

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT  
(CORWM) PLENARY  
5 NOVEMBER 2014, LONDON**

**Attendees:** Laurence Williams (Chair), Francis Livens (Deputy Chair), Lynda Warren, Stephen Newson, John Rennilson, Paul Davis (on the phone), Simon Harley, Brian Clark, Rebecca Lunn, Janet Wilson, Dharshana Sridhar (secretariat), Mojisola Olutade (secretariat).

**Agenda Item 1 Open Meeting and Welcome**

1. The Chair welcomed the members of the public who were observing the meeting.
2. The Chair noted that Gregg Butler and Helen Peters had sent in their apologies as they were unable to attend.

**Agenda Item 2 Declarations of Interest**

3. No new declarations of interest were made.

**Agenda Item 3 Chair's Update**

*Sponsor Meeting*

4. The Chair reported that concerns regarding the impact of CoRWM visits to nuclear sites, were raised by the Sponsors. The view was expressed that the current format of CoRWM's site visits followed by public meetings in and around the sites, however well intentioned, could have an adverse impact on the delivery of the UK Government's policy for geological disposal. There was some concern over the impact CoRWM's public meetings could have during the next two years when the work programmes stemming from the White Paper will be undertaken. The main concern was that CoRWM's visits could be interpreted as an indication that the particular site/ area being visited had been earmarked for the GDF and this could potentially be used to force local communities in the areas visited to make premature decisions regarding possible engagement in the GDF siting process. The Chair recognised the potential sensitivities and undertook to discuss the issue with Members.
5. The Chair confirmed to Members that their term extension letters has been sent out after he had raised this at the Sponsor meeting. The chair notified Members that the current head of the Radioactive Waste Management and Strategy Team in DECC – Rachael Solomon Williams - will be going on maternity leave early next year and her post will be covered by Tom Wintle.

6. The Chair reported that DECC officials were keen to hear what were the main concerns CoRWM had regarding RWM's transition and what were the main qualities and attributes missing from the current structure. In particular DECC wanted to know where CoRWM thought the gaps were and why and asked for a written note from CoRWM listing these concerns. The Chair had agreed to discuss this with the Committee and report back to DECC.
7. The Chair reported that the Welsh Government welcomed CoRWM's comments on the draft consultation paper, both at the meeting on 4 September and later in writing and stated that it has taken the majority of CoRWM's comments on board. The Welsh Government also welcomed CoRWM's consideration of the responses received to the earlier call for evidence. The consultation paper was published at the end of October and the deadline to respond is on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2015. The Chair had informed the Welsh Government that CoRWM would be making a formal response to the consultation.

#### *Geological Disposal Programme Board (GDPB) Meeting Feedback*

8. The Chair noted that he had attended the GDPB meeting. Some Members of the Committee remarked that not all Members had access to the GDPB papers.. The Chair agreed to raise this at the meeting with sponsors later the same afternoon emphasizing that the Committee cannot do its job of scrutinising DECC without wider access to the papers.

#### **Action 1: Chair to raise with DECC the issue of wider access to GDPB papers**

#### *Dounreay Visit on 27<sup>th</sup> October*

9. The Chair reported that he and Brian Clark had visited Dounreay on the 27<sup>th</sup> October in response to an invitation from the Managing Director of the site to follow-up some of the issues raised by the Committee at its earlier visit in September. The Chair noted that the visit had been very productive and the Company, Dounreay Site Restoration Limited (DSRL) had been very open and had addressed all the Committee's issues.
10. In relation to the decision to cancel the D3900 ILW Cementation Project, the Chair reported that it was clear that DSRL fully understood the implications of the decision to cancel the project and had satisfied itself that the risks of continuing to run with the current Dounreay Cementation Plant (DCP) facility were manageable. In particular DSRL made it clear that there were no

foreseeable plant life limiting issues and that in the extreme, the most significant plant items could be replaced within 12 months, which would not affect the ability for DSRL to complete the conditioning of all the DFR and PFR liquid fission product waste and deliver the Dounreay site restoration programme agreed with the NDA. DSRL were also confident there was a robust supply chain to provide replacement components. In relation to the Committee's previous concerns regarding the move to the use of shielded containers and storage in unshielded store, the Chair reported that robust arguments had been given by DSRL to support the rationale behind the decision.

11. Regarding the suitability of conditioned ILW for near surface disposal, The Chair reported that a comprehensive response was given by DSRL. The key points from the presentations made, were that by 2025 80% of the conditioned waste will not be suitable for near surface disposal and even after 300 years of surface storage at Dounreay some 62 % of the waste will still not be suitable for near surface disposal. The Chair felt that this is an issue for the Committee should raise with the Scottish Government. The Committee agreed that this should be on the agenda when the Chair meets the Scottish Minister.

