

HINKLEY POINT SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON FRIDAY 25 JUNE 2021

- Mr Peter Evans, Hinkley Point B Station Director, reported on the station's continued high level of safety performance. He pointed out that following receipt of the consent from the Office for Nuclear Regulation, Reactors 3 and 4 had been returned to service on 22 March and 11 April respectively and since those dates had been operating at nominal full load.
- Mr. Evans said that following further planned inspections of reactor graphite later in the year, the reactors would be operated for a further final period of approximately six months and that defueling of the reactors would commence no later than 15 July 2022. He said that government had agreed a contract with EDF to cover the defueling of all the AGR reactors; this arrangement was expected to lead to savings of approximately £1 billion.
- Mr Mike Davies, B Station's Lifetime Transition Manager, described plans for defueling the AGR reactors. He said that defueling was expected to take some 3½ years and that this would occur as part of a 12 year period of decommissioning with a delay then before final site clearance. He said that during defueling there would be an increase in the number of despatches of irradiated fuel transport flasks from the site.
- Ms Laura Miles, Hinkley Point A Acting Site Director, reported on activities at the Site. She referred to a recent event on site where someone received minor injuries after a fall through a raised escape route. She explained attention given to the investigation of even minor incidents so that any issues which might prevent more serious events could be identified.
- Ms Miles reported on progress with the retrieval of waste from storage vaults and the commissioning of the waste encapsulation plant together with the arrangement for transporting waste packages across the site. She said that equipment for the waste preconditioning facility had been manufactured and was undergoing testing at the manufacturer's works; building work on site to accommodate this equipment had been completed.
- Members received reports from the NDA and from inspectors representing the Environment Agency and the Office for Nuclear Regulation. Inspections by regulators had given satisfactory results. Mr David Wallace of the NDA explained arrangements approved by government for the AGR stations to be transferred to NDA ownership for decommissioning after defuelling had been completed by EDF. NDA would work closely with EDF during the defuelling phase.

- Proposals for changes in the membership of the Group were discussed in advance of submission for formal approval at the next meeting.

HINKLEY POINT SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held via Zoom on Friday 25 June 2021

PRESENT

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

Elected Members

Cllr R Birkenhead	-	Otterhampton Parish Council
Mr A Debenham	-	Stop Hinkley
Cllr Ms A Bown	-	Sedgemoor District Council
Cllr H Davies	-	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Cllr B Eyley	-	Kilve Parish Council
Cllr M Facey	-	Sedgemoor District Council
Cllr Ms S Goss	-	Stogursey Parish Council
Cllr W Hawley	-	Fiddington Parish Council
Mr A Jeffery	-	Bridgwater & W Somerset Green Party
Cllr E Plomgren	-	Holford Parish Council
Cllr L Redman	-	Bridgwater Town Council
Cllr Ms A Reed	-	Wembdon Parish Council
Cllr G Richardson	-	North Somerset Council
Ms C Slaymaker	-	Nether Stowey Parish Council
Ms M Smith	-	Forum 21

Co-opted Members

Mr M Brown (Vice Chairman)

Appointed Members

Mr D Wallace	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Ms C Gallery-Strong	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr D Knowles	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Ms T Braithwaite	-	Environment Agency
Ms V Thomas	-	Environment Agency
Mr R Davies	-	Somerset County Council
Ms L Martin	-	Somerset County Council

EDF

Mr M Davies
Mr M Pardo
Mr D Uminski
Mr J Mason

Magnox

Ms K Basra-Steele

Mr W Hamilton

Ms J Callander

Ms G Coombs

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. He expressed a particular welcome to Ms Laura Miles, Acting Site Director, Hinkley Point A Site and Ms Kirandeep Basra Steele who would be taking up her appointment as A Site Director in due course.
- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Mr H Rickard, Cllr M Reid, Mr M Laver, Cllr M Phillips, Mr S Morgan, Cllr K Pearson, Mr J Jenkin, and Mr D Stokes.
- 3 It was noted that there were sufficient members present to constitute a quorum for this meeting. Cllr Caswell reminded members of the importance of reporting back accurately to their member organisations on matters discussed at these meetings.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(a) Accuracy

- 4 The minutes of the meeting of this Group held via Zoom on 26 February 2021 were approved as a correct record.

