

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

- Mr John Stanton welcomed members to the meeting which was again being held via the Zoom digital platform due to the continuing high number of coronavirus infections in the local area.
- 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. He said that robust COVID precautions remained in force on both Sites to limit the potential spread of infection, but the virus had had no effect on operations at either Site.
- There had been no retrievals of radioactive waste from the vaults at Berkeley since the previous meeting, but work continued on the commissioning and testing of handling equipment. Trials of the waste encapsulation plant were continuing and the necessary consent for the use of this plant had been granted. Retrieval of waste from the vaults was scheduled to re commence in the New Year.
- Decommissioning work in the former cooling ponds at Oldbury continued including the removal of a large heat exchanger which was scheduled for despatch. Despatches of waste from the Site included a large volume of asbestos waste and two ductile cast iron containers which had been sent to Berkeley for storage.
- Temporary buildings were being installed at Oldbury to provide accommodation for staff vacating buildings which were due for demolition. The Oldbury Technical Centre was due to close at the end of 2021 with staff moving to office accommodation at Almondsbury; surplus office equipment was being donated to local charities.
- Mr Simon Napper of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority reported on current issues and Mr Eddie Pollock described the current use of the Berkeley railhead.
- 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.
- Mr Andy Bates explained the progress of the Severn Edge nomination for hosting the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) facility at the Oldbury and Berkeley sites. It was noted that this nomination was one of the five sites remaining under consideration and that a final decision on the selection of the site for development would be made at the end of 2022.

**BERKELEY AND OLDBURY ON SEVERN SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM
ON WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER 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 J O'Neill	-	Stroud District Council
Cllr C Davies	-	Stinchcombe Parish Council
Mr S Henderson	-	Gloucester Harbour Trustees
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish 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 S Napper	-	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 E Pollock	-	Nuclear Transport Solutions
Mr A Bates	-	Business West
Mr J Townes	-	
Ms A Presdee	-	
Mr M Heaton	-	Oldbury and Berkeley Sites Director
Mr P Clarke	-	Oldbury Site
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox Communications
Mrs E Vaughan Lewis	-	Magnox Communications
Ms B French		
Dr J McHugh		
Mr G Vaughan Lewis		
Mr T Hellen		
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 due to the recent increased incidence of coronavirus infections in the local area.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr G Langdon, Ms S Williams, Ms S Baillie MP, Mr K Warren, Prof T Smith, Mr G Wheeler, Cllr D Griffiths, Dr J Cordwell, Mr A Mitchell, Cllr T Kirton, and Mr I Gwyn

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Accuracy

- 3 The minutes of the joint meeting of the Berkeley and Oldbury SSGs held on 28 July 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

(b) Matters arising

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

SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- 5 Mr Heaton reported on recent activities at the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) There had been no significant safety or environmental events at either Site since the time of the previous meeting. Robust precautions remained in place on the Sites to limit the potential spread of coronavirus, but the virus had had no effect on operations at either Site.
 - (ii) The company was developing a sustainability strategy
 - (iii) There had been no retrievals of waste from the vaults at Berkeley since the previous meeting. The installation and commissioning of equipment for the handling of these wastes was continuing and the retrieval of waste from the vaults was planned to recommence in the New Year
 - (iv) Commissioning and operational trials of the concrete box encapsulation plant at Berkeley were continuing. The trial filling of two boxes with simulated non-active waste had been completed and a third trial box was planned to demonstrate the complete process. The necessary permission had been granted to allow the use of this concrete box waste packaging system.
 - (v) A programme of decommissioning activities indicated the completion of planned demolition work on the Berkeley Site by 2036. A meeting to discuss the preferred end state for the Site had been postponed due to changes in programme.
 - (vi) Decommissioning of the former cooling ponds at Oldbury was continuing including the removal of a large heat exchanger which was planned for disposal. Work on the size reduction of former pond skips was due to commence in the coming weeks.