**Action 2: The Secretariat to arrange a meeting with the Scottish Minister**

12. On the basis of the above information the committee agreed that DSRL had demonstrated a robust defence of its current strategy for the treatment and storage of radioactive waste.

**Agenda Item 4 Sub-groups and Members Updates**

***Siting Sub-group***

*Siting Policy Review*

13. The sub-group reported on the outcome of the siting policy review. The committee noted that a large proportion of the advice it had given to DECC on its siting proposals had been incorporated into the White Paper. It was noted that the White Paper left some of the more contentious issues open with a plan to address them over a two-year period. The Committee recognised the progress that had been made in the development of the policy as set out in the White Paper. Members felt that the next 2 years would be critical to the success in implementing the GDF policy and hence the work undertaken by DECC and RWM should be appropriately scrutinised.

### *Geological Screening*

14. It was reported that CoRWM Members had attended a geological screening event on the 30th of September. The aim of the meeting was to start the engagement process to produce the national screening guidance, but this was not the outcome of the meeting. The Members who attended the meeting reported that they were not impressed with the way the meeting was managed.
15. It was reported that initially there was a good outline of the policy and geological screening and there was a useful outline of the concepts including the international approach on screening, there was no clear explanation as to RWM's approach. The meeting then lost focus on screening and began to focus on the siting criteria. The role of the safety case criteria was introduced but this was too technical and was not related to the context as set out in the White Paper. The Member reported that the meeting included a panel on siting although siting was not the purpose of the meeting. It was also reported that the meeting did not address the topic of geological screening guidance which is the output of the exercise.
16. The Committee felt that in future screening meetings there has to be a definition of what screening is and isn't. The Committee raised questions on the relationship between RWM and the Geological Society in relation to the management and organisation of the meeting. Members wanted to know if RWM had simply used the Geological Society venue or if the Geological Society had organised the meeting and selected the panel?
17. It was reported that RWM did not want to predetermine the nature of the discussion and that was the reason given for them not giving any direction at the beginning of the meeting. This made it seem like they didn't know what outcome they wanted from the meeting. The Committee thought that RWM should have had a clear view on what it wanted from the meeting and should have managed it to deliver the required deliverables.
18. In summary, it was reported that the meeting on the 30 September had not been very well organised and the approach had caused the CoRWM observers to be concerned. It was clear that the meeting moved away from screening to siting which was inconsistent with the policy as set out in the White Paper. There was lack of leadership, lack of clarity and lack of focus. There was no round up at the end of the session. There was no clear plan on the review panel. As a result of this and the need to give feedback to DECC before the full Committee had had a chance to discuss the issues, the Chair had agreed that the CoRWM Observer could send her concerns to DECC soon after the meeting.

19. The Chair indicated that he would report on the Committee's discussion and concerns at the Sponsor's meeting that he would be attending later in the day. The main points that he intended to make were that:
- The RWM stakeholder/ public meeting did not take account of the feedback from CoRWM following the meeting between CoRWM and RWM prior to the stakeholder/ public meeting.
  - The meeting could have been better managed to stay focussed on the topic that was under discussion through an overall vision and roadmap and address what geological screening meant instead of drifting onto the siting process.

**Action 3: for Secretariat – To set up a meeting with RWM to provide further feedback; what CoRWM would like to see in their next events and to ascertain how they intend to establish a panel.**

*Safety Case Sub-Group*

20. The safety case sub-group reported that it was trying to get a better understanding of the 3 generic safety cases and how RWM see the transition from the generic safety case to a site specific safety case. It was reported that a meeting had been set up in December to discuss this with RWM. RWM had asked for specific questions the Committee wished to raise so that appropriate information can be given to the Committee.

**Action 4: Members to forward their questions to the sub-group.**

*Regulatory Sub-Group*

21. There was nothing to report.

*Welsh Government sub-Group*

22. The Chair of the WG sub-group reported that she had taken some notes on the Anglesey public meeting. The intention was for the note to be circulated to Members for comment. The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate for the note to be put on the CoRWM website.

**Action 5: Members to send their comments to the Chair of the Sub-group.**

**Action 6: Secretariat to put the note on the CoRWM website when revised and cleared by the Chair**

23. It was also reported that the WG sub-group Members will be making a follow up visit to Wylfa in late December / early January to see the HAW storage

facilities. The Secretariat confirmed that it was in the process of confirming the dates for the visit.

