

## **BERKELEY AND OLDBURY SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

### **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE JOINT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2017**

- Mike Heaton, Site Closure Director for the Berkeley and Oldbury Sites presented a report on recent activities. He said that there had been no accident on either Site causing absence from work for more than 12 months. The current focus of the company's safety campaign was mental health.
- Mr Heaton reported that a 30 litre container used for removing rainwater from a trench at Berkeley and disposing of it onto the ground had been found after the event to have trace radioactive contamination. There had been no environmental consequences but the container should not have been used in this way
- Following its assessment of the potential hazards on the Berkeley site, the Office for Nuclear Regulation had agreed that there was no longer any potential event which could give rise to a release of radioactivity requiring off- site emergency plans. Revised plans for dealing with any potential event had been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the ONR.
- Good progress continued to be made with the retrieval of fuel element debris from Vault 2 at Berkeley. To date some 59 ductile cast iron containers had been filled. Construction of a waste encapsulation plant had commenced.
- The removal of items of equipment from the cooling ponds at Oldbury continued. A new building would be required at Oldbury for conditioning and packaging waste items to be sent to Berkeley for storage.
- A report was given by Mr Bill Hamilton of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. He explained the background to a report from the National Audit Office on NDA's contract for the management of the Magnox sites; the issues raised by this report were shortly to be considered by the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. NDA's contract procurement arrangements were also the subject of investigation by an inquiry chaired by Mr Stephen Holliday which had published an interim report.
- Reports were received from the Site Inspectors of the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency. In relation to emergency plan requirements, the ONR Inspector explained the rigorous process and the conservative approach adopted by ONR's specialist assessors in considering potential hazards on the Berkeley site.
- Members received a report on discharges from the Berkeley and Oldbury sites and environmental monitoring undertaken in the vicinity. It was reported that all discharges had been well within permitted limits and there was no significant trend in any measurement of radioactivity in the environment.
- At the end of the meeting members were conducted on a tour of the South Gloucestershire and Stroud College UTC on the Berkeley site.

**BERKELEY AND OLDBURY SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS  
MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING HELD AT THE SGS COLLEGE,  
BERKELEY ON WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2017**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Mrs P Wride (in the chair)	-	Ham and Stone Parish Council
Mr S Andrews	-	Staff Representative
Rev R Avery		
Cllr Dr J Cordwell	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr D Dovey	-	Monmouthshire County Council
Ms G Ellis-King	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr C Evers	-	Glos Assn of Parish and Town Councils
Cllr M Hawkins	-	Aust Parish Council
Cllr G Vaughan-Lewis	-	Alkington Parish Council
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury SSG Chair
Cllr Ms J Lyons	-	Olveston Parish Council
Cllr Mrs H Molyneux	-	Forest of Dean District Council
Ms A Paine	-	Stroud Green Party
Mr B Roberts	-	Thornbury Chamber of Commerce
Mr J Stanton	-	Co-opted member
Cllr K Sullivan	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Dr Len Hales	-	Independent Environmental Consultant

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr W Hamilton	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr N Shaw	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Mr R Green	-	Environment Agency
Mr J Beckett	-	Stroud District Council
Ms S Stagg	-	James Reed PR
Mr P Barrett	-	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Mr P Heath	-	Magnox
Mr M Heaton	-	Oldbury and Berkeley Sites Closure Director
Mr P Clarke	-	Oldbury Site
Mr L Delaney	-	Berkeley Site
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox
Ms H Patel	-	Magnox
Mr W Gill		
Mr D Wride		
Ms E Ashton		
Mr C Molyneux		
Mr G Craig		
Ms B French		
Ms C Mayo		
Cllr C McFarling		
Mr G Wheeler		
Mr M J Davis (Secretary)		

## **I WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

1 Cllr Mrs Wride welcomed members of the Oldbury and Berkeley Site Stakeholder Groups to this meeting which was being held jointly for the consideration of monitoring reports and other items of interest to both SSGs. She expressed a particular welcome to Mr N Shaw who was attending for the first time as the Office for Nuclear Regulation's Site Inspector.

