

## **Community Representation Working Group (CRWG)**

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – 13:00-16:00

### **Attendees:**

Tom Wintle, Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Chair  
DECC officials  
Infrastructure UK

Judith Armit  
Holmfridur Bjarnadottir  
Prof Andrew Blowers  
Kirsty Gogan  
Lisa Levy  
Phil Matthews  
Prof Nick Pidgeon  
Phil Richardson  
Phil Stride  
Cherry Tweed

Simon Bandy - Local Partnerships  
Jenny Coombs - Local Partnerships

### **Committee on Radioactive Waste Management Observers:**

Brian Clark  
John Rennilson

### **Apologies:**

Paul Rowsell (Department for Communities and Local Government)  
HM Treasury

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### **Item 1: Introductions and house-keeping**

The Chair thanked members for giving their time and expertise to the project. He reiterated that the purpose of the group is to help design a set of practical recommendations on how to engage with communities in the future siting of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). Recommendations would need to be informed by a wide range of views and interests, meaning that before they are put to Ministers they will, most likely, be subject to public consultation. Members of the group formally introduced themselves and protocol for the minutes was agreed.

## **Item 2: GDF Initial Actions Project Update**

Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) confirmed that the Community Representation Working Group (CRWG) had been convened to help government address one of the key initial actions set out in the 2014 White Paper – to develop a more detailed process for community involvement within the wider siting process for a GDF. DECC explained how this work would interact with the other initial actions in the White Paper and related work being taken forward by the developer, RWM, and DECC:

- National Geological Screening (NGS). RWM is in the process of developing draft national screening guidance designed to pull together known, relevant geological data in the UK. Outputs from this work (e.g. maps) will support RWM's future engagement with potential host communities.
- National land-use planning. DECC is currently amending the Planning Act 2008 to bring GDF(s) within the definition of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). A draft Order was debated in both Houses of Parliament with successful vote in the Lords and final vote in Commons next week (w/c 16<sup>th</sup> March). The GDF siting process is additional to the planning consent process and in no way overrides the statutory obligations placed on the developer by the planning process. Equally, the fact that there is a statutory process to seek final development consent does not remove the need for an open siting process to first identify a potentially acceptable site.
- In parallel to delivering the initial actions, RWM is taking forward work to prepare as an organisation for formal engagement with communities following completion of the initial actions (expected by end 2016).

DECC explained that common to all this work is robust stakeholder engagement. Engagement undertaken on behalf of the CRWG would need to be cognisant of the engagement activities being led by RWM in its capacity as developer. The group noted that RWM needs to continue to be open and talk to people but should ensure its work with stakeholders ahead of formal community engagement is consistent with engagement activities on behalf of the CRWG and does not pre-empt the outcomes of CRWG work. Clarity for stakeholders on the purpose of engagement will be crucial to maintain public trust and confidence.

### **Action 1 – RWM to clarify for CRWG how its engagement activities ahead of formal community engagement will work**

## **Item 3: Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference (ToR) were circulated to members ahead of the meeting for approval. The group agreed that the ToRs should contain explicit reference to 'voluntarism' when referring to the principles set out in the 2014 White Paper. Otherwise the ToRs were agreed.

**Action 2 – DECC to update ToRs to add explicit reference to ‘voluntarism’ in opening paragraph on commitments in the White Paper.**

**Item 4: Draft Work Programme**

The draft work programme was introduced by Local Partnerships (LP) and agreed by the group, subject to comments. It was noted that clarity on the status of material published on the website is necessary.

The implications of the General Election and Purdah for timing of wider engagement were discussed; the group recommended flagging on the website that a call for evidence will take place following the General Election, subject to Ministerial approval.

The group considered that the work programme should make more explicit that governance around issues of community representation and decision-making throughout a community’s involvement with the siting process will be covered. It was agreed that this was the intention and so should be more explicitly reflected in the work programme to the extent that it is not already clear.

**Action 3 – LP to amend draft work programme to give more prominence to ongoing governance issues under ‘community representation’.**

It was confirmed that CRWG members are welcome to attend Local Partnership led stakeholder engagement events.

**Item 5: Draft Stakeholder Engagement Report**

LP introduced proposals for stakeholder engagement, designed to gather evidence to inform the group’s final outputs on working with communities. Members endorsed the draft stakeholder engagement report, and suggested additional stakeholders to include in the evidence gathering exercise.

It was noted that a realistic view of the resource required to engage a wide range of stakeholders in a meaningful way was needed. It was recommended to look at options other than one-to-one meetings as a means of gathering evidence

The importance of broadening stakeholder engagement beyond those who are already interested in nuclear was noted. The stakeholder engagement process is also an opportunity, at this stage, to start building awareness of the GDF siting process that will be taken forward with potential host communities after 2016.

The importance of clarity when engaging with stakeholders was discussed i.e. Local Partnerships will be gathering information rather than distributing it and will be engaging on how a future process might work, not running a siting process now.

## **Item 6: CRWG Communications**

There was a recommendation to include frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the website. The importance of managing expectations was discussed. It is important that there is clarity about the work of the CRWG and answers to common questions are freely available.

The group agreed to publish its Terms of Reference, pen portraits of members, and meeting minutes on the gov.uk website. It also agreed to develop a FAQs document that would be a living document, updated as issues are discussed by the group. The group agreed there should be clarity in the public domain on the work of the group and advised that opportunities for stakeholders to engage in the work should be flagged clearly.

**Action 4 – DECC to circulate minutes of the meeting for agreement.**

**Action 5 – CRWG members to comment/agree minutes and pen portraits.**

**Action 6 – DECC/LP to work up FAQs for agreement.**

**Action 7 – DECC to publish agreed ToRs, pen portraits and meeting minutes.**

## **Item 7: AOB**

None.