

**BERKELEY AND OLDBURY ON SEVERN SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS
SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE MEETING HELD
VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 28 JULY 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 said that high standards of safety performance had been maintained and there had been no significant events at either site. COVID precautions remained in force on both sites. All personnel on site at Berkeley had been reminded of the need for safe driving on local roads approaching the Site.
- Work was continuing on modifying and testing equipment used for the retrieval and handling of radioactive waste from the storage vaults at Berkeley. Retrievals of wastes from the vaults were planned to resume in the Autumn.
- At Oldbury work continued on the removal of equipment from the former cooling ponds. Two ductile cast iron containers of radioactive waste from Oldbury had been sent to the Berkeley Site for storage and a further container would be consigned to Berkeley in the Autumn. Temporary portable buildings were being installed at Oldbury to allow the demolition of other buildings and facilities. It was noted that debris from the demolition of buildings might be used to infill voids on the Site, subject to the approval of the Environment Agency.
- Mr Jonathan Jenkin of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority reported on current issues. Points noted included the fact that NDA was in due course to be given responsibility for the decommissioning of the advanced gas cooled nuclear reactors which are coming to the end of their operating life.
- Reports were given by the local site inspectors of the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency. Members expressed interest in the company's policy relating to tree planting on the Sites and in the discussions between the various bodies on the possible need to enhance flood defences.
- Mr Stanton reported on his recent activities as chairman of the Berkeley SSG.
- Mr Warner referred to earlier discussion at meetings of this Group on the preferred end state for the Berkeley Site. He said that following regulatory changes, the company was required to review the proposed end state of the Berkeley Site, including the possibility of an element of on-site disposal of radioactive waste. A meeting of stakeholders would be held in due course to gain an understanding of the factors which they wished to be taken into consideration in reviewing this strategy.

**BERKELEY AND OLDBURY ON SEVERN SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON
WEDNESDAY 28 JULY 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 R Layfield	-	Stroud District Council
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Cllr Mrs H Molyneux	-	Forest of Dean District Council
Cllr M Riddle	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Mr B Roberts	-	Thornbury Chamber of Commerce
Cllr B Tipper	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr J Warren	-	Aust Parish Council
Cllr Mrs V Williams	-	Alveston 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 I Gwyn	-	Horizon Nuclear Power
Mr K Warren	-	Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board
Mr P Barrett	-	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Mr M Heaton	-	Oldbury and Berkeley Sites Director
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox Communications
Mrs E Vaughan Lewis	-	Magnox Communications
Mr W Hamilton	-	Magnox
Mr I Warner	-	Magnox
Dr J Cordwell		
Dr J McHugh		
Mr G Vaughan Lewis		
Mr T Hellen		
Mr G Wheeler		
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 again being held on the Zoom digital platform.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr G Langdon, Ms V Hesselton, Cllr C Davies, Ms H Freeman, Mr A Mitchell, Mr W Gill, Ms A Presdee and Ms B French.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Accuracy

- 3 The minutes of the joint meeting of the Berkeley and Oldbury SSGs held on 26 May 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

(b) Matters arising

Permitted Level of Discharges of Tritium from Berkeley (para 18(i) refers)

- 4 In response to questions raised by Cllr Bamfield, Mr Heaton explained that Tritium would be emitted as a consequence of grouting waste items within concrete box packages. The encapsulation of waste in these packages was a new process on the Site. The Environment Agency had approved and issued a permit variation adding new gaseous discharge outlets and increasing the annual limit for gaseous discharges of Tritium.

SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- 5 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 and there had been no significant events at either Site. COVID precautions, including face covering and social distancing, remained in place. Some 2500 tests undertaken on each Site had identified a small number of positive cases but none of these had been related to transmission at the workplace.
 - (ii) The attention of all staff at Berkeley had been drawn to the need for safe driving on local roads and this was the subject of an ongoing campaign.
 - (iii) An exercise organised by the Avon Fire and Rescue Service had been hosted at Oldbury during July. This arrangement helped the fire service personnel to understand the layout of the Site and potential hazards.
 - (iv) Work continued on the installation and modification of waste retrieval equipment at Berkeley; this work was due to be completed by the autumn. Waste retrievals were due to re-commence in October and this would result in the first packaging of intermediate level waste in a concrete box container. The necessary permission to allow the concrete boxes to be stored in a future geological disposal facility was expected to be received imminently.

