

## **CIRIA initial capacity building discussions**

### **Note from NGO/ CBO discussion following Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) seminar Hull 15 October 2004**

#### **Present**

Dave Brooks, Local Agenda 21 Policy Manager

Peter Lanyon, Nuclear Submarine Forum

David Collier, independent consultant on stakeholder issues

Dianne D'Arrigo, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Washington

Pete Roche, independent consultant, previously Greenpeace

Jamie Woolley, advisor to Nuclear Free Local Authorities

Stewart Kemp, Nuclear Free Local Authorities

Richard Bramhall, Low Level Radiation Campaign

Jeff Kersey, SAFEGROUNDS project manager, CIRIA

#### **Background**

Jeff Kersey did a presentation during the NFLA seminar. This introduced the audience to 2 projects which he manages: The SAFEGROUNDS Learning Network, concerned with the management of contaminated land on nuclear and defence sites; and Site Decommissioning: Sustainable Practices in the Use of Resources (SD:SPUR), concerned with the management of construction materials of very low radioactivity arising from decommissioning. Both projects adopt approaches to engage stakeholders in developing good practice guidance.

Following the seminar he led a discussion session to explore a central question for SAFEGROUNDS:

- What are the prospects and mechanisms for enhanced involvement of the “alternative” sector in the development of industry good practice sites in the management of contaminated land on nuclear and defence sites?

The main aim was for him to be made aware of a range of views to consider enhancement of engagement and consultation processes as the project moves forward.

Delegates at the seminar were invited to come along and share their views. It was hoped that the session would lay the groundwork for a more structured and independently facilitated workshop planned for March 2005 (to coincide with the SAFEGROUNDS conference). People would have the opportunity to express interest in participating in this. It was hoped that from discussions a clearer plan for engagement would emerge.

The agenda items are indicated below. However discussion was fairly informal and flexible to encourage the free flow of ideas:

- Welcome and introductions
- Why the issue is important to SAFEGROUNDS
- Brief look at how SAFEGROUNDS and SD:SPUR currently engage
- Views on processes for enhanced participation
- Summary of main points

### **Discussion**

- Agreement that term “alternative” not appropriate for the discussion, people more comfortable with “NGO/ CBO”
- Discussion of the need for NGO/ CBO input and buy-in into industry guidance, the clean-up practitioners require broad stakeholder engagement, NGO/ CBOs therefore in a position of influence
- Questions raised about the role of SAFEGROUNDS and SD:SPUR in developing consensus based industry guidance.
- Initially a degree of scepticism on the prospects for independence if, for example, nuclear industry is funding or the construction industry is leading, therefore questioning of legitimacy of the guidance
- Some clarification provided on degree of independence now being achieved by the SAFEGROUNDS and SD:SPUR, this put forward by participants with some experience of those projects’ processes
- These projects attempted to achieve broad representation through project steering groups, sub-group meetings, stakeholder workshops and electronic consultation
- Did the fact we were having this meeting suggest the projects had already failed to engage?
- It was indicated that the guidance being produced provided a framework for considering a range of management and stakeholder engagement options
- Example discussed of two recent SAFEGROUNDS guidance documents being updated - NGO/ CBOs had helped put this work on the agenda and were participating in re-assessing the content
- Barriers to engagement of CBO/ NGOs relatively quickly identified:

### **Time**

NGO/ CBOs have few staff and therefore limited time available to participate

### **Money**

Limited financial resources, individuals take the strain

### **“Bang for bucks”**

Is participation in SAFEGROUNDS etc the most effective way for the NGO/ CBO to further their aims?

### **Creating precedents**

Nuclear industry, DTI etc possibly afraid to establish precedent in funding NGO/ CBO participation?

## **Image and reputation**

NGO/ CBOs may see a danger in negative impacts on their image if seen to get too close to the industry, some individuals on the industry / regulatory side have the same problem,

## **Cynicism**

NGO/ CBOs are wary of potential manipulation by industry, and also of being misrepresented. Reference to there being some experience of NGOs' engagement in a dialogue being represented outside the process as endorsement, at quite an early stage.

