

Findings of a public dialogue on how the nuclear industry engages and communicates with society on nuclear energy issues

NUCLEAR ENERGY & SOCIETY

Summary Visual Report November 2016

NNL Document reference: IP20038.590/06/10/01

This report is divided into 5 main sections, with the third section providing an analysis of the key dialogue findings.

REPORT STRUCTURE

Nuclear Energy & society: A public dialogue on how the nuclear industry engages and communicates on nuclear energy issues.

At a glance

1. Context

2. Introduction to the dialogue

3. Key dialogue findings

4. Improving the Concordat for Public Engagement

5. Impact of the dialogue

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At a glance

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Project partners and the Oversight Group steered the project with invaluable advice both to the dialogue design, delivery and report team but also to participants at the session. HVM is grateful for their commitment and openness to the process.

NNL, Project Partners and Oversight Group

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* Andrew Blowers, Emeritus Professor, Social Sciences at the Open University was invited to join the Oversight Group but he was unable to take part due to existing commitments. Steve Robinson, Dialogue Engagement Specialist advised NNL in the set-up phase of the programme.

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Project Partners

This project was commissioned by the **National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL)** in partnership with the **Welsh Government** and **Sellafield Ltd**.

NNL plays a key role in the UK and global nuclear industry. That means reducing the cost of clean-up and decommissioning, maintaining critical skills and attracting talented new people to the industry. Since July 2008, NNL has been providing independent advice to the UK Government and working with other National Laboratories around the world, and delivering a full range of research and technology to support the nuclear fuel cycle.

The public dialogue was designed, delivered and reported on by **Hopkins Van Mil (HVM)**. HVM specialises in dialogue and engagement programmes. It wants to put people at the centre of big issues and it does that by asking questions and listening. Emotionally engaging subjects such as our energy supply and our environment affect us all. But our opinions can get lost or swamped. As expert facilitators Hopkins Van Mil creates safe, neutral and productive spaces for the public, policy makers and policy shapers to share their views.

HVM designed and delivered a two-round dialogue process held in 2 locations. A group of 19 participants in Barrow-in-Furness and 18 in Wrexham were recruited to take part.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives – to:

- Inform and if needed, update the Concordat through public dialogue
- Gain and use insights into public expectations of how public engagement might be demonstrated
- Identify and where appropriate take account of the implications of implementing the Concordat within the nuclear sector
- Understand and take account of what is regarded by sections of the public as respectful methods of engagement
- Work with participants to determine how public views can be best accommodated within any public engagement learning and review process

Methodology

Who

- A broad demographic of 19 participants (Barrow) and 18 participants (Wrexham)
- Those self-identifying as having little or no knowledge of the nuclear industry were included in the sample
- Those self-identifying as having a great deal of knowledge of the nuclear industry were excluded from the sample

When

- Round 1 held simultaneously in Wrexham (North Wales) and Barrow-in-Furness (England) on 28th May 2016
- Round 2 held in the same locations on 9th July 2016

