

**BERKELEY NUCLEAR LICENSED SITE  
SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

**SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 12 JULY 2017**

- Mr Mike Heaton, Site Closure Director, reported on activities at the Site, commenting that high standards of safety had been maintained and the Site had been compliant with all regulatory requirements.
- Mr Heaton said that retrievals of waste from the storage vaults had been resumed following a review of the safety case. To date some 70 tonnes of fuel element debris had been retrieved from Vault 2 for storage in the Interim Storage Facility.
- Mr Heaton said that a decision from the Office for Nuclear Regulation was expected in the coming months on its assessment of a report which, if approved, would allow simplification of emergency planning arrangements.
- Mr Heaton said that the company was carrying out a review of cladding applied to its buildings in the light of the recent tower block fire tragedy.
- Mr Heaton said that equipment to be installed for the retrieval and processing of waste from vaults would include facilities for dealing with wastes which had been stored in containers within the vaults.
- Mr Heaton reported that following the receipt of the necessary planning consent, a start had been made on preliminary works for construction of the waste encapsulation plant. Construction of the plant was expected to take some 18 months and the plant was expected to be in operation for 3 – 4 years; it would be demolished after use.
- Mr Jonathan Jenkin presented a report on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. He explained the background to the decision taken jointly by NDA and the Cavendish Fluor Partnership to terminate CFPs contract for the management of the Magnox and RSRL sites at the end of August 2019. He emphasised that this resulted from a review, undertaken since the contract was let, of the work required to be done which had identified a significant mismatch with the forecasts on which the tender had been based. It was not in any way a reflection on the performance of CFP who would remain responsible for the management of the sites until the termination date.
- Reports were received from the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency on the results of their regulatory and inspection activities at the Berkeley site.
- Mr Simon Napper and Mr Stephen Payne, representing Radioactive Waste Management Ltd gave a presentation on proposed arrangements for the selection of a site for the development of a geological disposal facility for radioactive wastes.

## **BERKELEY NUCLEAR LICENSED SITE**

### **SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE JOHN HUGGETT ENGINEERING HALL, SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE, BERKELEY ON WEDNESDAY 12 JULY 2017**

##### **PRESENT:**

Cllr Mrs P Wride (Chair)	-	Ham and Stone Parish Council
Mr S Andrews	-	Staff Representative
Cllr Mrs L Ashton	-	Berkeley Town Council
Mr J Beckett	-	Stroud District Council
Mr G Vaughan-Lewis	-	Alkington Parish Council
Mr J Stanton	-	Co-opted member
Cllr B Tipper	-	Gloucestershire County Council

##### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr J Jenkin	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr A Davis	-	Environment Agency
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury on Severn SSG Chairman
Mr M Heaton	-	Site Closure Director
Mr A Moore	-	Magnox
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox
Mr S Napper	-	Radioactive Waste Management Ltd
Mr S Payne	-	Radioactive Waste Management Ltd
Mr G Rider	-	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Mr P Barrett	-	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Mr D Wride		
Ms C Mayo		
Ms B French		
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. She was particularly pleased that the meeting was being held in the South Gloucestershire and Stroud College premises, allowing members to see the excellent work undertaken in converting the former industrial facility into the John Huggett Engineering Hall.
- 2 Cllr Mrs Wride reminded members that the meeting scheduled to have been held in April had been cancelled due to the application of the purdah rules in the period leading up to the general election.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 3 Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Chandler, Mr P Dickenson, Cllr Dr J Cordwell, Mr Jack Sant and Rev R Avery.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **(a) Accuracy**

- 4 The minutes of the meeting of this Group held on 25 January 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

### **(b) Matters arising**

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

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

- 6 Cllr Mrs Wride invited members of the public to raise any issues which might not arise in discussion later in the meeting. No such issues were raised.

## **BERKELEY SITE CLOSURE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

- 7 Mr Heaton presented a report on current activities at the Berkeley Site, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) The current focus of the company's Target Zero safety campaign was electrical safety which was particularly appropriate in the light of the recent tower block fire tragedy with the clear link to fire safety.
  - (ii) There had been no injuries or significant events since the previous meeting and no breaches of regulatory requirements.
  - (iii) Retrieval of waste from storage vaults had been resumed following satisfactory completion of the review of the safety case described at the previous meeting.
  - (iv) A decision was expected from ONR in the coming months following its assessment of the Site's submission that due to the reduced level of hazards on site there was no longer a need for plans to be maintained for dealing with an off-site release of radioactivity.
  - (v) The company was carrying out a review of cladding applied to its buildings and providing information on this to ONR in the light of the recent tower block fire.
  - (vi) The importance of road safety and appropriate standards of driving on roads leading to the site had recently been reinforced in a staff "stand down".

