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Archdeacon of Dudley

09 August 2005

Mr Malcolm Griffiths
Director of Planning Services
BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove, Worcs.
B60 1AA



Dear Mr Griffiths

I have looked at your Statement of Community Involvement on your web-site and wish to make three observations.

The first concerns hard to reach groups. The document looks at a number of means of contacting people in such groups (page 11 FF). In my experience, most of these methods still miss their targets. I would suggest that Local Authorities staff need to go to youth clubs, residential homes, prisons and so on, to speak to people directly, not through representatives or focus groups, about the proposals, with interpreters as necessary. I appreciate that it is expensive but the other methods tend not to work. An alternative is for the Council to recruit and train representatives from those hard to reach groups to visit their peers to start the debate. This is a longer-term strategy but might remove some of the barriers between the Council and residents.

Secondly, I am concerned that the language is full of jargon and Local Authority speak, such as may be found on page 18.

Thirdly, a Faith Group should not be confined to the "Communities of Interest" list, page 19, because that means we may not be consulted about wider community matters, just those that the officers think the Church will be interested in. We must be in the "Communities of Place" and "Service Providers" lists because of our engagement and activities.

Thank you for seeking my views on this matter.

Yours sincerely