What

- A two-round deliberative dialogue process

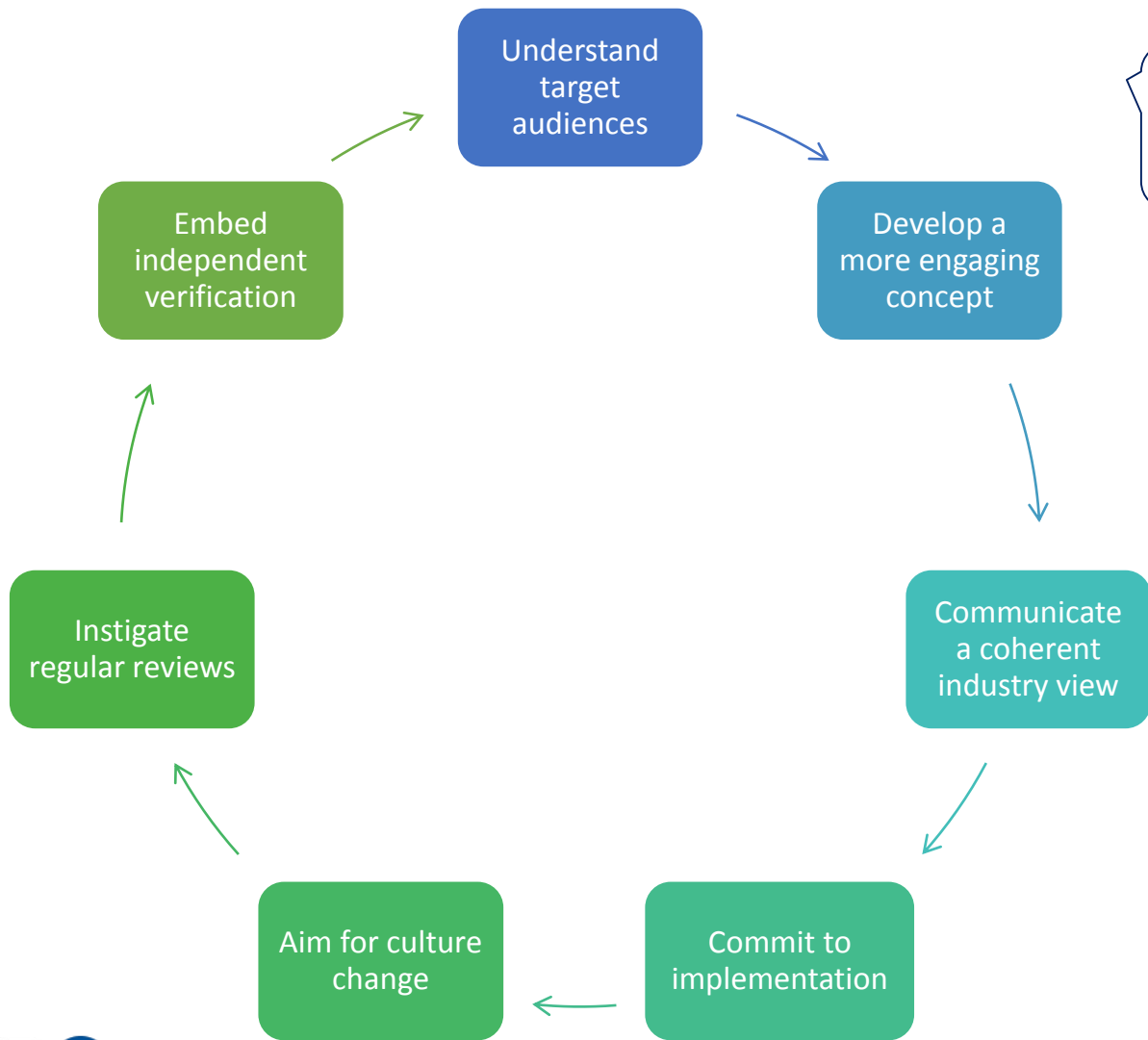
How

- Participants were recruited via a specialist fieldwork agency against a recruitment specification agreed by the programme's Project Team and Oversight Group (OG). The dialogue was delivered via a mixed methodology process plan ensuring results which could be analysed across the two locations.

In round 2 of the public dialogue participants developed 7 recommendations for improved industry communications and engagement. This slide presents the headline recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PUBLIC DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS

The experts we've had here today have shown that they can make it really interesting so that you can understand. And yet I didn't know they were trying to engage with us before. So reach out. Actually do it. (Wrexham)



Implement the Concordat with enthusiasm. Don't just do it, do it like you mean it. (Barrow)

Call the Principles a 'commitment'. That suggests something is happening. (Barrow)

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1. Context

The context in which the dialogue was held is relevant to the outcome. High profile discussions were taking place on Brexit and Hinkley Point C during and either side of each discussion round.

Contextual events around the dialogue

Trusting information:

Because of the amount of information being blurted out in the Brexit I decided to do my own research in to it and make up my own mind. (Wrexham)

An industry commitment:

Ensure an enduring commitment to use public opinion in policy decisions. A commitment which won't stop with changes of Government; funding streams or changes in the industry. (Barrow)



Picture credits left to right:
EDF Energy
The BBC
Andrew Parsons

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2. Introduction to the dialogue

The dialogue's focus was the industry's Concordat for Public Engagement and the 4 Principles embedded within it.

