

Public Perception and SMRs

UK in SMR; SMR in UK Manchester Conference Centre • 25 September 2014



Professor Andrew Sherry FREng Director of the Dalton Nuclear Institute

Public Perception & SMRs

- 1. Why public engagement on nuclear energy?
- 2. What is the public perception of nuclear energy?
- 3. How can public engagement be effective?
- 4. Next steps

Why public engagement on nuclear energy?



Underpins economic growth



Underpins future skills development

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Political mandate

Economic growth

Future skills



PWR SMRs CAP-100 CAREM **FLEXBLUE KLT-40S** mPower NuScale SMART **SMR-160** W-SMR

Public Engagement

Public perception of nuclear energy

Past Images (circa 1950s) "The Future is Safe"



"It's Our Friend Mr Atom"

Changing Attitudes to Nuclear Power

- The 1980s saw very high levels of opposition to nuclear power.
- The associations with atomic weapons, radioactive waste, contamination, cancer & accidents such as Chernobyl and Three Mile Island lead to unique worries about nuclear power (Slovic *et al.* 1980).

ERNEST RUTHERFORD (1871-1937) NOBEL LAUREATE LED THIS LABORATORY 1907-1919 HEREIN DISCOVERED THE NUCLEAR ATOM, SPLIT THE ATOM, AND INITIATED THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS

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MANCHESTER THE WORLD'S FIRST CITY TO BE DECLARED A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE (5TH NOVEMBER 1980)

British Attitudes

Trend shows favourable opinion back to highest ever, though unfavourable opinion still above baseline

Q How favourable or unfavourable are your overall opinions or impressions of the nuclear industry/nuclear energy?





...an independent press office helping to ensure that the public have access to the best scientific evidence and expertise through the news media when science hits the headlines



Fiona Fox



Public attitudes to nuclear energy are complex and change with time and events. Public engagement must be dynamic and responsive.

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How can public engagement be effective?





Principle 1: Clarity

- Build an appreciation for basic scientific principles
- De-mystify nuclear as part of a low carbon energy mix
- Understand and address misconceptions using very basic science

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Principle 2: Trust

- Recognise the need to build trust in public engagement
- The public are bombarded with 'facts' about nuclear energy
- Data are used and mis-used to send a message
- So who do the public trust?



US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Principle 2: Trust

Scientists working in university, government laboratories

Best qualified to explain the impact of science and technological developments on society ?

> Politicians Industry Military Religions



European Commission (2010) Europeans, Science and Technology: Special Eurobarometer 340

Principle 3: Dialogue

- Recognise that communication is a two-way engagement
- Create opportunities for a two-way dialogue
- Ensure listening is part of the process



Principle 4: Consultation

- Recognise the value of public consultation in nuclear business
- Build stakeholder groups that:
- Enhance communications between the industry and local stakeholders
- Give an opportunity for questioning industry and regulators.
- Allow stakeholders the opportunity to comment on and influence strategies and plans



Next Steps









Summary

- 1. Public engagement on nuclear energy underpins:
 - The political mandate to deliver low carbon energy
 - The economic growth from nuclear energy
 - The new skills needed for the future

2. Public attitudes to nuclear energy are complex and change with time and events. Public engagement must be dynamic and responsive.

3. Public engagement on nuclear energy benefit from four principles:

- Clarity
 Dialogue
 - Trust Consultation
- 4. Next Steps:
 - Communications Steering Group
 - Charter on public engagement
- Nuclear Narrative
 - Integrated Research