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CoRWM's Recommendations and Rationales

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Westminster Energy Forum

18 May 2006



CoRWM Process

- Terms of reference – protect people and the environment *and* inspire public confidence in recommending long-term management options for radioactive waste
- Set up in November 2003 – reporting to Ministers at the end - July 2006
- Considered uranium, plutonium and spent fuel as well as higher activity wastes



CoRWM Process Cont.

- Major public and stakeholder engagement (see next presentation), and use of wide range of specialist expertise – science, technology, ethics, social science
- Draft recommendations published April 27 – unlikely to change significantly though we want to see if we can improve confidence in them



The Draft Recommendations

- See www.corwm.org.uk for full explanation of recommendations and rationales
- Since 1997, there has been a vacuum in UK policy on the long-term management of long-lived and more highly active radioactive wastes. CoRWM has drafted the following integrated package of recommendations. This is the start of a process, leading to CoRWM's final recommendations. Once made, they should be acted upon urgently.



Clause 1

- Within the present state of knowledge, CoRWM considers geological disposal to be the best available approach for the long-term management of all the material categorised as waste* in the CoRWM inventory when compared with the risks associated with other methods of management.

* CoRWM's reference position is that reactor decommissioning wastes within CoRWM's inventory will be treated the same as ILW, destined for geological disposal. However, we recognise that management options taken forward for LLW on reactor sites may also be appropriate, if a safety case could be made, for some reactor decommissioning wastes.

Clause 2



- CoRWM recognises that there are social and ethical concerns that might mean there is not sufficient agreement to implement geological disposal at the present time. In any event, the process of implementation will take several decades. This period could last for as long as one or two generations if there are technical difficulties in siting or if community concerns make it difficult, or even impossible, to make progress at a suitable site

Clause 3



- These uncertainties surrounding the implementation of geological disposal lead CoRWM to recommend that a programme of interim storage is required as a contingency and therefore must play an integral part in the long-term management strategy.



Clause 4

1. Therefore, CoRWM recommends a staged process of implementation, incorporating the following elements:
 - a. A commitment to the safe and secure management of wastes through the development of an interim storage programme that is robust against the risk of delay or failure in the repository programme. Due regard should be paid to:



Clause 4a Cont.

- Reviewing and ensuring security, particularly against terrorist attack;
- Ensuring the longevity of the stores themselves;
- Minimising the need of re-packaging of the wastes; and
- Addressing other storage issues identified during CoRWM's public and stakeholder engagement process, such as avoiding unnecessary transport of wastes.



Clause 4

- b. A commitment to an intensified programme of research and development aimed at reducing uncertainties at a generic and site-specific level in the long-term safety of geological disposal, as well as better means for storing wastes in the longer term. Appropriate R&D should be undertaken into alternative management options.



Clause 4

- c. A commitment to ensuring that flexibility in decision-making within the implementation process leaves open the possibility that other long-term management options (for example, borehole disposal) could emerge as practical alternatives.



Clause 4

- d. A continuing public and stakeholder engagement process aimed at building trust and confidence in the proposed long-term management approach, including the siting of facilities.
- e. A set of decision points providing for a review of progress with an opportunity for re-evaluation before proceeding to the next stage, or before foreclosing alternatives.



Clause 5

- CoRWM has not yet decided whether to make recommendations regarding the precise form of geological disposal. This will be an element in the next round of public and stakeholder engagement.



Clause 6

- If a decision is taken to manage uranium, spent nuclear fuel and plutonium as wastes, they should be added to the inventory and immobilised for secure storage followed by geological disposal. There must be clarity about the inventory that is to be disposed of by the time that communities are invited to express a willingness to participate in the implementation process (see below). Any additions to that inventory should be the subject of an additional stage in the process.



Clause 7

- Community involvement in any proposals for the siting of long term radioactive waste facilities should be based on the principle of volunteerism, that is, an expressed willingness to participate. Participation should be based on the expectation that the well-being of the community will be enhanced.



Clause 8

- Willingness to participate should be based on the provision of community packages that are designed both to facilitate participation in the short term and to ensure that a radioactive waste facility is acceptable to the host community in the long term.



Clause 9

- Community involvement should be achieved through the development of a partnership approach, based on an open and equal relationship between the potential host community and those responsible for implementation.



Clause 10

- At the end of each stage of the decision making process there should be provision for a review and the right of communities to withdraw from the process before proceeding to the next stage, up to a pre-defined point.



Clause 11

- In order to ensure the legitimacy of the process, the key decisions at each stage should be ratified by the appropriate democratically elected body(ies).



Clause 12

- CoRWM considers that an open and transparent process is an essential precondition to successful implementation of these recommendations.



CoRWM takes no position on the desirability or otherwise of nuclear new build. We believe that future decisions on new build should be subject to their own assessment process, including consideration of waste. The public assessment process that should apply to any future new build proposals should build on the CoRWM process, and will need to consider a range of issues including the social, political and ethical issues of a deliberate decision to create new nuclear wastes.



Public and Stakeholder Engagement in CoRWM's Programme

Fred Barker



Terms of reference

- must engage **members of the UK public**, and provide them with opportunity to express their views
- **key stakeholder groups** with interests in radioactive waste management must be provided with opportunity to participate
- an objective is to arrive at recommendations that can **inspire public confidence** and are practicable



Role and Nature of PSE

- **Purpose** - to inform CoRWM's decision-making, leading to more socially robust policy recommendations
- **Emphasis on deliberation** – opportunity to weigh evidence and arguments as the process of engagement proceeds



Involving the Public

- **Citizens Panels** - Four panels of 12-16 recruited citizens of mixed gender, age and social class, covering Scotland, Wales, North and South England.
- **Discussion Guide** - 568 self-organising groups from across the UK, including community groups, environmental NGOs, older people and schools
- **Schools Project** - 1305 students (age range 11-18) from 15 schools in Bedfordshire
- **Web-based** - opportunities to comment



Involving stakeholders

- **National Stakeholder Forum** - 20-25 from national organisations and bodies
- **Nuclear Site Round Tables** - meetings in 8 locations for stakeholders from local organisations around 14 nuclear sites
- **'Bilateral' meetings** - between CoRWM and individual organisations



PSE informs decision-making

- PSE1 (Nov 04 - Jan 05) - to seek views on the inventory, the long-list of management options and the criteria to use to screen out options
- PSE2 (Apr - Jun 05) - to seek views on the proposed short-list of management options and the criteria that should be used to assess them
- PSE3 (Oct 05 – Feb 06) - to enable participation in the assessment of short-listed options, focussing on judgements of the importance of different criteria
- PSE4 (May 06) – to seek comments on CoRWM's draft recommendations



How has PSE helped?

- **Short-listing** - confident that we were not excluding any options that had widespread support
- **Option assessment**
 - took issues of concern into options assessment eg burdens and flexibility
 - used views on the relative importance of different criteria in sensitivity testing



Views on criteria weighting in option assessment

- Most important - public safety, security and environment
- Least important - socio-economic impact, amenity and financial cost
- Differences - burdens/flexibility (older/young)



Level of support for geological disposal

- Events not run to generate quantitative findings, but findings indicate scope for geological disposal to inspire public confidence
- Citizens panels - around 66% of participants
- Discussion Guide - around 60% of groups
- Schools project - around 97% of participants



Key public confidence messages

- prioritise safety, security and the environment
- start now, but be flexible when moving forward
- be explicit about uncertainties and how they should be managed
- be open and transparent, and take seriously what you hear
- empower potential host communities