

**BERKELEY AND OLDBURY ON SEVERN SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS
SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE MEETING HELD
VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2021**

- Mr John Stanton welcomed members to the meeting which was being held via the Zoom digital platform due to the continuing coronavirus pandemic restrictions.
- Mr Mike Heaton, Site Director, reported on recent activities at the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites. He said that high standards of safety, environmental and security performance had been maintained at both sites and there had been no significant events.
- Mr Heaton said that the numbers of personnel working on the Sites were currently reduced to comply with the government's guidance; other staff were working from home where possible.
- There had been no retrievals of waste from the vaults at Berkeley since the previous meeting but the removal of waste items from the shielded area in the former laboratories was continuing. Waste handling facilities at the Site were being modified to enable concrete box waste packages to be used.
- Good progress was being maintained with decommissioning projects at Oldbury with three DCIC containers being filled with miscellaneous contaminated items from the station's vaults. Plans were being made for the demolition of a number of buildings on the Oldbury Site including the former turbine hall, electricity grid substation and the administration block; it was currently planned that this work would take place during the next 5/6 years.
- Mr Jonathan Jenkin of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority reported on current issues. He outlined current assumptions in relation to the restoration of land currently occupied by Oldbury's Silt Lagoon 3. In view of local interest in the future use of this land it was suggested that a special meeting of this Group should be held to consider proposals in the coming months.
- Reports were given by the local site inspectors of the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency.
- Prof Scott of Bristol University explained the process of nuclear fusion and its potential advantages over other energy sources. He described the government's proposed investment in this technology which was to take the form of a technology park and a demonstration fusion power station facility. Currently nominations were being made for the location of these facilities at various sites around the country. One site which was being considered was the Oldbury and Berkeley power station sites and land owned by Horizon Nuclear Power at Oldbury. Members expressed their support for such a proposal.
- Mr Stanton reported on his recent activities as chairman of the Berkeley SSG.

**BERKELEY AND OLDBURY ON SEVERN SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON
WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT:

Mr J Stanton (in the chair)	-	Co-opted member
Mr S Chandler	-	Hamfallow Parish Council
Cllr Dr J Cordwell	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr C Davies	-	Stinchcombe Parish Council
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Cllr D Griffiths	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Cllr Mrs H Molyneux	-	Forest of Dean District Council
Mr A Paget	-	Staff Representative
Cllr C Parkinson	-	Thornbury Town Council
Mr B Roberts	-	Thornbury Chamber of Commerce
Cllr K Sullivan	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Cllr B Tipper	-	Gloucestershire County Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr J Jenkin	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Ms N Barnes	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Ms S Gallagher	-	Environment Agency
Ms R Cleverley	-	Environment Agency
Ms G Ellis-King	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Mr L Flexman	-	Horizon Nuclear Power
Mr M Heaton	-	Oldbury and Berkeley Sites Director
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox Communications
Mrs J Callender	-	Magnox Communications
Mrs E Vaughan Lewis	-	Magnox Communications
Ms K Baxter	-	Magnox, Oldbury
Mr P Barrett	-	South Gloucestershire & Stroud College
Prof T Scott	-	University of Bristol
Mr J Townes	-	University of Bristol
Mr A Bates	-	Business West
Mr C Chick	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Ms A Presdee	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Mr B Watts	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Mr N Moor	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Mr G Vaughan Lewis		
Dr J McHugh		
Mr P Hazelwood		
Mrs E Ashton		
Ms S May		
Mr G Wheeler		
Mr T Hellen		
Ms B French		
Mr M J Davis (Secretary)		

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 1 Mr Stanton welcomed everyone to this joint meeting of the Berkeley and Oldbury on Severn Site Stakeholder Groups which was being held on the Zoom digital platform. It was being held as a joint meeting due to the continuing coronavirus pandemic.
- 2 It was noted with regret that Cllr Dovey had sadly passed away earlier that day. Mr Lynden expressed members' appreciation of the contribution made by David Dovey over many years as a member of this Group representing Monmouthshire County Council and passed condolences to his family.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 3 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Langdon, Ms V Heselton, Ms R Frett, Mr K Warren and Cllr M Riddle.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(a) Accuracy

- 4 The minutes of the joint meeting of the Berkeley and Oldbury SSGs held on 28 October 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

(b) Matters arising

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

SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- 6 Mr Heaton reported on recent activities at the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites, drawing particular attention to the following:
 - (i) Good safety performance had been maintained at both Sites with working practices reflecting government advice on pandemic restrictions. In line with those restrictions there were currently 135 personnel working on site at Oldbury and 150 on site at Berkeley. Other staff were working from home as appropriate. There had been very small numbers of cases of coronavirus on the Sites with no evidence of transmission between individuals on the Site.
 - (ii) There had been no retrievals of wastes from the vaults on the Berkeley site since the previous meeting. One DCIC container had been filled with waste from the shielded area; another container would be filled with these wastes by the end of March.
 - (iii) Modifications to the waste handling facilities at Berkeley to enable the use of concrete box containers were in hand. Trials of other plant items were being undertaken, including lid casting trials in the encapsulation plant. Concrete box storage containers were being manufactured off site

and it was anticipated that the necessary permissions for using these packages would be obtained in late Spring. With the completion of the modification work on site it was hoped that all the facilities for retrieval and packaging of wastes, using either type of storage container, would be available for use by the end of the current year.

