



**COMMITTEE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT (CORWM)  
OPEN MEETING  
02 MAY 2018, LONDON**

- Venue:** Room C21, BEIS Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET
- Timing:** 11.30 – 16.00
- Chair:** Campbell Gemmell (Acting Chair)
- Members:** Andrew Hall, Andrew Walters, Gregg Butler, Janet Wilson, , Julia West, Paul Davis, Richard Shaw, Simon Redfern, Stephen Newson, Stephen Tromans
- Attending:** CoRWM Secretariat, Bruce Cairns (RWM), Catherine Draper (NuLeAF), Cherry Tweed (RWM), Ivan Stone (Member of Public), Phillip Matthews (NuLeAF), Roy Payne (GDFWatch), CoRWM Sponsorship Team (BEIS), CoRWM Sponsors (by telconference)
- Apologies:** Melissa Denecke, Joanne Hill

## **Summary**

The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) is an independent group of (currently) 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 2<sup>nd</sup> May 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.

In this meeting CoRWM discussed their Annual Report and news from the Tailored Review. The Committee discussed potential national and international site visits, including the upcoming visit to Konrad in Germany. The Committee heard presentations from Phillip Matthews from Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum and Roy Payne from GDF watch. Finally a panel discussion explored the momentum of geological disposal in the wake of Brexit, and CoRWM's role for the next five years

## Agenda Item 1: Chair's Update

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
2. The Chair gave an update on the process to recruit a permanent Chair. It was anticipated that Sponsor Minister would make a decision on the appointment in the middle of May.
3. The Chair gave an update on the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) programme. The Committee had sent responses to the three ongoing consultations. BEIS and the Welsh Government were considering the responses received during the consultation process. The three consultations were:
  - a. BEIS and DAERA's joint 'Implementing Geological Disposal: Working With Communities' (WWC) consultation,
  - b. The Welsh Government's equivalent of the above, 'Geological Disposal of Radioactive Waste'
  - c. BEIS's 'National Policy Statement on Geological Disposal Infrastructure' (NPS) consultation.
4. The Chair gave an update on upcoming meetings:
  - a. with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) on 3<sup>rd</sup> May
  - b. with the Chair of RWM, Professor Malcolm Morley, and CoRWM Sponsors from BEIS (Craig Lester, Jess Ellis, Umran Nazir) on 8<sup>th</sup> May
  - c. the Geological Disposal Programme Board (GDPB) on 20<sup>th</sup> May
5. The Technical Secretary gave an update on his work to transfer CoRWM's Archive of documents to The National Archive, with the first batch of documents to be transferred in the coming months.
6. The Committee wished to give their thanks to the Technical Secretary who is leaving CoRWM in the middle of May. They expressed their appreciation for his hard work and wished him well in his new position. His successor was due to start the following week. The Committee welcomed the new Committee Secretary to the meeting.

**Agenda Item 2: Declaration of interests**

7. CoRWM's register of interests can be found online.<sup>1</sup>
8. Gregg Butler is now a member of Nuclear Innovation and Research Advisory Board (NIRAB)
9. Janet Wilson is working on a new build project.

**Agenda Item 3: Approval of minutes and status of actions from November 2017 Open Plenary**

10. The minutes of the March 2018 Open Plenary were approved
11. The action list from the March 2018 Open Plenary was updated.

**Agenda Item 4: Subgroup Activities and Plans****Subgroup 1: Working With Communities and Communications**

12. Janet Wilson provided an update on Subgroup 1's activities. Subgroup 1 had focused on responding to the Working with Communities (WWC) consultation and had been in touch with BEIS on WWC issues following the close of the consultation.
13. The Subgroup observed that BEIS had held several stakeholder events. These events were informative for CoRWM as they highlighted where CoRWM's submitted consultation responses aligned with other interested parties.

**Subgroup 2: Safety Case and Geology**

14. Paul Davis discussed the meeting Subgroup 2 had with Radioactive Waste Management Ltd. (RWM) on the 1<sup>st</sup> May and discussed the progress of the National Geological Screening (NGS). CoRWM were very happy with the outputs from the NGS and are discussing the next steps for safety.