- (v) The R3 plant for the retrieval of containerised wastes was undergoing inactive commissioning including operator training and instruction validation.
- (vi) Inactive commissioning of the MILWEP concrete encapsulation plant had started in June. Two inactive waste packages would be produced during this process.
- (vii) The removal of plant and equipment from the former cooling ponds at Oldbury was continuing. Some of this contained asbestos material and was being removed by specialist contractors. The size-reduction of former fuel skips was due to commence in the coming months.
- (viii) Two DCIC containers of waste from Oldbury had been shipped to Berkeley and a further container was to be transferred in October.
- (ix) Demolition of the former switch house at Oldbury was due to commence later in the year. Portable buildings were being installed to allow services to be relocated so that existing buildings could be demolished. Some of the topsoil removed to locate these temporary buildings had been sent for use on local farms.
- (x) Applications were invited from local community groups for grants from the socio-economic support scheme during the coming year. Surplus redundant furniture from the Oldbury Technical Centre could be made available to local charities or volunteer groups.

6 Mr Lynden asked about plans for waste arising from the demolition of buildings on the Oldbury site. Mr Heaton said that it might be possible to use this waste to infill voids on the Site; this would be a matter for discussion with the Environment Agency. He said that voids would provide more than enough capacity for the waste arising from demolition of buildings. Mr Lynden drew attention to the likely future need for material to reinforce sea defences.

7 Cllr Chandler had seen a Nuclear Transport Solutions (formerly DRS) train in the vicinity recently and asked what shipments were currently being made from the Berkeley railhead. Ms Coombs undertook to obtain this information.
[Note: It was subsequently established that recent rail movements from the Berkeley railhead had been for consignments of waste from the Harwell Site.]

8 In reply to a question from Cllr Tipper, Mr Heaton explained how spaces within a concrete box waste container were filled with grout before a concrete lid was cast over the whole, forming a single package.

NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY

9 Mr Jenkin reported on current issues, drawing attention to the following:

- (i) NDA corporate staff were continuing to work from home where appropriate. A managed return to office working was planned although some working from home might be incorporated in future arrangements.
 - (ii) The NDA's annual report and accounts for 2020/2021 had been published during the previous week. It showed continuing progress in hazard reduction, particularly at Sellafield and Dounreay, and progress with returning waste to overseas customers. Expenditure had been lower than forecast due to the pandemic and there had been a corresponding fall in income.
 - (iii) Some 1800 tonnes of coolant had been removed from the PFR at Dounreay using techniques which could have application for use on other decommissioning projects involving hazardous materials.
 - (iv) NDA had published its responses to the Holliday report, which had investigated circumstances associated with the NDA's contract for the management of Magnox, and the Departmental Review undertaken by BEIS. The recommendations were welcomed as helping to build on progress which had been made since the Holliday Inquiry had been established.
 - (v) Government had announced that responsibility for decommissioning of the Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor stations would pass to NDA after defuelling had been completed by EDF. Ownership of the sites after completion of defuelling would pass to NDA and the decommissioning work would be undertaken by Magnox.
- 10 In reply to a question from Mr Lynden, Mr Jenkin said that EDF had a contract with NDA for the management of spent fuel from the AGR reactors. This fuel had been reprocessed in the THORP facility until that had closed and now was stored at Sellafield where it would remain until a geological disposal facility was available. In response to a further question from Cllr Chandler, Mr Jenkin said that NDA would in due course have access to the Nuclear Liabilities Fund which had been set up to meet the costs of AGR decommissioning. Mr Hamilton said that it was likely to be at least five years before the first of the AGR stations was transferred to NDA for decommissioning and probably 10 years before they were all transferred.
- 11 Cllr Chandler drew attention to potential local concerns if waste from the AGR stations was to be sent for storage at Berkeley. Mr Jenkin said he could not foresee any need for waste from the AGR stations to be stored at Berkeley, but he suggested that consideration might be given to common storage of wastes from Magnox and AGR stations where the sites were adjacent to each other.
- 12 Cllr Bamfield said he had not seen references to tree planting proposals in published NDA documents concerning sustainability and biodiversity. Mr Jenkin confirmed that there were plans to plant trees across many of the NDA's landholdings. Mr Heaton suggested that it was more appropriate to give priority to the management of existing trees rather than plant more trees at the

Oldbury and Berkeley Sites. Cllr Mrs Williams drew attention to the importance of trees in preventing flooding. Mr Heaton said that many trees had been planted on these Sites in the past and he felt that at the moment priority should be given to increasing biodiversity on the Sites and improving the working environment; further tree planting might be appropriate in future. Mrs Ellis-King drew attention to the need for balance and some open areas which were needed by birds flying into the estuary.

OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION

- 13 Mr Morgan 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 drew particular attention to the following:
- (i) Inspections at Berkeley had covered security and safeguards; a security inspection had also been undertaken at Oldbury where a security exercise had also been witnessed. Inspectors had been satisfied with the adequacy of the arrangements in all cases.
 - (ii) Throughout the pandemic ONR Inspectors had maintained contact with Site personnel, including the company's independent inspectors and safety representatives, and Environment Agency inspectors.
 - (iii) ONR had been impressed by Magnox's response to the COVID pandemic.
 - (iv) ONR personnel continued to work from home where appropriate and were gradually increasing the number of site visits.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

- 14 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) Agency inspectors continued to work from home where appropriate and maintained close contact with the Sites.
 - (ii) Regulatory Position Statements which had been introduced during the pandemic had now expired.
 - (iii) An inspection of the MILWEP and R4 facilities at Berkeley and an inspection of lower active waste processes at Oldbury had provided satisfactory results with no instances of non-compliance.
 - (iv) Discharges of radioactivity from the sites remained low and well within permitted levels.

- (v) Ms Gallagher had confirmed that responsibility for flood defences on the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites was the responsibility of the Sites and the NDA.
- 15 Mr Lynden said it appeared that, subject to the necessary approvals, it would be possible to deposit the rubble arising from demolition of buildings, other than the reactor buildings, in voids on the Oldbury Site. He drew attention to the potential need for similar rubble material on the river bank to enhance sea defences. Cllr Chandler confirmed that members of the local community would be anxious to know that flood protection issues were being properly addressed by all those with relevant responsibilities. He felt it was important that all those with responsibilities for flood protection were in touch and working effectively together. Cllr Riddle confirmed the importance attached to sea defences by local people and drew attention to the need to protect from flooding not only the Sites themselves but also the access roads to the Sites.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

- 16 Mr Stanton reported on recent activities on behalf of the Group including a meeting, together with the Chairs of other SSGs, with the NDA Chairman

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 17 Mr Barrett referred to the issue raised by Mr Heaton earlier in the meeting regarding the importance of safe driving on local roads. He said that this was an issue of concern to the college. He said that he would support the introduction of speed monitoring devices if that was considered appropriate by the local community.
- 18 Mrs Ellis-King said that the "Severn Edge" submission to the UKAEA proposing hosting the development of a fusion reactor development facility on the Oldbury/Berkeley Sites was still under consideration. UKAEA officers were to visit the site during the coming week as part of their assessment. She said that she would report again on progress at the next meeting.

BERKELEY END STATE

- 19 Mr Warner referred to earlier discussions at meetings of this Group on the end state strategy for the Magnox station Sites. In the light of changes in regulatory requirements, Magnox was now seeking views on how the strategy might be updated. He said that the current baseline strategy provided for the removal of all residual radioactivity from the Sites. This could involve the excavation and removal of large volumes of material for disposal elsewhere. Environment Agency guidance now required Magnox to review its strategy and consider whether an alternative end state, which included an element of on-site disposal of radioactive waste, might be a more sustainable option for the Site. Mr Warner explained that waste which might be considered suitable for on-site disposal could be lightly contaminated underground structures and high volume, low activity waste from demolition.

- 20 Mr Warner said that work on the implications and consequences of the various options was at an early stage and no decisions had been taken. He said that Magnox wished to understand the views of stakeholders as to what they considered the most important factors to be taken into account. A meeting for this purpose would be held in due course.
- 21 Mr Stanton suggested that it was necessary to take into consideration the potential future use of the site as this was likely to affect the required end state.
- 22 Cllr Riddle said that the on-site disposal of waste would represent a significant saving compared with the excavation and removal of large volumes of waste from the site. He asked whether the benefit of those savings might be shared with the local community. Mr Warner said that this was something he had not considered. He was concerned with the technical feasibility of various options; potential savings would be considered at some stage but safety was the main consideration.
- 23 In reply to a question from Mr Wheeler, Mr Warner said that reactor core graphite was not being considered as waste which might be left on sites. Mr Wheeler also asked whether NDA would retain ownership of Sites after clearance. Mr Warner said he anticipated that sites would be in a condition which would allow them to be disposed of. He said that if any restrictions on future use were necessary, it might be possible to release part of a site.
- 24 In reply to comments from Cllr Bamfield and Cllr Mrs Ashton on options for future use of sites, Mr Warner said that the Environment Agency would have to be satisfied that sites were safe to be released for any planned future use. Any future developments on the sites would be subject to planning consent and it was important that effective records were kept of any materials which were retained on site.
- 25 In response to comments from Mr Barrett on potential future use of the Berkeley site by the college, Mr Warner said that any proposals for on-site disposal of radioactive waste were only likely to affect certain areas of sites and it was possible that other parts of sites could be released for alternative use at a much earlier date.

DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 22 It was noted that the next meeting of this Group was scheduled to be held on 27 October 2021.

MJD
1 August 2021