

BERKELEY NUCLEAR LICENSED SITE

SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT

THE BERKELEY ARMS HOTEL ON WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2015

PRESENT:

Cllr Mrs P Wride (Chair)	-	Ham and Stone Parish Council
Cllr Mrs L Ashton	-	Stroud District Council
Cllr P Case	-	Hamfields Leisure
Cllr S Chandler	-	Hamfallow Parish Council
Cllr S Patterson	-	Hinton Parish Council
Cllr J Stanton	-	Berkeley Town Council
Cllr G Vaughan Lewis	-	Alkington Parish Council
Cllr B Tipper	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Mr J Woodward	-	Hamfields Leisure

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr P Dickenson	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Mr A Davis	-	Environment Agency
Ms K Anderson	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury on Severn SSG Chairman
Mr A Neal	-	Site Director
Mr A Moore	-	Chief Operating Officer - Decommissioning Sites
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox Ltd
Mrs E Vaughan Lewis	-	Magnox Ltd
Mr P Ireland	-	Magnox Ltd
Ms K Duane	-	Magnox Ltd
Mr K Hamblin	-	South Gos & Stroud College
Mr J Huggett	-	South Gos & Stroud College
Mr M Jones	-	South Gos & Stroud College
Mr P Reilly	-	South Gos & Stroud College
Mr A Slaney	-	South Gos & Stroud College
Mr M J Davis (Secretary)		

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Cllr Mrs Wride welcomed all those present to this meeting of the Berkeley Nuclear Licensed Site Stakeholder Group.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Rev R Avery, Cllr Dr J Cordwell, Mr J Jenkin, and Cllr J Sant.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 JULY 2014

(a) Accuracy

- 3 The minutes of the meeting of this Group held on 30 July 2014 were approved as an accurate record.

(b) Matters arising

- 4 There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

BERKELEY SITE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

- 5 Mr Neal reported on current activities at the Berkeley Site. He drew particular attention to the following:
- (i) There had been no accidents involving time lost from work since the previous meeting.
 - (ii) With the much reduced level of potential hazard on site it was not possible to postulate an incident which could have an off-site effect and a justification for a reduction in the scale of emergency arrangements had been submitted to the Office for Nuclear Regulation. This work was now to be reviewed in the light of the presence of the South Gloucestershire and Stroud College on the Berkeley Centre site.
 - (iii) Active commissioning of facilities for the removal of materials from the waste vaults was due to be carried out later this year. Retrievals would start in 2016 and were expected to take three years to complete.
 - (iv) Cutting of control rods within the Chute Silo in order to segregate materials with different levels of irradiation allowed the volume of material classified as ILW to be reduced and the materials which could be classified as Low Level Waste to be treated appropriately.
 - (v) The conditioning facilities for drying resins and sludges transferred into DCIC containers was moving into a process of active commissioning.
- 6 Cllr Tipper commented that decommissioning work would have been made simpler if more care be taken when placing radioactive waste materials into storage vaults. Mr Neal said that decommissioning requirements were now taken into account when designing new nuclear plants.
- 7 In reply to a question from Cllr Mrs Wride, Mr Neal said that the sections of control rods which could be treated as low-level waste were those parts which had not been subjected to the highest levels of neutron flux when in the reactor. Separation and segregation of these wastes allowed some 8% - 9% of the material to be processed as low-level waste.

- 8 In reply to a question from Cllr Vaughan Lewis on the possibility of simplification of emergency arrangements, Mr Dickinson said that it was for the company to demonstrate a case that there were no potential events which could require off site emergency arrangements.

REGULATORS' UPDATE

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

- 9 Ms Anderson reported on current NDA issues, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) Government had approved a recommendation from NDA for changes in the management arrangements at Sellafield. A review had concluded that the complexity of the issues to be addressed at Sellafield were not well suited to the Parent Body Organisation model which was used for other parts of the NDA's estate. The new arrangements would involve Sellafield Ltd working with a "strategic partner" from the private sector. Briefing information prepared for stakeholders could be made available to members if they wished.
 - (ii) NDA was consulting on the content of its Business Plan.
 - (iii) NDA had recently published a new copy of its Insight magazine.
 - (iv) A National stakeholder event in October had started a process of engagement on the NDA's Strategy which was under review for approval by government in March 2016.
 - (v) SSGs currently operated in accordance with guidance issued by NDA in 2009. It had originally been intended that this guidance should be reviewed in 2012 but this had not been done as the arrangements had appeared to be working effectively. It was now considered appropriate for the guidance to be reviewed; some aspects such as voting procedures and codes of conduct had raised issues within some Groups and it was felt that standardised approaches would be helpful. The NDA's guidance was to be reviewed and any comments from members submitted via Cllr Mrs Wride would be welcomed.

Office for Nuclear Regulation

- 10 Mr Dickenson presented a report on his inspection activities at the Berkeley Site. A report on those activities had been made available to members in advance of the meeting. Mr Dickinson said that these reports followed a standard pattern and he would welcome any comments members wished to make on their format or content. He drew particular attention to the following:
- (i) Inspections undertaken during the past quarter had included the radioactive waste vaults ventilation system, the accumulation of

radioactive waste, plant modifications and the control of occupational radiation exposures.

- (ii) ONR had given formal approval to revised arrangements for the extension of intervals specified in the Plant Maintenance Schedule.
 - (iii) Licence Conditions had been amended to update definitions in order to ensure consistency with definitions used in other statutory provisions.
- 11 Referring to the event reported at an earlier meeting of this group involving radioactive contamination being found on the external surface of a fuel flask despatched from Oldbury, Mr Dickinson said that a considerable amount of work had been done at Oldbury to ensure that such an event did not recur. This work included improvements in equipment, procedures, paperwork control systems and staff training. An ONR inspection had confirmed that the issues raised by the event had been adequately addressed.

