

**BERKELEY AND OLDBURY ON SEVERN SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS  
SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE MEETING HELD  
VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2021**

- Mr John Stanton welcomed members to the meeting which was again 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 outlined continuing coronavirus testing arrangements at the Sites; there were currently no cases of infection at either site. Some staff continued to work from home with approximately 150 personnel currently working at each site.
- Mr Heaton said that there had been one incident during waste handling activities at Oldbury which had resulted in a twisted knee involving time lost from work. Otherwise standards of safety performance had continued to be good.
- Retrievals of intermediate level radioactive waste items from the shielded area at Berkeley were continuing. Good progress was being made at Berkeley with the modification of the waste handling plants in order to facilitate the use of concrete box storage packages.
- The trial casting of a lid over a concrete box storage package had been completed satisfactorily at Berkeley. The target for first filling of a concrete box package was November this year.
- The removal of plant items from the former cooling ponds at Oldbury was continuing and was nearing completion. Consideration was being given to the next phase of demolition of redundant plant and buildings at the Site. The former circulating water culverts had been sealed permanently.
- Mr Jonathan Jenkin of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority reported on current issues. He pointed out that the NDA had accepted the recommendations of the Holliday committee which had been established by the Secretary of State to investigate issues associated with the contract for the management of the Magnox sites.
- Reports were given by the local site inspectors of the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency.
- Mr Stanton reported on his recent activities as chairman of the Berkeley SSG.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON  
WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2021**

**PRESENT:**

Mr J Stanton (in the chair)	-	Co-opted member
Cllr Mrs E Ashton	-	Berkeley Town Council
Cllr I Bamfield	-	Berkeley Town Council
Cllr S Chandler JP	-	Hamfallow Parish Council
Cllr C Davies	-	Stinchcombe Parish Council
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Mr S Henderson	-	Gloucester Harbour Trustees
Cllr Mrs H Molyneux	-	Forest of Dean District Council
Cllr C Parkinson	-	Thornbury Town Council
Cllr M Riddle	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Mr B Roberts	-	Thornbury Chamber of Commerce
Cllr K Sullivan	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Cllr B Tipper	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Mr A Turnbull	-	Olveston Parish Council
Cllr J Warren	-	Aust Parish Council

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr J Jenkin	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr S Morgan	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Ms S Gallagher	-	Environment Agency
Ms R Cleverley	-	Environment Agency
Ms G Ellis-King	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Mr J Cook	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Mr I Gwyn	-	Horizon Nuclear Power
Mr M Heaton	-	Oldbury and Berkeley Sites Closure Director
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox Communications
Mrs J Callander	-	Magnox Communications
Mrs E Vaughan Lewis	-	Magnox Communications
Mr W Hamilton	-	Magnox
Mr A Bates	-	Business West
Ms A Presdee	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Dr J Cordwell		
Mr G Vaughan Lewis		
Mr T Hellen		
Ms B French		
Ms R Corney		
Ms V Williams		
Mr M J Davis (Secretary)		

## **WELCOME**

- 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. Mr Stanton expressed a particular welcome to those who were attending a meeting of these Groups for the first time.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Dr J McHugh, Mr G Wheeler, Ms H Ely, Ms S Baillie MP, Mr A Mitchell and Mr B Cleere.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **(a) Accuracy**

- 3 The minutes of the joint meeting of the Berkeley and Oldbury SSGs held on 27 January 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

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

#### **Radiation Exposure Assessments (para 16 refers)**

- 4 Cllr Mrs Ashton confirmed that she had received the information promised by Ms Cleverley on the change in the identification of the representative person for the purposes of assessment of radiation exposure.

## **SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- 5 Mr Heaton reported on recent activities at the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites, drawing particular attention to the following:
  - (i) All Magnox sites were continuing to implement coronavirus testing arrangements. There were currently no cases of infection at either of the Oldbury or Berkeley sites and no one was required to isolate. Some staff were still working from home and there were approximately 150 personnel working on each site.
  - (ii) There had been one injury involving time lost from work at Oldbury where an individual had twisted a knee during waste handling and sorting. The individual had subsequently returned to work. There had been a slight increase in the numbers of incidents across the company and this was receiving attention but the company's performance was still significantly better than that in other industries.
  - (iii) Retrievals of intermediate level wastes from the shielded area at Berkeley now amounted to more than 2.4 tonnes with six DCIC

containers having been filled. Some of the wastes remaining in the area would involve more difficult handling arrangements.

