



**COMMITTEE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT (CoRWM)
OPEN PLENARY MINUTES
8TH NOVEMBER 2018**

- Venue:** Meeting Room, Malmaison Hotel, Edinburgh, EH6 7BZ
- Timing:** 11:00 – 15:30
- Chair:** Nigel Thrift
- Members Attending:** Gregg Butler, Paul Davis, Campbell Gemmell, Stephen Newson, Richard Shaw, Andrew Walters, Julia West, Janet Wilson.
- Other Attendees:** Philip Matthews (NuLeAF), Ewan Young (Scottish Government), John Grierson (Magnox), Richard Gibson (Magnox), Kat Raines (public), Ian Hanley (ONR), Simon Morgan (ONR), Simon Harley (University of Edinburgh, former CoRWM Member), Alan Mowat (Dounreay), Andy Whittall (SEPA), Bruce Cairns (RWM), Dawn Armstrong (BEIS), Mariana Ghosh (CoRWM Secretariat), Matt Kirby (CoRWM Secretariat), Kathryn Yates (CoRWM Secretariat).
- Apologies:** Melissa Denecke, Andy Hall, Joanne Hill, Simon Redfern, Stephen Tromans.

Summary

The Open Plenary took place on the 8th November 2018 at the Malmaison Hotel in Edinburgh. The Chair discussed recent site visits to Hinkley Point C and to Sizewell B in which he was joined by members of the Committee. Members provided updates on subgroup activities, including the publication of Position Papers which have been written in response to FAQs regarding geological disposal. The Committee heard a presentation from Dounreay on a site restoration update and from Magnox on decommissioning efforts at Chapelcross and Hunterston A.

Item 1. Meeting open, welcome and introductory comments (Chair)

1. Site visits - The Chair discussed recent visits to Hinkley Point C and to Sizewell B. Committee members commented on the impressive scale of Hinkley Point C and dedication of the workforce and thanked staff members at both sites for their welcome.
2. Recent activities - The Chair discussed the recommendations of the Tailored Review concerning clarification of CoRWM's Remit within the Framework Document, and how CoRWM should undertake public engagement. CoRWM are currently discussing what kind of public engagement they should be carrying out and to what degree. The Committee are open to comments and suggestions regarding this.
3. GDF launch – The Chair discussed the upcoming launch of the GDF siting process. The Committee had a recent meeting with RWM (Radioactive Waste Management) and commented on the impressive study outcomes and professional videos created as part of their National Geological Screening (NGS) exercise.
4. Staff changes – The Committee thanked Matt Kirby for his time as Technical Secretary which comes to an end on the 15th November. They welcome Kathryn Yates who has recently joined CoRWM Secretariat.
5. Today's Presentations – The Chair welcomed representatives from Dounreay and Magnox who gave presentations at the Open Plenary.

Item 2. Declaration of Interests

6. Member Campbell Gemmell stated he has been appointed by the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for ECCLR (Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform) to Chair a Review of Air Quality Policy in Scotland until May 2019. The Committee congratulated Campbell Gemmell and understand this will not result in any conflict with CoRWM.

Item 3. Approval of Minutes from the previous Plenary

7. The minutes of the September 2018 Open Plenary were approved.

Item 4. Update on CoRWM activities and plans

8. Subgroup 1: Working with Communities and Communications.

- SG1 explained they had a meeting on 23rd October 2018 and are preparing for the launch of the GDF siting process. SG1 stated they are focussing on the post-launch roles for CoRWM as scrutiniser, for RWM (Radioactive Waste Management) as GDF developer, and for BEIS (Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy) as the department responsible for the policy. SG1 discussed that CoRWM have an important role as independent scrutiniser as it allows for discussions on all sides of the project.
- SG1 will next meet on 22nd November 2018.

9. Subgroup 2: Safety Case and Geology

- SG2 explained they have encouraged RWM to produce public-facing documents for a Safety Case for each of the three rock types suitable for a GDF. This has been completed and reviewed by the Committee.
- SG2 discussed RWM's informative videos which have been produced to explain different aspects of the GDF to the public. The Committee are impressed by the videos.
- Two members of SG2 explained they recently attended a public meeting held at the Geological Society in London organised by RWM regarding the NGS (National Geological Screening). This did not cover anything that SG2 were not already aware of.
- SG2 stated they welcome suggestions from attendees and the public about how RWM and CoRWM could capture questions from the public and communities regarding a GDF, and how other bodies such as regulators and learned societies could fit into the process.

