate.
- Nominated staff with skills and experience from the developer’s consultant team and officers from the TCBC Environmental Regeneration Section will support the engagement process.
- The levels of engagement will include:

INFORM	To provide the stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the project(s), alternatives that have been explored opportunities and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain feedback on issues for decision-makers to analyse, regard alternatives and inform decision making.
INVOLVE	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in the decision making processes.

Nature of Engagement	Stage 1 (Autumn 05)	Stage 2 (Spring 06)	Stage 3 (Summer 06)
INFORM	*	*	*
CONSULT		*	*
INVOLVE		*	

3. Context

The British is one of the largest brown-field sites in South Wales occupying over 500 hectares of land near Talywain, north of Pontypool. It has been subject to over 200 years of despoliation by heavy industry including several collieries, an ironworks and landfill operations. The site also comprises a significant ‘rural’ hinterland made up from semi-natural vegetation including some important habitats.

Harmoni Development Ltd (The developer), Torfaen County Borough Council (as the regeneration agency) and the WDA (as the reclamation agency) are working in partnership to secure the reclamation and redevelopment of the site. They are committed to a meaningful engagement and consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders.

The Consultation Strategy follows REVIT requirements and aims to build on best practice in terms of community engagement, information dissemination and a flexible approach to consultation.

Key questions related to the re-development of the British include:-

- *Will it be commercially viable?*
- *How will the reclamation process impact on local residents?*
- *How will new development impact and benefit the on local community/ residents and infrastructure?*
- *How will landowners adjacent to or on the site be affected?*

Approach

The strategic Masterplan options will be based on the following:

Analysis

- Previous reports (eg Arups 2003)
- Previous Proposals (eg Clay Collieries)
- Cabinet report (2003)
- Recent site history

Strategic Framework

- Current situation;
- Site capacity;
- Commercial market;
- Housing – compatibility with mixed use development.
- Employment, and leisure opportunities;
- Fit with adjacent land-uses and habitats

Urban Design & integrated Transport

- Transport / pedestrian linkages;
- Car parking provision;
- Public open space;
- Signage strategy;
- Urban design.

Market Survey Conclusions

Overall, the market survey has quantified the level and type of current market interest by property developers for additional housing provision / land as follows:

- **Retail:**
- **Leisure:**
- **Office:**
- **Residential:**
- **Community Facilities**

Policy Context

The development framework strategy has been informed by a range of policy and reference documents.

Key Documents – used to inform and guide the output of the study by providing relevant background information to the study and the redevelopment area;

- *Planning Policy Wales (March 2002)*
- *People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan (November 2004)*
- *A Winning Wales: The National Economic Development Strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government (January 2002)*
- *Technical Advice Note (Wales) 4: Retailing (November 1996)*
- *Technical Advice Note (Wales) 18: Transport (July 1998)*
- *Gwent Structure Plan (March 1996)*
- *Torfaen County Borough Local Plan (Adopted 2000)*
- *Torfaen Unitary Development Plan: Strategy & Issues Paper (May 2000)*
- *Torfaen Regeneration Strategy 2004 – 2016 (January 2004)*
- *Torfaen Housing Needs Survey?*

4. Links to other consultation activities

Other **relevant** consultation activities include:

None noted to date, JT 08.11.05.

Date	Name	Status	Lead

5. Consultees

The Consultation Strategy aims to involve the following groups. A list of these is provided at Appendix 5.1:

- Torfaen Members
- Torfaen Officers
- Community Councils
- Statutory Bodies
- WDA
- WTB
- CCW
- Voluntary Sector Organisations
- Private Landowners, Commoners and tenants.
- Local Groups
- The general public (a list will be collated on an ongoing basis) will be given the opportunity to view, comment on proposals at the appropriate stage (refer to Scope above) as they emerge.

Consideration will be given as to how best and when to reach and engage these consultees including “the hard to reach groups”(see methods below)

Ongoing consideration will be given to the venue(s) time(s), nature of engagement method(s), the methods themselves and who will “front” each engagement programme throughout the Consultation Strategy.

