

**BERKELEY NUCLEAR LICENSED SITE
SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

**SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ARISING AT THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2017**

- Mr Mike Heaton, Site Closure Director, reported on activities on the Site. He said that high standards of safety had been maintained and the Site had been in compliance with all regulatory requirements.
- Mr Heaton said that a decision was awaited from the Office for Nuclear Regulation on its assessment of a report which, if approved, would allow simplification of emergency planning arrangements.
- Twenty three ductile cast iron containers had been filled with fuel element debris from Vault 2 and transferred to the Interim Storage Facility. Retrieval of this waste was currently suspended pending a review of the safety case; this followed the discovery of more than anticipated fragments of fuel in the waste.
- Mr Heaton said that work on the design of facilities for the retrieval and processing of wastes from Vaults 1 and 3 was in progress and it was hoped that work on site to provide those facilities would commence in the autumn.
- Mr Heaton said that a decision was expected from Gloucestershire County Council during February on the planning application for construction of a waste encapsulation plant. Subject to that consent being given it was anticipated that work on the construction of the plant would commence in April/May. In order to meet required timescales this construction work would take place in parallel with the process of securing approval for the use of the concrete containers.
- Reports were received from the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency on the results of their regulatory and inspection activities at the Berkeley site.
- Mr Stanton reported on discussions with Radioactive Waste Management Ltd and representatives of other Site Stakeholder Groups on possible changes in regulatory arrangements as nuclear sites reach the final stages of decommissioning and clean-up. This matter will be the subject of public consultation and a response will be submitted from this Group in due course.
- Cllr Mrs Wride reported on her discussions with the Chairs of other Site Stakeholder Groups. These discussions had included an overview of activities at other sites and matters of common interest. She encouraged all those at the meeting to report back to their member organisations on matters discussed at this meeting.

BERKELEY NUCLEAR LICENSED SITE

SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT

THE BERKELEY ARMS HOTEL ON WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2017

PRESENT:

Cllr Mrs P Wride (Chair)	-	Ham and Stone Parish Council
Mr S Andrews	-	Staff Representative
Cllr Mrs L Ashton	-	Berkeley Town Council
Mr J Beckett	-	Stroud District Council
Cllr F Brown	-	Berkeley Town Council
Cllr S Chandler	-	Hamfallow Parish Council
Cllr J Cordwell	-	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr J Sant	-	Stinchcombe Parish Council
Mr J Stanton	-	Co-opted member
Cllr B Tipper	-	Gloucestershire County Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr J Jenkin	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr P Dickenson	-	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Mr A Davis	-	Environment Agency
Mr M Lynden	-	Oldbury on Severn SSG Chairman
Mr M Heaton	-	Site Closure Director
Ms G Coombs	-	Magnox
Mr M J Davis (Secretary)		

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Cllr Mrs Wride welcomed all those present to this meeting of the Berkeley Nuclear Licensed Site Stakeholder Group.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Mr Neil Carmichael MP, Mr P Heath, Cllr G Vaughan Lewis, Ms B French, Ms S Dracott, Cllr S Patterson, Mr C Cherry, Cllr Mrs H Molyneux, Mr D Wride and Mr A Moore.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Accuracy

- 3 The minutes of the meeting of this Group held on 27 July 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

(b) Matters arising

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

BERKELEY SITE CLOSURE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

5 Mr Heaton presented a report on current activities at the Berkeley Site, drawing particular attention to the following:

- (i) The company's Target Zero safety campaign was currently focused on waste awareness. Good progress had been made on site recently with the removal of low level radioactive waste and non-radioactive waste.
- (ii) There had been no injuries or significant events since the previous meeting and no breaches of regulatory requirements.
- (iii) A decision was awaited from ONR on its assessment of the Site's report which had concluded that there was no longer a need for plans to be maintained for dealing with an off-site release of radioactivity.
- (iv) The repair of the roof over the Active Effluent Treatment Plant was underway and would be completed by the end of February.
- (v) 23 ductile cast iron containers had been filled with fuel element debris from Vault 2 and transferred to the Interim Storage Facility. This represented approximately 10% of the volume of waste in this vault. Retrieval of this waste was currently suspended pending a review of the safety case. This was being undertaken following the discovery of a greater than expected number of fuel fragments amongst the waste. It was hoped that it would be possible to resume retrievals during the following week.
- (vi) Design work was continuing on equipment for the retrieval of wastes from Vaults 1 and 3. It was hoped that this design work would be completed by March and that work on site to provide these retrieval facilities could commence in the autumn.
- (vii) It was anticipated that Gloucestershire County Council would announce its decision on the planning application for an encapsulation plant during February. If the necessary consent was granted it was hoped that construction of the facility would be able to be started in April/May.
- (viii) The deadline for applications for socio-economic funding was imminent.

