Statement of Community Involvement: Ducie Street / Store Street Car Park, Manchester

Prepared by Indigo Public Affairs on behalf of Pridebank Ltd. & Inacity (Piccadilly) LLP

1.0 Introduction

This report has been compiled by the Manchester office of specialist community consultation company Indigo Public Affairs in respect of Ballymore Properties Ltd's proposal to seek planning permission for use of the Ducie Street / Store Street site as a temporary car park for a period of up to two years.

Ballymore Properties Ltd. fully acknowledges the importance of dialogue between the developer team and local community and key stakeholders. It is recognised that the overall quality of development and viability of regeneration is considerably enhanced where the development takes into account local views and requirements.

As a company with a long-term commitment to the regeneration of Manchester city centre and specifically the Piccadilly area, Ballymore Properties Ltd. places significant emphasis on establishing long-term trust and responsiveness to local stakeholders.

Accordingly, it has set out a strategy for stakeholder engagement and community consultation process for this site, including identifying how feedback from the local community and key stakeholders will influence the ongoing design and development of the scheme.

Working together with all members of the client team, and on behalf of Ballymore Properties Ltd, we have undertaken an extensive local consultation since the start of 2008 with all levels of stakeholders from community leaders, community groups, businesses, and residents through to elected representatives and other interested parties

The proposals put forward in the planning application have been subject to consultation with and input from stakeholders such as councillors, council planning officers, residents associations, and Greater Manchester Police.

A process of discussion with council planning officers has led to a number of changes to the form and design of the application, with a view to ensuring safety, security, and harmonious traffic flow.

However, as can be readily acknowledged, the opportunity for consultation and input into design is somewhat limited given the nature of the proposed use, with little or no substantive development anticipated.

1.1 Consultation context

Consultation is an increasingly important requirement for major development projects, and is looked on positively by both local and national government. Indeed, the Government is seeking to put community consultation at the heart of new approaches to planning and redevelopment.

The Government has undertaken the first fundamental reform of the planning system for more than a decade. Its reform aims to ensure that the system is more flexible and responsive. One of the key reforms is to ensure greater involvement of local communities in the planning process. The core objectives that have underpinned the Government's planning reforms have been to speed up the planning system and to increase public involvement in the process.

The values that underpin the Government's planning policies are part of a wider agenda for greater Corporate Social Responsibility, which encourages companies to take a greater responsibility for wider community and sustainability issues. Just as politicians need to be seen to be ethical and moral, so does business. Appearing to be, and actually being, responsible is now critical across both the private and the public sector.

Many Government consultations take a written form at departmental level and provide the public with an opportunity to give their views. More recently, consultation has become a statutory requirement and key component of a number of local government initiatives such as Best Value and Sustainable Community Strategies.

The point of consultation now is much more to do with outcomes and informing practice, rather than simply giving the public an opportunity to have a say.

"One of the principles of sustainable development is to involve the community in developing the vision for its area. Communities should be asked to offer ideas about what that vision should be, and how it can be achieved.

Local communities should be given the opportunity to participate fully in the process for drawing up specific plans or policies and to be consulted on proposals for development. Local authorities, through their community strategies and local development documents, and town and parish councils, through parish plans, should play a key role in developing full and active community involvement in their areas."

Planning authorities should build a clear understanding of the make-up, interests and needs of the communities in their areas. Communities will be made up of many different interest groups, for example, relating to a particular place, issues (such as access for the disabled, local environmental quality, or support for small businesses), values or religion.

Some of these will be well established and represented. But some groups may be less well equipped to engage with the planning system. An inclusive approach should be taken to ensure that different groups have the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged in the process. Identifying and understanding the needs of groups who find it difficult to engage with the planning system is critical to achieving sustainable development objectives.

Community involvement in planning should not be a reactive, tick-box, process.

It should enable the local community to say what sort of place they want to live in at a stage when this can make a difference. Effective community involvement requires an approach which:

– tells communities about emerging policies and proposals in good time;
– enables communities to put forward ideas and suggestions and participate in developing proposals and options. It is not sufficient to invite them to simply comment once these have been worked-up;
– consults on formal proposals;
- ensures that consultation takes place in locations that are widely accessible;
– provides and seeks feedback.

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, January 2005

2.0 Ducie Street / Store Street development context

The site has been used in recent years as a temporary car park operated by NCP, making use of otherwise vacant land dominated by disused railway arches. Parking provision was made on the upper level of the arches, with access from Ducie Street. The arches themselves and the frontage on Store Street were essentially derelict, giving the Store Street area an unwelcoming appearance with genuine and perceived fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.

The site was acquired first by Inacity and subsequently by a joint venture partnership ('Pridebank Ltd & Inacity (Piccadilly) LLP), and planning permission was granted for a 58-storey tower development of significant quality, intended to be the tallest residential tower in Europe.

