

Community Representation Working Group (CRWG)

Thursday 4th February – 11:00-15:30

Attendees:

Rachel Solomon Williams, Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Chair
DECC officials
Welsh Government

Natalyn Ala - RWM
Judith Armit – Local Partnerships
Holmfridur Bjarnadottir
Prof Andrew Blowers
Kirsty Gogan
Lisa Levy
Phil Matthews
Prof Nick Pidgeon
Phil Richardson
Ivan Stone - RWM
Phil Stride
David Toman - RWM

Apologies:

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
HM Treasury
Julian Wain

Observers:

Brian Clark - Committee on Radioactive Waste Management
John Rennilson - Committee on Radioactive Waste Management

Item 1: Introductions and house-keeping

The Chair thanked members for attending the meeting, and passed on apologies from those unable to attend. Policy development for the CRWG has been moved in house to DECC, and the Chair introduced the new team that will be delivering this work. She summarised that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss Community Representation; in particular approaches to defining 'community', roles and responsibilities of community representatives and potential structures for effective community representation. She emphasised that no conclusions have yet been reached, and further evidence from bilateral meetings with CRWG members, stakeholder engagement and public dialogue meetings will be fed into discussions

over the coming weeks. Issues around community investment and the test of public support will be discussed in the March CRWG meeting.

Item 2: Community Representation

DECC summarised the context and challenges of defining Community Representation. The revised GDF siting process is a national level process, and this means trying to develop a single definition of a 'community' or prescribe a body to represent a 'community' is challenging at the outset when it is unclear where it is situated. This means a flexible approach is required. The long timescales of the project introduce additional complexity.

Topics that were discussed included:

1. Approaches for defining the 'community'
2. How these approaches would feed into the siting process
3. Roles and responsibilities of the community representation body, Local Authorities and the developer
4. Structures for effective community representation

Key issues that were raised in discussion:

- The use of appropriate terminology and labelling.
- The need to understand issues important to a community including localised interests.
- Tools to help determine impact on a community and to identify community interests.
- How community representation will change over time i.e. 15-20 years and how that might feed into changes to community representation.
- The importance of understanding the emotional attachment of a community to an area, locally and from further afield.
- The roles of the developer (RWM) and Government.
- The involvement of all tiers of Local Authority in the process.
- The relationship between the community and the developer.
- The role of regulators in the process.
- The importance of the technical safety case being critically and independently evaluated to build trust with the local community and wider stakeholders.
- Use of a communications plan so that people in the community are empowered.
- International examples of 'mediators' being used in the engagement process.
- 'Community vision' - place-making and legacy, and the intergenerational nature of siting of a GDF.
- Requirements for communities to demonstrate commitment to the programme.

- Provision of support e.g. facilitation and project management, to ensure community representation bodies can function collaboratively long term.
- The governance structure of any community representation group(s).
- Recognition that within the time frames of the project, structures will change.
- The importance of strong leadership within the process and how that can be applied to any community representation structures.

Item 3: Update on open policy making

Planning is underway for open policy making public dialogue meetings in late February/early March, which CRWG members are welcome to attend.

Item 4: Update on Welsh Government policy and progress with Initial Actions

Welsh policy update – the Welsh Government issued a policy statement adopting a policy of geological disposal for the long-term, safe and secure management of higher activity radioactive waste. They aim to deliver arrangements for engaging with communities in Wales that are compatible with those adopted in England, and have therefore taken up full membership of the CRWG.

National Geological Screening – The consultation on the draft national geological screening Guidance closed on 4 December. RWM will discuss the consultation responses and the updated draft Guidance with the Independent Review Panel (IRP) in March before publishing the final version. Preparations are being made to apply the Guidance.

National Land-use Planning - The draft National Policy Statement (NPS) has now been reviewed, and a revised draft NPS produced. Preparation is currently underway to carry out a public consultation on the NPS in conjunction with the associated AoS (Appraisal of Sustainability) and HRA (Habitats Regulations Assessment) reports in spring 2016. In parallel with this, parliamentary scrutiny of the draft NPS will be launched.

Item 5: Actions and next steps

Member's comments will be incorporated in the next steps of the policy development and discussed at the March and April CRWG meetings.

Item 6: AOB

The next CRWG meeting will be held on 9th March 2016.