## **II APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2 Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Jones, Cllr S Chandler, Cllr B Tipper, Mrs E Vaughan-Lewis, Mr A Davis, Ms A Brown, Mr D Drew MP, Cllr J Carpenter, Mr A Mitchell and Cllr D Griffiths.

## **III MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **(a) Accuracy**

3 The minutes of the joint meeting held on 2 November 2016 and of the meetings held separately on 12 July 2017 were approved as correct records.

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

#### **Berkeley SSG Meeting held on 12 July 2017**

4 Ms French had raised a number of issues which she felt had not been recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Cllr Mrs Wride commented that some of these points were well understood by members from discussion at earlier meetings. Mr Heaton summarised the position on each of the points raised by Ms French as follows:

- (i) The cost of a ductile cast iron container was approximately £200,000; the cost of a 6 m<sup>3</sup> concrete box was approximately 10% of that figure.
- (ii) Both DCIC containers and concrete boxes were designed for final disposal of the waste. The Interim Storage Facility on site, where waste packages would be stored until a geological disposal facility became available, had a design life of 100 years. It was anticipated that a GDF would become available in 2040/2050.
- (iii) The safety case covering operations in the waste vaults had allowed for the presence of some fragments of fuel in the vaults. Following the unexpected finding of an almost complete fuel element, retrieval operations had been suspended and the safety case revisited. After assessment of the safety case, operations had been resumed with no additional restrictions or emergency arrangements.
- (iv) There would be approximately 500 - 1000 lorry movements during the period of construction of the encapsulation plant.

#### **IV PUBLIC FORUM**

5 Cllr Mrs Wride invited questions from members of the public on any issues which might not arise in later discussions. No issues were raised.

#### **V SITE REPORTS**

6 Mr Heaton reported on recent activities at the Berkeley and Oldbury Sites, drawing particular attention to the following:

- (i) There had been no accidents involving time lost from work at either site for more than 12 months.
- (ii) The current focus of the company's Target Zero safety campaign was mental health. Steps had been taken to raise awareness and individuals had been identified to provide support at local level.
- (iii) One of a number of 30 litre containers used for removing rainwater from a trench at Berkeley had trace levels of radioactive contamination. This had been identified after the container had been used to dispose of the water onto the ground. The event had no environmental impact but it was recognised that the container should not have been used for this purpose.
- (iv) Following its assessment of a report on potential hazards on the Berkeley site, the Office for Nuclear Regulation had concluded that there was no longer any potential event which could cause a release of radioactivity requiring the maintenance of off-site emergency plans. Revised arrangements for dealing with events on site had been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the ONR in an exercise and revised plans had been submitted to ONR for approval. A report on potential hazards at Oldbury was still being assessed by the ONR.
- (v) Some 59 ductile cast iron containers had to date been filled with waste retrieved from Berkeley Vault 2. Improved techniques had resulted in progressive increases in the quantity of waste loaded into each container. It was currently intended that retrievals from Vault 2 would continue during the remainder of this year and that retrievals from Vault 1 would commence next year.
- (vi) A high-pressure waterjet technique had been developed for puncturing containers of waste in the Berkeley vaults which might have become pressurised by gases generated within the container during storage.
- (vii) Construction of a waste encapsulation plant at Berkeley had commenced and would continue for some 18 months.
- (viii) A backlog of low level waste on the Berkeley site would be cleared by the end of the current year.

- (ix) Low-level waste fuel skips and Ionsiv filters had been removed from the Oldbury cooling ponds and placed on the pile cap; pond furniture was being removed. Equipment for processing Ionsiv cartridges currently stored in the pond was to be delivered to site by the end of the year. It had not yet been decided whether intermediate level waste fuel skips were to be cut into sections underwater within the pond or removed from the pond for this work to be carried out.
- (x) A new building would be required at Oldbury to house equipment for processing wastes before sending the resulting packages to Berkeley for storage.
- (xi) Mr Heaton said that arrangements could be made for members to visit either the Oldbury or Berkeley Site if they wished.

7 In reply to a question from Cllr Vaughan Lewis on the treatment of fragments of fuel found within fuel element debris in the Berkeley vaults, Mr Heaton said that the safety case had always anticipated that some fuel fragments would be present within the vaults. He said that following the unexpected discovery of an almost complete fuel element, retrieval operations had been suspended and the safety case had been revisited but, following assessment, no additional restrictions or emergency arrangements had been considered necessary. The fuel fragments remained within the vaults.