**Action 7: The Secretariat to arrange a follow-up visit to Wylfa for the WG Sub-group**

24. It was reported that the Chair and Lynda Warren (who declared an interest as she is on the NRW Board) met with Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) Chair and two members of staff. The meeting had been arranged to discuss CoRWM's concerns about NRW's capability to manage its radioactive waste responsibilities. NRW officials gave a detailed overview of NRW role and responsibilities. However, the NRW representatives were unable to go into how NRW deals with radioactive waste issues. The Committee agreed that NRW should be invited to the next CoRWM plenary meeting in Cardiff and asked to give a presentation on how NRW delivers its radioactive waste responsibilities.

**Action 8: The Secretariat to invite NRW to the next Plenary meeting in Cardiff**

25. It was reported that the Welsh Government intended to issue a consultation on the need for a policy on radioactive waste disposal. The Committee agreed to respond to the consultation. The deadline for responding is the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2015. Lynda Warren agreed to produce the first draft of the response and circulate it to Members for comments.
26. The Welsh Government had requested assistance from CoRWM to help with the analysis of technical responses. The Committee agreed to support the WG as requested.

**Action 9: Lynda Warren to circulate a draft response to the WG Consultation before the next meeting in December for members' comments.**

**Action 10: Members to send their comments to Lynda as soon as possible after receipt of the draft.**

*RWM Transition Sub-Group*

27. The Chair of the sub-group reported that there had been an on-going discussion with RWM and its predecessor RWMD on the transition process. CoRWM was scrutinising this work because the successful delivery of a GDF will depend upon an effective delivery organisation (Developer) and hence the development of RWM into an organisation capable of delivering a GDF is of crucial importance. The sub-group had split its activities into 3 main parts:

- To scrutinise the transition of RWMD into a wholly owned subsidiary (RWM) of the NDA.
- To review the attributes and capabilities of a GDF organisation.
- To scrutinise the GDF organisation development plans and how well this correspond with best practise.

28. It was reported that there was a meeting with RWM in August to discuss the transition up to April 2014. After that meeting RWM had submitted some 27 to 30 documents to CoRWM. The Chair of the sub-group reported that a narrative on the transition to date had been produced. He hoped to produce a report for CoRWM in the not too distant future.

**Action 11: Stephen Newson to produce a report for CoRWM on the first stage of the RWM transition programme.**

#### *The Scottish Government Sub Group*

The Chair of the Scottish Government Sub-group reported that a draft implementation strategy for consultation was expected to be published in a matter of weeks. The draft had gone to Ministers for approval. The Sub-group expected to have a draft by the December meeting for Members to discuss and make comments. The Chair noted that the Committee will be interested to see how the comments CoRWM provided earlier have been taken up by the Scottish government.

#### *Interim Storage*

29. It was reported that the visits to Dounreay had resolved the Committee's concerns regarding storage of HAW. The initial visit to Wylfa did not allow the Committee full access to the HAW storage facilities and a further revisit was being planned for January. The Committee thought that a visit to Berkeley to see the ILW storage facilities would allow the Committee to see an example of shielded containers being stored in an unshielded store. A visit by the sub-group will be planned early in the New Year.

**Action 12: The Secretariat to arrange for the Sub-group to visit Berkeley NPS to see the new ILW storage facilities**

30. A meeting with the regulators was proposed to address the storage plans to discuss shielded containers in unshielded stores or shielded stores and unshielded containers.

**Action 13: The Secretariat to arrange a meeting with the Office of Nuclear Regulation to discuss the regulatory approach to ILW interim storage**

#### *NDA Research Board*

31. Francis Livens reported on his observations on the NDA Research Board which had taken place on the 15<sup>th</sup> October. Discussions had focussed on R & D management strategy for each of the organisations involved in the meeting. The Board was happy for CoRWM to attend its meetings. Francis volunteered to continue to represent CoRWM at these meetings. The Committee agreed.
32. The Committee questioned the role of the NDA's Research Board and asked if its focus was on the adequacy of the NDA's research activities. The Committee was also keen to understand the link between the NDA radioactive waste strategy and its research programme. There was also a request to understand the role of the NDA research Board and NIRAB. Francis Livens agreed to discuss the Committee's questions at the next NDA meeting.

