



**Committee on Radioactive Waste Management
CoRWM Doc. 3876**

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK

2023

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1. Introduction from the Chair

I am honoured to present this Work Programme on behalf of the Committee. 2022/23 continued to be a busy year for the Committee and I fully expect that 2023/24 will match it as the siting process for the geological disposal facility (GDF) continues to make headway and as the growth in domestic nuclear power ambitions produces new waste challenges.

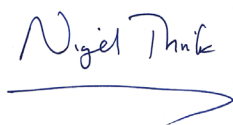
The Committee is now at full complement as a result of two new appointments. I am delighted that we have been able to recruit Professor Malcolm Joyce to replace Neil Hyatt who stood down from CoRWM last year. We have also been able to recruit Professor Barry Lennox to replace Gerry Thomas who also stood down last year. At the same time, we have been able to extend the terms of five existing members – Claire Corkhill, Penny Harvey, Ray Kemp, Mark Kirkbride and Derek Lacey. The stability provided by these extensions will be invaluable as we build on the knowledge and learning of government and NDA programmes they have already amassed during their previous terms.

Through the year, the Committee has worked hard to communicate better with the various constituencies that it serves, returning to in-person open plenaries whilst continuing to provide the option of joining online. We plan to revamp our website to provide more up to date news and blogs. We will endeavour to provide valuable and accessible indications of our assessments and positions, using our website as well as position papers, conference presentations, blogs, social media and our various meetings and reports in order to communicate our work as fully as possible.

Much of 2022/23 was taken up with examining the substantial progress being made in the geological disposal facility (GDF) siting process which we have marked with the first of what will be a regular series of annual progress reports. We expect this work to continue. In order to advise and scrutinise to the best of our ability an important part of our work will be to learn and understand how other countries are taking forward their geological disposal programmes. We completed a visit to France in June to the Bure Underground Research Facility to learn about the French experience of nuclear waste storage and disposal. We will consider study trips to other facilities over the coming year.

Important though the GDF siting process is, it is not our only concern as a Committee. We attend to all radioactive waste issues. In particular, currently we have turned our attention to the management of uranium and the storage of radioactive waste and nuclear materials. We will also be looking carefully at any plans for near surface disposal of intermediate level waste and have also started to engage on a variety of issues around implications for storage and disposal of waste from new advanced nuclear technologies. Whatever the issue may be, CoRWM will continue to scrutinise and advise drawing on the varied expertise of its members to provide well-evidenced and robust position papers and appropriate advice.

Nigel Thrift



Sir Nigel Thrift
Chair, Committee on Radioactive Waste Management

2. Summary

1. The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), with a remit to provide independent scrutiny and advice on the long-term management of radioactive wastes to Ministers across the UK and to engage and communicate with the public on these matters. The Committee normally consists of a Chair and 11 experts from various fields related to radioactive waste management.
2. CoRWM is sponsored by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Scottish Government (SG), Welsh Government (WG) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland.
3. This Work Programme sets out CoRWM's work plans and budget for the next year. CoRWM updates this document annually. It has been agreed by our sponsors. CoRWM's financial and working year begins on 1st April and ends on 31st March.
4. This document also describes: the Committee's background and remit; its methods of working and enablers; and its priorities and proposed deliverables for 2023 to 2024.
5. A good part of the Committee's work this year will be focussed on activities related to the siting process for the GDF, especially evaluating Nuclear Waste Services' (NWS) processes, particularly in respect of community engagement.
6. The Committee also has a remit to advise more broadly on radioactive waste management issues, which includes: scrutinising the storage, characterisation and classification of radioactive waste; advising the Scottish Government on policy for near-surface near-site waste management and disposal; examining the management of spent fuel and nuclear materials.
7. The current membership of CoRWM is given at Annex B.

3. Background to Our Work

8. CoRWM was established in 2003 as part of the Government's Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme. Its initial remit was to oversee a review of the options for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste (HAW) and to recommend an option (or combination of options) to Government. CoRWM reported in July 2006 (CoRWM doc. 700) and Government responded in October 2006, accepting most of CoRWM's recommendations. CoRWM's principal recommendation described geological disposal as the best available approach to the long-term management of higher activity waste and recommended progressing as soon as practicable.
9. In October 2007, CoRWM was reconstituted, with revised Terms of Reference and expertise, to provide independent scrutiny and advice to the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations on the longer-term management of radioactive waste, including storage and disposal.
10. CoRWM also advises the Devolved Administrations of Scotland and Wales on their radioactive waste policies and Northern Ireland when requested, including where they differ from that of the UK Government, for example, the Scottish Government policy of near-site near-surface storage and disposal of HAW.
11. Another important part of CoRWM's mission is communication of the issues arising from radioactive waste to the general public.
12. CoRWM's current Framework document is deposited in the House of Commons Library ¹.
13. Though CoRWM's membership and remit have changed over the years, CoRWM members continue to conclude unanimously that geological disposal is the best available approach to safely manage the UK's higher activity radioactive waste for the long-term and prevent it from becoming a financial and environmental burden to future generations.

