



**COMMITTEE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT (CORWM)
OPEN MEETING
23 MARCH 2018, LONDON**

- Venue:** BEIS Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET
- Timing:** 11.00 – 16.00
- Chair:** Campbell Gemmell
- Members:** Andrew Hall, Andrew Walters, Gregg Butler, Janet Wilson, Joanne Hill, Julia West, Richard Shaw (Members), Stewart Agar (Secretariat)
- Attending:** RWM Head of Policy, BEIS Head of CoRWM Sponsorship, GDFWatch Executive Director
- Apologies:** Paul Davis, Melissa Denecke, Simon Redfern, Stephen Tromans (Members)

Summary

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) is an independent group of 13 experts which provides scrutiny and advice to the UK governments on the long-term management of higher activity radioactive wastes. CoRWM meets six times each year in plenary to discuss its work.

This note contains minutes for the 23rd March CoRWM Open Plenary, which was held in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) conference centre in London. CoRWM Open Meetings encourage participation and input from the public and other stakeholders.

CoRWM plenary meetings usually provide update on the work of CoRWM's Subgroups which examine key areas of interest to stakeholders. In this meeting CoRWM discussed their responses to the consultations regarding siting and engagement of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) and finalised their Work Programme for the coming year for submission to Government.

Agenda Item 1: Chair's Update

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
2. The Chair gave an update on the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) programme. There were three consultations ongoing which CoRWM were responding to:
 - a. BEIS and DAERA's joint 'Implementing Geological Disposal: Working With Communities' (WWC) consultation,
 - b. the Welsh equivalent of the above, 'Geological disposal of radioactive waste',
 - c. BEIS's 'National Policy Statement on Geological Disposal Infrastructure' (NPS) consultation.
3. Interviews for the permanent CoRWM chair were ongoing, with a decision from the UK Government and Devolved Administration (DA) Ministers likely to be heard by roughly mid-May.
4. The Tailored Review of CoRWM was likely to circulate its report to CoRWM in mid-late April, and publish its findings in May.
5. The Committee noted their appreciation for Seb Lawson, who had left the CoRWM Secretariat in the beginning of March. They expressed their appreciation for his hard work and wished him well in his new position.
6. The Committee noted the effectiveness of a two-member Secretariat, and the value it provided in helping coordinate between CoRWM and partners and better tracking of advice. They hoped this recent Secretariat arrangement would continue.
7. The Chair hoped that the Tailored Review would echo recent conversations between CoRWM and partners hoping for CoRWM to provide more proactive outreach with stakeholders.
8. The Chair had recently attended the following meetings:
 - a. Geological Disposal Programme Board (GDPB, 16 January and 26 February) - Details on these meetings had been forwarded to members and minutes are available online¹. The Chair noted that the GDPB was moving quickly and now waiting for feedback from the consultation responses for much of its steer.
 - b. Sponsors meeting (13 Feb) – This meeting mainly discussed issues of recruitment.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/geological-disposal-steering-group>

- c. NDA meeting (13 Feb) – As discussed under Subgroup 7
 - d. Teleconference on Letters of Compliance (LoC) with RWM (2 March) – As discussed under Subgroup 4
 - e. Tailored Review interview (with Deputy Chair) (2 March)
 - f. Teleconference on Annual Report Recommendations with RWM (7 March) – The Chair with Deputy Chair reviewed the status of CoRWM's 2016/17 Annual Report Recommendation
9. CoRWM had been considering how to better codify advice, making it more consistent and facilitating feedback being given and received with advised bodies. Ways to improve CoRWM's public presence were also being considered.

