

CoRWM Open Plenary Minutes

Wednesday 27th November

Timing: 10:00 – 12:30

Chair: Nigel Thrift (CoRWM Chair)

Members: Penny Harvey, Mark Kirkbride, Stephen Tromans, Simon Webb, Claire Corkhill, Clare Bond, Barry Lennox, Ray Kemp, Derek Lacey, Malcolm Joyce

DESNZ: Jessica Parsons, Adam Draude, Josie Carlton and Shubhnit Seera

Guest speaker: Petra Tjitske Kalshoven, The University of Manchester

Apologies: None

Agenda:

<u>Arrival and refreshments</u>	09:30-10:00
Chair's opening remarks (NT)	10:00-10:10
Declaration of interests	10:10-10:15
Approval of Minutes from the September Open Plenary	10:15-10:20
Update on subgroup activities	10:20-11:00
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SG1 - Working with Communities (PH)• SG2 - GDF Geology and Delivery (MK)• SG3 - Planning and Regulation (RK)• SG4 - Scottish Government Activities (CB)• SG5 - Welsh Government Activities (ST)• SG6 - Storage of Waste, Spent Fuel, and Materials (DL)	
Questions from the public	11:00-11:15
Presentation: Dr Petra Tjitske Kalshoven, The University of Manchester <i>Modes of engagement, analogies of restoration in areas of nuclear decommissioning</i>	11:15-11:45
Q&A	11:45-12:00
<u>Meeting close and lunch</u>	12:00-12:30

Chairs opening remarks (NT)

1. NT welcomed all attendees, including guest speaker Petra Tjitske Kalshoven.
2. CoRWM have completed numerous activities since September 2024 including a visit to Theddlethorpe where members met the Community Partnership (CP) and other community members
3. Some members of the Committee visited the El Cabril near surface disposal (NSD) facility in Spain. A blog is to be published on the website covering the details of this visit.
4. ST attended an International Nuclear Law Association Congress in Warsaw in November.
5. NT discussed the future of Open Plenaries – these are no longer going to be held in the same form as they are currently. Public outreach will still be undertaken as part of CoRWM's work. There will be a number of public events held throughout the year including staying active with CPs. There is a planned meeting with South Copeland CP to take place in Jan 2025. The Committee are also very happy to respond to any queries by email at corwm@energysecurity.gov.uk, and would welcome any other ideas for public meetings/engagement.

Declaration of interests

6. ST is undertaking work advising AWE, Urenco, Last Energy, Sellafield, and EDF, but not on matters that represent a conflict of interest with CoRWM's work.
7. Simon Webb has been doing some work on Nuclear Submarine programmes, again outside of CoRWM's remit.

Approval of Minutes from September Open Plenary

8. Approved

Update on Subgroup Activities and Plans

SG 1 Working with Communities (Penelope Harvey)

9. SG1 (and wider CoRWM) visited Theddlethorpe in October 2024, attending a CP meeting. PH detailed the itinerary for her visit, including visiting the Coastal Centre, a drop-in centre used by the CP or NWS to engage with the community about the GDF.
10. They attended a CP meeting as observers, then met with members of Guardians of the East Coast (GOTEC), who oppose the GDF. CoRWM listened to their concerns, one of which is the potential impact on tourism.
11. There are plans for a visit to South Copeland Community Partnership meeting in January 2025.
12. SG1 met with NWS on October 23rd. The meeting focussed on:
 - a. Update on the GDF Community Portfolio

- i. Update on Community Partnerships – including recent activity and outcomes; progress on ‘visioning’ work.
 - ii. Property Value Protection – how it works; community engagement and the launch; follow-up activity.
 - b. Update on approach to communications and engagement with communities.
 - i. Current communications activity and planning for the next few months.
 - ii. Campaigns update.
 - iii. Youth Forum
 - c. Social science in NWS – update on activity to strengthen social science capability in NWS.
- 13. SG1 reported to the NWS/CoRWM workshop, held at the British Geological Survey on observations from the visit to East Lincolnshire, and from the recent visit that CoRWM members had made to the El Cabril LLW disposal site in Spain. Spain also has plans for a GDF, aiming for 2073 for it to be operational. They are exploring a participatory model to siting, different to UK based consent process. The Spanish Government are looking to set up an advisory body with CoRWM as a model. There is also interest in following the Netherlands model such that all disposal sites are artworks.
- 14. Questions from members of the public in attendance covered the Theddlethorpe Gas Terminal site and public access to NWS’ geological data. PH addressed the recent confirmation from NWS that the search area in East Lincolnshire goes beyond the gas terminal, but the makeup of the CP is not changing. NWS attendees confirmed that research and accessibility will be covered at the next NWS NGO forum.

Subgroup 2: GDF Geology and Delivery (Mark Kirkbride)

- 15. The CoRWM Underground Research Facility (URF) paper has been through a series of reviews and updates following on from an NWS presentation on their current strategy, as well as comments received from the Environment Agency (EA) and Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), and now also includes historical CoRWM recommendations on a URF. The updated paper has subsequently been reviewed by other CoRWM committee members and is approaching final form. The paper will be updated following consideration of the EA’s consultation on the guidance on the requirements for authorisation and staged regulation for the disposal of solid radioactive waste (the GRA). This consultation is running until end of Feb 2025, CoRWM will issue a response to the consultation, and after that will finalise URF paper.
- 16. SG2 have renewed efforts in updating/reviewing CoRWM’s previous positions on retrievability.
- 17. Questions from the public in attendance included the position of the Irish government on a UK GDF in the inshore region on the West Coast. CoRWM confirmed that any inshore GDF wouldn’t impinge on Irish territorial waters, but as a neighbouring state there are international mechanisms where they may raise objections.

