

Table 1: Techniques

Approach	Advantages	Disadvantages	Costs
<p>Communications audit</p>	<p>Identifies and targets key audiences.</p> <p>Summarises local politics and elected representatives.</p> <p>Identifies key contacts.</p> <p>Identifies most likely issues of concern.</p> <p>Identifies similar projects/operations within locality.</p> <p>Provides basis from which to develop a communications plan.</p>	<p>Is only a first pass at assessing the situation.</p> <p>Must check out any assumptions made in audit about likely issues.</p>	<p>Requires a visit to locality, meetings with developer / planning consultants and desk research.</p> <p>Circa £2K to £4K.</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>Universal 24-hour access.</p> <p>Fairly easy to set up and update as projects develop or new information becomes available.</p> <p>Easy access to key documents that you wish to put in the public domain - eg minutes of community liaison meetings.</p> <p>With video becoming an increasingly important medium, the website is an ideal place for short videos.</p> <p>Video/animations help to visualise what is proposed or to clarify complex issues.</p> <p>Website can be used as medium through which to conduct surveys, build up a database of followers as well as</p>	<p>Only reach e-literate audiences which may be fine in the future but does not cover all important stakeholder groups at present etc.</p> <p>To be credible must be kept up to date.</p> <p>Care needed about level of detail and use of language.</p>	<p>Relatively inexpensive, once set up, provided constructed so as not to require frequent revision etc.</p>

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	<p>dissenters which can then be used pro-actively.</p> <p>One of the first places the media and other interested groups look for information.</p> <p>Allows you to clearly summarise all relevant information and key messages.</p> <p>Allows you to respond very quickly with appropriate information as new issues emerge.</p>		
Video	<p>Excellent medium for helping to educate people about often complex issues.</p> <p>Can help visualise proposed projects.</p> <p>Can show examples of similar projects / operations and restoration.</p> <p>Can utilise mixture of graphics, film, animations, commentary.</p> <p>Can be uses in a variety of applications eg website, exhibitions, YouTube, show at meetings.</p>	<p>Badly produced resource can create poor impression.</p> <p>Is relatively more costly to produce and update than other resources.</p>	<p>Depends upon level of complexity and use of animation. Say £5,000 upwards.</p>
CD/DVD	<p>Conveniently packaged form of information.</p> <p>Was seen as a very useful when internet connections were less reliable and slower.</p> <p>Can be useful when you want to convey</p>	<p>Less flexibility than web.</p> <p>Once issued cannot be updated.</p> <p>Costly to produce and distribute in large quantities.</p> <p>Need to ensure that distributed</p>	<p>Low cost copying once base programme made. Around £1 a disc for larger quantities.</p>

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	<p>large amounts of data.</p> <p>Can have menus etc to facilitate use</p>	<p>effectively to key audiences.</p> <p>Becoming less useful for distributing images/video as broadband improves</p>	
<p>Leaflets/ booklets/ briefing notes</p>	<p>Provide clear and well presented outline of project / issues.</p> <p>Can be mailed to ensure delivery to specific locations/postcodes.</p> <p>Addresses concerns over providing information to non IT literate members of the community.</p> <p>Allows you to be pro-active in communications (rather than relying on individuals looking at website) Can be used to encourage people to visit website.</p> <p>Useful as handouts at exhibition or meetings etc.</p> <p>Allows information to be summarised in convenient format accessible to all.</p>	<p>Cannot be updated unless reprinted.</p>	<p>Relatively cheap to produce.</p> <p>Circa £3,000 to £5,000 for copywriting, design and printing of 4-page A4 or A5 leaflet with print run of circa 1,000. Cost of imagery used may increase costs.</p> <p>Distribution costs need to be considered when planning mailshot.</p>
<p>One to One meetings</p>	<p>Often useful to arrange face to face meetings with individuals who are most likely to be affected by a project or have concerns about its likely impact. This would for example include immediate neighbours to the site.</p> <p>Ensures that individuals have the relevant information and recognise that developer is genuinely seeking to consult</p>	<p>Needs to be handled sensitively, can be counter-productive if developer is seen as aggressive, uncaring or arrogant.</p> <p>Time consuming.</p> <p>May raise fears or concerns where they did not previously exist.</p>	<p>Although time consuming in man hours, can be very cost effective in terms of longer term benefit.</p>

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	<p>with them.</p> <p>Often easier to discuss specific issues and explore options before meeting in a more public forum.</p> <p>Helps to build relationships.</p>		
Public exhibitions	<p>Opportunity to meet broad range of stakeholders while avoiding confrontational public meetings.</p> <p>Present information in clear and concise format.</p> <p>Often the minimum required in terms of public consultation.</p> <p>Discuss issues with individuals so genuine two way exchange of views.</p> <p>Allows public to put a face to and connect with the people involved in the project.</p> <p>May help to identify champions to support project and enable you to identify extent of concern on specific issues.</p> <p>Helps identify interest groups you need to engage with.</p> <p>Demonstrates pro-active engagement with public.</p> <p>Can be used to demonstrate that you</p>	<p>Need to ensure that event is well managed and promoted.</p> <p>Can be high jacked by an opponent group.</p> <p>Need to ensure that all interested parties have opportunity to access - may need to include evening/weekend or hold on several sites depending on size of community you need to consult with.</p>	<p>Depends on size of venue, promotional costs, costs of resources eg visual aids, leaflets etc. Support staff attending.</p>

