

MEETING WITH WELSH GOVERNMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

Present:

CoRWM: Laurence Williams (Chair), Bill Lee ((Deputy Chair), Brian Clark, Francis Livens, John Rennilson, Gregg Butler, Paul Davis, Simon Harley, Helen Peters, Lynda Warren, Stephen Newson, Rebecca Lunn. Laura Butchins (secretariat) and Sam Bains (secretariat).

Welsh Government (WG) (Radioactivity & Pollution Prevention Branch): Michelle Grey, Robert Williams.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW): Bob Russ, Rob Price.

Discussion

1. Members met with WG & NRW before the plenary meeting started. After introductions CoRWM asked for an update on the Welsh environment bill and sustainability review. WG said that their branch did not cover these areas but would record any questions and send CoRWM written responses. They did however discuss with their Environmental Bill Team who confirmed that at this stage they did not envisage any direct implications for radioactive waste in proposals put forward for inclusion in the Bill.
2. WG said that the key elements of the Welsh environment bill and sustainability review for public bodies were economics, social aspects (cultural) and environmental aspects.
3. NRW started on 1 April 2013. It was the environmental regulator for Wales. It covered 100 non-nuclear sites and 3 licensed nuclear sites. They had quite experienced inspectors for non-nuclear sites. For nuclear sites the Environment Agency would continue to provide permitting and compliance inspections and would advise NRW. NRW was still the decision-maker and would need to agree permits following EA advice. It was expected that the EA would continue to provide NRW with a regulatory service for nuclear licensed sites for the foreseeable future.
4. WG's policy on MRWS has not changed: WG has reserved its position on the policy of geological disposal although they play a full part in the MRWS process. If a Welsh community expresses an interest in hosting a GDF WG would consider its position on geological disposal and the specific expression of interest. No community in Wales has so far shown any interest in hosting a GDF. Radioactive waste disposal is devolved and any decision on a GDF in Wales would go through the Welsh planning route not the major infrastructure planning route.
5. WG policy is to support a new nuclear power station at Wylfa.
6. CoRWM's chair provided an update on the 2013-16 work programme. 75% of CoRWM's time in the next 12 months would be spent on MRWS issues.