

HINKLEY POINT SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER 2020

- Mr Peter Montague, Hinkley Point A Site Closure Director reported on activities at the Site. He said that Magnox had introduced an operational pause at all Sites early in the coronavirus lockdown. All operational activities at Hinkley Point A had been shut down and the site had been manned by security staff only. Decommissioning work was now returning to normal. Mr Montague outlined actions taken at the site to reduce the spread of coronavirus but emphasised that those actions would not be allowed to distract from other safety requirements.
- Mr Montague reported that following the period of shutdown retrievals of fuel element debris from the wet vaults had resumed; it was hoped that some 10 tonnes of this waste would be retrieved by the end of the year. He said that good progress had been made with the removal of plant and equipment from the sludge canning building which would allow access for further decommissioning work.
- Mr Peter Evans, Hinkley Point B Station Director, reported on the station's continued high level of safety performance. He said it was now over 14 years since the station had experienced a nuclear reportable event, over 11 years since the last environmental event and over four years since the last lost time incident involving an EDF employee. Mr Evans gave details of actions being taken at the station to reduce the spread of coronavirus
- Mr Evans reported that both reactors remained out of service for planned maintenance and inspection outages. The inspections had included 63 channels within the graphite reactor cores. The results of those inspections had all been within expectations and were being reflected within revised safety cases which were being prepared for submission to the Office for Nuclear Regulation.
- Members received reports from the NDA and from inspectors representing the Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

HINKLEY POINT SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held via Zoom on Friday 23 October 2020

PRESENT

Cllr M Caswell (Chairman)	-	Sedgemoor District Council
Mr P Montague	-	Site Director, Hinkley Point A
Mr P Evans	-	Station Director, Hinkley Point B

Elected Members

Mr A Debenham	-	Stop Hinkley
Cllr Ms S Goss	-	Stogursey Parish Council
Cllr W Hawley	-	Fiddington Parish Council
Mr A Jeffery	-	Bridgwater & W Somerset Green Party
Cllr T Gardener	-	Otterhampton Parish Council
Cllr M Phillips	-	Cannington Parish Council
Cllr E Plomgren	-	Holford Parish Council
Cllr L Redman	-	Bridgwater Town Council
Cllr Ms A Reed	-	Wembdon Parish Council
Cllr M Reid	-	Nether Stowey Parish Council
Ms M Smith	-	Forum 21
Cllr S Stretton	-	Spaxton Parish Council
Cllr B Eyley	-	Kilve Parish Council

Co-opted Members

Mr M Brown (Vice Chairman)

Appointed Members

Mr J Jenkin	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr J McNamara	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Ms N Barnes	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Mr D Knowles	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Mr K Littlewood	-	Environment Agency
Ms V Thomas	-	Environment Agency
Mr R Davies	-	Somerset County Council
Ms L Martin	-	Somerset County Council
Mr D Bamsey	-	Sedgemoor District Council

EDF

Mr D Stokes	-	Communications Officer
Mr J Mason	-	Local Joint Council Representative
Ms V Evans	-	Nuclear Safety Group Head
Ms L Pearson	-	Independent Nuclear Assurance Evaluator
Mr M Pardo	-	External Communications Manager

Magnox
Ms J Callander
Ms G Coombs
Mr O Yapp

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr M J Davis - Secretary

CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1 Cllr Caswell welcomed all those present to this meeting of the Site Stakeholder Group for Hinkley Point A Site and Hinkley Point B Power Station. There were no changes in membership.
- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Burton, Mr T Ayre, Mr B Nozad, Ms T Braithwaite, Cllr Ms L Whetlor, Mr H Rickard, Cllr Ms R Perrett and Cllr Ms A Bown.
- 3 It was noted that there were sufficient members present to constitute a quorum for this meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(a) Accuracy

- 4 The minutes of the meetings of this group held on 28 February and via Skype on 31 July 2020 were approved as correct records.

(b) Matters Arising

Facilities required for B station decommissioning (minutes of meeting held on 31 July 2020 refer)

- 5 Mr Evans said that no submission had yet been made in relation to planning consent for facilities required for B station decommissioning. He said that the matter would be discussed again with this Group before an application was made.
- 6 There were no further matters arising which would not be covered in presentations later in the meeting.