The purpose

Being open & transparent:

The nuclear industry has had a reputation of not being as open as it could be in its communication and we're really keen to change that and have an open and transparent dialogue with the public so that we can listen to their views. (NNL representative)

The Principles:

1. Leadership commitment
2. Best practice
3. Effective communicators
4. Making a difference

The Concordat:

<http://www.niauk.org/images/pdfs/publications/Public%20Engagement%20Concordat%20Dec15.pdf>



Inform & if needed update the Concordat through public dialogue



Gain and use insights into public expectations of how public engagement might be demonstrated



Identify and where appropriate take account of the implications of implementing the Concordat within the nuclear sector



Understand and take account of what is regarded by sections of the public as respectful methods of engagement



Work with participants to determine how public views can be best accommodated within any public engagement learning and review process

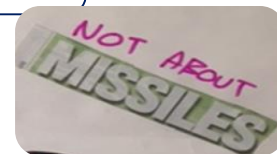
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3. Key dialogue findings

In this section of the report we summarise people's views on nuclear energy and how they developed as part of taking part in the dialogue.

Clean and reliable power...for everyday applications and not about missiles. (Barrow)



3.1 Nuclear energy

There is going to be some of the population that would want more [industry engagement], but there will be an equal number that probably don't care. (Wrexham)

Prior to the dialogue participants felt neutral about industry communications.

Most participants said that **before taking part** in the dialogue they had a **very low awareness** of the role of **nuclear power** in the energy mix.

As a result of taking part they felt it important that the industry communicates effectively with a wide range of people.

With input from **specialist advisers** at the session; by going through the **dialogue process**; and **discussing** the Concordat **with their peers** participants felt **their interest in the subject** as well as their **knowledge** had been increased.

Many older participants had a particular view of the nuclear industry not shared by others.

For **older people**, particularly for whom the **Second World War**, the **Cold War** and **Chernobyl** are in living memory the term 'nuclear' carries strong connotations with **nuclear defence** and **failing international relations**.

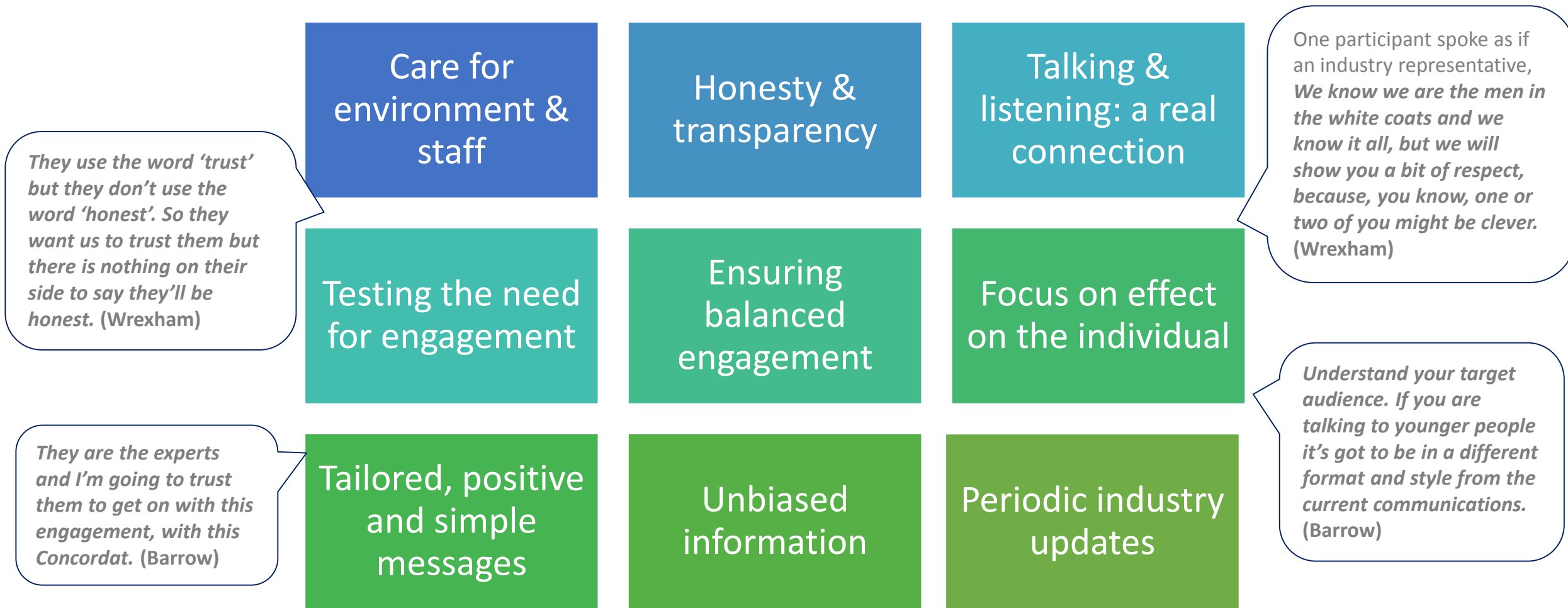
Younger participants, particularly those with young families also had a specific interest in the nuclear industry.

