

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP ON ELF EMFS (SAGE)

summary record of the

MAIN GROUP MEETING

10 July 2009

Baldwins Gardens, Holborn, London EC1

DISTRIBUTION:

Copies to - Meeting Participants, Apologies and SAGE Website
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nature of the Report

This document is the summary report of the second meeting of the SAGE Main Group (Phase II), held on 10th July 2009. A full report is also available.

NOTE: Nothing in this report should be taken as representing a collective SAGE view. The views recorded are for the most part expressed by individual participants and even where the report indicates that an agreement has been reached, this has the status only of a working agreement for the particular meeting or workstream and should not be quoted as a SAGE view.

1.2 Attendee List

Anthony Barker	Institution of Engineering and Technology
Paul Bicheno	Institution of Engineering and Technology
Roger Coghill	Coghill Research Laboratories
Mike Dolan	Mobile Operators Association
Theresa Donohue	Department of Communities and Local Government
Barry Hall	Council of Mortgage Lenders
Caroline Hampden-White	CHILDREN with LEUKAEMIA (replacing Chantelle Roberts)
Ross Hayman	National Grid Company
Andrew Hood	Western Power Distribution
Denise Libretto	Department of Energy and Climate Change
Jill Meara	Health Protection Agency
Mike O'Carroll	Independent
Caroline Patterson	Stirling Before Pylons
Hector Pearson	National Grid Company
Alasdair Philips	Powerwatch
Graham Philips	Electromagnetic Radiation Research Trust
Howard Price	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
David Renew	National Grid Company
Anne Silk	Independent Health Researcher
Brenda Short	Powerwatch
Jonathan Stopes-Roe	Department of Health
John Swanson	National Grid Company
Adrian Todd	Kilmorack Community Council

Facilitators – Nigel Westaway, David Collier, Pete Wilkinson
Technical Reporter - Simon Turner

Apologies were received from Mike Clarke, Steve Davies, David Dossett, Alison Edwards, Michael Jayne, Arthur Johnstone, Nigel McMahon, Richard Mellish, Alan Preece, Peter Roberts, Geoffrey Stokes and Stephen Wall.

1.3 Objectives of the Meeting

The following objectives for the meeting were circulated in advance and agreed on the day:

- clarify future SAGE membership and government representation;
- receive progress reports from the Distribution Working Group and the Science Forum and review their future work programmes;
- agree a way forward on SAGE Declarations of Interest and Code of Conduct;
- introduce the new SAGE website and discussion forum;
- consider the next stage of SAGE's work.

2.0 UPDATES

2.1 New Overhead Line Routes

A query was raised about new or proposed major overhead line or substation projects and the following link was offered to the National Grid quarterly connections update:

http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Electricity/GettingConnected/gb_agreements/

National Grid has also recently published a new set of commitments, building on the Section 9 Statement, for new projects and covering consultation and public involvement. This can be viewed on:

<http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/LandandDevelopment/SC/Community/scadraftpolicy.htm>

2.2 Definition of ELF Frequencies

In response to a query about the definition of 'ELF', it was agreed that, for SAGE ELF EMF meant, "all frequencies that stem from the power system and the use of electricity (ie 50Hz plus harmonics)."

2.3 Undergrounding in Scotland

One participant brought to the attention of the meeting an article in a Scottish newspaper, in which a Scottish National Party MSP had expressed the view that a new line route should be undergrounded on the grounds of health and amenity.

2.4 Government Representation and Response to SAGE Phase I

All three of the Government Departments present on SAGE were represented at the Main Group meeting.

The meeting was informed that the response to SAGE Phase I had taken longer than anyone would have wished, due in part to ministerial reshuffles and a delay in input from the devolved administrations, but that a response was expected shortly. It was noted that a public consultation was due to take place in the late summer on the Energy Infrastructure National Policy Statements (NPSs) for the new independent Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). The meeting was also informed that it would be necessary for the Government's response to SAGE Phase I to be made before the NPS consultation takes place.

Concern was expressed by a number of members of SAGE about the considerable delay in Government response undermining the SAGE process. Some felt that the Phase I Report could be regarded to be out of date, in the light of studies that have been published since 2007 and that government should pay attention to the wider and changing context of the EMF debate.

SAGE MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Potential Organisations Not Represented on SAGE

Participants were asked to suggest any additional organisations that might be approached regarding SAGE, to ensure that the overall membership was inclusive and balanced.

Process Group

The Process Group is made up of 6 members, providing a balance of interests and reflecting the funding programme:

- John Swanson and Mike Dolan from industry
- Jill Meara and a DH representative from HPA / Government (Stuart Conney is expected to replace George Hooker from the Department of Health once he takes up his post)

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- Graham Philips and Caroline Hampden-White from campaigning groups (Caroline has replaced Chantelle Roberts from CHILDREN with LEUKAEMIA, and Graham has replaced Alasdair Philips on the Process Group).

4 REPORT FROM DISTRIBUTION WORKING GROUP / FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Caroline Hampden-White and John Swanson gave a report on the Distribution Working Group (DWG). The DWG was convened by Main Group in October 2008, to look at EMFs from substations and low voltage distribution systems (SAGE Phase I having considered high voltage 132-400kV transmission systems, and household wiring and appliances).