6. Methods

The Consultation process will comprise a three separate workshop stages as set out in Section 1 to cover the consultees groups listed in Section 5 above.

Stage 1: Briefing Workshops

Three workshops will take place, plus one ‘practice’ workshop. A public exhibition will also be held. Dates, venues and target audience for each are set out below.

The aims of these workshops are to:

- brief the consultees on the proposed reclamation and masterplanning process for the site;
- inform the consultees of the opportunities for involvement in the process;
- gain an understanding of the key issues considered by the consultees to be significant in those processes and the development of the site; and,
- re-engage consultees in the development process.

Element.	Audience	Venue	Date / Time
Practice / Brief	Councillors	Pensioners’ Club, Talywain	Tuesday 22 nd November, 12.00 - 13.00
Workshop #1	Landowners within site and adjacent landowners	Pensioners’ Club, Talywain	Thursday 24 th November, 18.30 - 19.30
Workshop #2	Statutory consultees	Council Chamber, County Hall	Friday 25 th November, 11.00 - 15.00
Workshop #3	Community representatives	Pensioners’ Club, Talywain	Friday 25 th November, 18.30 - 19.30
Exhibition	General public	Pensioners’ Club, Talywain	Thursday 24 th November, 12.00 – 18.00 Friday 25 th November, 12.00 – 18.00

Format

The format for the workshops is set out below. The ‘Practice / Brief’ will be a dry run of the workshops and this event will also be attended by Councillors. The event will allow the following:

For the Consultant Team / Client Group -

- to run through the proposed presentation format;
- to identify any problems or opportunities that should be addressed to improve the planned event;
- to familiarise themselves with the format;
- to provide information to the Councillors to allow dissemination of accurate information;
- to confirm the time required for elements within the presentation.

For the Councillors –

- To be briefed on the proposals, and the development and consultation processes;
- to appraise the Team of what they anticipate to be the key issues in the above;
- to ask questions concerning the above;
- to be in a position to answer questions from the electorate concerning the above;
- to familiarise themselves with the Client Group / Consultant Team

Workshops

The proposed agenda for the workshops is attached as Appendix 6.1.

The basic format will be an opening presentation by members of the Client Group and the Consultant Team as per the agenda.

The attendees will then be randomly divided into focus groups for the discussion section. The aim of the discussion is to:

- Gain an understanding of what are considered by the consultees to be the key issues affecting the development of the site.

Discussion within each group will be facilitated by a 'Facilitator'. The Facilitators will be representatives of the Client Group and the Consultancy Team to be agreed before the Workshops. The number and size of the focus groups will depend on the number of attendees to the workshops. Individual groups will aim to be no larger than 10 people.

The discussion will aim to cover the key topics areas and issues in terms of:

- Environment – open space, visual, ecology, drainage, traffic;
- Social and economic – sustainability of space, facilities;
- Community and activity – links, sense of place, defining the characteristic of the area;
- Future – aspirations, consultation, process, timescales.

The facilitator will use a prepared template covering the above issues to assist in recording and directing discussion. A copy of this is included at Appendix 6.2

The workshop will be concluded by a rounding-up of comments and a reminder of the next stage.

Exhibition

This will be a public exhibition of display panels which will be presented at the workshop events. The purpose of the exhibition is to inform members of the public of the process, proposals, timeframe, and the opportunities to be involved in the consultation process.

This is to be manned by a representative of the Client Group (the Council) and the Consultant Team (PDU) during opening hours to answer questions and record comments where relevant.

It will provide the opportunity for visitors to the exhibition to provide contact details to be kept informed of future consultation events.

Stage 2 and Stage 3

The type of method(s) to be selected should be subject to establishing information regarding the following:

- Facilitated interactive forums
- Information dissemination via the press/media & leaflets
- Stages 2 & 3 to evolve in response to the needs of the project.