Younger participants were keen to understand **how electricity generated from nuclear power will affect** their electricity bills. They were more likely to consider nuclear power to be something **of interest to all members of society**.

Nuclear is for life, not just for Christmas. It is important for everyone in society (Barrow)

Following a brainstorm on industries with impressive corporate communications in round 1, participants went on in round 2 to reflect on their expectations from & with the nuclear industry.

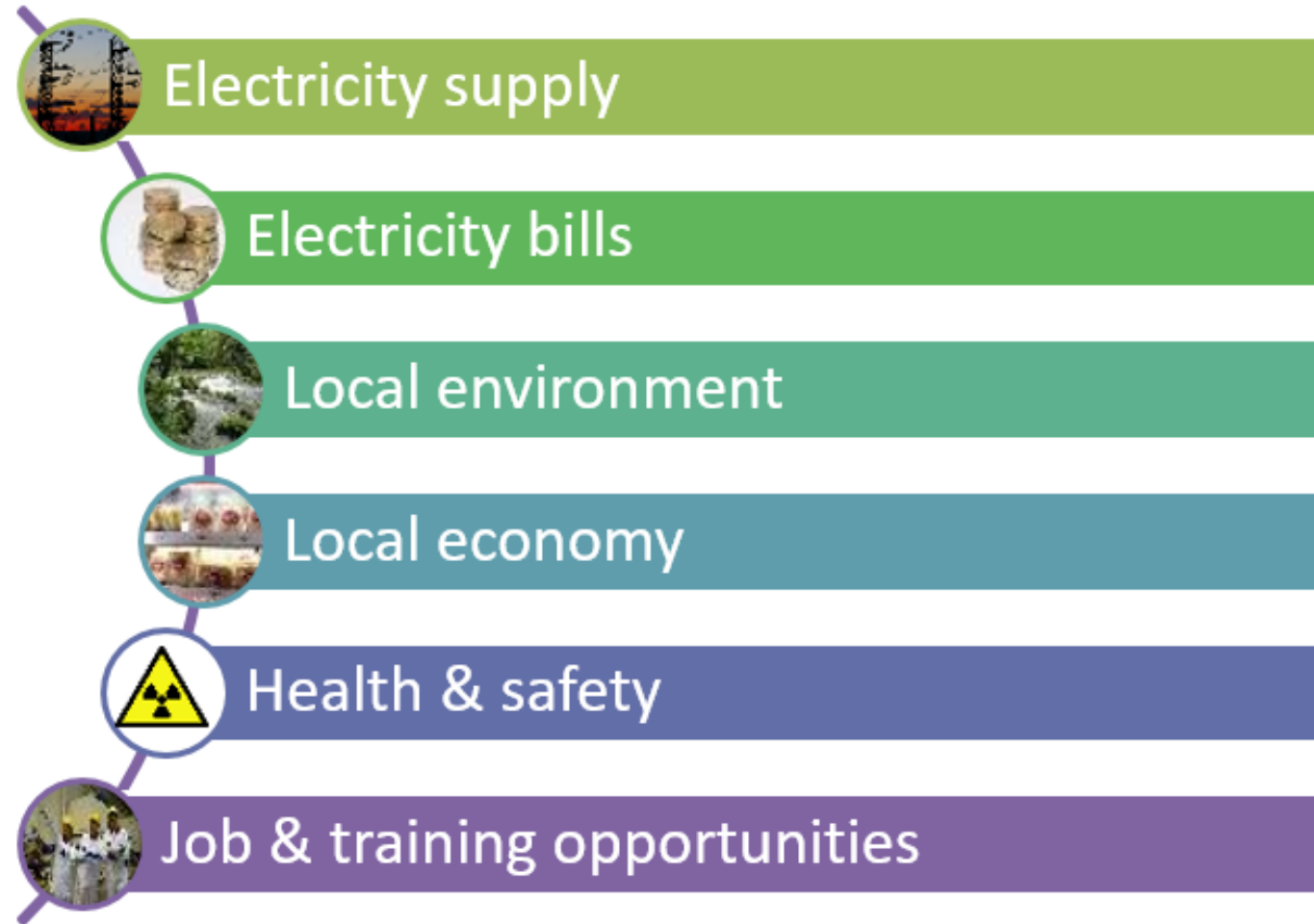
3.2 Expectations of the nuclear industry



