

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT (CORWM) PLENARY  
2 MAY 2014, WORKINGTON**

**Secretariat**

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

1. The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public who were observing the meeting.

***Declarations of Interest***

2. CoRWM members, Francis Livens and Gregg Butler are co-supervising a PhD student sponsored by Manchester University, Radioactive Waste Management Ltd. and Sellafield Ltd. who will be carrying out research focusing on conservatism in safety cases with multistep processes in relation to safety within the nuclear industry. The Chair stated that, as the work is generic to the nuclear industry, there would be no conflict of interest with CoRWM's work.
3. Rebecca Lunn has recently become a member of Scottish Government's working group on Geothermal Energy.

***Chair's Update***

4. The Chair had recently attended a meeting of the Nuclear Innovation Research Advisory Board (NIRAB) which has been set up to look at nuclear related research in the UK. There would be a series of meetings over the next few months to develop its advice to Government.
5. The NGOs have agreed for CoRWM to observe the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) –Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) forum as part of CoRWM's scope under its terms of reference to scrutinise DECC. CoRWM has reminded the NGOs that they can observe CoRWM's plenary meetings, as can any member of the public.
6. CoRWM members agreed this approach and also suggested that they could offer a bilateral meeting to NGOs should that be desirable.
7. The Chair had been interviewed by BBC Cumbria Radio and BBC Look North in advance of CoRWM's public meeting in Workington.

***Nuclear Waste Research Forum (NWRF)***

8. A CoRWM Member had recently observed an NWRF meeting. Several of these meetings had clashed with CoRWM plenary meetings so attendance had not been possible, however it was felt that these meetings provide a useful source of information for CoRWM. All those with an interest in radioactive waste tend to attend, on this occasion GE Healthcare was absent. The Environment Agency (EA), the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and CoRWM observe these meetings.
9. The CoRWM member commented that the forum was a useful way of sharing information and ideas and didn't seem overly restricted by commercial constraints, for example, those that will be responsible for the forthcoming decommissioning of the Culham fusion reactor will be able to learn from others.

10. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) has a knowledge hub which all members of the NWRf can access.
11. The Committee noted that while there is a contractual obligation for the NDA estate to attend and share information and good practice via this route, the attendance of other parties was on an informal basis. CoRWM agreed to raise this with NIRAB, as it would be useful to have the Forum's role more widely recognised.

### ***GDF Users Group***

12. A CoRWM member recently observed a meeting of the GDF Users Group which was led by RWM and was attended by representatives of RWM and a number of organisations which, in the future, may use a GDF to dispose of their radioactive wastes.
13. A brief overview of RWM's interaction with DECC was provided on the review of the site selection process for a GDF in the UK. RWM had some discussion with DECC about removing the 2040 (circa) target date for opening a GDF. It is believed that meeting the 2040 date is possible, although there is some concern over having a fixed date within a voluntarism-based process.
14. Some of the management changes associated with RWMD changing to RWM, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) were also discussed.
15. RWM representatives presented talks on RWM's approach in carrying out disposability assessments for innovative waste packaging proposals and RWM's work on the design of multi-purpose waste containers. These presentations included some discussion on the difficulty of having optimized containers without having a site and specific geologic setting for a GDF.
16. An RWM representative presented an interesting overview of transport and logistics of waste management with some discussion of transport to a hypothetical GDF.
17. CoRWM had previously asked the GDF users group for an organogram of relevant topics and their interactions, which would help all attendees to gain a greater understanding of RWM's efforts and a paper copy of this organogram was provided at the meeting.

### ***NDA Research Board***

18. On 23 April, 2014, a member of CoRWM had recently observed a meeting of the NDA Research Board which meets twice a year with membership of chief scientific advisors, regulators, site licence companies and a number of independent members including one from France.
19. At the meeting the board had discussed NDA's research & development (R&D) programme for RWM and R&D relating to spent fuel.
20. CoRWM was interested in the NDA research board's review of the NDA/RWM's Research and would look out for a report of their findings. It would be important for CoRWM to see how the review related to the advice CoRWM provided on R&D in 2009.
21. A major point for discussion at the meeting was based on the question – "Is the UK R&D programme for management of existing spent fuels covering the correct issues to sufficient depth in the correct timescale with no significant omissions?" The CoRWM observer thought that it would be

useful for the Board to stipulate the correct issues and required timescales as metrics. The actual research being undertaken could then be evaluated against these measures.

