

## CoRWM e-bulletin 27

### November 2008

Welcome to CoRWM's latest e-bulletin. This reports on our first public workshop held on 30 October, our plenary meeting on 4 November, and our plans for the next plenary. We are making good progress towards delivering our first reports to Government, on interim storage of radioactive waste (March 2009), research and development (June 2009) and progress towards geological disposal via the Government's *Managing radioactive waste safely programme* (June 2009).

#### The Reading workshop, 30 October

1. Since we were re-established last November with new Terms of Reference, we have invited public comments on our work, and held a number of meetings with local or national stakeholders. But this was our first workshop designed to bring together a wide range of citizens and stakeholders, working collectively and with professional facilitators, to give us comments and suggestions across a broad range of issues. We learned a lot, both about the issues that mattered to people, and about how we could organise future events. We currently plan to hold events around twice a year so this will enable us to focus on a smaller number of issues in greater detail. We shall publish a report on the workshop (CoRWM document 2488).

#### Our plenary meeting, 4 November

2. The Committee meets in public where we discuss the substantive issues and take our decisions. We met in London on 4 November. Papers went on our website ([Plenary Meeting November 2008](#)) a week in advance, as usual. They are referred to below by their CoRWM document number.
3. Main issues and decisions at this meeting included:
  - i. Interim storage (document 2471):
    - We are near the end of our information gathering for the March report, and starting to outline its scope. We plan a couple more meetings to gather and test information about spent fuels, plutonium and uranium. We discussed NDA's plans for putting options for plutonium management – including sale, immobilisation, or some combination of the two - to Government; NDA work to develop criteria to judge whether waste packages are at risk of failure; progress on NDA's review of UK waste storage; and our own progress and plans for inviting public and stakeholder views and ensuring that our March report is fair and evidence based.
  - ii. Research and development (document 2473):
    - On interim storage, we are awaiting a report from NDA which we shall discuss with them. On the basis of this and other meetings already held with learned societies, research bodies and others, we shall provide an R&D section for the report on interim storage, so that there is time to invite public and stakeholder comment.

- On R&D mainly related to geological disposal, again we have had a range of meetings with scientific and other bodies and are collecting some reports from NDA. We have drawn up an outline of our 2009 report to Government, covering R&D, including UK skills and capabilities, and have identified some areas which we may need to examine next year, such as engineering and other skills needed to implement a geological disposal facility. The meeting discussed this, including the need to draw on overseas experience of (among other things) regularly publishing research programmes for review by a wide range of stakeholders.
- iii. Geological disposal:
- We discussed the UK waste inventory published by the Government and NDA last June. We think this should be supplemented by more information about possible future scenarios, including materials such as spent fuel and some plutonium and uranium not currently classified as wastes, and the implications of a new nuclear programme. This could help a number of organisations and local communities to think ahead and plan. We understand that Government hopes to provide more information and we look forward to this prospect. (Document 2438.1)
  - We talked about Government plans, once any communities enter into siting partnerships, for identifying potential sites including its proposed sub-surface exclusion criteria. We have had meetings with the British Geological Survey and others, and over the next few weeks we shall meet geoscientists, the NDA and Government to learn how they see the process working and what challenges they face. (Document 2470)
  - We discussed the Government ***Managing radioactive waste safely*** programme, including the limited response so far from local communities to the Government invitation to express an interest in discussing the possibility of hosting a geological disposal facility. (Document 2446.1) We reported on a recent meeting with the local government Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum, NuLeAF, which raised a number of issues, including local public engagement, the role of district and county councils, and community benefits packages. We discussed NDA's consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment and a set of proposed comments in response. (Document 2477)
- iv. Public and stakeholder engagement:
- We looked at some of the messages coming out of the Reading workshop, where the public raised significant concerns on all the issues – interim storage, R&D and geological disposal – on which we shall be reporting to Government next year. We noted that there had been few responses to our July invitation to comment on our work programme, but respondents had raised some substantive issues which working groups were considering. We discussed NDA's consultation on public engagement and communications framework for geological disposal, and some proposed comments in response. (Documents 2475 & 2479)
- v. Our work programme and other issues:

- Our first year's programme is on schedule and within budget. We have a 3-year rolling programme and are now starting to plan our 2009/10 work in detail. We shall invite your views on this in the new year before we send it to Government in March. Meanwhile your comments and suggestions on our current and future work are welcome at any time.

4. Detailed minutes of the meeting will be published in December.

#### **Our next plenary meeting is on 18 December**

The next meeting of the full Committee is on 18 December at MWB Business Exchange, 10 Greycoat Place, London SW1P 1SB, telephone 020 7960 6000. The agenda will include discussion of

- geological disposal, including exclusion criteria and their application;
- the main business of the meeting: interim storage: a detailed outline of our March 2009 report to Government on waste storage and management of plutonium, uranium and spent nuclear fuels
- research & development, including the Committee's views on storage (to feed into the March report), and discussion of geological disposal-related R&D (on which we shall report in June 2009);
- Government's ***Managing Radioactive Waste Safely*** programme;
- public & stakeholder engagement, including plans for events in 2009; and
- initial discussion of possible elements of our work programme for 2009-12.

There will be working group meetings on 17 December; these are not open to the public, but reports will be published.

**Further information** about our work can be found at <http://www.corwm.org.uk> or from our secretariat at CoRWM, 4C Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AL, telephone: 0207 238 1721, e-mail: [contact@corwm.org.uk](mailto:contact@corwm.org.uk).