Round 1 of the dialogue reinforced the idea that people are generally more interested in information about the nuclear industry when it is relevant to them, such as when they know it is powering their homes or because they live in the vicinity of a nuclear site.

3.3 Relevance to me

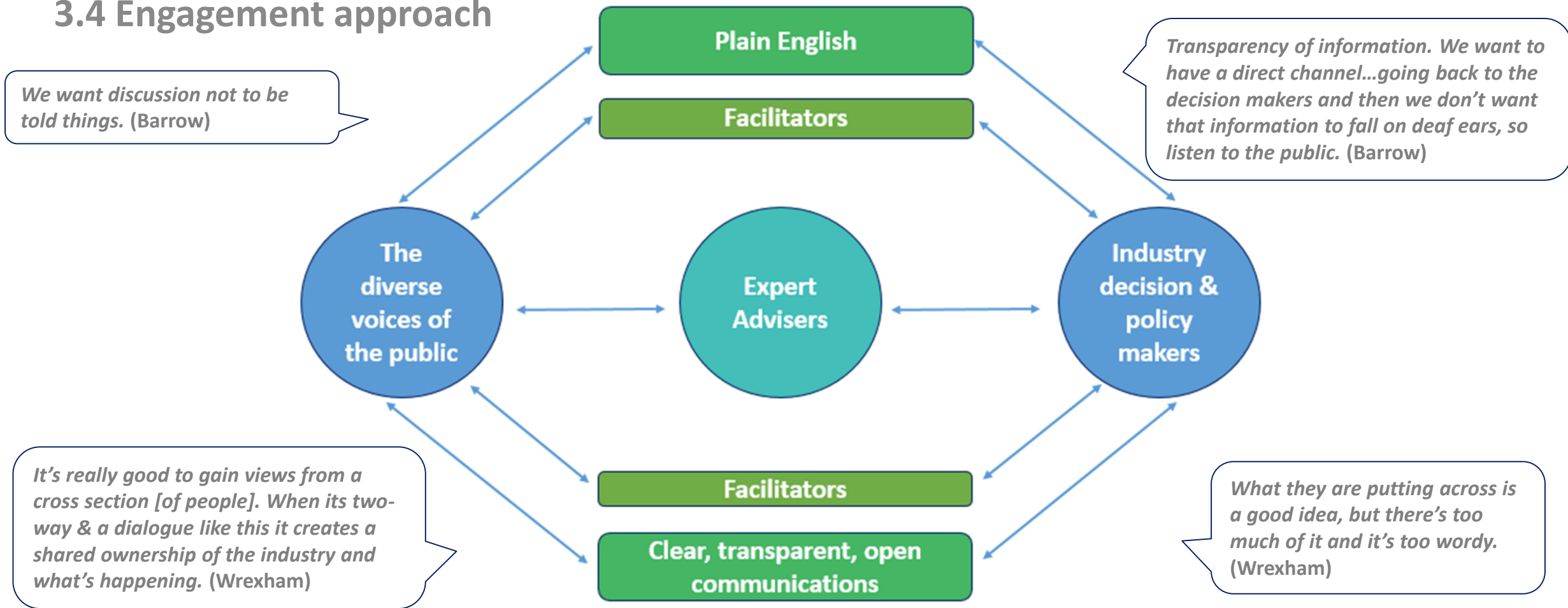
These elements of the nuclear message were mentioned by participants as having relevance to them and their lives



