# minutes of Committee on Radioactive Waste Managament (CoRWM) plenary

# 5 SEPTEMBER 2014, ANGLESEY

#### Secretariat

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

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

***Declarations of Interest***

1. Rebecca Lunn stated that she was involved in a project funded by RWM Limited and that the University was funding 2 PhD students to look at geochemistry. Laurence Williams stated that he had recently taken up post at Imperial College London and was also involved as part of the Imperial College team in a DECC contract on nuclear security culture (along with Kings College London). Lynda Warren stated that she was a board member of Natural Resources Wales.

***Storage of Intermediate Level Waste at Wylfa***

1. CoRWM had visited the Wylfa site on the previous day. The Committee had received presentations on the site’s strategy to manage its Intermediate Level Waste and the plans for decommissioning. The Committee had been taken on tour of the Wylfa Plant site but was not given access to the Reactor and the Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste (ILW) stores.
2. In general the Committee appreciated the presentations and clearly a good deal of effort had been put into planning the day and ensuring that the Committee were given a comprehensive summary of the way radioactive waste is managed on the site. The staff who conducted the tours were clearly knowledgeable and the Committee appreciated both their candid briefings on operations at the site and the issues that they foresaw. The Committee was particularly interested to hear about the work being undertaken to deal with consequences of the water ingress event that had occurred in one of the dry stores many years ago.
3. The Committee was concerned that it was not able to visit the reactor and the waste storage facilities because of access security difficulties and the Chairman agreed to write to the Station Director at Wylfa to arrange a follow-up meeting by the Welsh sub-group to have the opportunity to look at the HAW storage facilities. The Committee also felt it would be appropriate for the Chairman to write to the Station Director to thank him for hosting the visit and to explain the Committee’s remit and scrutiny role.

**Action 1:** **Chairman to write to the Station Director at Wylfa.**

**Action 2:** **Secretariat to arrange a follow-up meeting to Wylfa to enable the Welsh Sub-group to observe the ILW storage facilities at Wylfa.**

1. The Committee felt that it would be appropriate to ask the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to provide the Committee with an update on the Magnox Operating Plan (MOP).

**Action 3:** **Secretariat to arrange for the NDA to brief the Committee on the Magnox Operating Plan.**

***CoRWM’s Public Meeting in Anglesey***

1. CoRWM had held a public meeting the previous evening for members of the public to meet the Committee, and raise any issues relating to radioactive waste. The meeting had been well attended. Some strong opinions were expressed against radioactive waste disposal on Anglesey. There was also some confusion over the role of CoRWM and its reasons for visiting Wylfa. The Committee felt that some members of the public had misunderstood the fundamental purpose of CoRWM’s visit to Anglesey, which was to scrutinise the storage of radioactive waste at Wylfa, and instead assumed that CoRWM had come to Anglesey in relation to geologic disposal of radioactive waste.
2. In the light of the public meeting, the Committee felt that at any future public “meet and greet” meetings it would be useful to give a brief presentation to explain CoRWM’s role at the start, emphasising its independence and setting boundaries for the ensuing discussions. It was agreed that it could be useful to produce a diagram of where CoRWM sits in relation to DECC, its other sponsors in the devolved administrations, the NDA, RWM, the regulators and the nuclear licensees. The use of break-out groups during the public meeting to make the discussions more informal and focussed was also discussed as an option that could be tried at future meetings.
3. The Committee agreed that when publicising the meetings through press releases/ briefings etc. is also important to ensure that the Committee’s remit and ways of working are explained. In planning any future meetings, the Committee would need to think about what the CoRWM wanted to communicate so that this could be explained in advance in order to manage expectations. The Committee thought that the public meeting was worthwhile and where appropriate it should continue to hold public meetings when CoRWM visited nuclear facilities.

***Reflections on meeting with the Welsh Government***

1. As part of CoRWM’s remit to provide advice to the devolved administrations, the Committee had had a meeting with officials from the Welsh Government (WG). It was noted that the WG appreciates the support it receives from CoRWM and that the Committee has an excellent working relationship with the Welsh Government officials. It was noted that, partly in response to the EU directive on spent fuel and radioactive waste management, the Welsh Government is currently in the process of deciding whether Wales should have its own policy to manage radioactive waste.
2. CoRWM had responded to the WG’s initial call for evidence on the possible review of its policy and the officials found CoRWM’s input very useful. The officials discussed their intention to put in the public domain the questions asked in the call for evidence and the responses received. They were also in the process of drafting a consultation paper on whether the Welsh Government should have its own radioactive waste policy and, subject to Ministerial approval, the consultation is to be published in the coming weeks.

***Chair’s Update***

*Secretariat*

1. The Chair introduced the new members of the secretariat.

*Follow up on Dounreay*

1. The Chair reported that Managing Director of Dounreay had invited CoRWM to return to the site for a follow up visit and to look at the interim storage facilities in more detail. The Committee agreed for the secretariat to request possible dates to conduct the follow up visit and for members of the Scottish sub group in particular to indicate which of the dates would be suitable for them.