Agenda Item 2: Statement on UK Government GDF Policy

10. CoRWM wished to record that they reiterate their Managing our Radioactive Waste Safely² recommendations to government (CoRWM doc. 700) in 2006, and Statement on Geological Disposal³ position paper (CoRWM doc. 3122) published in 2013.
11. CoRWM sees geological disposal as the most viable approach to managing the UK's radioactive waste safely. It recognises geological disposal as international best practice for high-level waste^{4,5}. It believes we have a moral obligation to reduce the burden on future societies, and should hence act now to make radioactive waste safe and stable. CoRWM therefore welcomes and fully supports the policy and efforts of UK and Welsh Government to implement geological disposal.
12. CoRWM members discussed their desire to revisit CoRWM's 2006 recommendations, noting that updating these to reflect and account for any recent developments may be appropriate.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-our-radioactive-waste-safely-corwm-doc-700>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-on-geological-disposal>

⁴ IAEA Specific Safety Requirements, No. SSR-5, Disposal of Radioactive Waste, 2011 - https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1449_web.pdf

⁵ A Collective Statement by the NEA Radioactive Waste Management Committee (RWMC), 2008 - <http://www.oecd-nea.org/rwm/reports/2008/nea6433-statement.pdf>

Agenda Item 3: Declaration of interests

1. CoRWM's register of interests can be found online ⁶.
2. The Chair declared that his work for Scottish Government on post-Brexit environmental governance had concluded. He had been asked, as part of his consultancy work, to look at issues around transport of nuclear materials in Eastern Europe.
3. Janet Wilson declared that she had responded to a question from Parliament.UK on licensing and permitting for SMRs, unpaid. As part of her consultancy work she is giving support to an American company, which is interested in UK new nuclear build.
4. Members had no other interests to declare.

Agenda Item 4: Approval of minutes and status of actions from November 2017 Open Plenary

5. The minutes of the January 2018 Open Plenary were approved.
6. The action list from the January 2018 Open Plenary was updated.
7. Members noted the internal 'Advice Summaries' which had been prepared by the Secretariat, and noted their use as summaries and an audit trail of advice to partner bodies. There was also desire from BEIS and the Committee to return to publication of quarterly reports.

Agenda Item 5: Subgroup Activities and Plans

Subgroup 1: Working With Communities and Communications

8. Subgroup 1 (SG1) had, with the help of other members, attended BEIS's public consultation workshops which had been held across the country. This had been useful for CoRWM to gather feedback from attending stakeholders.
9. SG1 had met with BEIS on the 21 March to discuss the feedback received from stakeholders, and noted that the themes picked up by BEIS had largely matched those picked up by CoRWM members.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-members-interests--3>

10. The main theme picked up had been a lack of clarity about the role of local authorities in the process, and their right of veto.
11. SG1 found the workshops well run and felt attendees were more informed and empowered to respond afterwards. SG1 noted that they had raised the issue of ensuring the separate roles of BEIS / RWM / NDA were properly communicated, and found roles had been clear in the workshops.
12. Subgroup 1 is leading on CoRWM's response to the WWC consultation.

Subgroup 2: Safety Case and Geology

13. SG2 had received and circulated RWM's updated draft Public-Facing Safety Case documents, and thanked RWM for their responsiveness in replying to CoRWM's advice. CoRWM agreed that their 2016/17 Annual Report recommendation on these documents had now been closed out.
14. SG2 members had met with the BGS to discuss their technical reports underpinning the National Geological Screening. These were comprehensive and ready for publication when RWM instructed.

Subgroup 3: Planning and Regulation

15. SG3 was leading on the NPS consultation response.
16. SG3 had met with BEIS GDF Team's land-use planning members to discuss the NPS, and the draft Statutory Instrument, of which SG3 had recently provided comments on the legal drafting instructions.

Subgroup 4: Organisational Development

17. SG4 had submitted its report on the IPA Review of RWM to BEIS. The IPA's review report had produced recommendations, which had fed into a GDPB action plan. SG4 was now just keeping a watching brief on these actions.
18. SG4 had a teleconference on the Letters of Compliance process with RWM on 2 March. It was agreed that RWM would host a workshop in roughly June whereby they would present on their recent work in this area and show how CoRWM's past queries and recommendations about the LoC process had been addressed.