### ***Scottish Government Nuclear Sites Meeting***

22. A CoRWM member had attended the previous day a meeting involving Scottish Government officials, regulators, nuclear site operators including the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances (SCCORS), and Site Stakeholder Group (SSG) members. Scottish Government updated the meeting on progress toward publication this summer of a Consultation Document on the Implementation Strategy which follows from the Higher Activity Waste (HAW) Policy Document issued in January 2011. Acknowledgement was made of CoRWM's contribution to the Project Board and to more recent comments on various drafts of the Implementation Strategy. Particular issues that remain include the suitability of wastes for near surface disposal and the extent of "added value" which the document will bring over and above the Policy.
23. Presentations at the meeting were from Scottish Government on the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 which amongst other things gives a new statutory purpose to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and from the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) on Graphite Waste Management. Reports from those attending were factual but included advice that EDF had applied to vary the Authorisations for both Torness and Hunterston B stations in order to allow more flexibility in the disposal of waste, including Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) from both stations and to allow waste to be received on to both stations from other EDF stations for the purpose of combining similar wastes for onward disposal or treatment. Public consultation on these applications is the next step.
24. The CoRWM observer noted that SCCORS were currently without a Chairperson, that North Ayrshire Council where the Hunterston stations were located had decided not to appoint a Councillor to SCCORS. It was important that local government were fully involved on HAW issues and it was to be hoped that the current position would be resolved shortly.

### ***DISTINCTIVE***

25. A CoRWM member had recently attended an event which launched a series of EPSRC-funded projects relating to decommissioning and storage in which ten universities were participating. Sellafield Limited, the NDA and the National Nuclear Laboratory were involved in the work. The work packages would run for up to five years and relate to:
- AGR spent fuel degradation in wet and dry stores and analysis methods,
  - Plutonium oxide (PuO) and fuel residues – characterisation and behaviour,
  - Legacy ponds and silo wastes, e.g. new ion exchange materials, treatment and robotics for characterisation,
  - Infrastructure - development of injected ground barriers and smart ways for retrofitting monitoring devices to investigate degradation of structures.
  - Engagement – developing materials for the media and schools to raise the level of understanding of nuclear power and waste.

### ***NGO- DECC meeting***

26. A CoRWM observer had recently attended a meeting hosted by DECC with NGOs to discuss issues relating to the GDF Siting policy.

### ***Welsh Government Call for Evidence***

27. CoRWM had noted the recent Call for Evidence issued by the Welsh Government. CoRWM agreed that it should respond to the consultation. The response would be drafted by the lead for the Welsh Government sub-group, supported by the sub-group and shared with the rest of the committee after this point. The final response would be agreed by the CoRWM Chair prior to submission to the Welsh Government.
28. It was agreed that one member, Janet Wilson would not comment on this paper due to her other interests in Welsh Government Policy relating to her full time employment at Horizon.
29. CoRWM then considered their responses to the questions posed in the call for evidence and made the following points:
- CoRWM agreed that there was a need to review the current policy.
  - The Committee agreed that in CoRWM's response they should refer to full package of recommendations that CoRWM made in 2006 (CoRWM doc. 700) including the need for robust interim storage, and further R&D.
  - The Committee also considered that different disposal methods may be appropriate for different waste types and that geological disposal could take a number of forms, for example shallow disposal may be appropriate for a few types of short-lived wastes, or deep boreholes with is an example of geological disposal. There may also be waste forms that benefit from being placed in separate GDFs.
  - CoRWM thought that the Welsh Government would need to make clear, in any new policy, how the geographical origin of Higher Activity Waste arisings was applicable to the policy.
  - In CoRWM's response, the Committee thought it would be useful to explain CoRWM's role in providing advice to Welsh Government during the review of its policy. The committee had allocated 20% of its time this financial year to Welsh Government policy.

**ACTION** 05/2014/077: Welsh sub-group to draft and circulate CoRWM response to Welsh Government's Call for Evidence

### ***Sellafield Site Visit***

30. CoRWM had visited the Sellafield site on the previous day to receive an update on the decommissioning of the legacy facilities and see the current and new waste stores.
31. CoRWM were given a tour of the pile fuel pond and briefed on the other three legacy facilities; the Magnox storage and decanning facility, the pile fuel cladding solo and the Magnox swarf storage silos.
32. The Committee visited the Box Encapsulation Plant that was under construction and associated stores. This is a priority project that will receive Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) from the legacy facilities when the facilities are commissioned. CoRWM was then shown the Waste Encapsulation Plant Site and the Windscale Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor Intermediate Level Store.
33. Those of the Committee who had previously visited the site were generally impressed by the progress made at the pile fuel pond and the dynamic approach to project management that facilitated simultaneous progress on a number of work streams. These work streams included
- CoRWM doc. 3162 May Plenary Minutes

retrievals of oxide and other fuels, retrieval and treatment of sludges, retrieval and treatment of other pond wastes and imaging of the pond interior to improve knowledge of its contents.