7. Resources

7.1 Finance

Harmoni Developments (as recipients of grant assistance from TCBC, WDA) will be responsible for the payment of the following costs & budgets. This is the total cost as estimated at the current stage in the programme:

Item	Cost (approximations)
Venues	£500-600
Professional Facilitators	Say £5000
Advertisements	Say £500
Web Pages(Harmoni cost)	Say £5000
Refreshments	£100
Travel	£150
Equipment rental	£1500
Leaflets and Publications	£1000
Audio Visuals	?
Consultant staff time	£6500
TCBC officer time	Grant assisted
TOTAL	c £19850

The following provides a breakdown of costs for each consultation stage:

Stage 1

Element	Cost (estimated)
Preparation of material (information sheets, display boards)	1,250.00
Preparation and issue of invitations	500.00
Collation of responses	300.00
Hire of display stands	400.00
Printing and materials	500.00
Preparation of Consultation Strategy (ongoing)	1,300.00
Consultant time for setting up and manning exhibition	800.00
Consultant staff time (not included in other elements)	1,250.00
Hire of Venue	225.00
Refreshments	50.00
Facilitators (total for all Stage 1 events)	3,000.00
Consultation Report (including collation of feedback)	400.00
	£ 9,975.00

It is important to note that the costs for Stage 1 include consultation and process 'setting up' costs which will not be incurred in later stages of the consultation process, such as the establishment of the Consultation Strategy and agreeing REVIT procedures and compliance from the outset.

Stage 2

[To be inserted]

Stage 3

[To be inserted]

7.2 People

Powell Dobson and TCBC's Environmental Regeneration Section will field the following staff to assist with the consultation programme:

Name	Title	Skills
Martin Sullivan	Project Manager, Powell Dobson	Masterplanner/coordinator/facitator?
Mark Farrar	Assistant Project Manager	Land use planner/manager
James Brown	Urban Designer	Design Briefing
Ray Lake	Reclamation Design	Infrastructure Design
Jeanette Shaw	Environmental Planner	Environmental Assessment
Andrew Gray	Head of Environmental Regeneration	Facilitator [Level Headed] Project Planner (Prince II)
Claire Gray	Head of Environmental Regeneration	Facilitator [Level Headed] Project Planner (Prince II)
Alison Amoah	Principal Regeneration Officer	Facilitator [WCVA] Project Planner (Prince II)
Jon Townend	Consultant to TCBC	Project Planner [Prince II]

8. Timetable

The proposed timetable and resource allocation is shown on the Gantt Chart at Appendix 8.1.

9. Outputs

The following are expected outputs:

Stage 1 Workshops

For the Client Group and Consultant Team:

- Updated database of consultee contacts;
- An understanding of the key issues considered to be of importance to the consultation groups;
- Feedback on the success of the event(s).

For the Consultees

- An understanding of the context of the scheme;
- An understanding of the proposal and timescales involved;
- An understanding of the role that they can play in the decision-making process;
- An understanding of the influence that they can have on the proposals;
- An understanding of who is involved in the scheme from the Local Authority, Developers, Funders, Consultees and the Consultant Team.

Stage 2

[to be inserted]

Stage 3

[to be inserted]

Overall

- information from meetings
- quarterly newsletters
- communication strategy
- meetings and workshops held with different groups
- advertisements in the local press
- exhibitions/presentation material
- web site
- brochure
- audio visual
- reports
- lessons learned log

10. Outcomes

- Completed requirements for statutory consultation for Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- Improved working relationships and communication with all stakeholders;
- Wider circle of ownership / responsibility for decisions and actions;
- Agreement on purpose and direction of the master plan proposals
- Identification of issues, benefits and drawbacks;
- Generation of new ideas;
- Developing consensus to enable progress to be made;
- Creation / enhancement of social capital;
- Improved environment for people;
- Local capacity building and learning

11. Evaluation

- 11.1 The REVIT evaluation tool will be used to check the level of preparation of the consultation project.
- 11.2 Measures will be taken on an ongoing basis to evaluate how well the messages are being received and understood.(eg questionnaires and straw polls at events)
- 11.3 A post evaluation review will take place comprising an evaluation team to assess the planning, delivery and completion of the consultation. This evaluation team will include developer representatives, their consultants, officers, outside bodies and selected members of the community.