**Subgroup 3: Planning and Regulation**

15. Andrew Hall stated that Subgroup 3 had submitted their response to the consultation on the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Geological Infrastructure. The subgroup planned to have a meeting with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) on 3<sup>rd</sup> May to discuss ONR's progress on the NPS. The subgroup plan to meet with BEIS to discuss the consultation responses in June.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-members-interests--3>

**Subgroup 4: Organisational Development**

16. Stephen Newson discussed Subgroup 4's activities. Subgroup 4 was keeping a watching brief on the ongoing actions from the Geological Disposal Programme Board (GDPB).
17. CoRWM planned to set up a meeting with RWM to discuss their Letters of Compliance (LoC). One of the recommendations from the Infrastructure Projects Authority review was to examine the work culture of RWM.

**Subgroup 5: Scottish Government Activities**

18. Campbell Gemmell discussed the meeting Subgroup 5 had with the Scottish Cabinet Secretary. The Cabinet Secretary thanked CoRWM for the engagement and discussed items of the Work Programme.
19. The next meeting will be to work on Euratom
20. There was a meeting on 26 April with Scottish Nuclear Sites who provided an update on the progress of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency's (SEPA) integrated authorisation approach.
21. The Chair planned to attend the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA) supply chain event at the Scottish Parliament on 15 May.

**Subgroup 6: Welsh Government Activities**

22. Gregg Butler stated CoRWM had previously commented on drafts of the Welsh Governments equivalent to the WWC consultation. There were 21 hard copies and 59 online responses sent to the Welsh Government in response to the consultation. There has been a subsequent request to CoRWM from the Welsh Government to help provide technical advice.
23. The Welsh Government does not currently have an equivalent to the NPS that is compatible with the BEIS's NPS on geological infrastructure.
24. CoRWM thanked the Welsh Governments outgoing Head of Radioactive Policy Robert Williams for his contributions and wish him the best in his retirement.

**Subgroup 7: Storage of Radioactive Waste, Spent Nuclear Fuel and Nuclear Materials**

25. Gregg Butler provided an update on the progress of spent fuel. There will be a finite, small amount of non-reprocessed spent fuel and the storage arrangements appear to be robust.
26. The Committee was updated on the progress of the treatment and storage of higher activity wastes (HAW). Subgroup 7 believed an overall parameter that

measured progress in recovery of the entire waste inventory would be useful. Such a measure might be based on previously used Safety and Environmental Detriment (SED) scores. The subgroup planned to meet in June to discuss this in more detail.

27. The Chair stated that the Committee and its Sponsors were discussing how to best work with the NDA to offer assurance on issues related to the waste inventory. In the past this had focussed on BEIS and RWM, but there is an opportunity and need to work more closely with NDA.

#### **Subgroup 8: Euratom Exit Implications for Radioactive Waste Management**

28. Stephen Tromans stated CoRWM had published a report about Euratom called "Radioactive Waste: Implications of UK Withdrawal from Euratom and the EU" on the Committees government website.
29. The Scottish Government had requested a tailored report to discuss the Scottish context of the Euratom transition arrangement. Subgroup 8 will work on this throughout the year.

#### **Subgroup 9: CoRWM Outreach**

30. A 'task-and-finish' group had met to discuss options for CoRWM's outreach and had completed their work, so this sub-group would come to an end.

#### **Changes in Subgroups**

31. The Committee had changed the status of Subgroup 7 (Storage of Radioactive Waste, Spent Nuclear Fuel and Nuclear Materials) from a watching brief to a standing group, to recognise the ongoing need to understand the waste inventory and waste treatment as the GDF programme developed. The Committee anticipates that further changes will be made in the status of other subgroups once the 2018-2019 work programme is agreed.

#### **Agenda Item 5: CoRWM Tailored Review**

32. The Tailored Review is the successor to the Triennial Review process (which CoRWM underwent in 2015). During the review, the CoRWM Chair, Deputy Chair and several members, together with other stakeholders, were interviewed by the Tailored Review panel. Informal feedback has indicated that no major changes were expected.
33. It was expected that the main outcome from the review would be to establish a Framework Document, which would set out the way the Committee worked with BEIS and its other Sponsors.

34. The Committee was making good progress in improving their profile and online presence. The Chair hoped the Tailored Review and resulting framework document would help streamline communicating CoRWM findings to the public.
35. The BEIS Sponsorship Team thanked CoRWM for their contributions to the review and agreed that major changes to the Committee were unlikely. It was hoped the review would be useful in clarifying CoRWM's role and remit.