#### *NDA & RWM stakeholder group*

33. It was reported that there had been a good attendance at the NDA/RWM stakeholder meeting. Approximately 65 or 70 people attended from a variety of organisations including NDA, RWM, DRS, Stakeholders and Unions, SEPA, EA, MOD and Nuleaf. There was a series of presentations, which were interesting but not necessarily joined up or targeted at the audience. Use was made of a facilitator to help RWM in managing the event. The attendees were put in predetermined group to discuss their expectations of RWM. It was not apparent what RWM actually wanted from the two days workshop. The CoRWM observers felt the RWM needed to have a clearer understanding of what it wanted to achieve from these meetings.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Working over the next 2 years**

34. The Chair relayed the concerns raised by DECC, at the previous sponsors' meeting regarding the Committee's visits to nuclear sites and the potential for public meetings to undermine the Governments revised siting policy. The Chair indicated that the next two years were crucial for the delivery of the new policy as set out in the White Paper and he did not wish CoRWM's activities to put this at risk. He recognised that CoRWM needed to visit nuclear sites that stored radioactive waste to fulfil its remit to scrutinise the management of the higher activity radioactive wastes and that CoRWM needed to engage with the duty holders in order to be in a position to provide authoritative advice. However, the Chairman pointed out that in spite of CoRWM's worthy intentions, people and organisations had used the recent visits to Cumbria and Anglesey to raise public and media attention to GDF siting issues and not CoRWM's HAW storage intentions. Members expressed some concern in relation to the independence of the Committee and the ability of the Committee to gather information about the storage of HAW and to gain first-hand knowledge from the local stakeholders. There was a feeling from Members that they did not want to be dictated to by the sponsor Department. However, Members clearly

understood the reasons behind DECC's concerns and did not wish to do anything that could undermine the success of the Government's activities during the next two years. A detailed discussion took place on how best the Committee could continue to undertake its remit and at the same time take note of DECC's sensitivities surrounding CoRWM's visits nuclear sites and holding public meetings.

35. The Committee agreed to revise its normal ways of working given the importance of the successful completion of the White Paper work packages over the next 2 years to the GDF siting programme. As a result Members agreed that CoRWM (as a Committee) should:
- Suspend its nuclear site visit programme and associated public meetings.
  - Continue the scrutiny of radioactive waste storage at nuclear sites via the sub-group visiting the sites. There will be no public meetings but the sub-group when visiting the site would plan to meet the chair of the local liaison committee (site stakeholder group) on site if he or she is available.
  - Continue to hold open plenary meetings in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh only.

#### **Agenda Item 6 CoRWM's Scrutiny of DECC GDF Initial Action Plan**

36. The Committee discussed the DECC/RWM White Paper action plan. It was agreed that the scrutiny of these activities would form the major part of CoRWM's work over the next two years. There was a significant discussion on the content of each of the work packages and the Committee felt it was important to identify and agree a CoRWM lead for each work package.
37. The CoRWM leads for each work package were agreed as:
- Work Package 1** - National Geological Screening – Becky Lunn  
**Work Package 2** – Working with Communities – John Rennilson  
**Work Package 3** – National Land-use Planning – Lynda Warren  
**Work Package 4** – Developer Lead Communications and Engagement – Brian Clark  
**Work Package 5** – Providing the ONR with legal vires to licence a GDF – Helen Peters
38. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat had an important role to play and that the Head of the Secretariat should meet with each of the work package leads and agree an initial engagement strategy for DECC and RWM and initial meeting requirements.

**Action 14: Head of the Secretariat to meet each of the work package leads and develop an initial engagement strategy and meeting programme for each work package**

**Agenda Item 7 Initial Thoughts on 2015/18 Programme of Work and new sub-groups**

39. The Chair reminded the Committee that the 2015/18 programme of work needed to be with Ministers at the end of March. This meant that an agreed programme needed to be sent to the key stakeholders by early February 2015..
40. The Committee went through the current programme of work to consider if any overall changes to the balance of effort was required. The general consensus of the Committee was :
  1. GDF Siting Policy – Currently at 50%, but the tasks needs to be modified.
  2. Welsh Policy – Currently at 20%, but only for 2015/16
  3. RWMD Transition – Currently at 5% but needs further consideration in light of expected developments over the next few years
  4. Scottish Government – Currently at 10% but may need further consideration in the light of developments in 2015
  5. Interim Surface Storage – Currently at 5% but could be increased to 10%
  6. Spent Fuel, Plutonium and Uranic management – Currently at 5%, no reason to change given current understanding of priorities but the words need to be modified.
  7. CoRWM Outreach – Currently at 5% and no reason to change
41. After some discussion it was agreed that the Chair and the secretariat would produce a new draft for the closed meeting in December.

**Agenda Item 8 Q&A**

42. There were no questions from members of the public

**Agenda Item 9 Close of Meeting**

43. Before closing the meeting the Chair on behalf of the Committee congratulated Paul Davis on his wedding.