12 Evidence

The consultation process will be documented throughout its lifetime with all information being collated into an end report. Key information that will be included will be held in a file divided into the following :-

- Consultation Process Framework
- Finance Summary
- Consultation Project Plan
- Notes and summary of all consultation meetings
- Database of contacts
- Audio Visual material
- Newsletters
- Press Releases and Articles
- Web Site
- Final Report
- Lessons Learned Log and Recommendations for future events.



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Annex 1 The British, Master Plan & Reclamation Strategy

Stakeholder engagement and
public consultations briefing
[stage 1]



January 2006

1) Introduction

- a) This report has been produced to appraise the preparation, delivery and effectiveness of a series of information and consultation events that were held at the Talywain Pensioners' Club, Abersychan and County Hall, Cwmbran relating to the regeneration of The British, a brown-field site at Abersychan, Torfaen. The events were led by Powell Dobson Urbanists [PDU], consultants working for the developers, Harmoni Developments Ltd, with the support of Torfaen County Borough Council [TCBC]. They were organised to brief local stakeholders and statutory authority consultees on the planning process relating to The British.
- b) The briefing events are the first part of a three stage process:
 - A series of briefing workshops with stakeholders (Landowners, local community representatives, statutory authorities.)
 - A co-ordinated series of workshops with the same groups to highlight the options for the reclamation and redevelopment of the site and their impacts and benefits. Spring 06
 - A public Exhibition and presentations to the general public illustrating the preferred development strategy. Summer 06
- c) The Consultation Strategy, promotional and presentation materials and Feedback Report produced for the consultation events are attached as appendices to this report.

2) Forward planning

- a) A Consultation Strategy [see appendix 1] and event plan were produced prior to the events. These were prepared through an iterative process by PDU and TCBC. The format of this report is based on Torfaen's draft Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit produced as the authority's local project contribution to the CCI.1 Programme. This approach was presented to the developer and the lead consultant early in the planning stages and ostensibly accepted by them. There was then an apparent lack of commitment on the part of the developer's team to work through the approach and produce the Strategy. This was overcome with the support of Council resources.
- b) The draft event plan was produced by TCBC using MS Project software. The lead consultants were not proficient with the software and thus unable to adopt or amend the plan.
- c) The Strategy was not produced within the framework of a communication plan, as this had not been drafted by the time the events took place.
- d) **No baseline research was undertaken.**

3) Purpose, scope and context

- a) The purpose, scope and context of the consultation process is clearly stated in the Consultation Strategy. The purpose and aims of the first stage events were agreed by Harmoni, PDU and TCBC to be primarily for information purposes.
- b) The Consultation Strategy was made available for information to the parties involved in delivering the first stage consultations. Personnel involved in the consultations discussed the purpose, scope and context of the events at meetings and a briefing workshop prior to the events. They were clearly understood by the personnel leading and facilitating the events.

- c) Local council Members were also provided with copies of the Consultation Strategy and attended the briefing workshop but it is not clear how well they understood the information provided to them.

4) Links to other consultation activities:

- a) No links with other events were identified.

5) Consultees:

- a) The key audiences for the first stage were grouped under three headings:
 - Landowners & tenants,
 - Statutory authorities
 - Local community representatives
- b) A draft database of contacts for each group was provided by TCBC officers and was finalised by PDU. Copies were provided to local Council members for comments and to add additional contacts. The Council's internal participants were identified by the TCBC Regeneration team.
- c) The general public were not initially included in the planning of the event but a late decision was made to provide information but not to consult with them.
- d) Hard-to-reach groups were not specifically targeted.
- e) The social capital of the consultees has not been considered in-depth.