As a result of this, enabling work has been carried out on site which has primarily involved the demolition and excavation of the area formerly occupied by the arches, creating a large open area level with Store Street and a steep banked gradient to the Ducie Street level. The site has been surrounded by hoardings whilst site clearance work has continued.

Unfortunately, current financial market conditions have had an adverse impact on this development. As such, the project partners have reluctantly decided that although current work to clear the site will continue, the construction phase of this development will be postponed until such time as the financial and property markets stabilise. Accordingly a temporary car park facility will be restored to the site in the interim period.

This is viewed as being a practical and sensible alternative to leaving the site empty for many months; it will create additional car parking capacity in the busy Piccadilly area and will help to ensure that the site is safe and secure.

It is proposed that the site should be used as a 24 hour car park for up to 390 cars and light vehicles, with associated infrastructure provision including lighting columns, barriers, bay markings, pay-stations etc.

3.0 The consultation process

Pridebank Ltd. & Inacity (Piccadilly) LLP believe that consultation and stakeholder input needs to be strategically planned and properly integrated with project development. Accordingly Indigo Public Affairs have been commissioned to carry out this function in conjunction with the developer project team on an ongoing basis. This work has mainly comprised consultation and communication relating to the proposed tower development and enabling works, but has been extended to cover the proposed car park scheme.

Indigo follows a five stage process in community consultation to ensure transparency and understanding and encourage participation throughout the process.

1. **Identifying key community groups, target consultation area, and key local stakeholders; notifying the community and stakeholders about the process for the consultation and the future timetable.**
2. **Providing information about the plan in the form of a leaflet, stakeholder briefing meetings, and a community drop-in exhibition. Given the limited nature of the car park proposals this has been limited in this case, a letter has been used instead of a leaflet, and the exhibition is felt to be unnecessary.**
3. **Analysing the feedback to see what issues the developer needs to address to ensure the development fits in with the requirements of the local people.**
4. **Providing a response from the project team to that feedback.**
5. **Publicising the key issues and Ballymore's response to them as required.**

The consultation described herein has commenced and has largely been completed, although work will continued to be carried out on behalf of the applicants throughout the period before the application comes before the Planning Committee. During this time the council will also carry out its own consultation procedures.

We have carried out a process of consultation with key local groups and stakeholders, explaining our proposals, answering questions and using their views to develop our scheme. This work has been ongoing for some months in respect of the Piccadilly Tower scheme, enabling us to build on existing contact and communication with relevant stakeholders.

3.2 Briefing Letter

With regard to the specific car park proposal, we have sent a briefing letter to approximately 50 stakeholders including the following

- **Ward Councillors (City Centre Ward; Ancoats and Clayton Ward)**
- **Council Ward Co-ordinators (ditto)**
- **Tony Lloyd MP**
- **Town Centre Securities Ltd.**
- **Avis Car Rental**
- **Gateway House tenants**
- **Government Office North West (proposed tenants of Rail House)**
- **North West NHS**
- **Piccadilly Village Residents Association (representing the neighbouring housing developments on Jutland Street and off Store Street)**
- **The Place**
- **British Waterways**
- **Greater Manchester Police**
- **The Piccadilly Partnership**

- **Urban Bubble Ltd apartment management company**
- **Local voluntary sector organisations**
- **Individual residents on our mailing list**

As a follow-up, approximately 250 copies of this letter have been delivered door-to-door to neighbouring residents in the Jutland Street and Piccadilly Village developments.

In addition, consultation has been carried out by the project team with statutory consultees and non-community stakeholders including the Environment Agency and United Utilities.

The letter identifies means by which residents and other stakeholders could get in touch if they have any queries or other feedback. These consist of:

1. **A Freephone telephone line, staffed during office hours by Indigo personnel.**
2. **Email address**
3. **FREEPOST postal reply address for feedback slip on leaflet and/or other written submission**

Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujerati, and Mandarin translations have been available on request.

3.3 Addressing barriers

Throughout the ongoing communication and consultation process relating to this site in terms of both the tower development and the car park proposal, we have been mindful of the need to address barriers to participation, including:

- **Ethnic, cultural and language**
- **Mobility and access**
- **Age (young and old)**
- **Health**
- **Literacy**
- **Time and lifestyle**

Accordingly, we have designed information to be available in other community languages, ensured that any venues used were accessible to people with limited mobility, and scheduled meetings at a time and date that would allow optimal attendance.

4.0 Results of consultation

4.1 Feedback

Feedback has been received from the following organisations:

- **Cllr Marc Ramsbottom, City Centre Ward, MCC**

- **MCC Homelessness team**
- **Urban Bubble Ltd**
- **Town Centre Securities**
- **Jutland House residents association**
- **Piccadilly Village residents association**
- **Piccadilly Partnership**

No negative feedback has been received; a number of stakeholders have contacted us to welcome the proposals and the information provided.