- (vii) Decommissioning work was continuing as normal following the decision taken mutually by NDA and the Cavendish Fluor Partnership to terminate the contract for the maintenance of the Magnox sites with effect from 1 September 2019.
- (viii) Some 70 tonnes of fuel element debris had been removed from Vault 2 and packaged in DCIC containers for storage in the Interim Storage Facility. Improved packing techniques meant that fewer containers than forecast would be required. Later in the summer attention would be turned to Vault 1 for the retrieval of ion exchange resins.
- (ix) Equipment was to be installed over the next couple of years to allow the retrieval and processing of containerised wastes. Equipment was also being designed to deal with potential pressurisation of containers in storage.
- (x) Modifications to facilitate waste encapsulation included increasing crane capacity and providing additional shielding. None of these modifications would affect the external appearance of buildings. Following receipt of planning consent, preliminary works were commencing for construction of the encapsulation plant. Construction would take some 18 months and the plant was expected to be in operation for some 3 – 4 years.
- (xi) The current strategy which involved the transfer of wastes for storage at a smaller number of sites provided an overall saving of some £200 million.
- (xii) An estimated 623 packages of waste from the Berkeley vaults would be stored in the Interim Storage Facility together with 73 packages of waste transferred from Oldbury. These Oldbury packages included 15 containing waste transferred from Sizewell and Dungeness.

- 8 In reply to a question from Cllr Tipper, Mr Heaton said that one of the most important lessons to be learned for the decommissioning of future nuclear sites was the potential benefit of maintaining an improved inventory of wastes in order to avoid having to characterise them at the time of retrieval.
- 9 In reply to questions from Cllr Mrs Wride, Mr Heaton said that any gas released from a waste container which had become pressurised in storage would be vented via an authorised monitored system. Mr Moore said that the concrete box system had not yet been licensed for use but he was confident that a licence would be granted in time for its planned use.
- 10 In response to a question from Cllr Mrs Ashton, Mr Heaton said that the use of DCIC containers rather than concrete boxes for ion exchange resin wastes would reduce potential exposures for personnel due to the improved shielding provided by the DCIC container.

- 11 In reply to a question from Mr Vaughan Lewis, Mr Moore said he was confident that Magnox fuel element debris at Oldbury would, due to natural radiation decay, within a few years be classified as low level waste. In response to a further question Mr Heaton said that the worst credible incident for the purposes of emergency planning remained a vault fire but the probability of such a fire occurring had been reduced by the installation of retrieval equipment.
- 12 Mr Heaton confirmed, in reply to a question from Cllr Mrs Ashton, that the waste encapsulation plant was to be demolished after its work had been completed.
- 13 Ms Coombs gave details of the results of the stakeholder survey carried out last year. She said that SSG members and others had taken part in the survey, the results of which had been very positive. SSGs had been regarded as working effectively, with members obtaining information from their attendance at meetings and providing feedback to the groups which they represented. She said that the highest levels of satisfaction with SSG performance were indicated as being in the South West. An identified demand for site visits was to be met with visits for SSG members being organised every other year. A visit to Berkeley was to be held during August.
- 14 Ms Coombs reminded members of sources of information available to them outside of meetings via the company's website, electronic newsletter, YouTube channel and twitter account. She reminded members also of the availability of funding for local groups and activities under the company's socio-economic support scheme.
- 15 Ms Mayo and Ms French said that there was a much lower awareness of activities on the Berkeley Site amongst residents on the western side of the River Severn. Cllr Mrs Wride said that councillors from Monmouthshire the Forest of Dean and Chepstow generally attended these meetings. From time to time she had organised SSG meetings in those areas but attendances had generally been poor. It was also noted that Town & Parish Councils do get the minutes & notices of all meetings.