6) Methods:

- a) The key audience groups were presented with information and consulted with at three separate briefing workshops at different venues over a two day period. This method was chosen to enable informed discussions to take place at venues convenient for each audience and provide opportunity for feedback in manageable-sized groups. The lead consultant acted as facilitator, supported by a mixed team of staff from PDU and TCBC. The developer did not take an active part. An introductory presentation was given by the lead consultant with support from a senior representative Council officer. Discussions took place in break-out groups of 5-8 with each group supported by a facilitator to stimulate topics and record issues. Issues arising were then fed back to the lead facilitator, collated and briefly summarised back to the audience. Appraisal of the feedback forms suggests that this method was effective. No proportionate targets were set relating to numbers of invitees attending.
- b) The local public were presented with information at staffed exhibitions in a venue in the settlement closest to the site over the same two-day period as the workshops. Opening times were limited to 12.00-18.00 and 20.00-21.00. 44 people visited the exhibition and all had an opportunity to speak with an informed representative of PDU or TCBC. The attendance achieved was considered to be quite good by TCBC officers compared to other similar events, though no targets were set relating to numbers of attendees.

7) Resources:

- a) Venues: The local pensioners club hall was used for two workshops and the public exhibitions. This was close for the local community and over-looked the development site, was easily accessible, large enough, well lit and warm [events took place in November]. Sufficient furniture and refreshments were provided for workshop attendees. The statutory authority workshop took place in the Council Chamber at County Hall. This is laid out as a large lecture theatre with tiered, fixed furniture that was appropriate for the presentation, but limiting for the break-out groups. The slide presentation did not work well at the distance the audience were obliged to sit from the screen. Refreshments were provided.

- b) **Staffing:** The lead consultant, PDU, provided the lead facilitator for the workshops with a planning background, assisted by another planner. The presentation to the statutory consultees was supported by a technical specialist. TCBC provided four staff from the council's Urban Regeneration section. These resources, referred to as the 'team' were used flexibly over the two days and were sufficient for the events. The roles and responsibilities for each member of the team were clarified during the planning stages, although there may have been some uncertainty regarding facilitation roles as the pre-event briefing ended before staff had chance to confirm their understanding of roles.
- c) **Materials:** The following materials were used for the events [copies included in appendix ??]:
- Graphic display boards prepared by PDU summarising the information about the planning process.
 - A slide presentation using MS Powerpoint prepared by PDU of the display boards.
 - A timetable, agenda, and topic sheet for the workshops.
 - Exhibition/focus group feedback questionnaire forms.
 - Contact details for Harmoni, TCBC, WDA and PDU.
 - Flip chart for the lead facilitator.
- Some consultees noted that information about the site context would have been useful.
- Welsh translations were not available. No complaints were received regarding this.
- d) **Finance:** The lead facilitator provided an estimate of costs for the first event and this is set down in the Consultation Strategy. These have not yet been verified/confirmed. The principle cost element was staff time. The cost of Council officer time was not included in the estimate. Funding was obtained through several sources: WDA grant funding towards the cost of the Masterplan, Harmoni's contribution towards the same, the REVIT programme and contribution in kind of Council officer time.

8) Timetable:

- a) A draft timetable for the workshops was provided and modified at the planning stage. This was close for the presentation time but proved to be an under-estimate for the break-out sessions.

9) Outputs:

- a) It was made clear to consultees that they were being asked to make comments and raise concerns but that they would not be able to make decisions affecting the scheme.
- b) A report on the findings of the events and responses on the feedback questionnaire forms [see below] has been prepared by PDU. The report will be presented to the Programme Board of representatives of Harmoni, TCBC and the WDA. This includes a summary of the issues that will need to be addressed during the planning process, a breakdown of attendance and an appraisal of the feedback on the effectiveness of the events. The issues will be referred to by PDU to inform the considerations and recommendations for the master plan and the proposed measures relating to coal recovery and reclamation of the site.
- c) The issues will be recorded in an 'issues log' and referred to by the programme management team when considering actions or advice to consultants, and when considering submitted plans and proposals.
- d) The developer may use the information arising to inform their public relations strategy.

