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27 January 2016

Dear Professor Williams

I wrote to Professor Livens on 29 July welcoming the Committee's eleventh annual report and said I would respond to the two recommendations made by the Committee in due course. Once again, thank you for your helpful report. Now that the Triennial Review has been completed I am pleased to be able to provide a considered response, and an update on progress in relation to each of the recommendations, which are set out below.

**Recommendation 1: GDF Licensing under the NI Act 1965**

*CoRWM recommends that the Government should ensure that the details of the licensing of the GDF should be agreed and published before the end of the initial action period in the White Paper (end of 2016).*

The Government agrees with this recommendation.

The White Paper recognises that a GDF will be a nuclear installation under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 and, as such, it will be ONR's role to ensure that, prior to construction of a GDF, a process is in place such that ONR can consider the granting of a licence for the site, with the requisite site licence conditions attached, and enforce the requirements of that licence.

ONR have been developing their thinking on this subject in 2015. DECC officials are now re-convening meetings with ONR and EA (and now including NRW) to further develop the licensing approach, ensuring a coherent regulatory regime across licensing and environmental permitting is agreed before the end of the initial actions period. This includes production of joint guidance by ONR and the EA and, in due course, the making of a statutory instrument by DECC to bring geological disposal within the licensing regime.

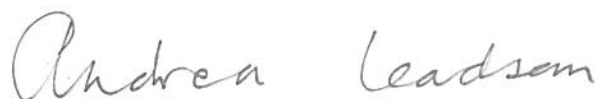
**Recommendation 2: Generic Environmental Safety Cases**

*CoRWM recommends that Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (RWM) produces individual generic environmental safety cases for each of the three geological settings, hard rock, clay and salt.*

Safety is of course the overriding consideration in development of a GDF. The development of safety cases for a GDF is a complex, technical issue for the developer, RWM, to take forward and agree with the independent regulators, who will ultimately have to consider the safety cases produced in relation to a facility. To this end RWM will be tasked with considering this suggested approach to generic safety case design in more detail, with the independent regulators to help inform the assessment of a site specific safety case in due course. As a first step, DECC officials will invite RWM and CoRWM to come together to discuss the suggested approach in more detail, in order to help build a greater understanding of any potential benefits or dis-benefits inherent in CoRWM's suggested approach to safety case design.

Finally, I would therefore like to take this opportunity to record my appreciation for all the hard work the Committee undertakes on behalf of the UK and Devolved Administrations and for the dedication and professionalism shown by you and all the members of the Committee.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Leadsom".

**ANDREA LEADSOM**