¹ <https://www.parliament.uk/depositedpapers#toggle-1100>

4. How We Work

14. The Committee formulates its key advice and takes decisions by consensus in plenary session. It has normally held four open plenary meetings each year that the public can attend. The Committee also holds closed plenary meetings to take evidence and enable discussions with government officials.
15. The Committee provides its advice through a variety of methods. Members' views on some issues may be communicated in person or as commentary on documents. More complex issues will often require the consensus of the Committee through discussion at closed plenary meetings and may be presented in a formal letter or report with recommendations.
16. CoRWM Doc. 3394 sets out a new system of categorising CoRWM advice. It describes how *CoRWM Position Papers* and *CoRWM Recommendations* always constitute a consensus committee view, where *CoRWM Advice Notes* always constitute the view of a subgroup unless clearly stated otherwise.

Table 1: Categories of CoRWM Advice

Category	Examples	Default level of consensus required
"Recommendation" ²		Consensus view of committee.
Report	Consultation response, technical report, position paper	Consensus view of committee.
Note	Advice note, meeting note, summary note	Consensus view of subgroup unless stated otherwise.
Comments	Document comments, emails, meeting minutes	Consensus view of the subgroup unless stated otherwise

17. Much of the work of the Committee is carried out by six subgroups. Each subgroup focuses on an area of interest or aspect of a Government or Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) radioactive waste management programme, and contains members with relevant knowledge, skills and experience. The membership and focus of these subgroups is given in Annex C.
18. The Chairs of the subgroups are responsible for preparing work plans to meet the requirements set out in this work programme. Subgroup chairs must also ensure the work of the subgroup is reported to the Committee in order for the Committee to formulate its advice.

² Potentially formalised in the Annual Report or presented to Sponsors for their consideration.

CoRWM's Funding and Time Allocation

Table 2: CoRWM budget estimates 2023-24³. (This is an indicative budget, subject to annual budget settlement with DESNZ)

Item	Budget (£) 2023-2024
Members' Fees	209540
Accommodation, Travel, Subsistence, Visits	80460
Total	290000

Table 3: CoRWM members time allocations for 2022-23 by role

CoRWM Role	Indicative time allocation for role (days)	Number of Members in role	Total indicative time allocation for role (days)
Chair	70	1	70
Deputy Chair	35	2	70
Subgroup Chair	25	6	150
Member	25	3	75
All CoRWM Roles		12 ⁴	365

CoRWM Stakeholders

19. CoRWM engages with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure that CoRWM members have up-to-date information and access to a broad range of views in radioactive waste management.
20. In developing this work programme, the Committee consulted the following groups for their feedback:
 - The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
 - Scottish Government
 - Welsh Government
 - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
 - Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)
 - Nuclear Waste Services (NWS)
21. The proposed indicative 2023-24 work programme reflects the comments that were received.

³ These figures are indicative and the actual financial allocation will depend on future spending settlements.

⁴ Actual number of members may vary due to membership changes and new appointments in progress.

5. Our Tasks and Focus

Our Work Areas for 2023-2024. For further details see Annex A.

21. Much of CoRWM's work has been and will be focused on activities related to the process for seeking a suitable location for a GDF, a process that was launched in December 2018 in England and January 2019 in Wales. CoRWM will continue to scrutinise and advise on the documentation, technical challenges, and implementation of these policies, as well as plans supporting NWS's community engagement and siting process, advising communities as and when needed. It will also be involved in many other dimensions of radioactive waste policy and implementation, including:
22. Keeping under review the implications of consultation proposals to update nuclear decommissioning and managing radioactive substances policy and provide advice as necessary.
23. Further work will focus on advice to the Scottish Government on their near-surface near-site storage and disposal policy for HAW as well as advice to the Welsh government as and when needed.
24. The Committee has not allocated a specific task regarding Northern Ireland. The Committee will continue to provide advice to Northern Ireland at the Executive's or DAERA's request.
25. In the wider radioactive waste management landscape, CoRWM will be reviewing the NDA's assumptions and strategy for managing the majority of radioactive wastes in the UK, especially its risk-informed approach and the possibilities presented by NDA's work in exploring near surface disposal. It is also involved in work on uranics, and on the implications of prolonged interim storage of radioactive waste, spent fuel and nuclear materials.
26. The Committee has become involved in considering the nature of radioactive waste outputs from small modular reactors (SMRs) and advanced modular reactors (AMRs).
27. The Committee will be publishing a position paper on the use of robotics in a GDF, a paper on uranium disposition, and will continue to develop further Position Papers.
28. The scope of this indicative work programme is built on the assumption that current levels of Secretariat support will continue to be put in place. The Committee is supported by a small team within the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