- (vii) Waste shipments from the Oldbury Site included a large volume of asbestos waste for authorised disposal and the despatch of two ductile cast iron containers of waste to Berkeley; a third such container was due to be despatched to Berkeley in January.
 - (viii) Inspections of the external glazing of the Oldbury reactor and turbine hall buildings were currently being carried out.
 - (ix) Temporary buildings were being installed at Oldbury to provide accommodation for staff from the administration building which was due for demolition. Demolition of the former turbine hall was due to commence in 18 months' time.
 - (x) The timescale for future decommissioning and demolition work at Oldbury indicated completion of planned work by 2033.
 - (xi) The Oldbury Technical Centre was planned for closure at the end of 2021 with staff being relocated to office accommodation at Almondsbury. Surplus office equipment had been donated to local charities and the office buildings were scheduled for demolition.
- 6 Cllr Riddle asked whether consideration had been given to leasing the Oldbury Technical Centre buildings to other businesses which would provide local employment. Mr Heaton pointed out that refurbishment of the buildings to make them suitable for future use would require disproportionate expenditure and the land had been identified as suitable for future use by a possible STEP project.
- 7 Mr Lynden asked whether the granting of permission for use of the concrete box encapsulation plant at Berkeley would allow the use of similar plants at other sites such as Hinkley Point. Mr Heaton said that the permission was specific to the Berkeley waste stream, but the approval did provide a basis for the approval of similar plants at other sites.
- 8 Cllr Mrs Ashton drew attention to a flood defence group, of which she was a member, which had received indications of a potential substantial increase in sea water levels. Ms Cleverley undertook to ensure that the appropriate person within the Environment Agency would provide help for this group.
- 9 Cllr Davies asked whether there were plans for recladding the main buildings at the Oldbury Site. Mr Heaton said that the current inspection work included the tightening of fixings where necessary, but it was possible that some recladding might be necessary at some stage.

NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY

- 9 Mr Napper pointed out that Mr Jenkin was being seconded to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. He reported on current NDA issues, drawing attention to the following:

- (i) NDA staff were continuing to work largely from home. A managed return to office working was taking place.
 - (ii) The NDA had published its Annual Report and Accounts and its Strategy document.
 - (iii) Implementation of the new Group Leadership structure within NDA was continuing. Dounreay had been transferred to NDA ownership. A new Nuclear Waste Services division was being formed to combine the Low Level Waste Repository and Radioactive Waste Management organisations within a single executive team.
 - (iv) 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.
 - (v) A working group had been established in Theddlethorpe, Lincolnshire, to facilitate discussions on the possible scope for establishing a geological disposal facility for radioactive waste in that area. Working groups had already been established in Copeland and Allerdale in Cumbria.
 - (vi) Government and NDA had published their responses to the recommendations of the Magnox inquiry and departmental review. Many of the recommendations had already been addressed within the NDA's new organisational arrangements.
 - (vii) A major supply chain event was to be held by NDA in February.
- 10 Cllr Davies suggested that former Magnox power station sites currently undergoing decommissioning might be suitable for the location of new power stations based upon Small Modular Reactors.
- 11 In reply to a question from Mr Stanton, Mr Napper said it was too early to identify cost savings which might result from the NDA's new organisational structure, but he said that the government was continuously looking for savings from all such bodies.

NUCLEAR TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

- 12 Mr Pollock outlined the nature and scope of the services provided by Direct Rail Services which was now combined within the Nuclear Transport Services organisation within the NDA. He described the railheads which were spread across the country, including the Berkeley railhead which had been used for the loading of spent fuel from Berkeley and Oldbury on to the rail network.
- 13 Mr Pollock said that the Berkeley railhead was currently being used for the transport of waste materials from Harwell. He said that this arrangement had

been in place for some six years and there had been no recent change in this operation. The waste was mainly low level waste and some intermediate waste.

