

# Midland Metro

## 1.6 Consultation

### 1.6.1 General

Consultation with statutory bodies and interested parties is an important part of assessing the environmental impacts of a scheme. Consultation is important since it helps to facilitate a full understanding of the baseline environment and potential nature of impacts, and ensures that the scheme is designed to maximise the benefits it can deliver. The Guide to the Transport and Works Act <sup>(15)</sup> notes that adequate and timely consultation is an essential part of the Order authorisation process, providing helpful feedback into the design development programme. In addition, the UNECE's <sup>(16)</sup> Aarhus Convention requires that the public must participate in decisions about development that may have a significant effect on the environment. The European Commission is preparing a Directive to give effect to the Convention across the European Member States. This would lead to a revision of the EIA Directive (85/337/EEC as amended by 97/11/EC) to provide for early and effective opportunities for the public to participate in the development consent procedure. Centro, in conjunction with ERM, has adopted this principle and has undertaken a full programme of consultation.

The consultation process has also included a continuous dialogue with a number of key parties, including Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) <sup>(17)</sup>.

The aim of this consultation has been to ensure that the views of the relevant statutory authorities and other persons likely to be affected by the scheme are identified early on in the EIA process and taken into account in the ES.

### 1.6.2 Scoping Report

A Scoping Report setting out the proposed scope of the EIA has been issued to a range of bodies with a potential interest in the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill scheme. Although the undertaking of a scoping study is not a requirement of the Transport and Works Act, it is generally recognised as good EIA practice and was fully supported by Centro.

A description of the scoping exercise that was undertaken is provided in *Section 3.5*. A list of those bodies consulted on the Scoping Report, together with a summary of their responses, is provided in [Appendix B](#).

### 1.6.3 Key Consultees

Meetings have been held with a number key consultees including:

- Dudley town centre businesses;
- Waterfront businesses;
- Merry Hill traders;
- Newby Foundries;
- Dudley Zoo and Castle;
- Black Country Living Museum;
- Environment Agency;
- Bloor Homes;
- bus operators;
- Dudley Taxi Alliance;
- Round Oak Rail;
- Brierley Hill Leisure Centre; and
- Brierley Hill Buddhist Temple.

Dialogue has been maintained with a number of the consultees throughout the development of the project.

### 1.6.4 Public Consultation

In addition to consultation on the Scoping Report, Centro has undertaken rigorous public consultation with a wide range of community and business interests. In early 2002 a public consultation exercise was undertaken. The aim of this consultation was to present Centro's proposals for the scheme to residents in the vicinity of the alignment, and to seek comments and obtain feedback on the proposed route. Property owners and occupiers located within around 200 m of the route were invited to attend open meetings, via an information pack sent to over 3,500 properties in February 2002. A copy of the information leaflet sent out to residents is provided in [Appendix C](#).

A series of seven open meetings were held between February and April 2002, at which officers from Centro, SMBC and DMBC were at hand to explain the proposals and obtain feedback. Each meeting, chaired by a Passenger Transport Authority Councillor or a Centro officer, included a short presentation and a video followed by a question and answer session. Feedback forms were also completed by those attending the meetings.

Exhibitions have also been held throughout the development of the project as part of a general programme of awareness raising. These have taken place at locations such as the Merry Hill Centre and Dudley market, and have been staffed by officers from SMBC, DMBC and Centro. A dedicated hotline has also been established to enable members of the public to speak to a project team member or to request additional information.

### 1.6.5 Additional Consultation

#### General

A number of additional consultation meetings and exercises have been undertaken with individual residents. These meetings were held as a result of specific concerns raised at the open meetings and exhibitions described in *Section 1.6.4* above. A description of the issues raised,

summarised for the Consultation Report <sup>(8)</sup> for the scheme, is provided below.

### Great Bridge

Following a poor response to information packs sent to residents in this area, a questionnaire was hand-delivered to properties located in close proximity to this proposed stop. As a result and following concerns over the use of a proposed secondary access to this stop, the access has been removed from the scheme.

### Residents of Bramah Way, St Helen's Avenue, Mansion Drive and Daisy Close

At a meeting held at Great Bridge School in March 2002, concerns were raised regarding the possible widening of the corridor in this area. In particular, residents were worried that they may lose land from their gardens as a result. In order to clarify this issue a letter was delivered to all properties to assure residents that land take from their properties would not be required.

### Heath Close

Following the meeting at Great Bridge School described above, a number of residents from Heath Close raised concerns relating to Centro's proposal to break through from a disused private walkway linking Horseley Heath and the railway corridor to Heath Close. A petition was also raised objecting to this aspect of the scheme, and as a result, it was subsequently removed. All residents have been informed of this decision via hand delivered letters.

### Birmingham New Road

Following a meeting at Coneygre Community Centre in March 2002, a meeting with residents from Lindley Avenue was held to discuss specific concerns regarding the proposed Birmingham New Road stop. In particular, the following issues were raised:

- perceived parking problems caused by users of the proposed stop parking on adjacent streets;
- noise and visual intrusion;
- a perceived decrease in property values;
- possible future use of the alignment for freight; and
- the use of an existing walkway.

Centro is undertaking a study to look at potential parking and traffic impacts at all stops, and will also provide comprehensive signing to park and ride sites. The potential for noise and visual impacts to occur are considered in *Sections 6.4* and *6.6* of this ES respectively. Following the meeting described above, Centro agreed to undertake a survey of the area around the stop to determine whether there was support for the principle of the stop. The results showed that a large majority were in favour of the stop.

### Pedmore Road

A number of concerns were raised at a meeting at Woodside Community Centre in March 2002, including:

- perceived parking (including disabled parking) and traffic impacts;
- the possible future use of the corridor for freight operations; and
- the location of the stop.

A further open meeting was subsequently held in December 2002 and as a result, Centro are considering the issues raised.

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