8 In reply to a further question from Cllr Vaughan Lewis on the conclusion that it was no longer necessary to support off site emergency plans, Mr Heaton said that ONR's assessment of the report on potential hazards on the Berkeley site had taken some 21 months and had included visits to the site by ONR assessors. The proximity of potential hazards to the site boundary fence had been taken into account. Existing devices for monitoring radioactivity in the environment in the vicinity of the site remained in place.

9 In reply to a question from Mr Craig, Mr Heaton said that items of waste from Sizewell and Dungeness which were to be stored in due course at Berkeley currently remained at the Oldbury Site. The waste was to be conditioned and packaged at Oldbury before transport to Berkeley for storage.

10 In response to questions from Dr Hales and Ms Payne, Mr Heaton explained that the technique for puncturing containers of waste was used in other industries and had been successfully demonstrated in off-site trials. Facilities were to be provided on site for carrying out this work within the vault in order to contain any release with any discharge exiting via the installed ventilation system. Equipment for handling the containerised wastes was being manufactured and would be delivered to site and installed next year. In reply to a question from Cllr Mrs Molyneux, Mr Heaton said that the volume of water released by the waterjet equipment was small and would not lead to an accumulation within the vault.

## **VI NDA UPDATE**

11 Mr Hamilton reported on issues of current interest to the NDA, drawing particular attention to the following:

- (i) A report had been published by the National Audit Office on NDA's Magnox contract between 2012 and 2014. This followed a High Court finding that the NDA had wrongly decided the outcome of its Magnox contract procurement process; as a result of that finding the NDA had reached a settlement of legal claims brought by unsuccessful tenderers. The issues raised by the NAO report were to be considered by the Public Accounts Committee during the coming month.
- (ii) Following the mutual decision to terminate NDA's contract with Cavendish Fluor Partnership for the management of the Magnox sites, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy had established an inquiry under the chairmanship of Mr Stephen Holliday. That inquiry had published an interim report addressing issues associated with NDA's procurement processes.
- (iii) Attention was focused within NDA on maintaining progress of work at the sites during the remainder of the contract with CFP and on identifying arrangements to follow after the termination of the contract.

12 In response to a question from Mr Gill, Mr Hamilton explained the issues associated with the scoring system adopted during NDA's procurement process which had resulted in the High Court finding. Mr Andrews emphasised that the changes and uncertainty associated with the competition procurement process had been very disruptive for staff.

## **VII OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION REPORT**

13 Mr Shaw introduced himself as ONR's Site Inspector for the Oldbury and Berkeley sites, appointed in succession to Mr Dickinson. He said that reports on ONR's inspection activities at the sites had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting and he invited comments from members.

14 Cllr Mrs Wride asked how members of the public could be assured that the revised emergency plans were adequate. Mr Shaw said that ONR's assessment of the report on potential hazards on the site was undertaken by specialist inspectors who adopted very conservative attitudes in carrying out this work. He said that their assessment had subsequently been subjected to rigorous internal processes of peer review before formal approval.

15 Mr Lynden emphasised the importance of SSG members being able to see that regulators carried out effective monitoring of activities on Sites and held the company to account for its actions; the attendance of Site Inspectors at these meetings was very important in that respect. Mr Shaw confirmed that he intended to attend meetings of this Group routinely.

## **VIII ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

16 Mr Green reported on the Environment Agency's inspection activities in relation to the Berkeley and Oldbury sites. Reports on these activities had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Mr Green drew attention to the following:

- (i) RIFE 22 which reported on radioactivity in food and the environment for 2016 had been published recently and copies were available on the Gov.uk website. Potential exposures, both nationally and locally, remained well within dose limits. Results were generally consistent with those in previous years.
- (iii) It was anticipated that the generic design assessment for the boiling water reactor of the type which might be built at Oldbury B would be completed in the coming months.
- (iv) The generic design assessment of the Chinese reactor design which might be built at Bradwell was about to commence.