- The problem of dealing with contentiousness of issues and making decisions on technically or scientifically complex matters was highlighted and reference made to a paper written about 5 years ago and available on the Green Audit website: [http://www.greenaudit.org/i\\_don't\\_know\\_much\\_about\\_science.htm](http://www.greenaudit.org/i_don't_know_much_about_science.htm)  
This point was concerned with the management of process
- The fact that a small number of NGO/ CBOs were paid a modest daily rate and expenses to participate in project steering group SAFEGROUNDS meetings was discussed
- A liaison committee involving NDA Team, DTI, Isolus project, CORWM had been formed to share information on various stakeholder dialogues, CIRIA representing SAFEGROUNDS and SD:SPUR on this and attended a recent meeting (a note should be available soon on the CoRWM website)
- Local authorities will not be too concerned about issues of being seen to “sell out”, particularly if there can be clear groundrules, generally positive about influencing the debate – for example the whole point of the Local Government Association’s Special Interest Group on Radioactive Waste Management & Nuclear Decommissioning is to engage
- These issues are very important to local authorities, but may be it’s a separate debate with local authorities?
- More buy-in will be achieved when there are particular local issues that can be addressed, in the meantime NGO participation has a strong representative role even if self elected.
- Local Authorities respond to statutory requirements but discretionary work often a problem. All the work around radioactive waste management policy including CIRIA's work is, in fact, discretionary and even though the issues can be very important in their potential consequences for local authorities, there is no duty (and therefore often no resources) available to engage.
- The Environment Council operated a trust fund for certain dialogues, providing money in lieu of money lost from attending, not large amounts
- The prospects of NGO/ CBOs organising into some form of body which could be used for engagement and consultation processes seemed unlikely, the differences between these organisations prevent this
- The failure of the consultation around the deep repository showed the need to get the engagement process right from the start
- Wariness that engagement was now being sought from industry to help them solve clean-up problems when they created the problems in the first place

- Overview of the different dialogues would be useful, maybe some academic research in this area
- Better cooperation between NGO/ CBOs might help to better structure responses to consultations
- Not clear what the prospects are for NGO/ CBOs doing more networking together
- NGO/ CBOs each engage for a different reason, there is more than one reason
- Only seem to need the NGO/ CBOs at the “back end” – general agreement on highlighting the principle that participation does not compromise NGO opposition to new build, new nuclear submarines, or whatever. somewhat included in next bullet point but one.
- But can be too cynical – the waste issue is still very important
- Yes, but would like to see it as part of the debate about the entire fuel cycle, NGO/ CBOs need to have the opportunity to engage in the energy debate, this should be part of the context for their general involvement
- There is a growing culture of community involvement, evident over a number of years
- Develop academic approach – all the dialogues are evaluated (some of this has been done already by David Collier)
- Would be useful to draw out the range of experience
- Fragility of the information system eg role of local authorities on SD:SPUR did not work out as anticipated, representative yet to feed back to local authorities as planned but new PSG assumption that silence does not give consent is to be welcomed, even if it may act as a temporary veto and slow things down.
- Stuck at the project steering group level, we need to produce a means to engage a community concerned with a site – ie re-emphasis of the need to engage at the local level. But how do we identify those who don't know they are stakeholders? - need mechanisms to involve them in a structured way
- Has DTI or DEFRA produced a document on how US handled stakeholder issues?
- Some work has been done for NDA (by David Collier)
- Some discussion of approach with Sizewell – details anybody??

### **Final remarks**

- Time and money!
- Sell it on a case by case basis, identify why it's important – if important people will participate (but don't over sell it, could do a dis-service by taking attention away from other dialogues)
- Understand the cultural divide, understand how different organisations are perceived eg why some are thought of as arrogant, track record in divide and rule, not really listening
- Understand differences amongst NGO/ CBOs
- Don't just ask why NGO/ CBOs don't participate in industry consultations – what about encouraging industry to sit in on NGO/ CBO groups?
- It's not easy for NGO/ CBO to work with industry, their constituents can get suspicious
- Those present would like to explore further
- There will be an independently facilitated session March in London, coinciding with SAFEGROUNDS conference

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CIRIA