10. Subgroup 3: Planning and Regulation

- SG3 members are meeting with BEIS officials in mid-November to discuss the draft National Policy Statement (NPS) for Geological Disposal Infrastructure.

11. Subgroup 4: GDF Delivery

- SG4 discussed an outstanding recommendation from CoRWM's 13th Annual Report which stated that "RWM should ensure that the LoC (Letters of Compliance) process is applicable to GDFs in all 3 rock types". In response to the recommendation and discussions with SG4 in March 2018, RWM had created a document "Developing Confidence in the Approach of Disposability Assessments to a Range of Geological Environments". This document was presented and discussed at a meeting between RWM and CoRWM representatives on 21st June 2018 and the topic subsequently discussed at the September Plenary Meeting in Cardiff. It is now accepted by the Committee that the RWM have complied with the original recommendation.

12. Subgroup 5: Scottish Government Activities

- SG5 met ahead of the Plenary on the 7th November 2018. The group welcomed, in addition to Charles Stewart Roper and Martin Macdonald, Ewan Young from the Scottish Government who has experience in relevant areas.
- The group and SG5 discussed the report commissioned by the Cabinet Secretary considering the potential effects in Scotland of UK withdrawal from the Euratom treaty. Five key areas were highlighted:
 - i. How high-level oversight is secured
 - ii. Continuation of professional knowledge exchange and networking
 - iii. Compliance with multinational agreements
 - iv. Sector involvement with UK Government
 - v. Skills capacity going forwards
- SG5 discussed SEPA's (Scottish Environment Protection Agency) Nuclear Sector Plan. A representative from SEPA confirmed that this Plan is being developed and explained that the document will set out the main ways nuclear is regulated and will touch upon key principles in Scotland.
- SG5 will meet next in March/April 2019.

13. Subgroup 6: Welsh Government Activities.

- SG6 explained that the Welsh Government asked CoRWM for help with responses to FAQ's regarding the Working With Communities consultation and the Committee have produced a number of Position Papers in response to this. The Position Papers are available on CoRWM's website. Members have researched CoRWM's stance over its lifetime on various topics to produce these papers. The topics of the Position Papers so far are:
 - i. Support for disposal rather than indefinite storage
 - ii. Geological disposal of radioactive waste – safety requirements
 - iii. Selecting a GDF site based on the best geology
 - iv. Transport considerations for radioactive materials
- The Committee explained that they are working on further Position Papers with the following topics:
 - i. Retrievability of waste from a GDF
 - ii. Why geological disposal?

14. Subgroup 7: Storage of Waste, Spent Fuel, and Materials

- SG7 explained that CoRWM's previous annual report dealt with nuclear materials and spent fuel, and that they will meet soon regarding the House of Commons Select Committee Report (NDA Risk Reduction at Sellafield).

- SG7 discussed that a study was undertaken by CoRWM in 2009 (CoRWM doc. 2500) regarding waste retrieval and treatment. The current Committee does not have the resources to take on a study of this size to re-visit the topic, but that they are working with the NDA (Nuclear Decommissioning Authority) to understand the radioactive waste inventory.
- SG7 highlighted the Waste Metric Dashboard created by the Low-Level Waste Repository (LLWR) to the NDA and suggested it could also work to have a similar process for higher activity waste.
- A representative from Dounreay stated that they use measurement reporting with waste classifications to help explain progress to the Government.
- The Committee expressed concern over how waste types and decommissioning progress is being explained in reports. Words such as 'risk', 'hazard' and 'potential' can be used incorrectly, and the Committee stated the importance that descriptions of progress remain traceable to science.

15. Subgroup 8: Euratom Report (Impact on Radioactive Waste Management from the UK's Withdrawal from the EU and the Euratom Treaty CoRWM Doc. 3381)

- SG8 explained that recent efforts have been put into creating the report and it is now complete.

Item 5. Speaker 1 -Dounreay Site Restoration Update (Alan Mowat) (CoRWM doc. 3515)

16. Alan Mowat presented a site restoration update on the following areas: higher activity waste, lower activity waste, and on the Particles Programme.

17. Alan Mowat provided an overview on one of their biggest challenges; dealing with the legacy waste in the shaft and the silo. The presentation showed the audience images of retrieval machines already being constructed for future use.

