

Patron: The Duke of Norfolk



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1st October 2008

Henry Cleary Esq
Deputy Director
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Department for Communities and Local Government
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London, SW1E 5DU

Dear Henry

Ford Eco-Town: Barton Willmore Final Submission - Public Consultation

Further to my previous letter dated 14 September 2008 about the Ford-related responses to your Department's Consultation Paper "Living a Greener Future", it will not perhaps surprise you to hear that we are very concerned indeed about the content of the Ford Airfield Vision Group's "Public Consultation for Ford Airfield Eco-Town" report of 30 June 2008.

The report's picture of successful consultation in relation to the Ford Eco-Town proposal is so divorced from reality as to make it unrecognisable in places, and even the synopsis in Chapter 3 (Involvement) of the Final Submission document itself is extremely misleading. For instance, the statement (in para 3.3) that "when consulted strong support has been identified from the public in response to FAVG's exhibition roadshow" is based on the opinion of only some 50 people, and the statement (in para 3.11) that the FAVG has given presentations to and held discussions with CAFÉ is completely untrue.

As a result of these concerns, we have therefore written a critique of the whole of the FAVG's Public Consultation report, and I attach this at Annex A.

In our view, the FAVG has concentrated far too much on the transmission of information rather than in substantive discussions with those who would be

affected by the development, relying strongly on their website, their advertisements and on the results stemming from a poorly attended roadshow. The engagement with the community has been a superficial 'box ticking' exercise, with no genuine attempt to listen to the concerns strongly expressed by the communities affected by the Ford Eco-Town proposal.

Thus, contrary to the assertions in the Public Consultation report, the consultation process has not been a success. Instead, it has been a disaster. The FAVG has simply gone through the motions of a communications exercise, and has failed either to impress or to convince at any level locally. Finally, the pathetic attempt to 'prove' that there is a strong level of local support for the proposed Eco-Town at Ford as a result of receiving information from no more than 108 people is a complete travesty; indeed, it is a dishonest use of statistics designed to mislead the decision-makers.

I hope that you will find our analysis helpful, and I should be grateful if you would please be very cautious before accepting the FAVG's version of the apparent success of their consultation arrangements in relation to the Ford Eco-Town proposal; nothing could be further from reality.

Yours sincerely,

Vicky Newman

Victoria Newman
Vice-Chairman CAFE