CLOSURE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – HINKLEY POINT A SITE

- 7 Mr Montague reported on activities at the A Site since the previous meeting, drawing particular attention to the following:

- (i) An operational pause had been introduced throughout Magnox in the early stages of the coronavirus lockdown. All operational activities had been shut down and Sites had been left in a safe state, manned only by security staff. A considerable programme of work had been required subsequently to resume operational activities in a safe manner. Some staff continued to work from home; there were currently some 300 personnel working on the Site compared with 400/450 before the pandemic.
- (ii) Precautions to help reduce the spread of coronavirus included 2 m+ distancing on all Sites with risk assessments for any activity which did not allow such distancing, the provision of hand sanitisers, increased allocation of working spaces in offices and the provision of screens, and increased provision of facilities for washing and decontamination. Efforts were made to ensure that coronavirus precautions did not distract from other fundamental safety requirements.
- (iii) Safety requirements for contractors had been modified to reflect coronavirus hazards. The Site canteen had been closed but was due to open again in four weeks' time on a limited basis.. Efforts were made to promote mental health and well-being of staff in the current difficult conditions.
- (iv) After a period of shutdown, retrievals of fuel element debris from the wet vaults had resumed on 9 October; it was hoped that some 10 tonnes of this waste would be retrieved by the end of March 2021. Consideration was being given to the possibility of being able to dispose of this waste without the need for secondary sorting to remove more highly radioactive components. If it was possible this would accelerate the rate of retrievals but it was important to ensure that waste packages were consistent with criteria for final disposal. A decision on the need for secondary sorting of this waste would be taken in the New Year.
- (v) Samples of wastes were shortly to be removed from the dry vaults for analysis which would determine processing and packaging arrangements.
- (vi) Good progress was being made with the removal of plant and equipment from the sludge canning building.
- (vii) Samples of sludge and sand were being characterised to enable decisions to be taken on how these wastes should be processed.
- (viii) Magnox had recently recruited 34 apprentices, 7 of which were based at Hinkley Point.

- (ix) Community support activities included donations towards Covid related activities. A new Magnox socio-economic website was now online.
- 8 Cllr Ms Reed asked who was responsible for decisions on the need for secondary sorting of fuel element debris waste. Mr Montague said it was a business decision requiring many factors to be taken into account, including safety of staff and the environment and compliance with regulatory requirements together with consideration of the various disposal options. He emphasised the importance when processing wastes of ensuring that the packages met the required criteria for final geological disposal.

STATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT – HINKLEY POINT B

- 9 Mr Evans reported on activities and performance at the power station since the previous meeting of this Group, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) High standards of safety performance had been maintained. It was now more than 14 years since there had been a nuclear reportable event at the Station, more than 11 years since there had been an environmental event and more than 4 years since the last lost time accident involving an EDF employee.
 - (ii) Anomalies had been found in relation to a consignment of radioactive waste desiccant which had been despatched from site for processing. A further batch which was due for consignment had been retained until improvements had been made to prevent any such recurrence and the station's processes had been independently verified.
 - (iii) Actions to prevent the spread of coronavirus included the installation of testing equipment and temperature scanning cameras, the wearing of masks by all on site except when sitting at desks and a track and trace system to be used if any individual experienced symptoms of the virus.
 - (iv) Both reactors were currently shutdown for an extended period of planned maintenance and inspection. Current estimates were for Reactor 4 to return to service on 26 February and Reactor 3 to return on 12 March 2021.
 - (v) Graphite inspections undertaken during the current outages included 27 channels in Reactor 4 and 36 channels in Reactor 3. All the results of these inspections were within expectations. It was anticipated that a revised safety case would be submitted to the ONR for assessment at the end of this year and that this assessment would be completed by February/March 2021.