18.

Subgroup 3: Planning and Regulation (Ray Kemp)

19. SG3 met with the EA and ONR on October 10th, discussing:
 - a. CoRWM's emerging URF position
 - b. Environment Agency's consultation on guidance documents
 - c. Near surface disposal of intermediate level waste and its regulatory implications
 - d. Transport of radioactive waste and spent fuel
 - e. CoRWM's future work programme, including:
 - i. storage of radioactive waste and spent fuel
 - ii. AMR wastes
 - iii. Scrutiny of the siting process for a GDF
 - f. Regulator long-term capabilities
20. Following the EA meeting, SG3 then met with NWS on October 22nd, discussing:
 - a. Property Value Protection and how it will work
 - b. CoRWM update on recent activity, and learning and advice from site visits
21. SG3 are progressing work on transport of radioactive waste (and spent fuel).
21. RK, SW and DL met with Nuclear Transport Solutions. A visit blog has been prepared and will be published on the CoRWM website.
22. RK also attended the visit to the El Cabril facility which accepts both LLW and ILW. It is a near surface engineered facility with a long history reaching back to the early days of uranium mining. RK was particularly interested in environmental monitoring and the safety systems in place.
23. SW has now joined SG3

Subgroup 4: Scottish Government Activities (Clare Bond)

24. SG4 are meeting Scottish Government on November 28th to discuss CoRWM's work on retrievability of radioactive waste from near surface disposal facilities.
25. DL attended a Scottish Government Higher Activity Waste Strategy Implementation Group (HAWSSIG) meeting in September. CoRWM have provided initial thoughts on the review, ahead of the public consultation.
26. Scottish Government (SG) attended the CoRWM Closed Plenary. Both CoRWM and SG are exploring more areas where CoRWM can provide advice.
27. SG4 member Clare Bond, visited the El Cabril Low Level Waste Repository site in Spain, with other CoRWM members, to see first-hand a near surface disposal facility for intermediate level waste in operation. Discussions around site selection, monitoring and long-term vision were of particular interest, given Scottish radioactive waste policy of near-site, near-surface management. CB is preparing a blog on the visit, which will be published.

28. SG4 were part of discussions at the British Geological survey with NWS, in early November. This included a visit to see the analytical facilities at the BGS as well as discussing the NWS work programme.
29. The next Scottish cross-party group on the Civil Nuclear Industry is December 17th with a focus on radioactive waste.
30. Members of the public attending asked about the Scottish policy and strategy review. CB shared that SG aim to go to public consultation later in 2025.

Subgroup 5: Welsh Government Activities (Stephen Tromans)

30. ST welcomed back Barry to CoRWM and to SG5.
31. Following the September plenary, CoRWM members attended a site visit to Wylfa. ST produced a blog which was published on the CoRWM website on October 30th.
32. On 1-2 October ST attended and spoke at a Wales Nuclear Forum (WNF) event on decommissioning in Cardiff and attended a site visit to Aberthaw power station.
33. ST attended the Nuclear Inter Jura Congress in Warsaw in early November, here he heard about greater interest in the standardisation of waste forms internationally, and the number of countries grappling the ideas of novel wastes from advanced modular reactors (AMRs). He also attended a presentation from Mark Foy, ONR Chief Executive and Chief Nuclear Inspector, on the regulation of new reactor designs to minimise complexity in decommissioning and international cooperation in regulation.

Subgroup 6: Storage of Waste, Spent Fuel, and Materials (Derek Lacey)

34. SG6 met with the justification team from Defra on 12th November, who sought advice about radioactive waste management in relation to certain new reactor designs currently going through the justification process SG6 continue to gather information on interim storage of radioactive waste.
35. Specific areas of interest at present for SG6 include the NDA's stores export strategy, which is a scenario-based approach to scheduling the final disposal of waste currently in interim storage and the NDA's thermal treatment strategy, which has the potential to bring benefits of volume reduction for both interim storage and disposal.
36. SG6 maintains an interest in the inventory for disposal and is currently focused on the implications of the deployment of SMRs and AMRs for radioactive waste management including wastes that can be disposed of in a geological disposal facility.
37. SG6 paper on waste burning reactors should be completed by the end of 2024.
38. SG6 are also presenting a short review paper on HTGR fuels.

Presentation

39. Guest speaker Dr Petra Tjitske Kalshoven of the University of Manchester gave a presentation entitled: *Modes of engagement, analogies of restoration in areas of nuclear decommissioning*

- The presentation covered recent research by Petra on public engagement around nuclear facilities. Key themes included:
- Imagined futures of landscapes and nuclear facilities' place in them.
- Details of a current project 'Mimesis in Action: Nuclear decommissioning as conceptual playground for societal and ecological future making' (2022-26), funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council. Grounded in ethnographic fieldwork in West Cumbria, England; Zeeland, the Netherlands; La Hague, France; and Caithness, Scotland, the project engages with interested residents through experimental methods for 'futuring'.
- Petra also covered modes of engagement encountered in the Netherlands, with a key featuring concept being 'restoration' and the potential to draw analogy between attempts at nuclear and at wider environmental restoration.

Questions

40. Dr Kalshoven, CoRWM and members of the public discussed the presentation in the context of the communities involved in the GDF programme. CPs are currently developing 'visions' as part of the process. Some of the methodologies discussed in the presentation may be relevant to this process.