(b) Matters Arising

- 5 There were no matters arising from the minutes which would not be covered in presentations later in the meeting.

STATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT – HINKLEY POINT B

- 6 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 at the station. With this good performance, everyone was aware of the danger of

complacency but attention was given to minor events to ensure that any lessons were learned to avoid more serious issues.

- (ii) Station staff had worked with the Environment Agency to ensure that issues arising from the Agency's warning letter relating to the despatch of a consignment of spent desiccant had been adequately addressed.
- (iii) The Office for Nuclear Regulation had approved the graphite safety case and given consent for the return to service of both reactors. Reactor 3 had returned to service on 22 March and Reactor 4 on 11 April. Following good preparatory work during the outages these operations had been completed smoothly and both reactors had operated at nominal full load since returning to service.
- (iv) Following further planned inspections later this year, the reactors would complete one further final period of operation. The length of these periods of operation would be determined by the rate of fuel burn-up but would be approximately six months. Defuelling of the reactors would start no later than 15 July 2022. A defuelling contract had been agreed with the government to cover all the AGR reactors.
- (v) During maintenance work, water had been found in pipework on the discharge side of reactor gas relief valves. This had been found to be due to rainwater ingress caused by damaged hoods covering the outlet pipework. All lines had been drained and replacement hoods fitted.
- (vi) Checks carried out following the discovery of incorrect material having been used in a control rod articulated joint (as reported at the previous meeting) had confirmed that other rods were unaffected by this problem.
- (vii) There were currently 494 full-time EDF personnel at the station, 8 apprentices, 11 former Horizon Nuclear Power apprentices, 200 contract partners and 17 agency staff
- (viii) An exercise of the station's emergency arrangements was to be undertaken on 16 September and a security exercise was to take place on 21 July. It was possible that the site siren would sound during these exercises.
- (ix) Staff and contract partners at the Station had raised over £15000 for Prostate Cancer UK, EDF's chosen charity.

7 In response to a question from Cllr Richardson relating to the root cause of the problems associated with the despatch of spent desiccant, Mr. Evans said that actions taken included changes in weighing procedures and the introduction of more independent checking.

- 8 In reply to further questions from Cllr Richardson, Mr. Evans said that the reactor gas safety relief valves had never been required to operate during the life of the station to date. The ingress of water had raised concerns over potential water hammer and steam generation in the event of a valve opening.
- 9 Mr Jeffery acknowledged with thanks receipt of information provided to him by Mr Evans.
- 10 Cllr Eyley asked whether the former Horizon Nuclear Power apprentices would be employed by EDF on completion of their training. Mr. Evans informed him that this would be the case.
- 11 Cllr Ms Bown drew attention to what she believed was an increased level of traffic through Wembdon and asked whether numbers of staff were increasing, or individuals were not sharing transport. Mr. Evans said that numbers of staff had not changed significantly; he said that individuals had travelled alone in cars due to COVID restrictions, but he undertook to check the situation with the other sites.
- 12 Ms Smith drew attention to the impact on local authorities of the reduction in business rates with the station ending operation.

HINKLEY POINT B DEFUELLING PLANS

- 13 Mr Davies outlined plans for defuelling the Advanced Gas-Cooled (AGR) Reactors. He said that each of the seven AGR reactor stations would commence decommissioning during the coming decade. Hunterston B was expected to commence defuelling early in 2022 and Hinkley Point B to follow during the second half of the year. He said that defuelling and despatch of the fuel would remove 99% of the radioactivity from the sites. EDF had reached agreement with the government on a contract for defuelling the AGR reactors. Mr Davies said that defuelling involved procedures which were essentially an extension of normal operation and the involvement of EDF in this work, with the company's operational experience, was expected to lead to savings of £1 billion.
- 14 Mr Davies said that each AGR reactor contained approximately 300 channels of fuel which had to be removed and the despatch of this fuel from the site would require some 400 irradiated fuel flask movements. It was anticipated that this process would take 3½ to 5 years; Dungeness B would take the longest as its design had more fuel channels.
- 15 In Mr Davies's replies to questions from Cllr Richardson, Cllr Ms Reid, Cllr Hawley, Mrs Smith, Mr Jeffrey and Cllr Redman, the following points were noted:

