

SDPAG observers' interim update on SDP consultation events.

Two AG members (David Collier, Paul Dorfman or myself) have now attended two days at each of the consultation events at Plymouth and Dunfermline to act as observers on behalf of the AG.

MOD have staffed the exhibition and led the workshops. Green Issues have facilitated the workshops, run the reception desk and provided general support. Each of the events has been supported by either a representative from the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

The exhibition consisted of display boards, publications and the SDP video. MOD staff have been at hand to assist visitors and answer questions. The workshops consisted of a presentation by MOD, followed by the opportunity for discussion and questions. Issues which arose in the workshops have been captured on "post-its" which were placed on the wall for others to study. Notes of the meeting are made. MOD have been analysing each event and identifying "lessons learnt" for future events. AG observers have also fed issues to the MOD and will be producing a report for the AG at the end of the consultation.

Unfortunately, attendances at both events have been disappointing, despite local adverts, flyers, local leafletting and media coverage. However there has been some lively debate and interesting views and concerns expressed by a reasonable range of key local community stakeholders. The Plymouth event saw 406 people visiting the exhibition with 87 at the workshops. Dunfermline had 139 visitors and 36 people at the workshops.

AG observers consider that generally the events have been well run with adequate information available for interested parties; any outstanding queries have been captured to be answered later. MOD and naval staff have been communicating with the public very well and ensuring that people are free to express concerns/views. It has been important for MOD staff dealing with submarines locally at each site to be present as this has helped to engender trust with stakeholders; similarly the presence of regulators has assisted. AG observers are also satisfied that key points and concerns are being captured. Most attendees came to get more information and understanding of the project before responding via the consultation feedback form.

MOD have responded to stakeholder requests and added additional events for Saltash Town Hall, Linlithgow, and potentially Rosyth.

AG observers will be attending for one day at the Saltash and Edinburgh events as well as the national stakeholder workshops.

Les Netherton. SDPAG Chair