

**2593**

**Cumbrian Stakeholder Event**

**May 2009**

**Report of CoRWM Stakeholder Workshop on the Consultation Draft Report on Deep Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Wastes – 15<sup>th</sup> May, Workington Cumbria**

1.	Author	Secretariat
2.	Date	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
3.	Subject	Stakeholder Workshop
4.	Status	Draft
5.	Recipients	Members and participants
6.	When commissioned by CoRWM	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
7.	Confidential	No
8.	Additional notes	None
9.	Document no.	2593

- The Cumbrian stakeholder workshop was held at the Oval Centre in Workington on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009. The primary focus of the event was to understand the stakeholders' views on geological disposal through discussions on the Government White Paper (June 2008) 'Managing Radioactive Waste Safely, a Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal' and CoRWM's draft report to Government on 'Deep Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Wastes' (CoRWM document 2550).
- The workshop was an invitation-only event for stakeholders in Cumbria. All attendees, listed in Table 1, were sent the consultation draft report on 'Deep Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Wastes' in advance of the workshop.
- The format of the day is indicated in table 2. After welcoming remarks, Mark Dutton introduced the purpose of the workshop, which was to understand the stakeholders' views in relation to geological disposal. Three main sessions followed, which included discussions on the Government White Paper, key issues identified by CoRWM in their draft report on 'Deep Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Wastes' and finally CoRWM's proposed conclusions and recommendations in the draft report.
- The main sessions were broken down into four parts that consisted of a short presentation given by a CoRWM member, followed by individual table discussions where attendees were placed on specific tables. Key issues from each table were then fed back in turn, leading to a plenary discussion where all groups had the opportunity to comment. The notes below summarise the main points made in each session.

**1. WELCOME**

- Robert Pickard welcomed participants and thanked them for attending the meeting. He summarised the Committee's scrutiny role and the way in which CoRWM itself

was scrutinised by Parliament, Government, stakeholders and others. As an independent body, CoRWM was not an agent of Government but would advise it, including pointing to any issues on which it did not seem to be taking account of stakeholders' views.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- Mark Dutton introduced the proposed agenda, the purpose of the day's discussion and how CoRWM proposed that the event would be organised. The aim was to understand stakeholders' views in relation to geological disposal. Apart from giving the introductory presentations, and any clarification sought by participants, Members would listen and facilitate the discussion, not impart information or views.

## 3. ISSUES IMPORTANT TO LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Brian Clark introduced the Government White Paper (June 2008), 'Managing Radioactive Waste Safely, a Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal' in a brief presentation. This included an overview of the MRWS progress to date (2006 – 2009) and the preparations and planning for geological disposal. He also highlighted protecting people and the environment through regulation, planning and independent scrutiny, before concluding with the Government's proposal for site selection using the voluntarism and partnership approach.
- After table discussions, participants summarised the issues that each table saw as important. Some points were contributed by individuals. (Some issues came up several times during the day, and they are reported accordingly, not merged together.) These were:
  - (1) The process, and the need to maintain public confidence over a period lasting decades:
    - issues of national and local governance
    - the need to know where resources are coming from
    - the need to be accountable and responsive to local people
    - the way that the local environment will change over several decades; hence,
    - the need for a credible **Managing radioactive waste safely** (MRWS) process that ensured public confidence in the way the waste inventory was managed.
  - (2) Safety, and the need for public confidence:
    - the importance of trust in the facility design and its designers
    - and in the regulators
    - in a long process going via BGS screening to eventual implementation of a disposal facility
    - much would be needed to convince local residents
    - concern over gas (need to release in order to avoid a pressure build-up of hydrogen; need to retain in order to avoid undue doses due to radioactive methane) was cited as one example of this.
  - (3) Uncertainties and the need to reduce them:

- for example, uncertainty over the composition of the eventual inventory and the implications of that inventory for
  - the local community and other affected communities (the Isle of Man was cited as an example),
  - the packaging of the waste, and
  - the design of the disposal facility
- the inventory, the design concept and the location of the facility all influenced one another.

(4) Expressions of interest:

- Government had not defined some key terms clearly enough, including
  - what constituted a "community" and
  - what they were actually expressing an interest in.
- In Cumbria, the County and the two District Councils fitted the description of a "decision making body" but not that of a "community".
- They could not themselves be a host community, so how was such a community to be identified?
- Some questioned the extent to which the **MRWS** process was a change from the former Nirex process since there is currently no protection against Government and a Decision-making Body imposing a repository on an unwilling local community.

(5) Defining the host community:

- What distance defined a host community?
- What if the surface workings lay within one community but underground workings lay further afield?
- How far away would community benefits be shared?

(6) Retrievability:

- Any decision process would need to follow *Best practicable environmental option* (BPEO) practice

(7) The need for Government to involve communities outside Cumbria:

- Government should first inform the public through a national awareness programme; CoRWM had recommended an 18 month period
- The Government 2008 invitation was arid and encouraged very few expressions of interest
- Instead, it should set out the possible pros and cons so that Councils could see whether the issue was worth discussing

(8) The prospective host community's right of withdrawal:

- Was there a "cliff edge" in the siting process where this right effectively ended?