Item 6. Speaker 2 – Chapelcross and Hunterston A Update (John Grierson) (CoRWM doc. 3514)

18. John Grierson presented on decommissioning activities at both Chapelcross and Hunterston A sites.

19. John Grierson discussed that early decommissioning activities at Chapelcross had all been completed and the focus at this site is now the waste including dealing with ponds containing unique Magnox waste streams.

20. John Grierson discussed that at Hunterston A site waste is currently being retrieved and that a Solid Intermediate Level Waste Encapsulation (SILWE) plant is being constructed to process intermediate level waste.

Item 7. Panel Discussion (Chair: Campbell Gemmell (CG) and Andrew Walters (AW) with John Grierson (JG) and Alan Mowat (AM))

21. A question was raised about the difference in the ponds at Chapelcross and Hunterston A. JG explained that Chapelcross ponds have been drained every two years and Hunterston ponds were not. Hunterston ponds are complex due to their size and Chapelcross ponds are complex due to the technology required to deal with them.
22. CG asked about if and how sites exchange knowledge. JG explained that Magnox has a single programme and knowledge is shared across all sites. As the industry is relatively small, workers can move across sites too, and even useful equipment can be deployed across sites.
23. AW raised a question on innovation in the approaches to delivery of projects given the long-standing relationships with the delivery partners. Further whether there were delivery models that might be applicable to delivery of a GDF. JG suggested that industry players work closely with Scottish policy regarding near-surface disposal, and that for a GDF the biggest challenge is front-end community engagement. It was discussed that after clarifying concepts with the public, the project can then focus on construction. It was agreed that relationships at both the front-end and construction-end are critical due to the lengthy timescale of the project. The group used the Low-Level Waste Repository as a good example to follow in how they have worked with the community at Drigg.
24. JG explained that most sites have a good relationship with the local communities, and that sometimes differences of opinion exist but there is still the requirement for respect on both sides. It was agreed that parties involved want the same outcome which is for the site to be decommissioned safely. AM explained that at Dounreay residents from the nearby hamlet are invited to visit the Low-Level Waste Disposal facility to discuss any issues related directly with that waste facility or more general Site issues.
25. CG asked the presenters to comment on the regulatory drivers over time. JG explained that challenges for the regulators will be knowledge transfer/continuity and recruitment of new staff. AM suggested the main drivers for regulators would be safety, security, and the environment. A representative from the ONR agreed and explained that they are being creative in recruitment methods and offer a variety of options including

graduate schemes and apprenticeships which offer long term development of new recruits.

26. Given the expected timescales of a GDF delivery, AW sought views on opportunities to further innovate in the design of a regulatory frameworks relevant to GDF project. AM explained that regulatory issues can be continually explored and revisited.

Item 8. Questions from the Public

27. A question was raised regarding retrievability and if this is being considered in CoRWM's timeframe. CoRWM answered that the Committee's opinion on this has not changed. The GDF intent is for disposal, however the issue of retrievability may come up in the future. Members discussed that this issue depends on the situation such as the type of waste, the type of rock, and the local authority. CoRWM hope to publish a Position Paper on this issue.

Item 9. AOB

28. The Committee explained that a History of UK Nuclear Timeline is being created and will be made available on CoRWM's website in the future. The Timeline will include key events and decisions important to the UK Nuclear Industry. Former CoRWM member Simon Harley offered to assist with this.
Action Point 1 – for Secretariat to contact Simon Harley.

Item 10. Next Meeting

29. The next Open Plenary will take place 16th January at BEIS Conference Centre in London.
30. Please contact corwm@beis.gov.uk for details on how to attend CoRWM plenaries or visit [CoRWMs webpage](#) or [meetings calendar](#).

Appendix A – Abbreviations

BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
BGS	British Geological Survey
CoRWM	Committee on Radioactive Waste Management
EA	Environment Agency
GDPB	Geological Disposal Programme Board
gDSSC	Generic Disposal Systems Safety Case
GDF	Geological Disposal Facility
HAW	Higher Activity Wastes
KORAD	Korean Radioactive Waste Agency
ILW	Intermediate Level Waste
LLW	Low Level Waste
LLWR	Low Level Waste Repository
LoC	Letters of Compliance
NDA	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPS	National Policy Statement
NRW	Natural Resource Wales
NSD	Near Surface Disposal
ONR	Office for Nuclear Regulation
RWM	Radioactive Waste Management
UKRWI	United Kingdom Radioactive Waste Inventory
WWC	Working with Communities

Appendix B - Actions

- AP1: Simon Harley has offered to assist with CoRWM's UK Nuclear Timeline
– Secretariat will make contact.