

# Oldbury Site SSG Report

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 meeting

**This report covers our regulation of Oldbury Site and related issues over the period February to May 2019**

## 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 covered management of Higher Activity Waste (HAW) at Oldbury site, and the arrangements in place to ensure compliance with their permit. The inspection gave us a good opportunity to look at how HAW is managed on site, and how the Radioactive Waste Management Case (RWMC) is put into practice. We concluded that arrangements assessed were adequate, and the management of HAW represented Best Available Techniques (BAT). Much of the HAW from the ponds has been successfully retrieved, with packaged waste handled appropriately, and stored safely and securely pending transfer to other sites for interim storage.

HAW work at Oldbury has been subject to delays due to funding constraints applied corporately, and we will assess the implications of delays to waste retrieval milestones. Delays could also compress the schedule

for production of disposability cases for waste packages, so we have encouraged early engagement to allow us sufficient time to assess the environmental implications of packaging. No non-compliances were noted as part of this inspection.

## Enforcement

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

## Environmental Permitting

Following the publication of the Guidance on Requirements for Release of nuclear sites from radioactive substances regulation (GRR) in July, we have now begun the process of varying site operators' permits to implement the changes associated with the guidance. Separately, Oldbury have submitted an application to vary their environmental permit to remove a discharge outlet associated with the Centre Block Contamination Ventilation system. This outlet is no longer in use and has been blanked. We are in the process of determining this application.

## 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.

Discharge returns for the period January to March 2019 were submitted within the required timeframes. As mentioned in the previous report, Oldbury indicated to us they may exceed their Quarterly Notification Level (QNL) for liquid tritium as a result of the recent draining of the pond and associated operations. Oldbury subsequently confirmed this and notified us of the exceedance on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Given the discharges are associated with planned decommissioning activities, we considered them to represent BAT. Liquid discharge activities peaked in January and now appear to be falling. We will continue to track, and expect them to return to previous levels in the next quarter, at which point we will calculate the

estimated dose associated with the recent operations. We do not currently judge there to be any risk of annual discharge limits being exceeded.

Gaseous discharges remained stable, with activity well below the relevant annual discharge limits, with no Quarterly Notification Levels (QNL) exceeded.

## 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 2017 was published in RIFE report 23 (RIFE 23) in October 2018, and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radioactivity-in-food-and-the-environment-rife-reports>

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. Results of both programmes are consistent and indicate 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.

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for Oldbury Site is Alex Lord, 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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