29. CoRWM Work Areas for the coming work year are as follows:

- 1:** Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy and Net Zero, the Welsh Government and NWS on activities related to the GDF siting process and implementation of the Working with Communities policy.
- 2:** Scrutiny of and advice to NWS on the application of the published site evaluation approach and the safety case.
- 3:** Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero developing appropriate regulation to give the Office for Nuclear Regulation the powers to licence a GDF.
- 4:** Scrutiny of and advice to Scottish Government on the management of radioactive waste in Scotland, including the review of its higher activity waste strategy.
- 5:** Scrutiny of and advice to the Welsh Government on the management of radioactive waste in Wales.
- 6:** Scrutiny and advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, NDA and NWS on the management of the UK inventory of radioactive waste, spent fuel and nuclear materials, and their storage and disposal, including near surface and in situ disposal for radioactive waste and potential disposal of spent fuel and nuclear materials in a GDF should they be declared as waste.
- 7:** Review of the implications of the UK Government and Devolved Administrations' proposals to update nuclear decommissioning and managing radioactive substances policy and provide advice as necessary.
- 8:** Advice on the nature and management of potential radioactive wastes arising from small and advanced modular reactors.
- 9:** Responsive advice, including replies to consultations and other miscellaneous work, in wider waste management areas.
- 10:** Outreach activities, including advice to communities engaged in the GDF siting process and public talks.
- 11:** Committee management, which includes the development of consensus views in plenary meetings.

Table 4: Time allocation for Work Areas 2023-24 ⁵

Work Area	Work Area description	Subgroup	Indicative allocation of days⁶
1	GDF siting process and policy implementation	SG1	55
2	GDF site evaluation approach	SG2	55
3	Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net zero and NWS on activities related to GDF licensing and the implementation of the Geological Disposal programme	SG3	55
4	Scottish Government Activities	SG4	55
5	Welsh Government Activities	SG5	25
6	Management of radioactive waste including small and advanced modular reactors, spent fuel and nuclear materials	SG6	70
7		SG2+SG3+SG6	20
8	Responsive work	All	10
9	Outreach	All	15
10	Committee management	Nigel Thrift, Penny Harvey and Derek Lacey	5
Total			365

⁵ Resource deployment will be an ongoing task.

⁶ Allocation of days per Work Area is indicative and subject to review throughout the year.

Annex A – Work Areas, Tasks and Deliverables for 2023-24

30. Table 5 Provides a description of each proposed Work Area for 2023-24, together with Tasks and indicative deliverables or records, the task priority and the planned resource allocation.
31. CoRWM will produce a number of deliverables in the form of informal summary notes for Government, NDA and NWS following meetings. Currently, this is the preferred approach to delivering advice with the requisite timeliness and flexibility. CoRWM will endeavour to publish all of its reports. CoRWM will also produce an Annual Report for 2022-23 for publication in summer 2023 and will also produce quarterly updates for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Table 5: Proposed work areas, tasks and indicative deliverables for 2023-24

Work Area	Task and Deliverable
1. Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Welsh Government, NDA and NWS on communication strategy and activities related to the implementation of Working with Communities policy, and related GDF and engagement documents, and exploration of the NSD concept.	1A To scrutinise implementation of the Working with Communities policies in England and Wales.
	1B To act as a source of independent information to communities in the geological disposal facility siting process and the wider public.
	1C To engage with other CoRWM subgroups to ensure a focus on community engagement across the full range of CoRWM's work.
	1D Scrutiny and provision of advice to NWS on public engagement and communication of the GDF safety case in collaboration with other CoRWM sub-groups.
	1E Inform and update NWS/NDA of the ways in which social sciences and humanities research can support their mission. Organise an event with leading social scientists and NWS senior team to discuss the potential contribution of this knowledge base.
2. Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and NWS on the GDF siting process, including technical evaluation criteria & plans for site investigation and characterisation.	2A Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net zero and NWS on technical site evaluation approach.
	2B Scrutiny and provision of advice to Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and NWS on activities relating to the continued development of a GDF safety case and the role of an underground rock laboratory.
	2C Scrutiny and provision of advice to NWS on GDF siting activities, including selection criteria, methods of investigation, and the timescale for carrying out site selection in different rock types.
	2D Provision of Subgroup 2 related advice to Working Groups and Community Partnerships involved in the GDF siting process

