

CoRWM e-bulletin 41 April 2010

Welcome to this e-bulletin. We report on

- our 22-23 March plenary and plans for our next one in Manchester on 27-28 April;
- our response to the Scottish Government consultation on managing higher-activity wastes;
- our proposed work programme for 2010-13, which we have sent to sponsor Governments, and
- our proposal to change the format of our Annual Report, starting with the report on 2009-10 that will go to Governments in June.

Report of our plenary, Cardiff, 22-23 March 2010

We agreed a response to the Scottish Government consultation on managing higher-activity wastes. We discussed progress in managing radioactive waste elsewhere in the UK, and plans for visiting Sellafield during the summer. We discussed our proposed 2010-13 work programme and agreed that this should be sent to our sponsor Governments for approval.

Scottish Government consultation on managing higher activity wastes

The Scottish Government published its proposed policy on 15 January 2010, and invited comments. We agreed our response in Cardiff and sent it on 1 April. A copy is attached.

The Scottish Government policy is to "*support long-term near surface, near site storage and disposal facilities so that the Waste is monitorable and retrievable and the need for transporting it over long distances is minimal*". This is different to the policy adopted by the UK Government and our response made a number of points, including these:

- We feel that the policy would benefit from having more information on the physical and chemical nature of the waste being produced in Scotland. The Policy Statement needs to bring out that, within the definition of higher activity waste that is included, there is a sizeable portion of waste (the accompanying Environmental Report suggests approximately 25% by volume) that will not be suitable for near-surface disposal. The Policy Statement should be clear about the process for arriving at an end-state for this waste.
- The policy is general and enabling, and places responsibility for developing an implementation strategy with owners and producers. The policy does not ensure optimisation and co-ordination. We believe that the Scottish Government needs to give more explicit guidance about what the implementation strategy is aiming to achieve. For example, is there a preference, where possible, for disposal? What are the full ranges of criteria for arriving at siting decisions? There also needs to be more guidance about the process for developing the implementation strategy and the likely timelines.
- In our view the Policy Statement needs to make it clear that the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will lead the development of an Implementation strategy. The Scottish Government will have to direct and enable the NDA to take on this role.
- We think the Policy Statement needs to spell out how considerations of cost, affordability and best value will be taken into account in developing an implementation strategy.

- The final policy statement needs to be stand-alone. Consequently, information and detailed definitions that are currently within the Environmental Report need to be brought into the Policy Statement. For example, it is stated in the Report that the preference is for disposal, but this is not reflected in the Statement.

We met with a number of stakeholders to inform our response and we are grateful for the information they gave us. We shall now scrutinise the process whereby the Scottish Government drew up and adopted its proposals. This will include further discussions with stakeholders and advice to the Scottish Government probably towards the end of 2010.

Our proposed work programme for 2010-13

We agreed our proposed programme in Cardiff and sent it to our sponsor Governments on 31 March. A copy is attached. Again, we are grateful for the comments we received from stakeholders as we drew up our plans over the last few months.

CoRWM's proposed priorities for scrutiny and advice in 2010-11 are:

- UK Government work to implement its policy on the long-term management of higher activity wastes
- Scottish Government development of its policy on the management of higher activity wastes and of proposals for its implementation
- NDA Strategy II
- NDA work on the implementation of geological disposal.

These priorities are based on discussions with sponsors and on CoRWM's own views. The first, second and fourth priorities are continuations from 2009-10. The work on NDA Strategy II is largely a continuation of CoRWM's work on waste conditioning, packaging, storage and transport, and on the management of spent fuels, plutonium and uranium.

We propose that research and development (R&D) will be considered in each priority area, and the overall strategic co-ordination of R&D for higher activity wastes will be dealt with in a separate task involving interactions with Government on CoRWM's 2009 R&D report.

We are proposing specific tasks on scrutiny of other organisations' public and stakeholder engagement (PSE). These will cover changes to be made to the Department of Energy and Climate Change and NDA websites, as well as scrutiny of those PSE programmes of these and other organisations that are relevant to the management of higher activity wastes.

The proposed programme does not contain a separate task on new build wastes. Instead, these wastes will be considered under all the other tasks except those related to Scottish Government policy. This is because the UK Government has not identified a requirement for specific advice on new build wastes in 2010-11. If such a requirement does arise, a suitable task will be added.

During 2010-11 we plan to produce a number of position papers and a formal CoRWM response to the NDA consultation on its Strategy II, but no formal Reports to Government on specific topics.

Further details of the meeting

Papers for this and other plenary meetings can be found here:

<http://www.corwm.org.uk/Pages/Plenary%20Meetings/Forms/Meetings.aspx>.

Draft minutes of the meeting (document 2804) will be published in April 2010.

Our Annual Report for 2009-10

We have agreed with sponsor Governments to change the format of our Annual Reports to include, besides the usual account of our activities and expenditure, any statements that the Committee wishes to make on UK progress with managing its HAW. Our Annual Reports will thus be one way of providing advice. Some Reports may also contain recommendations to Government, though we do not plan to make any in our 2009-10 Report.

We shall publish a first draft of our 2009-10 Report around 20 April, discuss it at our plenary meetings on 27-28 April and 8-9 June, and send it to sponsor Governments by the end of June.

Our next plenary, Manchester, 27-28 April 2010

Our next plenary meeting will be at the Chancellors Hotel & Conference Centre, Chancellors Way, Moseley Road, Manchester M14 6NN, telephone 0161 907 7414, fax 0161 907 7415. Venue details can be found here:

<http://www.conference.manchester.ac.uk/chancellorshotelconferencecentre/contactus/>

Plenary discussion is expected to include:

- The draft Annual Report for 2009-10, and
- Our first review of our effectiveness.

There will also be progress reports, including on issues related to geological disposal.

A detailed agenda, including start and finish times, will be published around 13 April.

Cancellation of our July 2010 plenary meeting

We have decided not to hold a plenary meeting in July 2010. This is because we have plenary meetings in June and August, which will be enough to discuss progress and plans.

Further information about our work can be found at <http://www.corwm.org.uk> or from our secretariat at CoRWM, Area D, 3rd floor, 3 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2AW , telephone: 0300 068 6117, e-mail: corwm@decc.gsi.gov.uk. Our phone numbers are:

Sam Bains 0300 068 6109

Simon Mussett 0300 068 6116

Adam Scott 0300 068 6112 (mobile: 07881 403570)