17 Cllr Vaughan Lewis drew attention to the Agency's report of levels of Iodine-131, detected at slightly above background, in a sample of seaweed taken as part of Magnox's environmental monitoring programme. It was reported that above background levels of this radionuclide had previously been detected in samples at this location and that its presence in this sample could not be attributed to activities at Oldbury or Berkeley. Mr Green stated that iodine 131 is a nuclide that was commonly used in the medical industry and that the levels detected in the sample were well below levels of regulatory and public health concern. Mr Clarke said that the level of radioactivity in the sample was very small but the company was obliged to report it to the Environment Agency. Cllr Evers and Cllr Vaughan Lewis suggested that a more rigorous attitude might be taken by the regulator if radioactivity found in such circumstances was thought to have originated from either of the former power station sites. Mr Green confirmed that the Environment Agency had robust arrangements to ensure limits on authorised discharges of radioactive waste are set so that discharges from regulated facilities would not give rise to harm to the environment or public health.

## **IX ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING REPORT**

18 Mr Clarke reported on the monitoring of discharges and radioactivity in the environment undertaken by Magnox. It was noted that a report had previously been made available to members.

19 Mr Clarke explained the nature of the discharges and the scope of the environmental monitoring programme. He said that the environmental monitoring programme had started for Berkeley power station in 1959. The programme included radiation measurements and analysis of Tackyshade collectors and TLD devices together with the analysis of food and environmental samples. The arrangements had been changed in February 2016 to reflect the changed operational circumstances on the sites.

20 Mr Clarke said that gaseous discharges from Oldbury had decreased following the cessation of generation whilst liquid discharges from the site remained similar to those in previous years. He said that there had been no significant changes in discharges from Berkeley; an apparent increase in carbon-14 discharges was attributable to the operation of waste retrieval and conditioning facilities but levels remained low.

21 Mr Clarke said that all discharges of radioactivity had been well within permitted limits and the environmental monitoring and analysis undertaken had not identified any significant trend in measurements. He said that with no new sources of radioactivity being brought to the Sites, all discharges and emissions could be regarded as part of the legacy of earlier operations.

## **X SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE UPDATE**

22 Mr Barrett welcomed members to the UTC part of the college's facility in which the meeting was being held. He acknowledged the support of this Group, Magnox and the NDA in helping to establish the excellent college facilities on the site. He said that learners had already started courses and their numbers would increase to 1000 over the next few years. He said that the college's activities would act as a catalyst for other developments on the technology park. In reply to a question from Mrs Ashton, Mr Barrett estimated that there were some 20 - 30 local people currently employed on the college site with significantly more employees from across Gloucestershire.

23 Following the meeting Mr Barrett conducted members on a tour of the UTC facilities.

## **XI CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

24 Cllr Mrs Wride reported on her activities since the previous meeting as Chair of this Group. She referred specifically to the following:

- (i) The successful visit to the Berkeley site arranged for members of the SSG.
- (ii) Discussions at a meeting between SSG chairs and Cavendish Fluor which had included possible post-Brexit nuclear safeguards arrangements and waste movements between sites. She had learned that the concrete boxes for the storage of intermediate level waste were to be manufactured off-site and delivered as units ready for filling.
- (iii) A National Stakeholder Group meeting in September had been followed by a tour of the Sellafield site.
- (iv) A meeting of the joint Emergency Planning Consultative Committee for the Oldbury and Berkeley sites had included discussion on changing emergency arrangements. Cllr Mrs Wride had invited emergency planning staff to attend the next meeting of this Group to give an update on these changes.

25 Mr Stanton reported on the visit to the Sellafield site which he had attended following the National Stakeholder Group meeting. He had been impressed particularly by the complexity of decommissioning caused by the lack of space for building new facilities; the fact that discharges to the environment from Sellafield were much reduced from levels in earlier years; and the extent of continuing decommissioning work on the site.

## **XII ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

26 Cllr Mrs Wride reminded members that arrangements would be made for them to visit either of the sites if they wished.

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

27 It was noted that the next meetings of the Oldbury and Berkeley SSGs were scheduled to be held on 31 January 2018 and the next joint meeting was scheduled to be held on 31 October 2018.

MJD

29 October 2017