10) Evaluation:

- a) A questionnaire relating to the effectiveness of the events was prepared by PDU for all attendees to complete at the end of the workshops and after seeing the public exhibition. The attendees were encouraged to complete and leave them with staff

before leaving the venue. 54% of attendees at the workshops completed the forms, 70% at the exhibition.

The statistics arising from the forms are presented in the consultation report.

11) Outcomes:

- a) Appraisal of the consultation feedback questionnaire forms indicates that a very large majority of the consultees either understood or mostly understood the information that was presented and discussed.
- b) There are always aspects that can be improved and the feedback from attendees and the lessons learned log below will be considered at the planning stage for the next series of events with a view to improving the effectiveness of communication.

12) Notice / Promotion of events / PR

- a) The events were publicised by the following methods:
 - Invitations to all stakeholders on the contact list issued four weeks before the events.
 - Notice and invitation by internal email to TCBC officers and council members issued five weeks before the events with a reminder issued one week before the events. Letters sent to members four weeks prior to the events.
 - Press release issued by the developers team one week before the events.
 - Posters put up in local shops and venues two days prior to the event.
 - Posters erected near the venue in Talywain on the morning of the first event.
- b) An article was published in the local press prior to release of the official statement that led to some misunderstanding regarding the timing and purpose of the events. This appears to have been the result of a conversation between the developer and one of the local community representatives.
- c) There was a delay in issuing the joint press release as a result of unclear communication protocols. It was not used by the key local free press publication [by editorial decision?]. This resulted in some comments being received after the events from local people to say that the event was not well promoted.
- d) The information provided on the internal email to Council officers was confusing and some senior council officers delegated attendance at the meeting to other officers who were not included on the circulation list. This led to some internal confusion regarding the details of the event.

13) Feedback:

- a) It is proposed that the consultees will be provided with an abridged copy of the consultation report prepared by PDU. No feedback has been provided to date to the consultees.

14) Evidence:

- a) A Consultation file has been established by TCBC [and by PDU?] that includes the following:
 - Consultation strategy
 - Database of consultees
 - Event plans and related materials
 - Presentation materials
 - Press releases, articles and promotion materials
 - Newsletters, leaflets and other information materials.
 - Communications from consultees
 - Evaluation reports

This will be maintained for the duration of the planning stage of the scheme.

15) Lessons learned log

The British, Talywain. Masterplan and Reclamation Plan Stakeholder engagement and public consultations.		
Item	Issue	Proposed action
1	Initial problem for developer's team in understanding Council's requirements and resistance to producing strategy and planning process. Possibly resulting from concerns over time and staff costs. Consultant and TCBC working with different software formats.	Fuller briefing for developers and their agents regarding Council's best practice approach and expectations. Resource implications to be explained more fully in consultant's brief to allow better informed costs consideration. Ensure compatibility of shared info.
2	The original planned dates had to be rearranged as they became unfeasible.	More realistic time should be allowed for planning, preparation and issuing notice to attendees.
3	The exhibitions were not well publicised in the local media and attendance could have been higher. Delays over agreed messages to public media.	Place shared statement as press advert in local publications. Ensure communication protocols are agreed and effective asap. Ensure local press deadlines are monitored.
4	The slide presentation did not work well at the County Hall venue. Break-out sessions were harder to arrange. No full dry runs were attempted at either venue.	Consider conditions at venue in when designing presentation or change venue. Use a full dry-run of presentations to test receptability at each venue.
4	Some statutory authority consultees did not know the site and found it difficult to offer informed comments.	Provide more background context at future consultations.
5	No attendance recorded for late evening public exhibitions. Late requests for early evening exhibitions not accommodated.	Review public exhibition times.
6	Lower proportion of completed questionnaires from workshops	Ensure sufficient time is planned into event and oblige attendees to complete before leaving venue.
7	The full cost of Council resources was not included in the event budget.	Council officers to record time inputs and value for match funding purposes.