Work Area	Task and Deliverable
	2E Review CoRWM's previous position in relation to retrievability of waste from a GDF.
	2F Review of proposed GDF site investigation programmes, including data sampling and testing regimes.
3. Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy Security Net Zero and NWS on activities related to GDF licensing and the implementation of the Geological Disposal programme	3A General scrutiny and advice to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and NWS on legal, regulatory, and planning permitting issues in relation to the geological disposal programme.
	3B Legal and regulatory issues involved in the development of an inshore GDF beneath the seabed but accessed from land.
	3C Legal and regulatory issues involved in the development of a possible underground research laboratory.
	3D Legal and regulatory issues involved in exploring the near surface disposal (NSD) concept for Intermediate Level Waste (ILW).
	3E Legal regulatory or policy issues arising from radioactive waste streams located in Scotland (in conjunction with Work Area / Sub Group 4).
	3F Legal issues relevant to the Working with Communities process as it develops.
	3G Legal, regulatory and planning permitting aspects of radioactive waste transport to a GDF.
4. Scrutiny of and advice to the Scottish Government (SG) on the management of radioactive waste in Scotland.	4A Ongoing advice and input into the implementation of the Higher Activity Waste Radioactive Waste Policy 2011 and Higher Activity Radioactive Waste Strategy 2016. SG4 are continuing to undertake work to take stock of the implementation of the 2011 Policy and 2016 Strategy and the review currently taking place.
	4B Scrutiny of and advice to the Scottish Government on the management of radioactive waste in Scotland.
5. Welsh Government (WG) activities	5A Scrutiny of and advice to the Welsh Government on the management of radioactive waste in Wales.
	5B Provide advice on likely management of radioactive waste issues with development of SMRs or AMRs at sites in Wales.
	5C Site visit to Trawsfynydd site to discuss waste and decommissioning issues and waste issues arising from the potential siting of SMRs and/or AMRs.
	5D Production of a Position Paper on the legal and policy position in Wales in respect of decommissioning and managing radioactive waste.

Work Area	Task and Deliverable
6. Scrutiny of and advice to the Department for Energy and Net Zero and NDA on the management of radioactive waste, spent fuel and nuclear materials that may be destined for disposal	6A Monitoring and providing advice on NDA Integrated Waste Management developments including boundary, difficult wastes in Scotland and strategic direction.
	6B To scrutinise and advise DESNZ and NDA on the potential for near surface disposal of some less hazardous ILW.
	6C To advise on the implications of a UK programme of SMRs and AMRs for radioactive waste management.

Annex B CoRWM Members



Chair

Sir Nigel Thrift was appointed Chair of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management on 2 July 2018.

Until 2017, Sir Nigel was the Executive Director of Schwarzman Scholars. He is one of the world's leading human geographers and previously served as Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Warwick and as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research at the University of Oxford. He is a Fellow of the British Academy.

Current term of office ends: July 2026



Deputy Chair

Penny Harvey is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester. She is an elected Fellow of the British Academy, and of the Europea Academia, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences (UK), and an elected member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. Penny has an extensive history of research on the social transformations of large-scale infrastructure projects, with a particular focus on the relationship between local communities, government agencies and corporate bodies.

Current term of office ends: **November 2027**



Deputy Chair

Derek Lacey was appointed to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in November 2019.

Derek has recently completed a term as a Director at the International Atomic Energy Agency. He previously had roles as Deputy Chief Inspector in the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and Head of Nuclear and Radioactive Waste Management Policy at the UK Department for Energy and Climate Change.

Current term of office ends: **November 2027**



Clare Bond was appointed to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in January 2022.

Clare is a Professor in Earth Sciences at the University of Aberdeen, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Clare has academic, industry, policy and third sector experience.

She specialises in understanding biases and uncertainties in subsurface data interpretation, as well as rock deformation and fluid flow in the Earth's crust. She applies her research to a range of subsurface challenges including CO₂ and nuclear waste storage. Clare is interested in the communication of

science and engineered subsurface solutions, and the engagement of publics.

Current term of office ends: **January 2025**



Claire Corkhill was appointed to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) in January 2020.

Claire is currently a Professor at the University of Sheffield. With an academic background in both geology and materials science, she has over 10 years of experience in researching nuclear waste material corrosion in geological environments. She has held research fellowships in both the UK and Japan and leads a team of 12 researchers focused on determining the long-term behaviour of radioactive materials. Claire is an enthusiastic science communicator and has made numerous media appearances in relation to nuclear waste disposal and nuclear decommissioning.