- (i) The timescale of defueling was determined largely by the logistics of arrangements for the despatch of fuel from the site; there was only limited scope for accelerating procedures on the site.
- (ii) Decommissioning, which happens alongside defueling, was expected to take 12 years, followed by a period of delay before final site clearance. It was noted that Sedgemoor District Council was giving consideration to the possibility of a fusion reactor facility being developed on the Hinkley Point site.
- (iii) It was anticipated that intermediate level radioactive waste arising from decommissioning would be stored on site. There would be opportunities for NDA and Magnox to consider storage arrangements.
- (iv) During normal operations there had been approximately one despatch of an irradiated fuel transport flask from B Station per week. During defueling this could be expected to increase to about three despatches per week.

SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – HINKLEY POINT A SITE

- 16 Ms Miles reported on activities at the A Site since the previous meeting, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) Ms Miles described circumstances where an escape route through scaffolding flooring had been masked by asbestos enclosure material and an individual had sustained minor injuries when they fell through the short drop; careful consideration of these circumstances had identified positive improvements applicable to other projects, induction procedures, containment arrangements and working procedures. Any minor incidents were examined carefully to identify any issues which might help to prevent more serious events.
 - (ii) A number of issues at the environmental analysis laboratories had identified opportunities for learning and improving arrangements including changes in the layout of the facilities.
 - (iii) Coronavirus precautions remained in place with staff continuing to work from home where appropriate. Home testing kits were provided for all staff and social distancing arrangements remained in place. Currently there were no coronavirus cases on site.
 - (iv) Sustainability was being integrated into the company's normal working practices. Steps were being taken to reduce carbon footprint and nurture biodiversity.

- (v) Some 14 tonnes of fuel element debris was to be retrieved from storage vaults during the current year and there was a target of 22 despatch shipments of low level waste.
 - (vi) During the current year the concrete encapsulation plant and the cross-site transporter system for waste packages would be subjected to inactive commissioning
 - (vii) Equipment for the waste preconditioning facility had been manufactured and was undergoing factory acceptance testing. Building works on site to accommodate the equipment had been completed.
- 12 In response to a question from Ms Smith, Ms Miles outlined actions taken to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic items on the Site including issuing reusable cups and wooden cutlery.
- 13 In reply to a question from Mr Jeffery on the timescale of FED retrievals, Ms Miles said that this was currently covered by a six-year programme of work. In response to a further question from Mr Jeffery, Mr Evans said that the retrieval of asbestos from Hinkley Point B Station during decommissioning would present fewer problems than at A Site.

UPDATE FROM THE NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY

- 14 Mr Wallace provided an update on current activities within the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) NDA staff continued to work from home where appropriate and there had been very low rates of coronavirus infection within the group.
 - (ii) Dounreay had transferred to NDA ownership on 1 April and Nuclear Transport Solutions, a new company to cover all NDA's transport services had been launched on 30 April.
 - (iii) NDA had published its strategy document, business plan, sustainability report and annual report and accounts.
 - (iv) The Holliday report, commissioned by government to investigate issues associated with NDA's Magnox management contract, had been published in March. Interim recommendations had already been acted upon and NDA would give a full response in due course.
 - (v) Working groups established in Copeland and Allerdale to consider issues associated with the possible location of a geological disposal facility had started their work. The establishment of these groups did not imply that the facility would inevitably be established in those areas; it was for other

local areas to establish working groups if they wished to be considered as a potential host location.

- (vi) The department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy had carried out a departmental review of the NDA.
 - (vii) NDA had welcomed the government's announcement on decommissioning of the AGR reactors. The AGR sites would transfer progressively to NDA as defuelling was completed. There would be close working with EDF during the defuelling period.
- 15 Cllr Ms Goss drew attention to the consultations in relation to the establishment of a geological disposal facility being carried out following the establishment of working groups in Cumbria. She asked whether NDA was also undertaking consultations in relation to any assessments which it might be carrying out as to the suitability of other areas for a GDF facility. Mr Wallace had no information on this but would establish the position [see para 26 below].

INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

- 16 Ms Gallery-Strong presented information on the NDA's integrated waste management programme which sought to provide for the sustainable, timely and cost-effective management of all radioactive waste in the UK. She explained its objectives, organisational arrangements, and benefits.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REPORT

- 17 Ms Thomas and Ms Braithwaite 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) Inspections at B Station has included a review of the control of major accident hazard arrangements undertaken jointly with ONR. Inspections had found no issues of non-compliance, but recommendations had been made for consideration by the station. Meetings with station staff had also included an annual review of environmental performance.
 - (ii) Inspections on A Site had included a higher activity waste inspection undertaken jointly with the ONR. No non-compliances had been identified but recommendations had been made for consideration. During an inspection on environmental awareness, the Agency's inspectors had been pleased with the level of awareness amongst personnel.

OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION REPORT

- 18 Mr Knowles reported on ONR's regulatory activities in relation to Hinkley Point B Station and A Site. Reports from the ONR relating to both sites had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Mr Knowles drew particular attention to the following:
- (i) Following a period in which inspections had been carried out remotely as far as possible, inspection arrangements were now returning to normal. Inspections undertaken since the previous meeting had given satisfactory results.
 - (ii) Following the resolution of issues associated with the graphite safety case for B Station, inspectors would now be giving consideration to preparations for defuelling.
 - (iii) Due to the rating of the issue reported earlier in the meeting involving gas safety relief valves as Level 1 on the International Nuclear Event Scale, the ONR was considering whether any further regulatory action was required.

MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

- 19 Mr Brown reported on the outcome of a review of the membership of this Group which he had conducted together with members of a subgroup established for the purpose. The review had included correspondence with member organisations and consideration of attendance records. The provisional recommendations were as follows:
- (i) Membership should be withdrawn from:
 - Pawlett, Chilton Trinity and Over Stowey Parish Councils;
 - English Nature and the Country Landowners Association; and
 - Mendip District Council
 - (ii) Following the merger of West Somerset and Taunton Deane District Councils, which held three and one voting member respectively, Somerset West and Taunton Council should be invited to nominate only two representatives.
- 20 Mr. Brown said that the subgroup had also recognised that membership of this Group would be affected by changes in local government organisation within Somerset. It had been felt that these changes should be addressed separately in due course.

- 21 Mr. Brown said that consideration had also been given to the scope for increasing the representation of young people on the SSG. It had been suggested that students at the nuclear college might be invited to attend meetings as observers and it had been felt that this issue required further consideration.
- 22 During discussion Cllr Ms Goss suggested that it might be appropriate for the Group to seek to engage with young people in their own environments. Ms Smith felt that students from other institutions as well as the nuclear college should be involved. Ms Martin suggested that Young Somerset might be consulted. Ms Braithwaite suggested that it might be possible to interact with young people via social media and that it might be appropriate to seek representation from “35-year-old mums”.
- 23 It was noted that final recommendations of the subgroup in relation to changes in the membership of the Group would be considered at the next meeting of the Group to be held on 29 October.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 24 A report from Cllr Caswell as chairman of the Group had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. He thanked members for their participation in discussion at this meeting.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- 25 Cllr Plomgren referred to the comment made by Cllr Caswell at the start of the meeting on the need for accurate feedback to member organisations on matters discussed at these meetings. He said that he placed the minutes of these meetings on his parish council's website and said that the summary page at the start of the minutes was particularly useful in this context. He asked that all those presenting information to meetings of the Group should be reminded of the need to avoid abbreviations and acronyms which would not be understood by members of the public. Cllr Ms Reid supported the comments made by Cllr Plomgren on placing minutes of these meetings on member organisations' websites.
- 26 Mr Wallace offered to provide for the information of members, links to information on processes carried out by Radioactive Waste Management in relation to the identification of a site for a geological disposal facility.

DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 27 It was noted that the next meeting of this Group was scheduled to be held on Friday 29 October 2021.

MJD

28 June 2021