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Clint Mason/ IAEA image bank

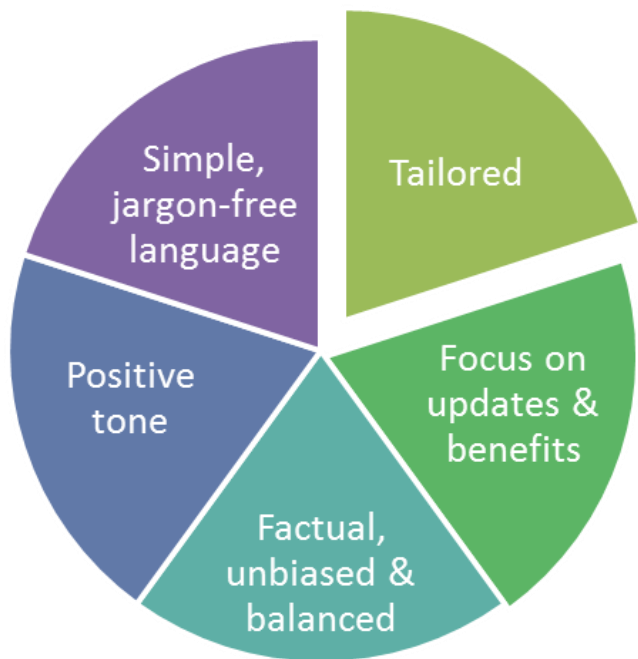
Participants expressed a preference for dialogue over information provision. They welcomed the platform to meet & discuss issues with industry experts & others in their community. The diagram below was transcribed by facilitators of participant views on their preferred engagement approach.

3.4 Engagement approach



Participants emphasised the need for tailored communications to ensure engagement with a range of voices in different parts of the country and across generations. They stressed the importance of communications which are appropriate for different life stages.

3.5 Effective messaging



Participant views on effective industry messaging

A sample slogan:
Nuclear energy is a reliable, always there, source of power.
(Barrow)

Participant views on what information they need

-  The UK's energy security
-  Pros & cons of electricity from nuclear energy
-  Cost to the (local) economy and consumer
-  Safety record and current measures
-  Environmental and social impact
-  Waste and decommissioning