- There was then a plenary discussion where further points were made:
  - Can Cumbrian councils and their different responsibilities address the GDF question with local co-operation? They will have to, but who will be the decision-making body? There needs to be local government co-operation and continuity over the coming years.

- Concern over what area within Copeland's Expression of Interest will be the host community. Who will make the decision for where the final GDF location will be?
- Decisions must be taken at the local level. There is a lack of trust in the credibility of certain major players in the MRWS process.
- Money corrupts. The MRWS process is basing what to do on where money goes and what influence it has, this could be a disaster. At least the NIREX process based site selection on the most scientifically suitable – there was no perceived 'bribery'.
- Contamination – the issue of escaping radionuclide in a gaseous form into the environment has not been looked into.
- Where necessary, Mark Dutton explained CoRWM's understanding of how specific parts of the **MRWS** / siting process would work. On occasions, this led to discussion e.g. about whether the process would, or should operate as he anticipated.
- The initial Cumbrian partnership has not been fleshed out because of a lack of clarity in the white paper, this is a real concern – it is too 'fuzzy'. There needs to be a professional analysis with Government on all uncertainties and guidance provided with further clarity. It is unfair for individuals and communities to work in such an uncertain and unclear environment. The white paper needs to be evolved.
- The MRWS White Paper is a national document. There is reference to two tier systems, where both tiers can make an Expression of Interest, which gives a clear decision to carry to process forward.

#### 4. ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY CORWM

- Mark Dutton presented issues that CoRWM identified in their draft report on 'Deep Geological Disposal of Higher activity Wastes', which covered areas such as the invitation to participate in the siting process for geological disposal and the arrangements for the decision making process. Other issues that were identified related to managing the implementation of storage and geological disposal, regulation and permitting and the development of geological disposal concepts and designs. The final issues that were identified related to screening out unsuitable areas and desk studies.
- After table discussions, participants summarised the issues that each table saw as important. These were:
  - (1) The need for a robust planning process, reflecting:
    - the local, "voluntarism" approach
    - the national, strategic approach - but can it be consistent with voluntarism?
  - (2) The need for clarity on the inventory of wastes for disposal:
    - the need to maximise safety and public confidence

- Government to commit to the inventory before final site selection
  - concern if materials are added later
  - might then need to modify design, and the impact on affected communities might alter
- (3) Getting from a large "expression of interest" area to a few candidate sites:
- via a geological and voluntarism process
  - need an expression of interest from the eventual (not just the initial) host community
  - but how to achieve that, when the host community lacks the necessary information, motivation and right to withdraw?
  - who will propose those local sites and how will local communities be involved in their selection?
- (4) The prospective inventory:
- including historic, and future waste arisings
  - the nature of the "change control" procedure and how the community will be involved
- (5) Long-term funding:
- in the long term, there is no way to commit future Governments
  - but assurances are needed, at least in the short term
- (6) Information needed about the prospective inventory and its implications:
- about other e.g. biological hazards, not just radiological - e.g. graphite
  - about any additional movements of materials and additional contents of disposal facility
  - about chemical form e.g. C<sub>14</sub>, Cl<sub>36</sub>
  - there are some doubts about the accuracy and presentation of the existing inventory as well
- (7) Storage or disposal:
- disposal intended to remove burden from future generations
  - but storage might be needed for how long: 100 years? 200?
  - monitorability, retrievability, maintainability are necessary
  - and how will local community be involved in the eventual decision on whether & when to close the facility?
- (8) Monitorability:
- community needs robust information - cf the Nirex "phased disposal" concept and Environment Agency concern about its viability
  - reliable information needed on the range of materials involved
  - importance of maintaining passive safety
- (9) Other points:
- Scottish Government position on continued storage is not plausible
  - BGS screening doesn't need peer review; such reviews would be better later in the site selection process

## 5. CORWM'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- John Rennilson gave the final presentation which presented CoRWM's proposed conclusions and recommendations in the draft report to Government on Deep Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Wastes.
- After table discussions, participants summarised the issues that each table saw as important. These were:
  - (1) Community benefits packages:
    - link the process to BPEO, which provided for socio-economic assessment; this would also make it more robust to challenge
    - concern that central government (e.g. Transport Department) might disagree with any local community priorities for investing in better transport links;
    - possible use of the Master Plan system for minimising the risk of disagreement
  - (2) Funding:
    - CoRWM's draft recommendation needed to go further and call for long-term funding of NDA itself
    - as well as for certainty that long-term funding of benefits packages will be available
    - recognising the current economic climate
    - CoRWM should refer to "local decision making body" not "host community"
  - (3) Involving communities outside Cumbria:
    - how long will Government leave open the call for expressions of interest?
    - when will it decide whether to go ahead on the basis of expressions received from Cumbria (or wherever)?
    - it might close the invitation to express an interest when the first "willingness to participate" decision is made
  - (4) Engagement packages:
    - some local authority costs have been reimbursed already
    - but need more confidence / certainty on what they can afford in future; e.g. they may need to engage independent technical, legal & c experts
    - see point already made about need for robust, trusted information, e.g. about how many disposal facilities might be needed, and other uncertainties
    - local communities need their own resources e.g. to engage experts so that they do not depend entirely on the local decision making body
    - see recommendations in the COWAM report about the need for resources to go to the local community not the Government's implementing body
  - (5) Retrievability:
    - need more clarity about the Committee's own position on retrievability / reversibility