- (iv) Analysis of the wastes at Oldbury which needed to be processed as intermediate level waste had confirmed a significant reduction in the number of packages which would be required compared with original estimates.
 - (v) At Oldbury, processing of the IONSIV cartridges and filters and the cutting up of pond skips classified as intermediate level waste had been completed. Three DCIC containers had been filled with miscellaneous contaminated items from the waste vaults. Samples from the pond walls were being analysed and redundant equipment was being removed so that the cooling pond area was now approaching its planned end state.
 - (vi) Plans were being made for the demolition of buildings on the Oldbury Site including the former turbine hall, the grid substation and the administration block. This work, which would require the construction of limited temporary office accommodation, would have a major impact on the visual appearance of the Site. It was proposed that the work would be undertaken during the next 5/6 years.
 - (vii) The Sites continued to support local organisations and activities through the socio-economic support scheme. The current deadline for making applications for grants was 26 February.
- 7 In reply to a question from Cllr Davies, Mr Heaton said that ONR was progressing its consideration of the proposed use of concrete box storage containers at Berkeley via a series of staged assessments.
- 8 In response to Mr Lynden, Mr Heaton said that debris from the demolition of buildings would be removed by contractors for recycling where possible. He drew attention to the outstanding issues associated with removal of asbestos. In response to further comments by Mr Hellen, Mr Heaton said that it would be for National Grid Company to determine whether or not the overhead lines to the site could be removed. He said that the reactor buildings would require recladding at some stage and it had been suggested by the local community that replacement cladding might keep the same colour scheme as the existing structure.
- 9 In reply to a comment by Ms Ellis King, Mr Heaton said that proposals for demolition of buildings were at an early stage of consideration and in due course approach would be made to South Gloucestershire Council in relation to any necessary planning consent.

- 10 Mr Heaton said, in reply to a question from Cllr Tipper, that in comparison with Berkeley, there would be very few facilities which needed to be established on the Oldbury site to facilitate the completion of decommissioning.

NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY

- 11 Mr Jenkin reported on current issues, drawing attention to the following:
- (i) Working practices had been modified to take account of coronavirus restrictions. Corporate NDA staff were largely working from home unless there was an essential need for access to offices.
 - (ii) Recent senior appointments within NDA included the Chair, a Non-Executive Director, and the Dounreay Managing Director.
 - (iii) Consultation on the NDA's draft Business Plan was due to close on 2 February. The plan would reflect the outcome of the recent Government spending review which indicated NDA expenditure of some £3.5 billion for next year.
 - (iv) NDA was creating a single transport division bringing together transport expertise and capabilities across the NDA Group.
 - (v) Working groups had been formed in Copeland and Allerdale in Cumbria to begin discussions about the potential siting of a geological disposal facility. This did not preclude other communities from establishing similar working groups.
 - (vi) Comments made in the consultation on the draft Strategy document had been considered and a final draft submitted to ministers for approval. The final document would be published by 31 March.
- 12 Mr Jenkin referred to discussion at an earlier meeting of this group on the future of the Oldbury Silt Lagoon 3. He said that the NDA's current end state assumption was that this area would be restored to a wetland habitat. He said that Horizon had expressed some concerns over the potential impact of this on any proposals for new build and he was aware of differing views on future use held within the local community. He suggested that it might be appropriate to hold a special meeting of this Group to consider the future of the Silt Lagoon 3 area during the Spring/Summer. Mr Lynden was anxious that such a meeting was held and that the views of the local community were taken into account. He pointed out that this area had been farmland prior to the power station's use, and he was anxious that any future plans for this area took account of the need for maintenance and improvement of sea defences.

OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION

- 13 Ms Barnes reported on ONR's regulatory and inspection activities. Reports had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

- 14 Ms Barnes explained the way in which inspection arrangements had been modified to take account of coronavirus restrictions and reported on the satisfactory outcome of inspections undertaken at the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

- 15 Ms Gallagher and Ms Cleverley reported on the Environment Agency's regulatory activities in relation to the Berkeley and Oldbury Sites. Reports had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. During discussion the following points were noted:
- (i) As reported previously, the Agency had issued a number of temporary regulatory position statements which allowed for limited relaxations of regulatory requirements during the pandemic. Neither of the Sites was using these temporary arrangements.
 - (ii) The inspectors had maintained regular contact with the Sites and other regulators.
 - (iii) Further information had been requested to support the application from Berkeley to vary its permit to reflect operation of the encapsulation facility.
 - (iv) All discharges from the Sites remained low and well within permitted limits.
 - (v) The Agency, together with the Food Standards Agency, had published its report on radioactivity in food and the environment for 2019. This report had shown that the assessed maximum exposure to radioactivity for the “representative person” in the vicinity of the Oldbury and Berkeley sites had been less than 5 microsieverts during the year.
 - (vi) Plans were being made for next year’s programme of inspections. Details would be available by the time of the next meeting.
- 16 In a response to a question from Mrs Ashton, Ms Cleverley undertook to provide information on why the “representative person” for the purposes of the radioactivity exposure assessments for these Sites had changed from an infant consuming milk to a prenatal child.

