

MINUTES OF CORWM PLENARY 20 FEBRUARY 2014, CARDIFF

Secretariat

Present: (CoRWM): Laurence Williams (Chair), Francis Livens, Brian Clark, John Rennilson, Gregg Butler, Rebecca Lunn, Helen Peters, Janet Wilson, Stephen Newson, Simon Harley, Paul Davis, Lynda Warren, Laura Butchins (secretariat), Chanelle Gibson-McGowan (secretariat).

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

1. Helen Peters is currently working for a client through her employer Pinsent Masons who is potentially interested in the future privatisation of Urenco Limited. It was agreed that there was no conflict with CoRWM's work.
2. Janet Wilson had been working on plans to license new nuclear facilities in Wales for her employer Horizon. It was agreed that there was the potential for conflict if CoRWM were to give advice to the Welsh Government on licensing.

Chair's Update

Welsh Government Meeting

3. The Chair and Lynda Warren had met with the Welsh environment Minister. The Minister had recognised that CoRWM had plans to set aside 20% of resource in the following year to provide advice to the Welsh Government. The Chair also remarked on the Minister's background and knowledge of the nuclear industry. Minutes of the meeting with the Minister would be published on CoRWM's website.

Nuclear Innovation and Research Advisory Board

4. The Chair had attended the first meeting of the Nuclear Innovation and Research Advisory Board (NIRAB), a new board set up to advise the UK Government on nuclear research. The board membership and attendance well represented the sector. Three sub-groups were to be set up to focus on research within academia, industry and advanced systems. The Chair had agreed with NIRAB that he could delegate attendance when he was not available. Francis Livens had been invited to sit on the academic sub-group. Janet Wilson or Francis Livens would substitute attendance at the advanced systems group and Simon Harley or Rebecca Lunn would substitute at the academic sub-group if required.

Geological Disposal Steering Group

5. The Chair and one member had observed the Geological Disposal Steering Group (GDSG) meeting earlier that week. The Group is chaired by DECC and steers the delivery of the programme. The two main issues discussed were the programme to deliver the revised White Paper, the responses to the GDF Siting Consultation and the proposed timing and changes to the role of GDSG from a steering group to a Programme Board.

CoRWM Sponsors Meeting

6. The Chair and one member had attended a sponsors meeting and the following updates were provided by officials representing CoRWM's sponsoring Government departments:

7. The Welsh Government were considering whether to review their position on nuclear waste. They had noted CoRWM's paper from July 2013 that had reiterated the Committee's position that geological disposal still provided the best long-term answer to managing waste.
8. Scottish Government were planning to consult on their Implementation Strategy for the Management of Higher Activity Waste this spring. They had requested comments from CoRWM on the draft and some members had collated some comments to send back although the Committee thought that the timescales allowed were very tight.
9. DECC had been working towards the publication of a White Paper in the summer. With all the necessary clearances to meet this deadline, their capacity would be fully stretched. They would be approaching CoRWM for some advice on specific topics in due course, once the analysis of the responses to the consultation was completed. DECC acknowledged CoRWM for the quality of their consultation response and the amount of effort taken in drafting it. CoRWM commented that they would be interested to see how much DECC would take note of their response.
10. DECC were planning to publish a summary of responses to the consultation at the end of February. CoRWM asked whether the Radioactive Waste Management Directorate (RWMD) of the NDA had been involved in the analysis. DECC had explained that they had very limited involvement and that DECC led on policy development however they would need RWMD to provide some technical expertise to ensure that any new siting process was deliverable. As RWMD are publically funded there would be no commercial gain.

Meeting with RWMD Managing Director

11. The Chair had met with the Managing Director of RWMD, Bruce McKirdy on 17 January. They had discussed CoRWM's response to the GDF Siting consultation.
12. Bruce McKirdy agreed with CoRWM's proposed role for RWMD as that of the implementing organisation which could lead in discussions with potential host communities. The CoRWM Chair informed that CoRWM intend to look at role and structure of RWMD in their work programme for the forthcoming year. Bruce McKirdy described the plans for subsidiary formation; a business case had been put forward to Government. Key proponents for subsidiary formation were the regulators.
13. RWMD had some disagreement with CoRWM's view on geological screening. They felt that there was a need to provide information that existed as early as possible on geology, although they understood CoRWM's concerns that geological information could easily be misinterpreted and was not likely to be able to answer all of the public's questions. RWMD had received feedback that local authorities would only be willing to take the political risk of engaging in a siting process if their area had geological prospects. The CoRWM Chair had stated that geology should always be presented as only one part of a safety case as there was little meaning until it was explained within the context of safety. It would be important for geologists to work with safety case engineers to ensure that information was presented accurately.

Meeting with NDA's Research & Development Board Chair

14. The Chair had met with the Chair of NDA's Research & Development Board (NDARB) and NDA Strategy and Technology Director on 17 January. This was in the follow up to the comments that CoRWM had made in their 2012-13 annual report. They discussed the role and independence of NDARB, and its relationship with CoRWM. The two chairs agreed to meet annually in advance of CoRWM drafting its annual report, and the Chair of NDARB would continue to welcome a CoRWM observer at NDARB meetings.