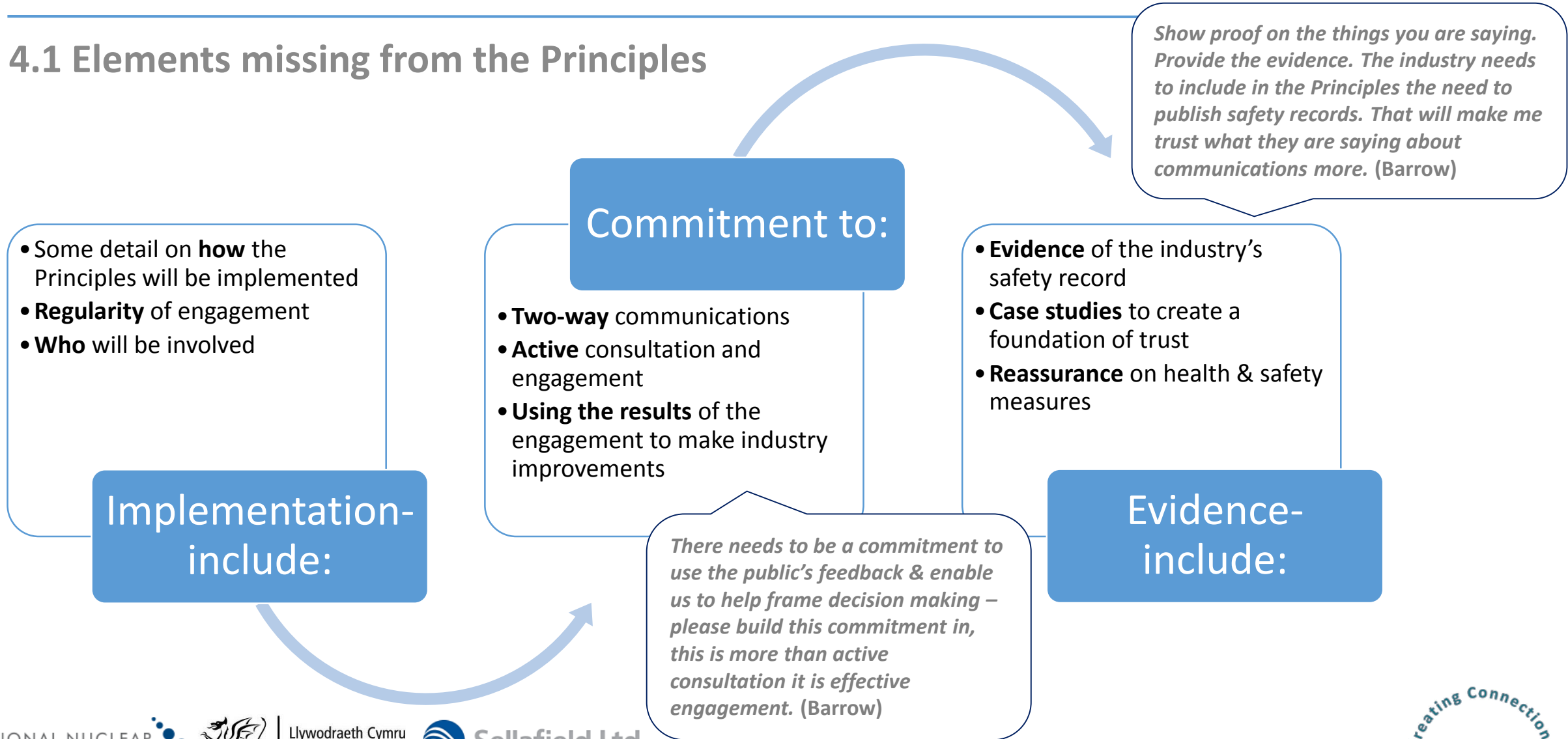
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4. Improving the Concordat for Public Engagement

The majority of participants recognised the importance of the industry building an ethos of engagement and have welcomed the effort made to consult the public on the Concordat. They identified 3 main elements they believe are currently missing from the Principles.

4.1 Elements missing from the Principles



In round 2 of the public dialogue participants developed 7 recommendations for improved industry communications and engagement. This slide presents the first 4 recommendations.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS 1-4 FROM PUBLIC DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS

1. Understand the various audiences

- **Tailor** communications appropriately using language which works for a range of audiences
- **Focus** on engaging young people as the decision-makers of the future
- **Demonstrate** to those with memories of WWII/ the Cold War that the focus is nuclear energy *not* defence
- **Recognise** that there are a range of opinions in society and that some people may not wish to engage with the nuclear industry

2. Develop a more engaging concept

- **Use** colourful visuals and positive language: simple, no jargon, memorable messages
- **Make** it less *us* (the industry) and *them* (the public), emphasising a partnership approach to engagement
- **Include** industry-specific examples and case studies which chime with people's personal lives

3. Present a coherent industry view

- **Ensure** a united industry view is presented, whether the communication is around something positive or negative that has happened around the generation of nuclear energy
- **Develop** and communicate an industry-wide mission statement