#### **UPDATE FROM NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY**

- 16 Mr Jenkin provided an update on issues of interest to the NDA, drawing particular attention to the following:
  - (i) NDA and the Cavendish Fluor Partnership had mutually agreed to terminate the contract for the management of the Magnox and RSRL Sites with effect from 1 September 2019. This reflected the significantly increased scope of work now recognised as being necessary compared with that identified in the tendering process.
  - (ii) The competition process which had resulted in the placing of that contract had been the subject of legal claims brought by Energy Solutions and Bechtel who had been unsuccessful bidders. The High

Court had ruled that the competition process had been flawed. The Energy Solutions and Bechtel claims had been settled in a total sum approaching £100 million; these costs could potentially have been significantly higher if the case had proceeded to trial.

- (iii) The Secretary of State had set up an independent inquiry under the chairmanship of Mr S Holliday to review the conduct of the competition process and the reasons why the contract had not been sustainable.
- (iv) The decision to terminate the contract was not a reflection on the performance of the Cavendish Fluor Partnership who would continue to be responsible for the management of the Sites until the date of termination of the contract. The contractual changes would not affect the continuing programme of work at the Site.
- (v) Consideration was being given to the arrangements for the management of the Magnox sites which would follow termination of the contract.
- (vi) The NDA had published its business plan setting out its priorities for the coming years.

17 In reply to a question from Cllr Mrs Ashton, Mr Jenkin confirmed that consideration was being given within the industry to implications of withdrawal from Euratom. Cllr Mrs Wride said that with current uncertainties it was not possible for this Group to have meaningful discussions on this matter at this stage; she suggested that it might be appropriate for the subject to be discussed at a future meeting when more information might be available.

18 In reply to a further question from Cllr Mrs Ashton, Mr Jenkin said that all options were being considered for the management of the Magnox sites following termination of the current CFP contract. Government approval of future arrangements would be required and early decisions were needed in view of the timescales for implementation of some potential options. Mr Jenkin hoped that interim findings from the independent inquiry would be available to help in choosing the way forward.

#### **UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

19 Mr Davis presented a report on the Environment Agency's inspection activities at the Berkeley Site. He explained the different roles of the Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation and emphasised the way in which the two organisations worked closely together.

20 Mr Davis explained the attention focused at the Berkeley Site on retrieval and processing of wastes. He said that there was a large volume of work in hand as reported earlier, but nothing exceptional to report from the perspective of the Environment Agency. He said that discharges remained generally constant at a low level, well within permitted limits. Potential radiation exposures to members of the public remained very low.

## **UPDATE FROM THE OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION**

- 21 Mr Dickenson, ONR Site Inspector had been unable to attend the meeting but reports on his inspection activities had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

## **GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY**

- 22 Mr Payne outlined the current position in relation to the establishment of a geological disposal facility for radioactive waste. He explained the background to the formation of Radioactive Waste Management Ltd as a subsidiary of the NDA and outlined its role.
- 23 Mr Payne briefly described the background to the identification of deep geological disposal as the preferred option for dealing with higher activity radioactive waste. He said there was general international consensus that this was the safest means of dealing with these wastes. A facility in Finland was under construction and was due to become available for waste disposal from the early 2020s; this would be the first geological disposal facility in Europe. He explained the different approaches of the devolved governments within the UK.
- 24 Mr Napper explained proposed arrangements for the identification of a site for creation of a deep geological disposal facility. He referred to work undertaken in conjunction with the British Geological Survey to provide a means of high level screening of the various areas of the country against the geological characteristics needed for a safety case. The results of this work would be published before the siting process started. Mr Payne said that public consultation was shortly to commence on land use planning issues and aspects of working with communities. He said that the selection of a site for development of a disposal facility would be dependent upon suitable geological conditions and the support of the local community. Community benefits would be available to local areas participating in the selection of a site.
- 25 In reply to a question Mr Napper confirmed that the extent of fracking activity would be taken into account in relation to the suitability of sites. Consideration would also be given to local effects of mining and potential future mining requirements. Mr Napper said there was a requirement for surface works to be on land but potentially excavation could lead to a storage facility under the sea.

## **CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

- 26 Cllr Mrs Wride referred to forthcoming meetings she was to attend with the NDA and with the Chairs of other SSGs. She would report back on those meetings at the next meeting of this Group. She invited members to contact her or the Site if they had any questions they wished to raise in the period between meetings.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No Business

## **DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 21 It was noted that the next meeting of this Group, a joint meeting with the Oldbury SSG was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 25 October 2017. The venue for this meeting would be confirmed in due course.

MJD

16 July 2017