Media Engagements

15. The CoRWM Chair had been interviewed for Costing the Earth on the long term management and disposal of radioactive waste. The radio 4 programme would be aired on 4 March.
16. The CoRWM Chair had also been interviewed by the Korean Radioactive Waste Agency for a Korean television documentary.

Member's updates

GDF Users Group

17. Simon Harley had observed the GDF users group. The group provides a forum for representatives of organisations including EDF, the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), the Ministry of Defence, GE Healthcare and others to share information and discuss issues with NDA and its Radioactive Waste Management Directorate (RWMD).
18. Topics covered at the meeting included:
 - disposability assessments with the aim of sharing innovation successes,
 - Waste Package Data and Recording, the work will address current gaps and weaknesses in existing waste package specifications.
 - ILW Storage Consolidation; the aim is to save the cost of building individual stores if waste types can be exchanged and consolidated at the regional level. The NDA are consulting on initial proposals.
 - Upstream Optionneering; the aim is to support and advise site licence companies on ways to improve disposal solutions, 85 opportunities have been identified and prioritised
 - Stakeholder engagement activities
19. Simon Harley commented that the meeting had been very useful and suggested that a map of issues discussed or presented at meetings be developed for attendees to allow them to understand connections between topics.
20. The Minutes of the meeting will be published on the NDA's website.

DECC - Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) Forum

21. Stephen Newson had observed DECC - Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) Forum which had been held on 10 February. Two main topics had been discussed; a paper on the security of nuclear installations, and the NGOs reply to DECC's GDF Siting Consultation. There had been a change of DECC Chair; Hergen Hays had stepped down and was being replaced by Liz Keenaghan-Clark. A reasonable number of attendees were present to represent both the NGOs and Government. The Minister had also been present to hear a summary of the NGO's consultation response.
22. DECC had been open at the meeting and explained the process by which they were updating the siting process. The NGO's had commented that social sciences had been marginalised in taking nuclear policy forward, for example, there was to be no sub-group representing social policy research in the new NIRAB.
23. The NGO Chair summarised the composite response to the GDF Siting Process that had been submitted by the NGO forum. Three key statements in the response had been that the consultation was not adversarial; they thought that the MRWS process had not failed, and that a number of issues remained in the process.

24. Stephen Newson commented that the NGOs response had been constructive and supportive of a new process. The forum was taken seriously by both sides and DECC had made every attempt to provide the information that had been requested by NGOs.
25. It was agreed that a CoRWM sub-group should meet with NGOs to understand their views should NGOs agree.

Action 02/2014/073: Secretariat to invite NGOs to meet with CoRWM sub-group.

26. CoRWM briefly discussed the meeting with Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. They would await any further developments as to whether Wales would be looking to review its policy.

2014-17 Work Programme

27. Members commented on a draft of their 2014-17 work programme. The Committee was required to submit the programme to Ministers by the end of March.
28. CoRWM are fully funded by DECC. The Committee noted that it should be up to sponsoring departments to agree between them where CoRWM's funding originates from but that CoRWM should be able to allocate resource to work for the different sponsors as they deem is required, and in accordance with CoRWM's Terms of Reference.
29. The draft work programme assumed that the Committee would have a similar budget to the current year. It was agreed that the Committee would highlight this point in a covering letter to Ministers. Members stated that in fact they were doing more hours than they were charging for. If new members were recruited in the next financial year, this would also impact on what the Committee could deliver, as in the past, it has taken time for new members to get up to speed. If there was a cut in budget, members would propose to cut tasks to ensure the quality of the advice they were giving was continually high.
30. The percentage of resource on the various tasks proposed in the draft work programme was agreed and allocated as follows::
- To DECC on the GDF Siting policy and subsequent White Paper implications -50%,
 - To provide advice to the Welsh Government on the management of Higher Activity Radioactive Waste, depending on what was required from Welsh Government - 20%,
 - To provide advice to DECC and other Sponsors on the transition of the NDA (RWMD) to an effective GDF "Delivery Organisation - 10%,
 - To provide advice to the Scottish Government on its Radioactive Waste Management Strategy - 5%,
 - Interim Surface Storage of HAW Radioactive Wastes - 5%,
 - Spent Fuel and Plutonium Management - 5%, and
 - CoRWM outreach -5%
31. Within those tasks there were a number of proposed sub-tasks, and sub-groups allocated to these tasks. The sub-groups would be responsible for leading on an area but the whole Committee would have a chance to comment and sign off any advice that was formulated.
32. For the tasks on Interim Surface Storage of HAW Radioactive Wastes and Spent Fuel and Plutonium Management, CoRWM would commentate on progress as full oversight was not possible

with the resources available in light of other priorities. There would also be some overlap of these tasks with that of the Scottish sub-group where members found out about waste management at Scottish Sites.

