

Community Representation Working Group (CRWG)

Wednesday 9th March – 11:00-15:30

Attendees:

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

Judith Armit
Steve Barlow - RWM
Prof Andrew Blowers
Prof Patrick Devine-Wright
Kirsty Gogan
Lisa Levy
Phil Matthews
Phil Richardson
Phil Stride
David Toman – RWM
Julian Wain

Apologies:

Natalyn Ala – RWM
Holmfridur Bjarnadottir
Prof Nick Pidgeon
Ivan Stone – RWM
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

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. She welcomed Prof Patrick Devine-Wright who attended this meeting in place of Prof Nick Pidgeon. RWM have offered a separate meeting on their engagement plans, for members who are interested. The Chair summarised the purpose of the meeting – to discuss ‘Community Investment’ and the ‘Test of Public Support’. She offered further bilateral meetings with DECC and welcomed comments on any of the areas of the work outside of the meeting. A consolidated policy view will be presented at the final CRWG meeting on 20th April.

Item 2: Community Investment

DECC presented the current thinking on the development of a policy framework for Community Investment.

Topics that were discussed included:

1. Principles for a community investment framework
2. Criteria for community investment funding
3. Eligibility for funding
4. Structures that can deliver the community investment framework
5. Legal constraints around the provision of funding

Key issues that were raised in discussion:

- Examples from similar programmes, including lessons learned from the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme can provide a useful framework.
- Defined criteria help give structure, particular for a range of people with different agendas.
- Flexibility is also required to allow space for innovation.
- It is important not to constrain more than necessary.
- The use of investment for a range of projects e.g. small and large projects, short and long-term projects.
- Mitigation and section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- It needs to be clear what the investment *is not* for.
- The use of appropriate language and terminology in describing the purpose of the investment is important.
- The use of a 'SWOT' analysis to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a community entering the process.
- The importance of the community investment framework being practical.
- The change in the meaning of a community as a result of entering the process.
- The possibility of scaling the investment from the host community outwards.
- The importance of the process being equitable, to avoid conflict.
- The criteria for demonstrating legitimate interest in order to gain investment.
- The use of a 'start team' in community discussions.
- The recognition that some degree of conflict within a community is likely, particularly at the beginning of the process.
- The mechanism for the developer to withdraw.
- The use of a project plan and the setting of milestones in the process.
- The recognition that different communities will progress at different speeds.

- Ways in which a funding panel body and Community Representative Partnership could work together.
- The provision of administration costs by the developer.
- The importance of the funding process being representative, transparent and equitable.
- The role of the developer in the Community Representative Partnership.

Item 3: Test of Public Support

DECC summarised the current thinking on the development of a policy framework for the Test of Public Support.

Topics that were discussed included:

1. The overarching principles of a test of public support.
2. Options for how to deliver a test, who should be involved and how to demonstrate that community consent has been secured.
3. The point at which such a test might be considered appropriate.
4. How a right of withdrawal might operate.

Key issues that were raised in discussion:

- The legacy for future generations of having a one-off test of support.
- Monitoring support in the lead up to a test.
- Having one mechanism to ensure a clear final test.
- The right of withdrawal being in a sense an ongoing measure of public support.
- The DCO application process for borehole investigations presents a potential point to review the community support but this doesn't necessarily have to be the test of public support.
- The issues of power and influence.
- The need for the test of public support to be consistent across different communities to ensure comparability.
- Future proofing as much as possible for changing structures e.g. combined authorities.
- The importance of defining the community.
- The options for measuring support – consultation, local referendum, statistically representative polling survey.
- The conditionality around acceptance and the use of this in measuring support.
- The importance of engagement prior to the test of public support.

Item 4: Public dialogue events

DECC gave an update on the 'public dialogue' events that have taken place in Manchester and Swindon. These are part of 'open policy making' to achieve better policy making through engaging with a broad range of people who have no prior knowledge of, or involvement in nuclear-related business. This will feed into the development of the 'Working with Communities' policy.

Item 5: Actions and next steps

Member's comments will be incorporated into the consolidated policy advice for Community Representation, Community Investment and the Test of Public Support. This will be discussed at the April meeting, and there will be a further opportunity to comment after the final CRWG meeting.

Item 6: AOB

The final CRWG meeting is scheduled for 20th April 2016.