

Oldbury Site SSG Report

31 January 2018 meeting

This report covers our regulation of Oldbury Site and related issues over the period October 2017 through January 2018

Radioactive Substances Regulation

We regulate radioactive waste disposals to the environment. We do this by placing limits and conditions in environmental permits, which helps us to ensure that radioactive waste discharges are minimised and that the environment is protected. We carry out regular checks of Magnox's compliance with our regulatory requirements.

Site Regulation

We check compliance with the permit by undertaking inspections at the 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 and follow-up on these where appropriate.

We have carried out one site inspection at Oldbury since our last report to the SSG. The inspection looked at Magnox's arrangements for the management and disposal of liquid radioactive waste at Oldbury Site. This included reviewing the procedures at the site for the sampling, monitoring and disposal of liquid discharges; the inspection and maintenance of key plant associated with the site's liquid discharge system; and the application of Best Available Techniques (BAT) to radioactive liquid waste. We did not identify any non-compliances during the inspection. However, we made some recommendations for improvements.

Other notable developments at Oldbury since the last SSG meeting:

Preparatory works are ongoing for the planned installation of conditioning equipment to support the treatment and temporary storage of Intermediate Level

Radioactive Waste (ILW) items that will be removed from the cooling ponds as part of the ponds decommissioning.

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 to include the new gaseous waste discharge outlets for the R1 and R2 passive ventilation systems. This is subject to the systems being successfully commissioned. We expect to receive this application by the end of March 2018.

We are also anticipating an application from Magnox this year to vary the non-radiological water discharge permit. This will be required to authorise discharges associated with the operation of a proposed reverse osmosis (RO) plant.

In addition, we are proposing to vary Magnox's radioactive substances permit during FY 2018-19 to include new conditions to support the implementation of joint Environment Agencies' guidance on requirements for release of nuclear sites from radioactive substances regulation – commonly referred to as 'GRR'.

Further details on GRR can be obtained from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) website at: <https://consultation.sepa.org.uk/operations-portfolio/grr/>

Intermediate Level radioactive Waste (ILW) Strategy

We work together with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) to advise Magnox on regulatory issues of mutual interest. 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 the site.

Discharge Reports

Nuclear sites are required to routinely report to us their liquid and gaseous radioactive waste 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 will undertake a review of the discharges information for the period October through December 2018, once we have received the December data from Magnox (required by the end of January 2018)

Environmental Monitoring

We carry out sampling and analysis under our independent environmental monitoring programme, in association with the Food Standards Agency. The results of this work are published in our annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report. Berkeley and Oldbury sites are considered together for the purposes of environmental monitoring because the effects from both sites contribute to the same area.

The monitoring data for the calendar year 2016 was published in RIFE report 22 (RIFE 22) in October 2017. In 2016 the dose to the representative person (the group receiving the highest dose) from radioactivity originating from Berkeley and Oldbury in 2016 was low, at 0.006 millisieverts. This is a slight increase from the figure for the previous year, which was less than 0.005 millisieverts.

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

In parallel to this programme, Magnox is required to carry out its own programme of environmental monitoring and to submit the results of this programme to us on a periodic basis.

In December 2017 we received notification from Magnox that a seaweed sample collected in the vicinity of Oldbury Site in November 2017 returned levels of activity that were statistically significant.

Magnox's analysis of the sample concluded that the elevated reading related to potassium-40, which is a common naturally occurring radionuclide.

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

Change of Lead Nuclear Regulator

From 1 April 2018 Alex Lord will be taking over as the nominated Nuclear Regulator for Oldbury Site from Rob Green. Alex's contact details will be included in our next report to the SSG.

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

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.

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