Three meetings have been held, with a further four proposed, to conclude in early 2010. The group has identified two main areas for detailed work:

- *Wiring and earthing practices at 400V*
The main sources of net currents (and therefore EMFs) in relation to distribution have been identified and a list of mitigation methods will be assessed to indicate which of these the DWG should recommend.
- *Substations*
The UKCCS Residential Sources ('High Homes') Study suggests that final distribution substations are not a major source of exposure, but the DWG is trying to find out how common exceptions are to this rule.

Magnetic field exposures from 11kV and 33kV overhead lines were considered, but it was noted that the numbers exposed were relatively few. The DWG is also working to clarify whether distribution systems can be a source of high electric fields and whether there are human exposures to these.

5 REPORT FROM THE SCIENCE FORUM / FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Graham Philips gave a report on the Science Forum and indicated that the following areas were identified as the highest priorities for the Forum:

- understanding divergent views on the science of EMFs, and how these are arrived at by review groups and other stakeholders;
- understanding how the evaluation of science is applied in policy making.

The Forum has received a number of introductory and personal presentations and a draft work programme has been drawn up to structure the Forum's discussions. Case studies will be identified to illustrate aspects of the science that are open to different interpretation by the scientific community itself and also those reviewing the science or creating policy based on it. It was tentatively suggested that the Science Forum might complete its work in the summer of 2010.

One participant suggested that most SAGE members are primarily interested in overhead power lines, and the health effects of these, which was the subject of SAGE Phase I. Whilst they believed there was a potential role for the Science Forum in advising government of changes in the science between SAGE Phase I (2007), they questioned whether, in the absence of a government response, this could influence policy or be just an academic exercise. In response it was confirmed that, although the Science Forum was not initially set up to make recommendations, if a consensus were to be reached, this would be submitted to the Main Group, which would then have the option of forwarding any recommendations it thought appropriate.

6 SAGE WEBSITE

The SAGE Phase I website has now been closed and the information transferred to a new website containing information from Phase I and Phase II. Much of the Phase I information remains confidential to Phase I working group members and has password protection. For Phase II, the aim is to keep as many documents as possible in the public domain.

The new website will also include a moderated discussion forum but the principal way of working for SAGE is through face-to-face meetings, and the forum should not supplant such discussions. It was agreed that the forum should make it clear that SAGE as a whole will not respond to individual posts (although individual SAGE members may), but will take on board useful ideas, questions and case studies in its work. It was noted that the forum may facilitate an international discussion on the topic, encouraging networking opportunities with SAGE.

The facilitation team will send out a monthly email with a list of new documents on the website and a list of posting topics.

7 SEMINAR

The facilitators are to arrange a seminar associated with decision making and policy formulation in areas of technical uncertainty. It was agreed that it would be best to run this in conjunction with the Science Forum's programme.

8 CASE STUDY

Alasdair Philips presented a case study to the Group.

A decision on consolidation of schools in Dundee has led to a proposal to build a new school directly underneath a 132kV power line in preference to another site away from the line and at similar cost. The decision also seemed to have involved a misinterpretation of the Energy Networks Association factsheet on high voltage lines. This example highlighted the case for a prompt government response to the SAGE Phase I and clear guidance for new development.

9 CODE OF CONDUCT

Clauses 9 and 10 of the Code of Conduct were subject to queries for resolution by the Main Group. Otherwise most people have now agreed to the Code of Conduct. Some amendments were agreed to these clauses and the new version of the code is appended to the full meeting report.

Anyone who has any concerns about the new version should contact the facilitation team.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was agreed that all SAGE should review their own Declarations of Interest in the light of the information since circulated from others.

11 FUTURE SAGE TOPICS

Once the DWG has concluded its work, the issue of EMFs and transport will be considered. To some degree this will involve a new set of stakeholders and it was agreed that the facilitators should open initial discussions with the relevant bodies.

12 COST OF UNDERGROUNDING

At the Main Group in October 2008, it was agreed to review the work on the cost of undergrounding, presented in SAGE Phase I, in the light of new or revised information. This will be tackled, as far as possible, through a dedicated web forum.

13 EVALUATION

An evaluation of whether SAGE was meeting participant requirements was conducted on flipchart. Most people were satisfied with the current progress of SAGE but not with the speed of Government response to SAGE Phase I.

14 ACTIONS

Action	Who	When by
Send NG web links to facilitators	Ross Hayman	asap
Review access to SAGE Phase I confidential documents by SAGE Phase II Members.	Facilitators	Sept 09
Develop process of notification of web forum posts to SAGE Members.	Facilitators	Sept 09
Notify the facilitators of any objections to the new version of the Code of Conduct	All	asap
Review own Declarations of Interest, including why involved in the process, interests relevant to SAGE & ELF EMFs, and any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.	All	asap
Start discussions with prospective stakeholders for establishment of a Transport Working Group.	Facilitators	immediately
Submit undergrounding study information with references.	M.O'Carroll	asap
Continue to monitor unfinished tasks from SAGE Phase I and suggest ways forward as and when appropriate.	Process Group	Sept 09 & ongoing
Present report on work completed to date	DWG	Next Main Group meeting
Present report on work completed to date	Science Forum	Next Main Group meeting
Circulate date for next Main Group meeting	Facilitators	Autumn 2009