16) Acknowledgments

The parties involved in facilitating the events were as follows:

- Powell Dobson Urbanists: Martin Sullivan, Mark Farrah.
- Torfaen County Borough Council: Andrew Gray, Alison Amoah, Jonathan Townend, Martin Buckle, Claire Gray.
- Ove Arup: Ray Lake



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Annex 2 Master Planning – Stage 1 Briefing & Consultation



www.revit-nweurope.org

February 2006

Summary of report produced by Powell Dobson Urbanists, planning consultants.

This report is part of the REVIT selfguiding trail.

1) Introduction

- a) A series of information and consultation events were held at the Talywain Pensioners' Club, Abersychan and County Hall, Cwmbran on 24th and 25th November 2005 relating to the regeneration of The British, a brown-field site at Abersychan, Torfaen. The events were led by Powell Dobson Urbanists, consultants working for the developers, Harmoni Developments Ltd, with the support of Torfaen County Borough Council. They were organised to brief local landowners, community representatives, other stakeholders and statutory authority consultees on the planning process relating to The British. These events are the first of series of consultations that will take place over the next 12 months.
- b) Three briefing meetings were held for landowners, community representatives and representatives from statutory authorities, public agencies and other organisations. A public exhibition was also displayed at the Pensioner's Club explaining the planning process. This was open to the public on the afternoons and late evenings on 24th and 25th November.
- c) This report summary gives an overview of the key issues arising from the consultation events and comments made by visitors to the exhibition. A factual bullet point listing of the actual items raised at each workshop is available on request.

2) Summary Of Issues Raised

- a) The primary concern that was raised during this stage of the consultation process was the impact that the coal recovery programme would have on the amenity of residents through noise, traffic movements, dust, highway safety, hours of operation and intensity. Overall there was concern as to how their amenity would be safeguarded and how these potential issues could be satisfactorily overcome. The potential highway congestion in the local area and on the wider network was a matter of considerable concern.
- b) There were some initial queries on why the coal recovery had to take place and why the area could not just be reclaimed without development afterwards. There was scepticism concerning whether the proposal would actually be implemented or whether these consultation events were simply "yet another" consultation exercise, where the opinion of the local residents would be ignored.
- c) The general response concerning the process and the opportunities for further involvement was positive although the timescale associated with the works was longer than many attendees expected.
- d) Benefits of the proposal were considered to be the removal of the motorbike problem which is currently seen as a serious issue of concern in the area. There was some concern regarding the quality of the residential uses on the site and clarification sought of how many houses were being proposed to be developed. The opportunity to broaden the range and choice of housing in the area was seen generally as a positive gain and there was strong opinion that the residential uses should not be high density in what was regarded generally as a 'rural' area.

- e) The opportunity to create links from the existing community to the countryside beyond The British was seen as a key benefit, plus the creation of open recreation space. There was concern that the areas of high landscape value should not be developed and the ecological value needs to be assessed.
- f) The opportunity to use rail transport to remove coal from the site was raised although there could be possible conflict with the existing national cycle route.
- g) There was strong feeling in relation to keeping the historic buildings on the site and communicating the historic importance of the site. Keeping the Big Arch was considered to be vital as an icon for the area.
- h) Frequent comments were made concerning incidences of flooding on the site and the need to address this in the proposals.
- i) There were concerns raised by members of the public at the exhibition concerning the demand for local schools that could arise from the new development and whether this would allow any existing schools to remain open which are currently threatened with closure.
- j) The landowner and community workshops were focussed more on the impacts of the proposal, what benefits it could bring for the quality of the area (recreation space, countryside links, tourism), creation of a community and the importance of the proposal being a 'quality' development as opposed to 'sprawling' homogenous high density housing. There was general enthusiasm for a residential development that could broaden the local private housing stock.
- k) The statutory consultees workshop focussed more on the actual processes of the scheme and the matters likely to arise once the scheme progresses in terms of statutory consents. It was considered that this was an opportunity to produce an exemplar of sustainable development at every stage of the process. The involvement of statutory consultees at this early stage of the development process was seen as good practice. The importance of a robust Environmental Impact Assessment was stressed in terms of gaining local confidence and transparency of decision-making.
- l) The majority of concerns raised at the exhibition arose from a 'fear of the unknown' and some misinformation. There was a generally positive response concerning the future opportunities for consultation and many attendees were looking forward with interest to seeing development options for the site. It was generally considered that the approach being taken to this scheme was a major improvement on the 1997 approach. There seemed to be a general acceptance of the benefits of the coal recovery element of the scheme in terms of financially enabling the reclamation of the site, however, there appeared to be little direct support for this element on its own. Overall, there remained concern of what impacts this could have on the surrounding area.