- (vi) There were currently 493 employees at the station, 17 apprentices, 200 contract partners and 12 agency personnel.
 - (vii) A surveillance audit by Lloyds Register had recommended the Station's continued certification against ISO standards for the ninth consecutive year.
 - (viii) An insight review by the Inspector General for Nuclear Safety and Radioprotection had received positive feedback.
 - (ix) Arrangements had been made for emergency scheme training to be completed whilst observing Covid 19 controls.
 - (x) Guided tours of the site had been discontinued due to the pandemic and the Visitors' Centre in Bridgwater had been closed.
- 10 Cllr Phillips questioned why the preparation of safety cases took such a long time given that the results of graphite inspections were within expectations. He emphasised the high cost of these outages for the industry. Mr Evans said that this work was proceeding in parallel with similar work for Hunterston B and there were limitations on the availability of specialist resources. The safety cases were subjected to the company's internal independent assessment and consideration by the Nuclear Safety Committee before submission to the Office for Nuclear Regulation. Mr Evans emphasised the importance of this work and the need to ensure that it was completed rigorously. Mr Knowles suggested that the group might want to consider asking a specialist from ONR to provide information on its safety case assessment processes. In response to a comment by Cllr Hawley that progress on safety case work might be vulnerable to the loss of personal knowledge held by individuals, Mr Evans said that there were large teams of staff involved in this work.
- 11 In reply to a question from Cllr Eyley, Mr Evans said that he had not been aware of any changes in the responses of the emergency services due to the pandemic.

UPDATE FROM THE NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY

- 12 Mr Jenkin provided an update on current activities within the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) the period of consultation on the NDA's Draft Strategy was still current and any comments would be welcome.
 - (ii) Following consultation the NDA had published its local economic and social impact strategy. This identified socio-economic expenditure priorities for each Site.

- (iii) The draft Business Plan for 2021/22 would shortly be issued for consultation. This would reflect the spending plans for the coming year. It was understood that government would be introducing a one year settlement rather than the 3-4 year spending review which had taken place in recent years.
- (iv) Resumption of normal working arrangements following pandemic restrictions was now almost 2/3 complete at Magnox Sites. NDA staff continued to work largely from home but offices were open for use when necessary. A number of SSG meetings had been held using Zoom and other online platforms.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REPORT

13 Mr Littlewood and Ms Thomas reported on the Environment Agency's monitoring and regulatory activities in relation to Hinkley Point A Site and B Station. A report on those activities had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- (i) Regular contact had been maintained with the sites. Temporary Regulatory Position Statements had been issued which allowed limited relaxation of certain regulatory requirements provided that specified circumstances and conditions were met.
- (ii) Reports of minor events submitted to the Agency by Magnox were being reviewed to consider the appropriateness of actions taken and whether any further action was required. Neither of these events had had any environmental impact.
- (iii) The Agency had conducted a joint inspection with the ONR at Hinkley Point B on Licence Condition 28 - Examination, Inspection, Maintenance and Testing. This has been undertaken by video conferencing followed by a site visit. The results of the inspection had been satisfactory and a further joint inspection of arrangements relating to solid radioactive waste was to take place later this month. That inspection would cover the situation regarding the anomalies relating to a despatch of radioactive waste desiccant referred to by Mr Evans in his report.

OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION REPORT

14 Ms Barnes and Mr Knowles reported on ONR's regulatory activities in relation to Hinkley Point A Site and B Station. Reports from the ONR on both sites had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Ms Barnes and Mr Knowles drew particular attention to the following:

- (i) Ms Barnes had taken over responsibility as ONR Site Inspector for A Site from Mr Shaw in April.
 - (ii) In the light of Covid-19 restrictions ONR's focus was on ensuring that safe and secure operations were maintained.
 - (iii) ONR had agreed that the annual exercise to demonstrate the B Station's emergency arrangements could be deferred.
- 15 In reply to a question from Cllr Hawley, Mr Knowles said that ONR was to take over responsibility for the monitoring of nuclear safeguards from Euratom with effect from 1 January. The new arrangements had been planned for some two years and inspectors had received appropriate training.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 16 A report from Cllr Caswell as chairman of the Group had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. No issues on that report were raised by members.
- 17 Cllr Caswell said that in discussions it had been proposed by the NDA that, in the light of present circumstances relating to coronavirus restrictions, the terms of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Group should be extended by one year. He felt that this was appropriate, particularly in view of the substantial changes in Local Authority representation in the membership of this Group which might occur during the coming year.
- 18 With Ms Smith registering dissent as she felt that the proposal was undemocratic, members agreed that the term of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Group should be extended by one year to October 2022.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- 19 No business.

DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 20 It was noted that the next meeting of this Group was scheduled to be held on Friday 26 February 2021.

MJD
26 October 2020