Environment Agency

- 12 Mr Davis presented a report on the Environment Agency's inspection activities at the Berkeley Site. He drew particular attention to the following:
- (i) Since the previous meeting the Agency's inspections at Berkeley had included procedures for the management of radioactive and non-radioactive wastes and the gaseous radioactive discharges from the site had been reviewed.
 - (ii) The requirements of the environmental monitoring programme specified within the Site's permit were to be reviewed together with the Agency's own monitoring arrangements.
 - (iii) Monitoring data indicated that the impact of radioactive discharges to the environment from the Site remained very low and was comparable to that in recent years. The report on radioactivity in food and the environment for 2013 it would be published shortly.

WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

- 13 Mr Ireland gave an indication of possible changes in strategies for the storage of intermediate level wastes and the treatment of fuel element debris which were being considered following the appointment of Cavendish Fluor Partnership as the new Parent Body Organisation. He emphasised that such changes would be subject to necessary regulatory approvals but the information was being provided at this stage as an indication of current thinking. He said that the approaches proposed by CFP had been included in their bid submitted to the NDA which had resulted in them being appointed as the new Parent Body Organisation. He said that in the current review account had been taken of preferences identified in the earlier public consultation on credible and preferred options for the location of ILW interim storage facilities. He emphasised that safety and the environment remained the highest priority.

- 14 Mr Ireland said that aspects of waste strategy which were being reviewed included consideration of the type of packages to be used for ILW storage, the method of treatment of fuel element debris, the treatment of pond skips and the treatment of IONSIV cartridges.
- 21 During discussion on the aspects currently under review the following points were noted:
- (i) Consideration was being given to the use of 6 m³ concrete boxes for the storage of intermediate level wastes as an alternative to DCIC containers. These concrete containers were new to Magnox but had been used successfully elsewhere and represented a significant cost saving compared with DCICs, the saving being associated with the cost of the container itself.
 - (ii) Due to the high costs and extended timescales experienced with the Magnox dissolution plant at Bradwell, consideration was being given to the encapsulation and interim storage of fuel element debris.
 - (iii) Fuel element debris at some sites could be segregated and, subject to receipt of the necessary permission, some parts of it disposed of as low-level waste. This approach would not be possible for the Berkeley fuel element debris due to the mixed nature of the waste.
 - (iv) Consideration was being given to the possible use of storage facilities on a regional basis to accommodate ILW from more than one site and to share facilities with EDF where possible. Existing or planned storage facilities might be able to be used for the storage of wastes from other sites which had lower volumes of waste. For Berkeley the intention remains to import ILW packages from Oldbury for interim storage.
 - (v) With the large volumes of waste at Berkeley there would be significant savings from using 6 m³ concrete boxes rather than DCICs for storage. This would require some plant modifications to allow wastes to be loaded into the different containers. It was noted that currently it does not appear to be technically possible for the existing Interim Storage Facility to handle these larger containers and that as such a further interim storage facility may be required. Consideration was being given to alternatives including the possible modification of the Interim Storage Facility, the possible use of smaller concrete boxes, the use of different packaging within a concrete box, or an extension of the existing storage facility.
 - (vi) The revised approaches under consideration could result in significant savings for the taxpayer. These issues would be the subject of a programme of stakeholder engagement in addition to detailed discussions with regulators, Radioactive Waste Management Ltd and the Low Level Waste Repository.

- (vii) IONSIV cartridges used for the removal of caesium from pond water required treatment and packaging for storage as waste. There appeared to be advantages in carrying out this work at a single site and consideration was being given to transferring some 22 of these cartridges from other sites to Oldbury for processing

22 Cllr Mrs Wride said that the information presented this evening raised important issues which required discussion within this Group. She said that she would allow limited discussion at this meeting but proposed that a separate special meeting should be convened specifically for discussion on these topics. During discussion the following points were noted:

- (i) Mr Case emphasised that approval had been given for the construction of a storage facility for waste already held at the Berkeley Site. Information had subsequently been given that there was sufficient spare capacity in this facility to accommodate wastes from Oldbury. He was now concerned that any extension of the storage facilities would lead to plans for accommodation of wastes from other sites.
- (ii) Cllr Ms Ashton expressed concerns that changes were being introduced purely to save costs. Information presented previously suggested that facilities were well-designed and she was concerned that if further potential cost savings were identified plans might be changed again.
- (iii) Cllr Stanton said that after the extensive consultation which had taken place on the use of DCICs the group needed information to help understand why plans were to change. He also emphasised that the storage facility had been approved for the accommodation of wastes already held on the Site - if wastes from elsewhere were to be stored at Berkeley it might be appropriate for the local community to benefit from any savings achieved.
- (iv) Mr Hamblin emphasised the impact of publicity given to proposals for increased radioactive waste storage at Berkeley was likely to have on the parents of students who were contemplating taking courses at the College on the Site. He felt that the timing of these issues being raised was very unfortunate in relation to the progress of investment in the college facilities.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

23 Cllr Mrs Wride referred to the successful event during the previous week when local industry representatives had been invited to the South Gloucestershire and Stroud College facilities. Mr Hamblin said that good progress was being made with securing the necessary investment and a positive announcement would be made shortly. Feedback from industry representatives at the recent event had been very positive and plans were proceeding for first courses to commence on site in 2016.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No business

DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 24 Cllr Mrs Wride said that a special meeting would be convened to allow further discussions on waste management and storage issues. [It was subsequently proposed that the meeting would be held on the evening of Thursday 12 February.]

MJD

5 February 2015