

Dear GDF Team,

I understand that the deadline for comment has been extended and wish to take the opportunity to add a small comment about independent expert review, relevant to your Question 3 about revising roles in the siting process.

In my response I noted that ".....groups of independent experts are likely to be employed by each of the implementer (RWMD – e.g. its TAP), DECC (i.e. CoRWM), the community and the regulators. The siting process needs to concentrate on ensuring that each of these players is able to recruit and maintain its own expert advisers and that there are mechanisms for each expert group to interact to address identified issues of common concern. Strong expert interaction from all parties via this mechanism should ensure that difficult issues are properly and openly addressed."

My additional comment concerns how this interaction might take place, as I consider that misunderstandings or contrary views are much better explored by the existing team of experts working together in an open forum rather than by bringing in another 'independent expert group'. In this respect, I have been impressed by the concept of experts meeting in a 'neutral space' or a 'protected space' so that issues can be freely and openly discussed without fear of misrepresentation, selective quotation, point-scoring or appeals to the media. This approach has been used to help resolve environmental issues in the USA and has led to the establishment of specialised bodies, often based in academia, whose task is to bring parties (in this case, the groups of experts) together in a neutral forum and facilitate the interaction process. This seems more likely to help resolve difficult issues among experts than the superposition of another expert group.

Best regards

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