A number of minor queries have been raised as follows:

- **identity of proposed operator of car park**
- **lighting arrangements**
- **security arrangements**
- **position of entrance / exit barriers**
- **boundary with Jutland Street**
- **surfacing of Jutland Street**
- **flyposting on Store Street and Jutland Street**
- **signage**
- **ongoing communication arrangements with local residents**

These have all been responded to appropriately.

Most stakeholders are supportive of the proposed use as a temporary car park provided it is suitably managed. Whilst many would wish to see the Tower development go ahead as part of massive transformation of the area, there is an acknowledgement that the current situation is difficult and a consensus that additional car parking in the Piccadilly area will be on the whole beneficial.

4.2 Follow-up

In usual circumstances Indigo would feedback consultation responses to the project team and an action plan would be set up to ensure that these responses were addressed as part of the design process where possible. For most developments involving buildings and/or public realm works this is helpful and desirable. However, given that the development in this case involves creation of a surface car park, there is considered to be limited scope for meaningful input into the design process. There is clearly little opportunity for variation of the design and built form.

5.0 Continued consultation

Indigo Public Affairs have been carrying out ongoing consultation and communication with local stakeholders for this site on a long-term basis, and it is proposed that this activity will continue as required as part of the eventual redevelopment of the site.

In the meantime, interim arrangements will be implemented including:

- **Follow up meetings as required with local community stakeholders such as businesses and residents associations to address any issues that may arise as a result of the application or the operation of the car park. We will continue these meetings until we are satisfied that any group that wishes to comment on or discuss our proposals with us has had the opportunity to do so. We are happy to meet with all groups and individuals, at a mutually convenient time and location.**

- **Continuing our freephone hotline, email address, and freepost address for any stakeholder or resident that wishes to contact us.**

- **Continuing contact with the community via established e-mail mailing list of interested parties in order to understand the needs of the local community and these can best be addressed within the development.**

During this process, Manchester City Council will be carrying out its own formal consultation procedure

Appendix: Information Letter (attached)

21st October 2008

Dear Stakeholder,

Pridebank Ltd. (Piccadilly LLP)
Piccadilly Tower, Ducie Street, Manchester

I am writing to you and to other local residents and stakeholders on behalf of Pridebank Ltd, in order to update you on the future of the proposed Piccadilly Tower development on land between Ducie Street and Store Street, Manchester.

As you may be aware, work has been underway for some months to clear the site in preparation for a major 58-storey residential and hotel development. A significant quantity of material has been removed from the site and the existing railway arches demolished.

Unfortunately, current financial market conditions have had an adverse impact on this development. As such, the project partners have reluctantly decided that although current work to clear the site will continue, the construction phase of this development will be postponed until such time as the financial and property markets stabilise.

We apologise for any disruption caused during the site works carried out to date, and express our regret that the overall Tower development will not proceed at this time. Nevertheless we would like to reiterate our commitment to being "considerate constructors" and to maintaining a "good neighbour" policy with local residents, businesses, and community representatives.

The project partners wish to emphasise that they will be retaining ownership of this site and remain fully committed to restarting this development when conditions allow. We wish to assure local residents and stakeholders that the site will continue to be responsibly managed and used in the interim period.

Accordingly, a planning application is to be submitted in the near future to Manchester City Council for permission to allow the site to revert to its previous use as a temporary car park for a period of two years.

It is proposed that the car park will be accessible from Store Street and the "lower" part of the site will be used for 24-hour pay-and-display parking for cars and light vehicles only. The site will be protected by security barriers and will be covered by CCTV. It is also envisaged that the operator will provide an on-site security presence.

In addition, the site project team is working closely with the architectural liaison officer at Greater Manchester Police to ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to ensure safety and minimise the risk of crime and antisocial behaviour.
It is anticipated that the hoarding along Store Street will be replaced by post-and rail fencing, but that the hoarding along Jutland Street will remain for safety

reasons. It will be lit by lighting column installations which will be "shielded" to prevent light pollution affecting neighbouring properties.

As part of the consultation process for this planning application, we would very much welcome feedback from local residents and stakeholders.
We expect that there should not be any direct inconvenience to local residents arising from these proposals, given that the site was previously used in this way, but we would be more than happy to respond to any questions or concerns that may arise.

Please feel free to contact us via the following methods:

Post: FREEPOST RRXL-XEBC-JELE
Ducie Street Consultation
Indigo Public Affairs
82 King Street, Manchester
M2 4WQ
Email: greg.stone@indigopa.com
Phone: 0161 635 4511

Yours sincerely,

Greg Stone
Account Director