34. CoRWM was also impressed with the transferred use of existing technology from other fields. For example, making use of sonar imaging techniques developed for the oil and gas exploration industry, together with robotic systems to image the interior of the ponds without the high costs of developing novel instrumentation.
35. Some members had not visited the Sellafield site for three years and remarked on the visual changes and change in mind-set of those that worked there to one of delivery focusing on the end point. They also remarked that staff seemed very aware of the interdependencies and timescales for commissioning new facilities, including making changes to unused facilities to reduce wherever possible the number of delays to getting the waste into safe and robust interim storage.
36. CoRWM agreed that it would ask the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and Sellafield Ltd for further details of the current and future volumes of wastes arising from decommissioning activities, the implications and costs of delaying geological disposal on the lifetime and number of stores at the Sellafield site. They would also be interested in a strategic view of the risk and cost as a function of time. CoRWM also wanted to understand the long term evolution of the site and its end state. CoRWM said it would look at the NDA strategy and the life time plan for the site and the assumptions made to produce this in the context of the provision of interim storage of Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) and Higher Level Waste (HLW) pending disposal.

### ***CoRWM Public Meeting***

37. CoRWM reflected on the public meeting that had been held the previous meeting in Hunday manor. Although some of the media attention in the run up to the meeting had been misleading about the purpose of the meeting, The Committee thought that the meeting had provided the opportunity to explain CoRWM's role.
38. It had been the correct decision to make a late change to the venue which had allowed everyone expressing a wish to attend to do so, rather than having to limit numbers.
39. The main concerns raised by those at the meeting related to the lack of trust in and between all levels of Government, and the various views on who best represented a community. CoRWM agreed that if there was way for the voluntary siting process to work, it would be important to ensure that all parties understood the process.
40. The Committee agreed that it was difficult to demonstrate the value added by CoRWM to members of the public because much of CoRWM's 'value-added' work is in providing comments to Government and DECC in private, although, CoRWM reserve the right to comment again in public if their concerns have not been adequately dealt with.
41. To ensure adequate 'turn outs' for future meetings, CoRWM should write some copy for the local newspapers where it can be seen, and through networks, for example through learned societies.

### ***CoRWM's Annual Report 2013-14***

42. The committee agreed that there was no need for a separate chapter on Research & Development and any relevant work done could be described in other chapters.

### **CoRWM Budget Report 2013-14**

43. CoRWM agreed the budget report for publication. Members were reminded to claim all that they were entitled to, to avoid future budget cuts.

### ***Q & A - members of the public observing the meeting were asked if they had any questions or points to raise with the committee.***

44. A meeting observer suggested that CoRWM should use their branding to help explain what they did more clearly, rather than simply using the logo and CoRWM acronym.

45. A meeting observer asked CoRWM that, if and when the Committee got to see a draft version of a White paper relating to the Siting of a Geological Disposal Facility, they ask the Committee to be careful to understand the difference between representative authority and host community. CoRWM agrees that this was a good point. The member of the public thought that the representative authority's decision to withdraw from any siting process should take into account the full view of all residents.

46. A meeting observer commented that the process would always fail unless there was a willing host community. The previous process seemed more suitable to finding a "victim" community rather than host community. They remarked that in the previous process, if it had gone into stage 4, the West Cumbrian community would have gradually found it increasingly more difficult to withdraw from the process. The meeting observer remarked that CoRWM's response to the Siting Process Consultation in December 2014 made this position worse and if this position was taken forward, it would be near impossible for any community who were unsure whether they wanted to proceed in the process to engage in discussions.

47. A meeting observer commented that, if any local body could approach Government, e.g. land owners, or an overseas developer, it may be very difficult to get out of any process. Whilst CoRWM had stressed to Government that there was a need for a high quality of regulatory framework, the need for a high quality of democracy was equally important.

48. CoRWM agreed that clearly defined roles in the process were needed and that a clear definition of what democracy means in the context of this policy was absent.

### ***Table of Outstanding Actions***

<b>Action no.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b><i>8 November 2013 (Minutes CoRWM doc. 3139) outstanding actions</i></b>		
11/2013/64	Secretariat to investigate another way to provide the historical information without undue pressure on secretariat resource.	Open
<b><i>20 February 2014 (Minutes CoRWM doc. 3150)</i></b>		
02/2014/073	Secretariat to invite NGOs to meet with sub-group of CoRWM	Open
<b><i>20 March 2014 (Minutes CoRWM doc. 3159)</i></b>		
03/2014/076	An ad-hoc sub-group of the Committee would put together some engagement material to explain CoRWM's role and	Open

	highlight issues of interest to the public and stakeholders.	
<b>2 May 2014 (Minutes CoRWM doc. 3162)</b>		
05/2014/077	Welsh sub-group to draft and circulate CoRWM response to Welsh Government's Call for Evidence	open