3) Attendance at the events

- a) The percentage of invitees attending the briefing meetings was generally quite high, particularly for the landowners' event.

- b) Attendance at the public exhibition was reasonable compared with similar exhibitions staged elsewhere in the County Borough. Comments were received from some members of the public that the exhibition had not been well enough publicised and that a change in opening times may make it easier for others to attend in future.

4) BULLET POINT SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES (from Workshop events)

a) Environment

- What will be the **impact of the coal recovery** on local residents – dust, noise, air, traffic
- Drainage of the site needs addressing
- Importance of comprehensive and transparent EIA
- Opportunity to be an exemplar of sustainable development at all stages of the scheme
- Importance of existing ecological habitat and opportunity to create habitat
- Opportunity for recreation opportunities (links to the countryside, creation of lake, footpath links)

b) Movement

- **Traffic impact** – congestion, routes, frequency, wider network impact
- Access at northern end to avoid flooding problems
- Cycle route should be retained
- Opportunity for rail connection to transport coal
- Big Arch should be retained

c) History

- **Historic buildings** should be retained and ideally reused or at least preserved
- Opportunity for interpretation features of history – tourism benefits, involvement of education
- Likely to be unknown archaeological features on site
- Embankment should be retained – archaeological feature

d) Community

- **Integration** with the existing community
- Motorbike activity on site is harmful to area – could this be stopped as soon as possible. What are the implications of this? Will it be transferred elsewhere?
- Opportunities for educational involvement
- The development should have unique characteristics – not just ‘more of the same’
- Use of local businesses and workforce
- Security of site
- Facilities to be provided?

5) Attendance at the events.

a) Workshop #1 Landowners

- 21 attendees (including 3 County Councillors)

b) Workshop #2 Statutory consultees

- 27 attendees.

c) Workshop #3 Community representatives

- 17 attendees (including 3 County Councillors).

d) Exhibition (two days)

- The number of attendees over the event period was 44 people.



revitalising industrial sites

Annex 3 The British Stakeholder Briefing Workshops Structure and Outputs



1. Introductions

- Harmoni
- Torfaen / WDA
- Technical Advisers: Powell Dobson, Arups, Jellards
- Other attendees

2. Explanation of Structure and Outputs : theme being to brief

3. Brief History of Site – previous uses

- 1997 application
- What's happened since
- Cabinet Report 2003
- Commitment to reclamation & redevelopment

4. Timescales of Masterplanning Process

- Coal Extraction
- Reclamation
- Redevelopment
- Reference to Diag (attached)

5. Opportunities for Public engagement

6. Explanation of SPG roles and outputs

7. Managing Expectations

8. Refreshments

9. Break out Groups/discussions of key issues

Plenary Summary

Take Away / Aide Memoire:

- Site Boundary
- Photos
- Parties involved
- Timescales
- Contacts

The British

Stakeholder Briefing Workshop

AGENDA

1.	Introductions	All	
2.	Explanation of Structure and Outputs	PDU	
3.	History of Site	TCBC	
4	Timescales of Masterplanning Process	Arup PDU	
5	Opportunities for Public engagement	PDU	
6	Explanation of SPG roles and outputs	TCBC	15 mins total for first section
7	Refreshments		10 mins
8	Break out Groups/discussions of key issues	All	20 mins
9	Plenary Summary and Conclusion	PDU	5 mins