

Oldbury Site SSG Report

26 April 2017 meeting

This report covers our regulation of Oldbury Site and related issues over the period since the last Oldbury SSG meeting, held in January 2017.

Radioactive Substances Regulation

We regulate radioactive waste disposals to deliver the best outcome for the environment. We do this by placing limits and conditions in the environmental permits that help us ensure radioactive waste discharges are minimised and the environment is protected. We carry out regular checks of Magnox's compliance with our regulatory requirements at Oldbury Site.

Site Regulation

We check compliance with the permit by making inspections at intervals at Oldbury Site. We prepare Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCARs) detailing our inspections and any non-compliances identified. These reports are placed on our public register. In addition to our own inspection activities we routinely review Magnox's reports of events and incidents occurring on site.

We carried out 1 site inspection at Oldbury since the last SSG meeting. The inspection focused on assessing Magnox's arrangements for the management and disposal of radioactive solid waste. The inspection was undertaken jointly with the Office for Nuclear Regulation. We did not identify any non-compliances during the inspection and were satisfied with Magnox's arrangements that were assessed on the day.

We reviewed Magnox's commissioning quality plan for connecting new passive ventilation ducts to the two defueled nuclear reactors at Oldbury. We were satisfied that the plan should ensure that the passive ventilation lines are connected up to the reactors without compromising emissions monitoring.

Magnox completed inactive commissioning of the passive ventilation lines on the two reactor vessels

and isolated the associated contamination ventilation system (CVS) during February and March.

The new ventilation ducts will be operated in parallel with the existing reactor ventilation system until we, and Magnox are satisfied with the performance of the new ducts.

Other notable developments at Oldbury since the last SSG meeting:

Magnox are continuing with work to clean up and decontaminate the Oldbury cooling pond. Empty fuel skips and redundant equipment were removed from the pond and are being stored at a temporary location on site prior to final disposal;

The active laundry facility at Oldbury Site has been closed. Contaminated clothing will now be sent off-site for cleaning. The closure of this facility will result in further reductions to discharges of radioactive waste from Oldbury Site;

Improvements have been made to the sewage treatment plant at Oldbury Site. Magnox hopes that the changes will improve the reliability and effectiveness of the plant. We will continue to monitor the plant to ensure that our regulatory requirements are met.

Enforcement

We have not taken any enforcement actions at Oldbury in the period since the previous Oldbury SSG meeting.

Environmental Permitting

We anticipate an application from Magnox to vary the radioactive substances permit at Oldbury Site to include the new gaseous waste discharge outlets for the R1 and R2 passive ventilation system, should the commissioning period for the system be completed successfully. We expect to have received this application by the end of August 2017.

We are also discussing with Magnox whether a permit variation or new permit application will be required to authorise a water discharge activity associated with the operation of a proposed reverse osmosis (RO) plant to treat mains water at Oldbury Site.

Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) Strategy

We are continuing our work together with the ONR to advise Magnox on regulatory issues at Oldbury Site. We provide advice to Magnox on the potential environmental considerations associated with its plans to progress the site through decommissioning, including Magnox's proposals for managing ILW at Oldbury Site.

No changes to Magnox's ILW strategy for the Oldbury Site have been made since the last SSG meeting.

Discharge Reports

Nuclear sites are required to routinely report to us their liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment. We review these reports for compliance and this work is detailed in a RASCAR, which is placed on our public register.

We have assessed the monthly reports from Magnox of Oldbury Site's radioactive gaseous and liquid waste discharges to the environment. Our assessment confirms that radioactive gaseous and liquid discharges from Oldbury site remain low and are well within the requirements of the permit.

Overall the levels of gaseous and liquid discharges remain far below the levels when Oldbury was an operating power station.

Environmental Monitoring

We have carried out sampling and analysis under our independent environmental monitoring programme, in association with the Food Standards Agency.

The independent monitoring data indicates that the levels of radioactivity found in the environment remain low and close to background levels.

We make the information from both Magnox's and our own environmental monitoring programmes available on our public register.

Further Information

The Environment Agency website has now moved to GOV.UK. Further information on our role in regulating the use of radioactive substances and related activities on nuclear licensed sites can be found on the GOV.UK website [i].

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for Oldbury Site is Rob Green, based in the Nuclear Regulation Group (South).

NRG(S) is responsible for the environmental regulation of radioactive waste disposals on or from nuclear licensed sites in southern England (and in south Wales, on behalf of Natural Resources Wales). We also work closely with the local Environment Agency teams in Wessex Area in relation to other Environment Agency roles and responsibilities.

Address: Environment Agency
Nuclear Regulation Group
Red Kite House
Howbery Park
Wallingford
Oxfordshire
OX10 8BD

Email: robert.green1@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone: 020302 59745

[i] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-regulation-in-the-environment-agency>