

CoRWM's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2013-14

Background

1. There are a number of reasons that have triggered CoRWM to review its stakeholder engagement strategy which are summarised as follows:

Low attendance

2. In the past few years, CoRWM have held plenary meetings in public that were advertised well in advance. In recent years, they have seen very low turn outs, and for three meetings held in 2012, no members of the public attended.

Budget

3. It is more expensive to hold an open plenary compared to a closed meeting and no longer offer value for money. CoRWM's budget has decreased over the last few years, has decreased this financial year and is expected to fall again next year in line with cross government spending reductions/spending reviews.

CoRWM's role

4. CoRWM's overarching purpose in their Terms of Reference is to:

“provide independent scrutiny and advice to UK Government and Devolved Administration Ministers (hereafter called ‘sponsor Ministers’) on the long-term management of radioactive waste, including storage and disposal.”

Within the terms of reference, CoRWM's primary objectives are:

- a) *to provide independent scrutiny of and advice to sponsor Ministers on the Government's and Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA's) proposals, plans and programmes to deliver geological disposal, together with robust interim storage, as the long-term management option for the UK's higher activity wastes; and*
- b) *to provide independent scrutiny of and advice on other radioactive waste management issues as requested by sponsor Ministers and their officials. This would include any scrutiny and advice requested by Scottish Government in relation to its policy for higher activity radioactive waste.*

CoRWM and its sponsor departments are agreed that they can deliver these objectives in an open and transparent way, without meeting the public face to face. Members do consider it necessary to periodically meet with stakeholders face to face to provide evidence for their scrutiny role and inform any subsequent advice to Government.

Changes to Ways of Working

5. In light of the above, the committee has decided that for the 2013-14 financial year, they will not hold any plenary meetings in public, However they are open to holding public plenary meetings when issues/topics allow. CoRWM are still committed to working in an open and transparency way.

6. According to the terms of reference:

“CoRWM shall undertake its work in an open and consultative manner in order to secure the confidence of stakeholders in the advice it provides. It will engage with stakeholders and it will publish advice (and the underpinning evidence) in a way that is meaningful to the non-expert.”

7. To achieve this, CoRWM will continue to:

- publish all minutes of plenary meetings (open and closed) on CoRWM's website,
- publish minutes of other bilateral meetings with stakeholders,
- circulate regular e-bulletins to those people who have signed up to receive them.
- make use of seminars, lectures and other stakeholder events to present CoRWM's remit and work programme.

8. Members of the public will be able to contact CoRWM through the secretariat at any time and will consider all views and concerns raised.

9. CoRWM will also continue to actively engage with its stakeholders by

- Holding regular face-to-face meetings to allow stakeholders to raise issues and concerns,
- Requesting feedback and considering comments on CoRWM's work programme.

10. The current position may change if CoRWM feel it would be beneficial to discuss a specific work item in public, or if it would be desirable to obtain public views on a particular matter.

11. CoRWM have updated their transparency policy (Annex A) to reflect these changes and to allow for changes to the way in which they engage in the future.

Annex A: CoRWM's Transparency, Information Management and the Publication Scheme

As a public body, CoRWM has a duty to follow Openness and Accountability Guidelines¹ and under its terms of reference, CoRWM is required to work in an open and transparent way.

CoRWM will engage with stakeholders on a regular basis in a way that actively allows face-to-face interaction. Members regularly meet with relevant stakeholders as part of the work programme. All events and meetings that are open to the public will be advertised on the website. The website also provides an overview of CoRWM's current activities and a record of all its publications in accordance with the Publication Scheme (see 5.1). In addition, interested parties can sign up for the *CoRWM e-bulletin* which is sent out periodically and typically provides an overview of the latest news, outcomes of meetings and future meetings.

Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places a duty on every public body to adopt and maintain a publication scheme for all information created by the authority to allow public access to the information held and publish the reasons for any decisions it makes. The scheme must specify the classes of information that are published and these generally fall under two categories; 1) The Committee's responsibilities for giving advice to Ministers, or scrutinizing of Government's work; and 2) the Committee's own organisation and operational procedures.

The publication scheme also defines the quality control process which is in place to ensure that the content of documents is robust and to avoid ambiguity, mistakes or administrative confusion. The ultimate responsibility for the quality of public documents and advice to government rests with the CoRWM Chair.

Classification of Documents

Advice or scrutiny may be classified by the following types of publication:

- Class 1 Investigation of the topic by means of external engagement, for example, literature searches, taking oral evidence from others, information obtained through visits to radioactive waste management sites, meetings with stakeholders and/or members of the public.²
- Class 2 Records of internal discussions within CoRWM.
- Class 3 Written advice.
- Class 4 Peer review and factual vetting.
- Class 5 Advice to Ministers.

¹ Public Bodies: A Guide for Departments Chapter 8 – Openness and Accountability, Cabinet Office, Agencies and Public Bodies Team (June 2006)

² Class 1 does not include information which is in the form of any early draft, where the information in question is subject to an obligation of confidence or where it cannot be published for reasons of national security or where it is commercially sensitive.

Class 6 Reporting and summarising, for example, the CoRWM Annual Report.

All documentation produced by CoRWM in classes 1-3 and 5-6 will be drafted with the aim of demonstrating the process by which conclusions were reached and where it is possible to do so, will be made publicly available. Peer review and factual vetting (Class 4) of third party documents will be published with agreement of the third party in question.

Organisation and Operational Procedures that describe corporate activities are classified as follows:

- Class 7 Membership details, for example, names and details of personal and business interests of CoRWM members provided for the Register of Interests.
- Class 8 Guidance for members, including the Ways of Working
- Class 9 Financial information, for example, the scale of member's fees or a breakdown of expenditure.
- Class 10 Communications and publications strategy; scope, and use, of paper and internet publication.

Fee rates and total annual expenditure are published, in addition to all guidance documents. CoRWM also publishes fee claims for individual members and the Register of Interests although other personal records are not made publicly available and so are not included within the scope of class 9.

Public Sector Information Regulations

Material produced by CoRWM is subject to the re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations (2005) which encourages the re-use of public sector information³. On request, CoRWM must, where possible, allow the re-use of its material, provided that it is referenced appropriately.

All published material will be made available free of charge on CoRWM's website, although hard copies can be made available through the secretariat by exception.

Drafting process

'First Draft' documents are usually presented by a lead author. The outcome of open plenary discussion on such documents will normally lead to a CoRWM members' "Recommended Draft" being presented to the CoRWM Chair, (or deputy Chair in their absence) for approval. The document will then become the "Final" version.

All documents that are not yet published will be marked as DRAFT and CLOSED.

It is important for readers of draft documents to understand that their contents are preliminary views that have not been adopted as firm positions by either the author or the committee. To make this clear the following statement will be put on all draft documents after the author's name and before the first heading title:

³ Guide to the Regulations and Best Practice, Office of Public Sector Information (2005).

“This document does not present the views of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management nor can it be taken to present the views of its author. It is a draft paper to inform Committee deliberations and both the author and the whole Committee may adopt different views and draw entirely different conclusions after further consideration and debate.”

CoRWM’s publications use a numbering system that ensures that all documents have a unique number. The system is controlled by the secretariat.

Style and Branding

All CoRWM documents should have a recognisable CoRWM style and layout. This will help to promote CoRWM as a well managed and consistent committee and will aid recognition by recipients of documents. The style can be adaptable to suit the type of document.

CoRWM has recently (in October 2012) been given approval to retain its own branding by the Cabinet Office, on the grounds that the Committee is an independent advisory body that may need to publicly take a different position to DECC or other government organisations.