4. Commit to the Concordat

- **Address** the *how* rather than just the *what* so that the industry can be held to account
- **Show** evidence of the implementation of the Concordat not simply an intention to do so
- **Call** the Principles of Engagement a *Commitment*
- **Commit** to an enduring programme of engagement and communication whatever the current political or economic landscape

Call the Principles a 'commitment'. That suggests something is happening. (Barrow)

In round 2 of the public dialogue participants developed 7 recommendations for improved industry communications and engagement. This slide presents the final 3 recommendations

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS 5-7 FROM PUBLIC DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS

5. Aim for culture change

- **Build** long-term culture change in to the Principles to ensure staff in the industry know the value of developing engagement and communication skills
- **Ensure** staff are able to answer questions engagingly, it is not enough to simply convey an industry message
- **Acknowledge** that not all industry employees will want, or be in a position to, play a role in engagement
- **Ensure** genuine engagement

Implement the Concordat with enthusiasm. Don't just do it, do it like you mean it. (Barrow)

6. Instigate regular reviews

- **Make** regular checks to ensure that the industry delivers on its engagement promises
- **Introduce** periodic reviews of the Principles and an overall review of the Concordat on an annual basis
- **Reconvene** this public dialogue as an informed section of society who can help with industry engagement

7. Independent verification

- **Ensure** that the Concordat is regulated by an independent, civil society based organisation which will hold the industry to account
- **Make** use of external independent expertise to inform industry communications and engagement

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5. Impact of the dialogue

Barrow-in-Furness is a nuclear community, Wrexham is not. There was more discussion about the impact of Brexit in round 2 in Wrexham than in Barrow. The authors found these elements to have had some influence on the views of participants.

5.1 The impact of different locations and societal issues



Participants in Barrow were more used to discussing the nuclear industry as it is part of their community and a large local employer.



Participants in Wrexham felt fairly neutral on the industry at the moment, but thought this would change if they heard about new nuclear in their area.



The Brexit announcement shortly before round 2 had a greater impact on discussions in Wrexham than in Barrow with more people continuing to discuss it in the first half of the session.

The dialogue showed that transparency and engagement had a positive impact on participants' perceptions of the industry.

5.2 The impact of industry transparency and engagement

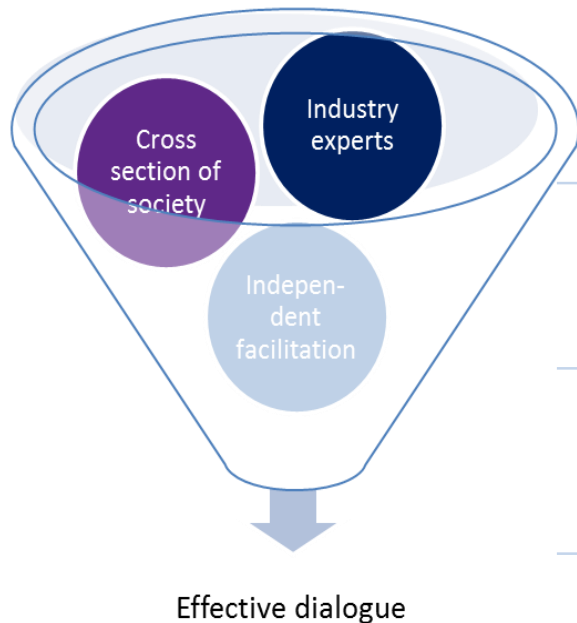
The fears of some, particularly the older generation, were allayed by taking part in the public dialogue and the difference between the generation of electricity through nuclear power and nuclear defence was understood

People felt reassured that the industry *is* interested in what they think and *plans to* respond to their views

There was a view that participants who had gained from this experience could convey messages about the industry to others in society

Equally, participants were pleased that they had the opportunity to learn about nuclear energy and they felt that more people should benefit from this knowledge

Participants felt that the combination of a cross section of society, industry experts and independent facilitation led to a very effective dialogue, one they would like to see repeated



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