Current term of office ends: **January 2028**



Ray Kemp was appointed to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in November 2019.

Ray is Chartered Town Planner and a specialist in risk communication. He has been a Member of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (CoMARE) as Public Interest Representative at the UK Department of Health and Social Care from 2013. In the past, he has worked as an adviser to the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) for the Australian National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Project. He was a Member, then Chair of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) between 2012 and 2015.

Current term of office ends: **November 2027**



Mark Kirkbride was appointed to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in November 2019.

Mark has been the Chief Executive Officer of West Cumbria Mining Ltd since 2014, having previously worked in a wide range of senior roles in the mining, engineering and construction industries. Mark is a Fellow of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, a Chartered Engineer and holds a degree in mining engineering and a research masters in geomechanics (machine rock cutting). He has more than 25 years' experience of underground construction techniques and project delivery.

Current term of office ends: **November 2027**



Catherine Mackenzie was appointed to the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management in January 2022.

Dr Catherine MacKenzie is a barrister and legal academic.

She is a member of the Faculty of Law of the University of Cambridge, Dean of Degrees of Green Templeton, University of Oxford, and Governing Master of the Bench of Inner Temple (Inn of Court).

Catherine has 25 years experience in nuclear law, energy law and international environmental law, including experience with the United Nations, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, in which she advised on major international energy and infrastructure projects.

Current term of office ends: **January 2025**



Stephen Tromans KC is a barrister practising at 39 Essex Chambers, London.

He was Joint Head of Chambers from 2011-2015. He has worked as an academic at Cambridge (1981-1987) and as a solicitor (1987-1999). He became a barrister in 1999 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2009.

His area of specialism is environmental, energy natural resources and planning law. He has extensive experience of advising companies and government and representing them in court and at public inquiries. He has a particular focus on nuclear law and is the author of the leading text, "Nuclear Law". He is also the author of leading works on environmental impact assessment and contaminated land and has spoken and written widely on these topics.

He has been a member of the UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA) since its formation in 1986 and has been Chair and a Council member of UKELA. He is also a member of the International Nuclear Law Association (INLA) and a director of INLA UK. From 1994-2002 he was a Council Member of English Nature, the predecessor of Natural England and from 2010-2014 was the Chair of the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF).

Current term of office ends: **November 2026**



Simon Webb CBE FICE specialises in major programmes and strategic change. An Executive Director at Nichols Group, he has led their work on nuclear decommissioning and warships for the last 10 years, at sites in England, Scotland and Wales. Simon was a non-executive Director of the Major Projects Association from 2010-21. He is a member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems.

Previously Simon was a Director-General in the Department of Transport and the Ministry of Defence, responsible for major projects and security policy.

Current term of office ends: **January 2025**



Malcolm Joyce is currently Professor of Nuclear Engineering and Cross-faculty Associate Dean for Research at Lancaster University. With an academic background in radiation detection and nuclear materials assay, he has over 30 years' experience in researching techniques for nuclear waste assay and decommissioning. He was Head of Engineering at Lancaster (2008-2015) and leads a team of 10 researchers focused on new measurement methods for radioactivity.

He is a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the Nuclear Institute, a recipient of a Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award and author of 'Nuclear Engineering: A Conceptual Guide to Nuclear Power'.

Current term of office ends: **June 2027**



Barry Lennox is Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and Professor of Applied Control and Nuclear Engineering Decommissioning at The University of Manchester. He holds a Royal Academy Chair in Emerging Technologies and is the Co-Director of the Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Collaboration (RAICo) in Cumbria, which aims to develop technology that will lead to the greater adoption of robotics in the nuclear decommissioning industry. He is Co-Director of the University of Manchester's Centre for Robotics and Artificial Intelligence and has been responsible for the deployment of a range of robotic systems into radioactive facilities in the UK and overseas.

Current term of office ends: **July 2027**

Annex C Glossary of Terms

AMRs	Advanced Modular Reactors
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
GDF	Geological Disposal Facility
HAW	Higher Activity Waste
ILW	Intermediate Level Waste
MRWS	Managing Radioactive Waste Safely
NIE	Northern Ireland Executive
NSD	Near Surface Disposal
NWS	Nuclear Waste Services
NDA	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
ONR	The Office for Nuclear Regulation
RWM	Radioactive Waste Management Ltd.
SG	Scottish Government
SMRs	Small Modular Reactor
URL	Underground Research Laboratory
UVF	Underground Verification Facility
WG	Welsh Government
WWC	Working With Communities (the policy)