

Project ISOLUS

Front End Steering Group

Meeting 2 1.00pm, Thursday, 10th March, 2001
Manchester Town Hall, Manchester

Minutes

Present: Fred Barker, RWMAC
 Andy Carr (deputising for Mark Hannan, Berkeley Power Station)
 Rob Gray, Health & Safety Executive, HM Nuclear Installations
 Inspectorate
 Brian Hooper, MoD
 Stewart Kemp, Nuclear-Free Local Authorities Secretariat
 Judith Petts, University of Birmingham
 Di McDonald, Bristol Submarine Forum
 Jane Hunt, Simon Pardoe & Pamela White, CSEC, Lancaster
 University.

Apologies: Andy Elmer, Local Government Association.

1. ***Welcome and introductions***

The meeting began with individual introductions and a welcome to Andy Carr.

2. ***Minutes of the previous meeting***

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd March in London were agreed.

With reference to item (9), it was noted that since the previous meeting it had been decided not to approach the Environment Agency and SEPA to give them the opportunity to send representatives to the Steering Group, as this would unbalance representation from different stakeholders. This was approved by all present.

an update on the situation with the *Renown* was requested. It was confirmed that DDLP was in progress. Before the BRDL proposal could proceed, NII would need to consent to the proposal. Nothing could be done that would prejudice the option of afloat storage without the agreement of both NII and SEPA.

3. ***Funding of participants at Stakeholder Workshops***

Jane Hunt reported that participants who had no other source of funding would be paid travel costs and subsistence, to assist them in attending a Workshop.

Two further questions were raised. The first concerned payment to acknowledge participants' time commitment (for attendance, preparation and any follow-up action) for people who are otherwise without funding (e.g from voluntary groups), which

would also take account of people perhaps having to take time off from paid employment in order to participate. A payment of this type was seen to increase participants' perception of their own value to the process and would encourage people to attend. There is, however, no funding available for this purpose at this stage of the consultation.

The second question concerned payment for independent consultants, especially those working on behalf of environmental NGOs. Three consultants in this category had refused to attend stakeholder workshops unless they received payment for their time. It was felt that payment to consultants was inappropriate at this stage of consultation, as the consultation is Front End – i.e. aiming to identifying the issues that need to be taken into account – and expert input on technical matters will not be required until later stages of consultation.

The SG agreed that it was important to clarify funding issues and make recommendations for future phases of consultation. The differences in various definitions of “stakeholder” and “public” (it is normal practice to pay members of the public for participation in focus groups, citizens' panels etc), were problematic and the final report should contain reference to this entire problem. Jane Hunt invited members of the SG to send her any comments on these issues for incorporation in the Final Report.

Action: all SG members
CSEC

4. Reports of Focus Groups

Jane Hunt reported that all the Focus/Discussion Groups had now taken place.

Simon Pardoe gave a presentation to the SG on the Focus Group component of the Project. He described the selection and recruitment of participants, the process through which the groups were conducted, and presented some initial observations. SG members had received the reports of the Bangor and Oban groups. They expressed their interest in these, and identified some initial issues that arose from them. These included the clarity with which the Bangor and Oban groups identified the need for an international responsibility, and sharing of expertise, in relation to radioactive waste management. Jane Hunt invited SG members to send their comments on the focus group discussions to her for incorporation in to the Summary and Final Reports. The reports will be posted on the website as they are produced.

Action: all SG members

5. Report of first Stakeholder Workshop

Jane Hunt reported that the first of these Workshops had been held in London on 24th April. The second in the series, in Newcastle on 26th April, was cancelled owing to poor response. The third, in Plymouth, would take place on 5th June. County and national elections had necessitated the postponement of the Manchester workshop from 7th to 18th June. A further Workshop was planned for Edinburgh on 26th June.

The London workshop had attracted a total of nine participants, the three environmental NGOs who had been expected having proffered their apologies. There was considerable discussion about the participation of environmental NGOs in Stakeholder Workshops. Lack of funding and suspicion of the process and outcomes of consultations were identified as reasons for non-attendance. The SG requested that a record be kept of the reasons given for refusal to attend, and this issue be addressed in the Final Report. Jane Hunt reported that several environmental groups were sending representatives to Plymouth or Manchester.

Action: CSEC

The report of the London Stakeholder Workshop had been circulated to SG members, who requested a log of the reports they had or should have received to ensure these were all delivered by a sometimes fallible electronic communications system. The report of the London Workshop would be posted on the website shortly.

Action: CSEC

6. Initial Responses to the Website:

Simon Pardoe reported that the website had been revised on the previous day in the light of comments received. The initial pages were shown to the meeting, who expressed their approval. Up to the previous day, there had been in excess of three hundred hits, with 810 discussion entries and a similar number of answers to the consultation questions.

Some concern was expressed on the limited number of responses, although the point that website consultations, to date, have attracted low numbers of responses generally was accepted. Discussion ensued as to the desirability of devoting resources to more publicity for the site against the limited effect this was likely to have in terms of generating high numbers of responses. Further press releases, increasing links with other sites, attempting to place news items in the computer pages of broadsheets, and joining other relevant discussion sites were identified as relatively low cost measures.

Action: CSEC and BH

Due to the election process, MoD are unable to make press releases until after the election.

It was agreed that whilst it is not normal practice to respond to website replies, the Lancaster team should provide replies where these were specifically requested. This decision could be revisited should numbers increase.

It was agreed that the website should be maintained after the end of June to provide information and post responses and notice of further developments.

Action: CSEC and MoD

7. Reporting and Responses Schedule:

Jane Hunt reported that Stakeholder Workshop Reports could be expected within two weeks of each workshop. The remainder of the Focus Group individual reports were currently being compiled. It was requested that responses from Steering Group members be received at Lancaster within two weeks of their having received a reports. The Report of the Citizens' Panel would be circulated shortly after completion of the Panel, i.e. w/b 28th May. All reports would be posted on the website.

Action: All SG members
CSEC

Jane Hunt presented a progress report on preparation for the Citizens' Panel, to take place over the weekends of 12th-13th and 26th-27th May. Details were given of the recruitment process, the Panel's activities, witness selection, the form of the Panel's report, and the possibility of public attendance during phases of the second weekend.

It was agreed that feedback from the Citizens' Panel would be forwarded to Steering Group members immediately after the first weekend.

8. Project Plan

It being the Steering Group's responsibility to produce a set of recommendations and suggestions for the future of the subsequent consultation, it was agreed that this needed to be complete by the end of the fourth Group meeting (i.e. London, Friday 20th July.) To enable the SG to move forward at the next meeting, Jane Hunt was requested to provide a draft of points at that meeting. SG members were requested to send their suggestions to Jane by the 19th June. It was agreed that the main focus of the next meeting would be the Project Plan.

Action: All SG members
CSEC

9. Any Other Business

Thanks were expressed that the recent article by Stephen Naysmith in the Glasgow-based Sunday Herald had been brought to the meeting's notice.

Next meeting: 1.00 pm, Thursday, 21st June at CERT, Birmingham University