Subgroup 5:

19. SG5 was due to meet the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham., on the 28 March after a meeting with Scottish Government (SG) officials.

20. SG is keen to hear CoRWM's independent views on potential requirements for various Euratom scenarios, and to discuss areas within SG's near-surface near-site policy.

Subgroup 6:

21. Subgroup 6 had met with Welsh Government (WG) officials on 7 March to discuss provision of CoRWM advice on policy development following feedback from the consultation.
22. WG are due to develop a Technical Advice Note which is the Welsh equivalent to the UK NPS.
23. Robert Williams is due to retire in May, CoRWM members wanted to record their thanks for the direct, open and helpful relationship he developed with them, and his strong advocacy for their work.

Subgroup 7:

24. SG7 had been in comprehensive email contact with the NDA regarding waste storage, and the status of spent fuel and nuclear materials since a meeting on 29 September.
25. On ILW storage, SG7 is advising the NDA to produce public-facing documentation which would summarise progress in waste treatment and storage across the NDA estate, and are meeting with the NDA on the 28 March to discuss this and other issues.
26. SG7 are supportive of the NDAs work and see no issues in their treatment and storage approach, but believe greater information could be provided to stakeholders to build confidence between the triennial Radioactive Waste Inventory reports.
27. A further meeting was held on the 13 Feb which discussed the NDA's ongoing review of waste disposal technologies which may complement geological disposal and CoRWM's role in advising on this work.

Subgroup 8:

28. Outside of CoRWM work, Stephen Tromans had produced a report for UKELA on Brexit and Environmental Law: Exit from the Euratom Treaty and its Environmental Implications⁷. This had been highly received by colleagues across government.

⁷ <https://www.ukela.org/content/doclib/316.pdf>

29. There may be further work requested by Scottish and Welsh Governments in order to ensure CoRWM's report on waste management implications from Euratom exit was fully applicable to each country.
30. Stephen Tromans had briefly met a member of the BEIS Euratom team on the 21 March to finalise SG8's work programme tasks.

Subgroup 9: CoRWM outreach

31. SG9 had exchanged emails and held a teleconference on the 2nd March. CoRWM had now reactivated its twitter account and began using its webpage and gov.uk more actively. SG9 suggested that CoRWM should offer to give presentations to agreed relevant organisations and institutions. After discussions members also considered that inviting experts from the UK and abroad to give presentation at plenaries would engage a wider audience.

ACTION 1: Members to suggest potential topics and speakers for future meetings and how these would add value to the discussions.

ACTION 2: Secretariat to explore possibilities for resourcing speaker visits, and video conferencing functionality at the 1 Victoria Street conference centre.

Agenda Item 6: Finalising the CoRWM Work Programme

32. CoRWM finalised their Work Programme for 2018-21. Much of the drafting for this programme had been conducted by email and drawn from the various subgroups, as such the Work Programme was finalised without issue.
33. In the past, the priority values had been useful in that new priorities that emerged would take precedence over these lower priority tasks. A specific Work Area had been created to include lower-priority items, in order to provide resource to accommodate any late-emerging priority tasks.

Agenda Item 7: Forward Look – 2017/18 Annual Report

34. On the annual report, Subgroup chairs were providing their input in sections. The Annual Report will be shorter and focus on the status of previous recommendation, in order to provide feedback. Previous recommendations were generally thought to be in hand or closed out.

Agenda Item 8: Forward Look – Plenary Meetings and Visits

35. CoRWM are exploring a visit to Germany in June.

36. The committee now have an available date for their visit to Sellafield.
37. The date and location of the June Open Plenary date is being moved to the 21st June and the Dalton Cumbria Facility, in order to facilitate this CoRWM visit to Sellafield.

ACTION 3: CoRWM to liaise with the Secretariat as to the facilities they wish to visit at Sellafield for confirmation at next plenary 2 May.