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	have consulted.		
Site visits to a similar operation	<p>Very effective way of helping individuals to both visualise the impact of the proposed project and defuse concerns re issues such as visual impact, noise or dust.</p> <p>Can invite selected groups of representatives or as an open invitation.</p>	<p>Need to ensure that the site chosen is a meaningful comparison.</p> <p>May accentuate concerns if issues such as noise and dust are perceived to be worse than imagined (hopefully this would not be the case).</p> <p>Need to ensure well managed particularly in relation to H&S issues.</p>	<p>Relatively cheap to organise - main costs transportation and publicising the opportunity.</p>
<p>Community liaison groups</p> <p>Set up by the developer involving a range of different interest groups eg parish council</p>	<p>Provide a conduit through which one can meet and discuss issues.</p> <p>You are dealing with representatives of the community (need to ensure a range of elected and other key community representatives are involved).</p> <p>Can provide a channel for two way conversation - representatives act as conduit for others concerns.</p> <p>Helps to build empathy and understanding of other people's perceptions and issues, clarity on motivation / reasons for particular decisions.</p>	<p>Can be counter-productive if one special interest group is allowed to high jack the meetings.</p> <p>Needs to be effectively chaired to work well.</p> <p>Important that proper minutes and actions agreed to be effective.</p> <p>Developer credibility will be damaged if they do not follow through.</p>	<p>Can be very cost effective for the project in terms of issue resolution.</p> <p>Main costs are administration and management of meetings.</p> <p>Need to ensure that developer is well prepared for meeting.</p>
Focus and discussion groups	<p>Facilitated meetings where people are brought together and asked to discuss a range of issues in relation to the project.</p> <p>Tend to follow a fairly structured approach providing a clear mechanism for feedback to be provided and suggestions put forward.</p>	<p>Need to ensure that they are run effectively.</p> <p>Can be costly to set up.</p> <p>Need to ensure that they are representative of the community as a whole and not allow over representation</p>	<p>Although can be costly to organise and manage.</p>

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Charette	<p>This technique involves working with designers, stakeholders and other experts to work through proposal and evolve design based on the feedback from these groups. Very consultative way of developing/refining a proposal/project.</p> <p>Those involved understand the reasoning behind the development of the plan.</p> <p>Helps to ensure broad range of support for project.</p> <p>Ultimately help to reduce costs of delivery and planning delays due to early clarity on project design and issues.</p>	<p>by any special interest group. Needs to be well managed.</p> <p>May be when very little flexibility in how the proposal can be developed.</p> <p>Tends to be used on bigger projects eg urban redevelopment.</p>	<p>Costly as requires and a range of experts to be involved during the exercise but good return in terms of the end result.</p>
Public meetings	<p>Provides a forum in which project is presented in an open meeting.</p> <p>Address questions and issues from the audience - provides opportunity for a variety of views to be expressed.</p> <p>Developer is able to put across their views in an open forum.</p> <p>Clear demonstration of developer being involved in a consultation process.</p>	<p>Danger that meeting will be dominated by those individuals opposing a project.</p> <p>Need to ensure that meeting is well chaired so all parties have opportunity to express their views.</p> <p>Can create a distorted view of the extent to which the development is opposed by the community.</p> <p>Not recommended unless unavoidable as other forms of consultation are more effective.</p>	<p>Main costs are venue hire, publicising the meetings, ensuring that project representatives are well prepared - includes both information about project but also to deal with possibility of hostile questioning from the floor.</p>
Social media e.g. Face book, YouTube, Twitter	<p>Can be used to inform and update about project - instantly.</p>	<p>Needs to be monitored on a daily basis.</p> <p>Can be exploited by organised</p>	<p>Once one engages with this medium will need to ensure regularly monitoring and updating.</p>

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	<p>YouTube useful way of facilitating access to project videos.</p> <p>Twitter can be used to notify individuals as project moves through different phases.</p>	<p>antagonistic groups if not closely managed. But a good way of reaching younger audiences and, in the case of Twitter, reaching journalists.</p>	
Media in general	<p>Need to build relationship with media.</p> <p>Opportunity to put ones views.</p> <p>Reach a large audience.</p> <p>Inform public.</p> <p>Can influence local opinion.</p> <p>May need a co-ordinated campaign</p>	<p>You cannot control the messages, only influence.</p> <p>If you do not engage may allow opposition a free hand.</p> <p>Can influence local opinion.</p> <p>Controversy makes a good story for journalist.</p>	<p>Relatively low cost.</p>
Television and radio	<p>A good way of reaching large audiences.</p> <p>Local radio may be a good way of reaching local people.</p>	<p>Difficult to get access unless the issues are very controversial or contacts with TV and radio editors are good.</p> <p>Only likely to get a few minutes coverage so it is essential to distil two or three key messages and make sure these are aired.</p> <p>Important to “come over” well - need experienced people to present.</p>	<p>Essentially a one-off opportunity that must go well or it could be very damaging.</p>

Table 2: Example of a structure for a communications strategy

Relationships to other organisations and individuals	Lead communicator (names of persons)	Messages, offers or propositions	Communication activities	Communications channels
Those parties that we do things in collaboration with:				
Those we do things to:				
Those we do things for:				
Those that have views about us that really matter:				
Those we request things from:				
Others:				

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