- 14 Cllr Chandler, who had raised the use of the railhead at the previous meeting, said that he and Parish Council colleagues had not been aware of the use of the railhead for waste from another site. He questioned why the low level waste did not complete its journey by road. Mr Pollock said that the use of rail for the transport of waste from Harwell to Sellafield and Drigg provided an economic and good logistical arrangement. In reply to further questions from Cllr Chandler about the nature of the waste from Harwell and the arrangements for regulatory oversight of activities at the railhead, Mr Pollack said that the content of waste packages was a matter for the consignor and the railhead facilities were subject to regular inspections. The sealed packages came to the railhead and were there transferred intact on to the railway system. Mr Morgan advised that the railheads were outside of the range of the licenced nuclear sites. He said that regulatory oversight of these sites might be the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive with powers under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Ionising Radiations Regulations.

OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION

- 15 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 undertaken at the sites since the previous meeting included arrangements for transport safety, site plans, designs and specifications, management systems and security. Inspectors had been satisfied with the adequacy of the arrangements in all cases.
 - (ii) Mr Morgan had attended various other meetings with Magnox and other regulators and had had helpful meetings also with Site Safety Representatives.
 - (iii) ONR had been satisfied with arrangements made by the licensee as precautions for dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Inspectors undertook COVID tests before visiting Sites.
 - (iv) ONR had received an award for the performance of its project to take over the role of nuclear safeguards regulator.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

- 16 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:
- (v) Agency inspectors continued to work largely from home where appropriate but maintained close contact with the Sites.

- (vi) Inspectors had carried out a joint inspection of the environmental monitoring programme including inspection of arrangements for the collection and processing of environmental samples. No non-conformances had been found, staff had been knowledgeable and housekeeping standards had been good. Ms Cleverley referred to the possible need for operational instructions to cover the collection of environmental samples.
- (vii) Discharges of radioactivity at both sites remained very low in relation to permitted limits.

17 In reply to a question from Mr Lynden, Mr Heaton said that although COVID infection case rates within the local area were currently high the pandemic had had no impact on operations at either Site. The company maintained stringent controls at the Sites and there was no evidence of any transmission of the virus on the Sites.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING REPORT

- 18 Mr Clarke reported on the monitoring of discharges and radioactivity in the environment undertaken by Magnox at Oldbury for the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites. A report on the past year's monitoring results had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.
- 20 Mr Clarke said that although it had not been possible to carry out monitoring as normal during the first of the lockdown periods, there had still been an extensive programme of monitoring during 2020. He said that the scope of the programme had been reviewed following the completion of draining of the Oldbury cooling ponds; the results of the Agency's consideration of this review was awaited.
- 21 Mr Clarke said that discharges of radioactivity remained at very low levels, well within permitted limits and the effect of changes in the operational status of the Oldbury plant could be clearly seen in the monitoring results.
- 21 Mr Clarke said that there had been no unexpected changes in discharges of radioactivity during the past year. He said that, with the Agreement of the Environment Agency the environmental monitoring programme had been reduced in 2020 due to COVID restrictions, but that the programme demonstrated that there had been no significant change in levels of radioactivity in the local environment.

BID FOR HOSTING A STEP FACILITY

- 22 It was noted that the Severn Edge bid to host the UK's first fusion power plant facility at the Oldbury and Berkeley Sites had progressed to the stage of being considered as one of the final five nominations. Mr. Bates pointed out that there would be increased interaction with the UK Atomic Energy Authority as it carried out detailed assessments of the remaining competing nominations. He said that the UKAEA's decision on its final choice of a site was expected to be ready for the approval of the Secretary of State in late 2022.

- 23 Mr Bates reminded members of the reasons for the government's decision to invest in the STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) project, against the background of the need to decarbonize energy production and growing demand for electricity. The Severn Edge nomination was based upon use of the Oldbury and Berkeley sites. Each of the other sites nominated had their own strengths and challenges.
- 24 Mr Stanton said that members of the Group had expressed strong support for the nomination and would be willing to give any further help if that was possible in due course. Mr Bates said that the project would keep in touch with the Group and provide further information when it became available. He undertook to circulate to members copies of his presentation slides.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

- 25 Mr Stanton reported on recent activities on behalf of the Group.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 26 No business

DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 27 It was noted that the next meeting of this Group was scheduled to be held on 26 January 2022.

MJD
31 October 2021