**Action 4:** **Secretariat to arrange a follow-up meeting to discuss CoRWM’s outstanding issues relating to the storage of HAW at Dounreay.**

*CoRWM’s response over the next two years to the publication of the Government White Paper on Geological Disposal Facility*

1. Geological screening – The Committee discussed the proposal for CoRWM to be part of the initial advisory group on geological screening. It was agreed that it was important for CoRWM to retain its independence and to focus on scrutinising the process and not be involved in decision making. It was agreed that Members should attend the first public event to be hosted by the RWM on the 30th of September and report back to the Committee. It was also noted that an initial meeting on geological screening between CoRWM and RWM had been arranged for the 12th of September.

**Action 5:** **Secretariat to arrange for Members to attend the geological screening meeting on 30 September.**

1. Planning, Communities and Public engagement – The Committee also agreed that it would be essential to scrutinise the other workstreams associated with the planning, communities and public and stakeholder engagement strands of the White Paper.

*Paper to the World Nuclear New Build Conference*

1. The Chair informed the Committee that he will be chairing a session at the conference and that he has clarified the appropriateness of this with DECC before accepting. The Chair noted that he had already circulated his intended presentation at the conference for Members to comment on and that Members were free to use the information in his presentation.

***Sub-Group Updates***

*Stakeholder Engagement*

1. The Committee discussed DECC’s intention to set up a Community Representatives Working Group (CRWG). There was agreement that it was imperative that information is provided to the Committee on the steps being taken and progress made in engaging and educating the public, without which it would not be possible for the Committee to scrutinise the process. Members agreed that regular update meetings should be set up with those involved in taking forward the work stream. It was agreed that this should form part of the Committee’s work plan for the next year.

**Action 6:** **Secretariat to arrange a meeting with DECC to discuss the CRWG programme.**

*Safety Case*

1. The lead Member gave a presentation on the current status of RW’s safety case work. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for a meeting to be arranged for Members to discuss the issue with RWM.

**Action 7:** **Secretariat to arrange a meeting with RWM to discuss the development of GDF safety cases.**

*RWM Transition*

1. Members of the sub-group met RWM (now a wholly-owned subsidiary of NDA) representatives on 20th August. At the meeting members were taken through the re-organisation and remit of RWM from a strategic level. Following the meeting RWM had sent CoRWM a number of documents on the transition process. The Committee agreed that the initial transition of RWMD into RWM was the first step in a process that would eventually lead to RWM becoming a GDF delivery organisation. The Committee agreed that RWM’s goal must be to create an organisation that was fit for purpose and capable of commanding the respect of two important stakeholders – the public and the regulators. It was agreed that the Transition Sub-Committee would continue to monitor developments.

*Scottish Policy*

1. It was reported that Scottish Government planned to publish a consultation draft implementation strategy in October, however the Committee could not discuss this issue because of the purdah restrictions in place for the Scottish Independence Referendum.

*Interim Storage*

1. It was noted that as a result of the Committee’s visits to both Dounreay and Wylfa to look at the management of HAW interim storage, further visits to both sites would be necessary to close out identified issues.

*Spent Fuel and Nuclear Storage*

1. The sub-group reported that it was planning to meet the NDA to discuss the implications of the Magnox Operating Plan on the current plans for interim storage.

***Forthcoming meetings***

1. The Committee planned to visit Berkeley in December to discuss its interim storage arrangements for HAW and hold its plenary meeting in the locality in line with its normal practice. Taking on board lessons from recent meetings Members thought that consideration should be given to holding the Committee’s open plenary in advance of having the public meeting.

**Action 8:** **Secretariat to revise the programme for the visit to Berkeley.**

1. It was agreed that the meeting on the 9th and 10th of March 2015 will now be held in London.

***Question and Answer Session***

1. A member of the public suggested that the Committee should give further consideration to the handling of public meetings. Another member of the public pointed out the concerns over the management of radioactive waste in Wales. The Committee noted the points made.
2. Almost all the observers agreed that after seeing the committee at work during the plenary they had a much better understanding of the Committee’s work and remit than they had gained from the previous evening’s public meeting.
3. A question was raised about the relationship between a community and the local council if the community wanted to enter into discussions to host a radioactive disposal facility The Committee responded that in relation to England, this issue was discussed in the White Paper published by DECC. The definition of a “community” is recognised as being central to the voluntary process and hence a group would be set up to discuss the issue and make recommendations on how the “community” in the context of a GDF should be defined. Under the policy for England, the “community” would be free to engage with the developer to see if a GDF in its area was feasible and at could withdraw from the process any time during this engagement, at which point the developer’s activities would cease.
4. Members of the public raised questions which CoRWM responded to relating to the safety of a GDF and how radioactive waste would be transported.