NUCLEAR FUSION REACTORS

- 17 Prof Scott explained the process of nuclear fusion, its potential advantages over other energy sources and the progress of its development to date. He explained the government’s proposed investment in this technology which was directed towards the development of a STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) facility.

- 18 Prof Scott explained that the STEP facility would build upon the success of the JET and MAST projects at Culham. It was proposed that it would be a smaller modular unit compared with the other demonstration facility (ITER) which was being established in France. The infrastructure requirements for the facility could be met well by locating it at or near to one of the former Magnox power station sites. Prof Scott said that the government's intention was to establish a technology park within the next 5-10 years where the design of the facility could be developed and to establish the STEP plant itself on the same site by the 2040s.
- 19 Prof Scott said that currently various proposals were being developed for the location of the technology park and STEP facility in different parts of the country. Expressions of interest were to be submitted to the UKAEA by 31 March. UKAEA would then carry out a selection process leading to a decision by government on the location of the facility in 2022. Within the South West consideration was being given to alternative locations at Hinkley Point or at Oldbury/Berkeley including the use of Horizon land acquired for new station construction.
- 20 During discussion the following points were noted:
- (i) Cllr Tipper drew attention to the need for public education on safety aspects. Prof Scott agreed and drew attention to the differences between fusion and fission reactors. He said that the JET plant at Culham had been operating for 30 years; it was not necessary for it to have a nuclear site licence and the site was regulated by the Environment Agency only.
 - (ii) Cllr Davies pointed out that this was to be a UK project and wondered whether more international cooperation might be appropriate. Prof Scott said that investment was intended to be solely from government initially but that private sector investment would be needed in due course. He pointed out that another benefit of the STEP facility would be that the process could produce hydrogen as a by-product; there would be large demand for hydrogen as a fuel for transport in future years. A small modular approach would have production advantages in developing multiple numbers of units and there could be parallels between the steam generating plant and the plant to be developed for the proposed Rolls Royce small modular nuclear reactor system.
 - (iii) In reply to a comment from Mr Hellen, Prof Scott said that he would welcome any support in providing information for the public on the proposals.
 - (iv) In reply to a question from Mr Lynden, Prof Scott said he anticipated that the cooling water requirements of the STEP facility would be equivalent or less than that of one of the former Magnox power stations. Following further questions from Mr Wheeler, Prof Scott said he anticipated that the plant would involve steam generation but there were

opportunities for direct generation from gases produced within the system.

- (v) Mrs Ashton asked whether international cooperation on other fusion research developments would continue. Prof Scott said that UK participation post Brexit in European fusion projects was secure; there were good mutual relationships between those involved in the various projects.
- (vi) Mr Barrett asked whether there was scope for using low grade heat from the STEP process for district heating. Prof Scott said that this could represent a significant advantage for local communities, particularly as the siting requirements for fusion plants could enable them to be located close to local areas of population. He felt that the potential for production of hydrogen was another feature which would become increasingly important.
- (vii) Prof Scott expressed his thanks to Magnox for the technical information provided on the sites.
- (viii) In response to comments by Cllr Dr Cordwell, Prof Scott said that strong local support was an important element of the proposal to locate the facility in this area, particularly as political considerations were likely to be taken into account by government in determining the location of the proposed facility. Mr Chick said that the proposal had been discussed with and was supported by local members of parliament. Cllr Mrs Molyneux said that support should also be sought from the Forest of Dean. Prof Scott said that the project presented opportunities for the whole region with potential procurement of special steels from South Wales and lithium from Cornwall
- (ix) Cllr Sullivan said that Oldbury on Severn Parish Council would welcome a presentation on the proposals.

NDA ROLE IN RELATION TO NUCLEAR FUSION REACTORS

- 21 Mr Jenkin said that the NDA, as the owner of the former Magnox power station sites, was supportive of proposals for developments on those sites but it had no role in relation to the selection of sites for this proposed development of a technology park and fusion plant.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

- 22 Mr Stanton reported on his recent activities on behalf of the Group. He referred to his regular contacts with Mr Heaton, comments submitted in relation to the NDA's consultation on the business plan and strategy documents and to discussions at a virtual meeting with other SSG chairs.
- 23 Mr Stanton said that he was in continuing discussions in relation to the storage of ammonium nitrate at Sharpness Dock

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 24 Mr Flexman said that he was pleased to be able to offer support from Horizon Nuclear Power for the possible establishment of a fusion facility on the Oldbury site; Horizon could also offer help with technical aspects of the use of the land. He said that whilst Horizon was happy to support these proposals in principle, if any other opportunities arose for the development of new plant construction on the site they would have to be considered.

DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 25 It was noted that the next joint meeting of these Groups was scheduled to be held on 21 April, with separate meetings scheduled for 28 July and a further joint meeting scheduled for 27 October.

MJD

29 January 2021