- 6 In response to a question from Cllr Mrs Ashton, Mr Heaton outlined the nature of materials classed as low level radioactive waste and the arrangements for despatch of this waste to the Low Level Waste Repository at Drigg in Cumbria.
- 7 In reply to a question from Cllr Chandler, Mr Heaton said that the safety case for retrieval of fuel element debris had anticipated that fragments of fuel might be present in the waste. It had been envisaged that this could have arisen from fuel elements being broken during the desplitting process, particularly when visibility in the pond had been limited. The discovery of a virtually complete element had not been anticipated.
- 8 In reply to a question from Mr Stanton, Mr Heaton said that, subject to receipt of the necessary planning consent, construction of the encapsulation plant would proceed with a view to having the plant available for first use in 2019. He said that this construction work would take place in parallel with the process of seeking approval for the encapsulation of waste in the concrete boxes. This approach was necessary to ensure that the wastes could be processed in the required timescale. He anticipated that approvals granted for the encapsulation of particular waste streams would be applicable at other sites.

UPDATE FROM NUCLEAR DECOMMISSIONING AUTHORITY

- 9 Mr Jenkin provided an update on issues of interest to the NDA, drawing particular attention to the following:
- (i) Consultation was taking place with members of Magnox staff on proposed changes to their current final salary pension scheme. The changes were part of government-led reforms of public sector pensions. The two arrangements under consideration, on which the views of affected staff members were being sought, were a career averaged revalued earnings arrangement or a pensionable pay cap. He understood that talks between trades unions and government were continuing on this matter.
 - (ii) Mr Tom Smith had been appointed as Chairman of the NDA to succeed Mr Stephen Henwood who would be stepping down from the post on 1 March 2017.
 - (iii) Dr Adrian Simper, NDA's Strategy & Technology Director, had been awarded an OBE for services to the UK nuclear industry in Japan. NDA Chief Executive John Clarke had been given a lifetime achievement award by the Nuclear Industry Association.
 - (iv) A start had been made on the removal of sludge from the Pile Fuel Storage Pond at Sellafield. This was the world's oldest nuclear fuel storage pond.
 - (v) Consultation on the NDA's draft business plan for the next three years was open until 3 February.

- (vi) The NDA's annual supply chain event in November had been attended by more than 1500 representatives of all levels of the supply chain.
 - (vii) Items contained in the spent fuel ponds at Dungeness A were being cut up and retrieved by divers working underwater. The water provided additional shielding from the sources of radioactivity and this method of working reduced the potential for airborne contamination.
 - (viii) Good progress was being made with the removal of ancillary pipework associated with the Steam Generating Heavy Water Reactor at Winfrith. This work was necessary to allow the decommissioning of the reactor vessel itself.
 - (ix) Essex County Council had given a planning decision which allowed packaged intermediate level wastes from Sizewell and Dungeness to be stored on site at Bradwell.
- 10 In reply to a question from Cllr Tipper, Mr Jenkin said that the safe retrieval of sludge from the Sellafield Pile Fuel Storage Pond represented a significant engineering achievement and this would now lead to a better understanding of the characterisation of the waste material. Mr Lynden referred to a programme - "Britain's Nuclear Secrets - Inside Sellafield" which had been shown on BBC4 on the evening prior to this meeting; he said this had given a good factual description of the history of the Sellafield site and helped to put into context some of the issues it currently faced.
- 11 Mr Andrews emphasised the extreme strength of feeling amongst staff raised by the current consultation on proposed changes in pension arrangements. He felt that the consultation arrangements showed a lack of respect for staff and the normal processes of negotiation which were well established within the industry. He felt that Magnox staff were in a unique position in carrying out decommissioning work which would lead to their jobs disappearing. He said that the staff, many of whom brought skills to the job from earlier operational experience, were now getting older and without the security of established pension arrangements might well have looked for employment opportunities elsewhere in the past. He said that many staff were very unhappy even to contemplate the possibility of industrial action and the damage which that might do to the company.
- 12 Referring to the honours awarded to Dr Simper and Mr Clarke, Cllr Mrs Wride acknowledged the helpful contribution they had made in discussions at national stakeholder group meetings. She undertook to send letters of congratulations on behalf of members; Mr Lynden asked that Oldbury SSG members should be associated with those comments.
- 13 In response to a question from Cllr Mrs Ashton, Mr Jenkin explained that the despatch of intermediate level wastes from Sizewell and Dungeness to Bradwell for interim storage was part of an overall waste management strategy. The transfer of waste from Oldbury to Berkeley was similarly a part of that strategy; the strategy gave considerable savings by optimising the use of storage capacity

on sites. Mr Heaton said it was anticipated that some 73 containers of intermediate level waste would be transferred from Oldbury to Berkeley for storage; 10 of these would contain Ionsiv filters and cartridges, some of which had been transferred to Oldbury from Sizewell and Dungeness.