### **Agenda Item 6: Site Visits**

36. CoRWM discussed possible international site visits. The Committee had proposed to travel to Onkalo in Finland. However, there is a significant fee to access the site which prevents this visit currently. Nevertheless, the Chair believed it would still be useful for members to visit this site. The Committee also discussed visiting other sites including Bure, France; Mol, Belgium; WIPP, USA and others in Sweden. It was also proposed that such visits could take place at the same time as government officials thus benefiting everyone in a cost-effective manner.
37. CoRWM plans to visit Konrad in Germany around 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to learn from Germany regulators' experience of planning for the disposal of low-heat generating radioactive waste
38. The Committee were organising a meeting in Dounreay in late 2018 or early 2019, and there was a proposal to visit Sizewell.

### **Agenda Item 7: CoRWM Finances**

39. A tracking system has been employed for the finances which allows for more efficient planning of member time.

### **Agenda Item 8: Update on Annual Report**

40. The Annual Report is in advanced stages of drafting.
41. CoRWM Secretariat was praised for their effective management of the drafting process. There was some discussion on the appropriate length and content of the Report. Members agreed that it was important to capture the breadth of work of the Committee over the year, while making the report accessible to the public and other stakeholders.
42. The CoRWM Sponsorship Team advised adding a strong Executive Summary with clear messages to highlight to Ministers.

**Agenda Item 9: Panel Discussion with Invited Speakers**

43. In previous meetings, CoRWM decided they would like to invite speakers to the Open Plenary. These presentations would revolve around radioactive waste management. The invited speakers to this Plenary were Philip Matthews from the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeAF), and Roy Payne from GDFWatch.
44. CoRWM have also decided for the first time to hold a Panel discussion. The Panel was composed of the invited speakers, Philip Matthews (NuLeAF), Roy Payne (GDFWatch), as well as Catherine Draper (NuLeAF).

**Agenda Item 10: Invited Speaker 1 Philip Matthews (NuLeAF)**

45. Philip Matthews presented on NuLeAF's work. All NuLeAF's work aims for the outcome that "The policy, strategy and practice for all nuclear waste and legacy issues has the interests of Local Authorities (LAs) as a central concern, leading to the best possible outcome for the communities they serve." In other words, NuLeAF aims to support, provide advice, co-ordinate and inform LAs on nuclear decommissioning, and to build understanding of what is proposed for geological disposal.
46. NuLeAF's policy supports geological disposal, in line with CoRWM's recommendations from 2006. NuLeAF supports CoRWM's proposal to progress to disposal as soon as practicable, consistent with developing and maintaining public and stakeholder's confidence.
47. NuLeAF are interested in how the landscape for geological disposal has changed since CoRWM's report, with the NDA looking at near surface disposal, accelerated decommissioning, in situ disposal, and application of waste hierarchy. A new radioactive waste strategy will look to develop an integrated approach for all radioactive wastes,
48. NuLeAF submitted responses to all three geological disposal consultations covering England and Wales. They believed there was a need for greater clarity on the terminology 'Search Area' and 'Community'. They support the use of existing ward boundaries to define the edge of the search area and the potential host community (PHC).
49. Philip Matthews discussed the pivotal role LAs have in every stage of the process. GDF siting will take many years, and RWM must be responsive to local issues and electoral cycles.
50. Greater clarity is needed on the direct and indirect benefits of geological disposal, and mitigation measures. The direct and indirect benefits should be maximised wherever possible, and the additional investment provided to the GDF host community must be substantial.
51. In the NPS consultation, BEIS has suggested that the GDF would be designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). NSIP is

distinct-non-site specific and thus high level. It must be driven by standards of safety and sustainability.

52. In terms of geological disposal, the Planning Act 2008 required additional contextual information. The assessment for the facility needed to clarify additional uses of a GDF such as repackaging and whether it will be a source of Combined Heat and Power (CHP). There needs to be more information on management of material, transportation and socio-economics.
53. Philip Matthews would like clarity on why an Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was not undertaken in the 2014 White Paper.

### **Agenda Item 11: Invited Speaker 2 Roy Payne (GDFWatch)**

54. Roy Payne (GDFWatch) discussed the benefits of international collaboration between local communities which have considered or are considering hosting a GDF.

Such interactions would help address the issue of trust. People were generally distrusting of authorities but might value the insights and experience of other ordinary people who had been through or were facing the same issues.

55. Importantly, collaboration between communities in different countries could support independent validation of technical and scientific information, if that material had been assessed and verified by multiple communities. It would also place geological disposal in a global rather than national context by:
  - a) emphasising that this was an environmental challenge facing the planet, not just a 'perverse' decision by one country's government;
  - b) opening the doors for wider economic and cultural exchanges and ties between such 'GDF-affected' communities; and,
  - c) help enhance the global memory of where repositories were built – remembering a global network would be more resilient and sustainable than just relying upon isolated, individual local community memories.
56. Roy Payne mentioned attendance by European local authorities at the NDA stakeholder summit. Although their attendance was on general decommissioning issues (and not specifically GDF focused), this was an important first step in building such international relationships at community level. The NDA stakeholders summit will be held at the Berkeley Green Campus, near Berkeley on 10th and 11th July.



