

community consultation

Centros has pioneered full community involvement from long before it became part of Government planning guidance. Working closely with local authorities, we organise comprehensive public consultation programmes to involve local people and key local interest groups from the outset.

Effective consultation relies on good communications so that people can contribute their views on the basis of facts rather than fiction. We aim to be as open and transparent as possible, using project websites to provide up-to-date information, providing regular briefings to the local press and distributing information through leaflets and other media.

To encourage maximum feedback, we provide as many conduits for communication as possible – including Freepost, telephone hotline, email, on-line questionnaires and, of course, face-to-face feedback through meetings and public exhibitions.

Centros prides itself in being a leader in this field and, to us, the benefits are clear. Good consultation helps to identify potential problems at an early stage and gives us time to resolve them. Openness and engagement with the local community also helps to generate goodwill for the development and a momentum that will help us overcome the many hurdles faced by complex town and city centre developments.

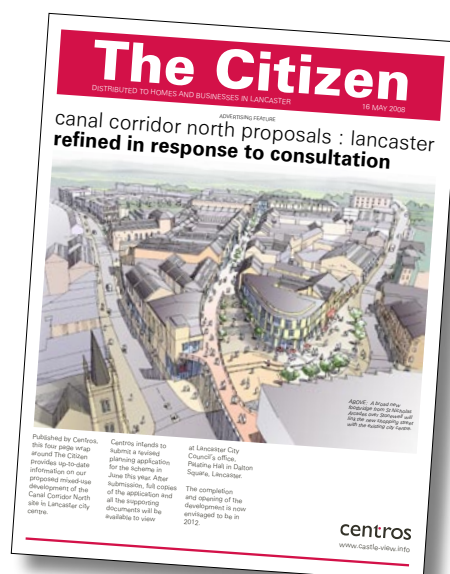
It's an approach that has also won plaudits from such organisations as CABE:

"A development process that appears to us to bring about a strong collaboration between the local authority, as client, landowner and planning authority, the developer and the architect, is to be welcomed. The time taken to consider the views of the local people and to develop a strategy that is simple and exciting is applauded. In summary, we believe that all involved are to be congratulated on the progress that has been made to date."

(CABE comment on the development of arc in Bury St Edmunds)

Castle View, Lancaster

Feedback from the public and local groups – as well as statutory consultees such as English Heritage, CABE and the Theatres Trust – has led to numerous refinements to our proposals for an extension of the city centre. More public open space, 20% more housing and a general lowering of building heights are just part of the changes made through consultation.



Castle View, Lancaster: numerous changes made in response to consultation

arc, Bury St Edmunds

Four stages of consultation helped the scheme evolve into the natural extension of the town's medieval street pattern that will open in spring 2009. The feedback to consultation led directly to the introduction of a 500-seat multi-purpose public venue, widening of the new streets and the addition of underground parking.



Centros regularly consults local interest groups – from Chambers of Commerce and Civic Societies to local residents and site neighbours. This meeting was with access and disability organisations in Bury St Edmunds, where we paid for a signer to translate for a profoundly deaf representative.

Northern Quarter, Portsmouth

Public exhibitions and workshop sessions with all the local interest groups helped us refine our initial proposals considerably. The feedback revealed demand for a second anchor store and as a result we were able to add a John Lewis department store into the scheme.



Northern Quarter, Portsmouth: our exhibition at the scheme's outline stage ran for three weeks in a Portakabin on the site and attracted thousands of local people.