(6) Communities:

- CoRWM sometimes needs to be clearer in its use of terms such as "host community", "partnership" and "decision making body"
- need clarity from Government too: many possible interpretations of those who can express an interest

(7) Decision-making:

- CoRWM says it is "not looking at decision making" but it should be more pro-active / judgmental in this area

(8) The inventory:

- CoRWM calls for the disposal facility design process to be kept flexible, but this gives NDA too much leeway
- more clarity is needed about future materials that might go into the facility, and the decision making / change control process
- the first step should be to identify the inventory, then the design concept, then the location

(9) Challenging waste streams at Sellafield:

- problems / challenges with conditioning, including cement
- concern that regulatory rules (e.g. NII requirements in 2000) may be softened (e.g. via EPP2, 2009) to reflect the scale of the problem rather than the desired solution
- need for NDA to be funded to tackle these problems, and
- need for CoRWM to advise e.g. on "upstream" issues such as the need for reprocessing

- There was then a plenary discussion where further points were made:
  - Clarity is needed about who is the 'host community'.
  - Local communities need to be clear about the environmental impacts that we are not close to understanding and the downside to benefits package.

## 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Participants then had the opportunity to raise any issues that were not discussed in previous sessions, the following points were raised:
  - A host community will not volunteer after BGS have screened out unsuitable areas if they have not been engaged from the start of the decision making process.
  - If the overall process is based on best scientific knowledge then host communities need to be induced by the best scientific information.

## 7. CLOSE

- Robert Pickard finally closed the event with a large thanks to all the participants for their time and thoughts throughout the day.



**Table 1: CoRWM's Stakeholder Workshop, Workington, Cumbria 15<sup>th</sup> May**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Adam Scott	CoRWM Secretariat
Allan Holliday	Copeland Borough Council
Becky Lunn	CoRWM
Brian Clark	CoRWM
Chris Shaw	Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC)
David Broughton	CoRWM
David Polhill	Gosforth Parish Council
David Southward	Cumbria County Council
Fergus Gibb	CoRWM
Francis Livens	CoRWM
John Rennilson	CoRWM
Katie Dawson	Sellafield Ltd
Margaret Burns	CoRWM
Marjorie Higham	Citizen
Mark Dutton	CoRWM
Mr McKinley	Gosforth Parish Council
Mr Wright	Gosforth Parish Council
Paul McKenna	Isle of Man Government
Penny Hitchin	Citizen
Philip Greatorex	Sellafield Ltd
Rachel Western	Friends of the Earth (Cumbrian Groups)
Robert Morris-Eyton	National Farmers Union
Robert Pickard	CoRWM
Sam Moore	Sellafield Ltd
Simon Mussett	CoRWM Secretariat
Stewart Kemp	Cumbria County Council
Tarsam Bains	CoRWM Secretariat
Tim Knowles	Cumbria County Council

**Table 2: Agenda for the day**

<b>Registration and refreshments</b>	<b>09.45</b>
<b>Welcome - Robert Pickard</b>	<b>10.00</b>
<b>Introduction and House Rules - Mark Dutton</b>	<b>10.05</b>
<b>Issues important to local stakeholders</b>	<b>10.15</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brian Clark will present some of the key issues raised in the Government White Paper (June, 2008), 'A Framework for Implementing Geological Disposal'</li> <li>• Table discussion</li> <li>• Group feedback session</li> </ul>	
<b>Refreshments</b>	<b>11.30</b>
<b>Issues Identified by CoRWM (<i>Document 2550</i>)</b>	<b>11.45</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Dutton will present some of the key issues identified by CoRWM in the draft 'Deep Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Wastes Report' (Doc. 2550)</li> <li>• Table discussion</li> <li>• Group feedback session</li> </ul>	
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>13.00</b>
<b>CoRWM's Proposed Conclusions and Recommendations (<i>Document 2550</i>)</b>	<b>13.30</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Rennilson will present CoRWM's proposed conclusions and recommendations in the draft 'Deep Geological Disposal of Higher Activity Wastes Report'</li> <li>• Table discussion</li> <li>• Group feedback session</li> </ul>	
<b>Any Other Business</b>	<b>14.45</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants have the opportunity to discuss issues that have not been raised in previous sessions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Close - Robert Pickard</b>	<b>15.15</b>
<b>End of Event</b>	<b>15.30</b>