33. For the task on the management of Spent Fuel, plutonium and uranium, the Committee agreed that it would be important to keep a watching brief on developments, as even though these materials were not currently in the inventory, if the position changed, there could be significant implications for Geological Disposal.
34. The Committee had noted the current Ministry of Defence (MoD) consultation on nuclear submarine waste although acknowledged that their remit did not cover wastes at MoD sites. CoRWM did however think that it would be useful to find out MoD's current position as waste could ultimately end up in a GDF. They would ask to meet with the MoD in the next financial year.
35. The task on CoRWM outreach should include engagement with NGOs in addition to the public.
36. Members agreed who would sit in each of the sub-groups, although it was agreed that other members could be brought in as necessary for particular subjects.
37. The next Steps will be to make any amendments, send to sponsors, the NDA and regulators for comment and finalise any changes and sign off final plan at the March plenary before submission to Ministers.

Implication of Preesall case for GDF planning and policy

38. Helen Peters had analysed the case for the Preesall Underground Gas Storage Facility, the first case of a Development Consent Order (DCO) for an underground storage facility. CoRWM agreed that there may be lessons to learn from the planning process for a GDF. The DCO had been refused by the Secretary of State but the decision had been overturned at Judicial Review. Determination of the DCO is now back with the Secretary of State.
39. Although the details of the case were not relevant for GDF planning, the case demonstrated some of the difficulties that might be expected under the new National Infrastructure planning regimes. In particular the case highlighted the relationship between safety assessment and planning assessments. In this case the safety was regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) 1999, which were well understood regulations compared to safety regulation for radioactive waste disposal. In addition, for any site, planners would need to understand that the site is 'fit-for-purpose' prior to granting consent and for this they would require some safety information. Therefore, the need for a comprehensive regulatory framework is of importance. For a GDF, any National Planning statement (NPS) would need to deal with the chances of success at the site although at the stage of granting planning, it could be difficult to provide full safety reassurance. This would be done prior to the site being licensed to dispose of radioactive waste.
40. The Committee agreed to produce a summary of the learning points from the case that would be relevant to planning and permitting a GDF.

Annual report

41. Members leading on drafting specific chapters provided a brief summary of the main points for inclusion.

42. The report would look at:

- the work CoRWM had done
- to provide advice to DECC in the Call for Evidence for the review the GDF Siting Process, the advice CoRWM gave during the Consultation period, and the observations that CoRWM had made on the various stakeholder events that DECC ran over the period of the consultation.
- the initial work that CoRWM had done to look at requirements for a GDF Safety case. This information is mainly based on what has been done for overseas programmes.
- the advice and scrutiny of Scottish Government's work on the management of Higher Activity Waste,
- the scrutiny and advice of and to the Welsh Government,
- the work CoRWM had done to look at current arrangements for the interim Storage of HAW, on nuclear materials, and a summary of the input CoRWM members have given on the UK's radioactive waste inventory.

43. Members would draft relevant sections in advance of the March plenary.

Action 02/2014/074: Members to send secretariat annual report draft chapters for collation by 12 March.
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GDF Licensing

44. Paul Davis and Gregg Butler agreed to prepare a paper on licensing a GDF for the Committee to discuss.

AOB

45. Paul Davis agreed to confirm his availability for the next GDF Users' Group on 16 April 2014 in London.

Action 02/2014/075: Paul Davis to confirm availability for the next GDF Users' Group.
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46. CoRWM had been asked to nominate a delegate to attend the launch of the **Natural Environment Research Council's (NERC)** Radioactivity and the Environment (RATE) Programme on 6 March. to find out what research is planning to be carried out. Francis Livens offered to represent CoRWM.

Q & A

47. Those observing the meeting were asked whether they wanted to ask any questions or make any comments at the end of the meeting.

48. A representative from RWMD noted that they shared CoRWM's view this was a time of uncertainty which made planning difficult; RWMD would like to discuss their stakeholder involvement when they know more. He had observed that both CoRWM and the regulator's profiles could usefully be raised and asked if there was anything that CoRWM could do about this.

49. CoRWM were in agreement that it was important that members of the public understood their role and they would be allocating time in next year's work programme to speak at conferences and raise awareness of their role.

Action no.	Action	Progress
8 November 2013 (Minutes CoRWM doc. 3139) outstanding actions		
11/2013/64	Secretariat to investigate another way to provide the historical information without undue pressure on secretariat resource.	On-going
7-8 January 2014 (Minutes CoRWM doc. 3146) outstanding actions		
01/2014/68	Secretariat to investigate UK wide video conferencing facilities suitable for drafting meetings.	On-going
20 February 2014 (Minutes CoRWM doc. 3150)		
02/2014/073	Secretariat to invite NGOs to meet with sub-group of CoRWM	New
02/2014/074	Members to send secretariat annual report draft chapters for collation by 12 March.	New
02/2014/075	Paul Davis to confirm availability for the next GDF Users' Group.	New