- (iv) Good progress had been made with the modification of waste handling facilities at Berkeley to enable the use of concrete box containers. Retrieval Plant 3 had been handed over to the company for inactive commissioning, and progress was on target for the similar handover of Retrieval Plant 4 in July.
  - (v) A trial of the arrangements for casting a concrete lid over the top of a concrete waste container had been completed successfully within the waste encapsulation plant at Berkeley.
  - (vi) Removal of plant items from the former cooling ponds at Oldbury was continuing with the removal of ceiling filters almost complete. This area was approaching the required end state for care and maintenance.
  - (vii) Some 40 tonnes of chemicals previously used in the water treatment plant at Oldbury had been removed from site, reducing potential hazards.
  - (viii) Consideration was being given to the next phase of demolition at Oldbury to remove redundant buildings and equipment. Discussions were taking place with National Grid in relation to the removal of the substation. It was anticipated that demolition of the turbine hall would take place in approximately 5 years' time. The circulating water culverts had been permanently sealed.
  - (ix) The number of Magnox headquarters staff at the Oldbury Technical Centre was currently much reduced with many individuals working from home. It was intended that headquarters staff in the future would be located at several hub locations around the country with the first of these being at Aztec West, allowing the Oldbury Technical Centre facilities to be demolished.
  - (x) Applications were invited from local organisations and activities for grants from the company's socio-economic funding.
- 6 In reply to questions from Cllr Davies, Mr Heaton said it was anticipated that ONR approval for the use of the concrete box waste encapsulation plant would be granted at the end of June, with a target of November for the first container to be filled at Berkeley. In a further question from Cllr Davies, it was not thought that the electrical substation on the Oldbury Site would be suitable for use in the event of the establishment of a fusion reactor plant as the equipment was deteriorating and required removal to reduce potential hazards.
- 7 Cllr Chandler drew attention to the start of a period of consultation on potential housing development between Sharpness and Berkeley.
- 8 In reply to comments from Mr Vaughan Lewis on possible reasons for a deterioration in safety performance, Mr Heaton said that there had been no

change in the company's approach or commitment to high standards of safety. Events which had occurred had been relatively minor ones generally caused by individual actions. Comments from staff on safety issues were relayed to senior managers and steps had been taken to increase the frequency of senior managers' visits to Sites.

- 9 Mr Hellen asked whether the existing transmission towers leading to the Oldbury Site might be dismantled. It was noted that this was a matter for National Grid Company and Ms Coombs undertook to provide Mr Hellen with contact details. Ms Ellis King said she understood that the connection to the grid system via the existing transmission towers would be adequate for a fusion reactor plant although conductors would require restringing.
- 10 Cllr Riddle expressed appreciation of the support to the local community provided by the company during the current pandemic. He asked whether materials arising from demolition of buildings could be used to fill voids on the Oldbury site. Mr Heaton said that this was something which was being considered but decisions had not yet been taken.
- 11 Cllr Mrs Ashton referred to the reported intention of government to simplify regulatory frameworks. Mr Heaton and Mr Morgan said that the proposals were generally welcomed and would not in any way lead to a relaxation in standards.

#### **NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY**

- 12 Mr Jenkin reported on current issues, drawing attention to the following:
  - (i) NDA staff were continuing to work from home where appropriate. It was anticipated that there would be increased working within offices as coronavirus restrictions were relaxed.
  - (ii) The NDA had published its Strategy Document, its Business Plan, and a Sustainability Report. Comments raised on draft documents in periods of consultation had also been published. All these documents were available on the website. The annual report and accounts had been recognised by the National Audit Office for its good practice.
  - (iii) The NDA had published details of its gender pay gap which had decreased slightly compared with previous years.
  - (iv) The Holliday report into problems associated with the NDA's Magnox contract had been published in early March. NDA had already acted upon the committee's interim recommendations and fully accepted the final recommendations. A formal response to the report by NDA would be published in due course. Mr Jenkin undertook to provide members with a link to the location of the final report.
  - (v) Two working groups had been established, in Copeland and Allerdale, to consider issues associated with the potential siting of a geological disposal facility for radioactive waste. These actions did not preclude

other communities from expressing an interest in siting the facility and establishing working groups.