Agenda Item 9: CoRWM Methods of Working

38. The Chair outlined correspondence with BEIS senior officials about more regular reporting of CoRWM progress and incorporation of feedback loops.
39. CoRWM are also expanding their web presence with and FAQ and eBulletin
40. CoRWM will upload their consultation responses immediately after the consultation close, to avoid appearing to inappropriately influence others by doing so beforehand.
41. The Chair outlined the scope for CoRWM to strengthen further, through the Having corresponded with Stephen Speed there is a response on the way. This will include accepting different ways of making progress and regular reporting.

Agenda Item 11: Questions from the Public

42. Roy Payne of GDFWatch - a not-for-profit organisation focused on informing communities to help them engage with GDF siting and ensuring accountability of government and the delivery body - discussed his efforts to bring various community, trade union and business groups together who have not previously engaged with the GDF siting process.
43. He described how these groups were mostly interested in the siting process from their own perspective, ambitions and agendas, such as community empowerment and localism.
44. Roy Payne hoped to bring potential communities and organisations together into a collaborative unit in order to help get their views across in the consultation and maintain active discussion going forward.
45. The possibility of an All-Party Parliamentary GDF Group was discussed. Attendees discussed the need to move the GDF issue away from being seen or treated as a purely nuclear project and placed in a broader context of regional/rural economic regeneration, community development and empowerment.

46. Roy Payne hoped to develop peer-to-peer collaboration between UK communities involved in the GDF siting process, and to bring together GDF communities from different countries to share experience and support each other. He had opened discussions with a pan-European association of local authorities, ENWD, which is somewhat akin to an EU equivalent of NuLeAF.
47. He mentioned discussions taking place to invite ENWD members to attend this year's NDA Stakeholder Summit. He believes European local authorities see the UK as advanced in its constructive involvement of local authorities with the NDA and the influence they had over decommissioning projects.
48. Roy Payne believed that because the siting process was now entering a more political/social (rather than technical) phase it was important that CoRWM was visible to communities as a source of independent expertise in the process. CoRWM may wish to consider building its community, communications and engagement expertise, or take practical steps such as holding evening meetings to increase public engagement.
49. RWMs new outreach team was discussed; Janet Wilson welcomed the development of this team and noted the willingness of staff to get involved.
50. CoRWM's Head of Sponsorship within BEIS gave update on potential new members of the Secretariat.

Agenda Item 12: Any Other Business

51. There was no other business raised.
52. The Chair led the Committee in thanking Roy Payne and RWM's Head of Policy for attending and giving update.

Agenda Item 13: Next Meeting

53. The next Open Plenary meeting will be held on **Wednesday 2 May 2018, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET**
54. Please note that the 20 June CoRWM plenary meeting, due to be held in Edinburgh, has been moved. The meeting will now be held on **Thursday 21 June, Dalton Cumbrian Facility, Cumbria, CA24 3HA.**
55. Please contact corwm@beis.gov.uk for details on how to attend CoRWM plenaries or visit our webpage⁸ or meetings calendar⁹.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/committee-on-radioactive-waste-management>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/corwm-plenary-meeting-dates-and-locations-2018>

Appendix A – Abbreviations

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| BEIS | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy |
| CNRD | Civil Nuclear and Resilience Directorate within BEIS |
| CoRWM | Committee on Radioactive Waste Management |
| DAs | Devolved Administrations |
| GDF | Geological Disposal Facility |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| IPA | Infrastructure Projects Authority |
| NDA | Nuclear Decommissioning Authority |
| NGS | National Geological Screening |
| RWM | Radioactive Waste Management |

Appendix B – Actions

| Actions from the Open Plenary | | Status |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| Action 1 | Members to suggest potential topics and speakers for future meetings and how these would add value to the discussions. | Closed |
| Action 2 | Secretariat to explore possibilities for resourcing speaker visits, and video conferencing functionality at the 1 Victoria Street conference centre. | Closed |
| Action 3 | CoRWM to liaise with the Secretariat as to the facilities they wish to visit at Sellafield for confirmation at next plenary 2 May. | Closed |