## **Agenda Item 12: Public Panel and Questions**

### **Key Questions**

57. How do we maintain momentum while the consultation responses are incorporated?
58. How do RWM and CoRWM keep the public interested in geological disposal?
59. What will CoRWM's role be over the next 5 years?

### **How do we maintain momentum while the consultation responses are incorporated?**

60. The Panel discussed how to maintain momentum for geological disposal. Catherine Draper (NuLeAF) felt that BEIS were being quiet, and although the NDA is large in monetary terms, it does not have much publicity.
61. The Panel had mixed feelings about the effect of Brexit on momentum. Some Panel members suggested Brexit is more of a priority and so the GDF will lose focus. Other members, however, thought Brexit may help the GDF by tying in the development of a GDF to industrial strategy and regional development.

### **How do RWM and CoRWM keep the public interested in geological disposal?**

62. The Panel discussed how to keep the public interested. This was compared to the current drive on plastic pollution (public discourse agenda), which utilised TV programmes. However it was felt the NDA and RWM do not currently have the funding budgeted for this kind of outreach.
63. There were suggestions of having a political champion for the cause. This does not necessarily have to be someone that is a politician, but a celebrity or celebrated scientist.
64. The Panel debated whether there was any public interest with regards to radioactive waste. Some felt the public would not be interested unless something bad happens. However, others have had discussions with the public, who are very interested in disposal.
65. It was suggested that there should be a more detailed debate on the UK energy strategy and how the nuclear industry manage themselves. Discussing waste at the same time as energy may be useful as people tend to be more interested in producing energy rather than dealing with the waste. This discussion could lead to dialogue on why we need a GDF now.

**What will CoRWM's role be over the next 5 years?**

66. The role of CoRWM was discussed. Although CoRWM is a technical body, there was a belief that they should engage with the public (e.g. people in agricultural and rural sectors) and improve stakeholder trust. Therefore the Committee's skills needed to reflect this.
67. It would be important to emphasise CoRWM's independence from the government.
68. There is also belief that CoRWM needs to maintain profile and momentum, and ensure the need for a GDF is communicated where others cannot. The Committee could potentially go around the country making their views clear, while helping to advise on the fidelity of the process.

**Final round up**

69. The visiting speakers were thanked.
70. The Chair thanked the speakers.
71. The Chair thought the presentations and QA process worked very well. He hopes to bring people in virtually at the next plenary. The Chair believed it was urgent to make sure these conversations take place, and that the conclusions are communicated.

**Any Other Business**

72. None raised.

**Agenda Item 13: Next Meeting**

73. The next Open Plenary meeting will be held on Thursday 21 June 2018, in Cumbria, Venue TBC
74. Please contact [corwm@beis.gov.uk](mailto:corwm@beis.gov.uk) for details on how to attend CoRWM plenaries or visit our webpage<sup>2</sup> or meetings calendar.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/committee-on-radioactive-waste-management>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/corwm-plenary-meeting-dates-and-locations-2018>

## Appendix A – Abbreviations

AOS	Appraisal of Sustainability
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
CHP	Combined Heat and Power
CoRWM	Committee on Radioactive Waste Management
DAs	Devolved Administrations
GDF	Geological Disposal Facility
GDPB	Geological Disposal Programme Board
HAW	Higher Activity Wastes
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IPA	Infrastructure Projects Authority
LoC	Letters of Compliance
NDA	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
NGS	National Geological Screening
NPS	National Policy Statement
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
ONR	Office for Nuclear Regulation
PHC	Potential Host Community
RWM	Radioactive Waste Management
SED	Safety and Environmental Detriment
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
WWC	Working with Communities

## Appendix B – Actions

<b>Actions from the Open Plenary</b>		<b>Status</b>
<b>Action 1</b>	Members to suggest potential topics and speakers for future meetings and how these would add value to the discussions.	In process
<b>Action 2</b>	Secretariat to complete the Early June E-Bulletin and send it out to the mailing list	In process
<b>Action 3</b>	Secretariat to explore whether it is possible to upload the early June E-Bulletin to the CoRWM website	In process