(vi) A supply chain event was to be held in Telford on 3 February 2022.

- 13 In reply to a question from Cllr Davies, Mr Jenkin said that following a review of decommissioning strategy it had been announced last year that consideration would be given to the possibility of adopting a process of continuous decommissioning at the Trawsfynydd Site. A detailed strategy for this was being developed by Magnox and a business case for any proposed change in strategy would be submitted to the NDA Board and Government in due course. Magnox was reviewing the strategy for each of its sites and a mix of approaches was likely to be adopted.
- 14 Cllr Sullivan referred to reports that reinforcement of sea defences between Aust and Sharpness would require reinforcement within the coming decade and that the Environment Agency was not responsible for the sections of riverbank falling within the power station sites. Mr Heaton said that there was no safety case requirement for enhancement of sea defences at the Sites. Mr Jenkin said that he would discuss this issue with environmental colleagues.
- 15 Cllr Riddle asked whether NDA was being encouraged by government to increase investment in the North of England as part of a levelling up process and whether this might act to the detriment of communities in the South of England. Mr Jenkin said that NDA's obligations in relation to local communities were clearly defined in the Energy Act.
- 16 In reply to comments by Cllr Mrs Molyneux on the gender pay gap in the nuclear industry, Mr Jenkin outlined encouragement given by the industry to female students to pursue careers in STEM subjects. Mr Hamilton referred to the number of women in senior positions within Magnox and outlined the work of the Women in Nuclear network.

## **OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION**

- 17 Mr Morgan introduced himself as the recently-appointed successor to Ms Barnes and reported on ONR's regulatory and inspection activities in relation to the Berkeley and Oldbury Sites. Reports had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Mr Morgan reported on the satisfactory outcome of inspections undertaken at the Sites.

## **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

- 18 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) The Agency had issued a revised environmental permit for the Berkeley Site to provide for two new gaseous discharge outlets and increase the

annual limit for gaseous discharges of tritium. These changes were required to allow operation of the waste encapsulation plant. Although the new limit would allow an increase in discharges of tritium, the specified level was below the level set when the power station was operating.

- (ii) The Agency had also updated and reissued its Compilation of Environment Agency Requirements document, setting out its requirements of the Site. Copies of the permit and the CEAR had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.
- (iii) The Agency's Regulators had maintained contact with the Sites and with ONR Inspectors throughout the pandemic. No instances of non-compliance had been identified from the inspections which had been carried out. A programme of subjects for inspections during the coming year had been prepared.
- (iv) Discharges of radioactivity from both Sites were at low levels and well within permitted limits.

#### **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

- 19 Mr Stanton reported on his recent activities on behalf of the Group. He referred to his regular contacts with Mr Heaton, and to a meeting with representatives of other SSGs on the findings of the Holliday report. He commented on the NDA's ready acceptance of the recommendations of the Holliday report.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 20 Mrs Ellis-King reported on progress with the development and submission of a bid for the location of the STEP fusion energy project to be based on the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites. The bid, which had been given the title "Severn Edge" had been submitted to the UKAEA, having been produced with excellent collaboration between a range of local organisations. The UKAEA's initial response had been delayed but it was anticipated that further consideration of the various bids would involve visits to each proposed site. It was agreed that "Severn Edge" should be included as a standard item on the agenda for these meetings in future. It was noted that no further action was required on this by members of this Group at this stage.
- 21 Members returned to the question of flood defences raised by Cllr Sullivan earlier in the meeting. Various views were expressed, ranging from a suggestion that the Environment Agency should be invited to give a presentation on the matter at a future meeting, to a view that the matter of flood defences in the area generally was not a matter for consideration at this meeting. Mr Stanton undertook to consider whether the matter should be included on the agenda for a meeting of this Group at a future date.

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

22 It was noted that the next meetings of these Groups were scheduled to be held on 28 July, with a joint meeting scheduled for 27 October.

MJD  
2 June 2021