- 14 Cllr Brown asked why there were differences in the volumes of wastes at the different sites. Mr Heaton explained that the nature of the waste varied with different designs and the volumes of waste could be affected significantly by pond management practices over the operational life of the plant. Mr Andrews pointed out that in addition to the Berkeley power station waste, the wastes stored on the Berkeley site included materials which had been sent to the nuclear laboratories from all other sites.

UPDATE FROM THE OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION

- 15 Mr Dickenson, ONR Site Inspector, reported on his inspection activities at the Berkeley Site. He said that with the reduction in the hazards on the site the frequency of his inspection visits had been reduced, but he maintained close contact with the site. He emphasised the value of inspections being undertaken jointly between ONR and the Environment Agency. He had been involved in discussions earlier that day with the Site and the EA Inspector reviewing current and future issues.
- 16 Mr Dickenson said that his most recent inspection visit had included accumulations of waste and decommissioning progress. He acknowledged a significant reduction in the volume of waste on site.
- 17 Mr Dickenson confirmed the expectation in the safety case that fragments of fuel were likely to be found in fuel element debris; he hoped that ONR personnel would be involved in the review of the safety case.

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

- 18 Mr Davis presented a report on the Environment Agency's inspection activities at the Berkeley Site. He said that at decommissioning sites, as nuclear safety issues decreased, waste management issues tended to increase and the focus of the EA in future would be upon the assessment, storage and inspection of wastes. He echoed the comments made by Mr Dickenson on the value of joint ONR/EA inspections.
- 19 Mr Davis pointed out that Magnox would be proceeding at some commercial risk by undertaking the construction of an encapsulation plant in advance of the necessary consent being granted to allow the boxes to be used for waste disposal. He acknowledged the action taken by the site in renewing the roof over the Active Effluent Treatment Plant to eliminate the possibility of water ingress and the consequent secondary waste arising.
- 20 In reply to a question from Mr Lynden, Mr Davis said that approval of the concrete box for storage of waste was dependent upon the package being acceptable for ultimate disposal in a deep geological disposal facility. It was

noted that concrete boxes had been used for the packaging of wastes from decommissioning of the Windscale AGR and this type of package was used in some overseas countries.

- 21 Cllr Mrs Ashton asked whether progress had been made with the selection of a site for the location of a geological disposal facility. Mr Jenkin said that consideration was still being given to policy and procedural issues. It had been felt after the previous failure to agree on a potential location that insufficient information had been made available about the community benefits from hosting such a facility.

REGULATION OF NUCLEAR SITES IN THE FINAL STAGES OF DECOMMISSIONING AND CLEAN-UP

- 22 Mr Stanton reported on a Radioactive Waste Management workshop meeting he had attended on issues associated with the regulation of nuclear sites in the final stages of decommissioning and clean-up. He said that these issues had not been considered when the existing regulatory framework was established.
- 23 Mr Stanton said that the meeting had considered potential end states for sites and possible future regulatory arrangements. It was recognised that the extent of clean-up considered necessary would vary with different possible end states. The costs and safety issues associated with the removal of very small quantities of radioactivity could outweigh potential benefits; residual levels of radioactivity on sites could be seen against the wide variations in natural background levels of radioactivity in different parts of the country.
- 24 Mr Stanton said it was assumed that at some point the responsibilities of the ONR for regulation of nuclear sites would come to an end but the responsibilities of the Environment Agency for environmental protection and the responsibilities of Local Authorities for land use planning would continue.
- 25 Mr Stanton said that proposals for consultation would be published shortly and it was envisaged that required parliamentary consent for future arrangements would be secured in 2019.
- 26 During discussion Mr Dickinson said that current approval for removal of a Nuclear Site Licence was dependent upon the site being declared "free from danger". This requirement was considerably more onerous than the arrangements relating to other potentially hazardous materials. Mr Lynden said that it could be preferable and safer to leave some contamination on a site rather than transfer bulk materials elsewhere provided that there were sufficient controls exercised by the Environment Agency and local authorities. It was recognised that the costs of removing all subsurface structures could be enormous and not justified dependent upon the future use of the site. Cllr Chandler felt it was sensible that at some point the Nuclear Site Licence controls should be replaced by other arrangements which were compatible with those applied by the Environment Agency in relation to other types of sites.

- 27 Mr Andrews said that he had worked on the Berkeley site for many years and that, with appropriate controls on specific hazards, the site was not considered by staff to be dangerous. He emphasised that a large part of the former nuclear laboratories site had been de-licensed allowing alternative use.
- 28 Cllr Mrs Wride said that the SSG would submit a contribution to the forthcoming public consultation and invited members to provide Mr Stanton with any further comments they wished to make on this matter.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

- 29 Cllr Mrs Wride reported on a recent meeting with representatives of other SSGs. Discussions had included an update on key issues at the sites and matters of common interest. Cllr Mrs Wride referred to a general feeling amongst other SSG Chairs that whilst relationships and dialogue with Site Directors remained good, there was little interaction and dialogue with senior Cavendish Fluor managers; it had been agreed that this was regrettable.
- 30 Cllr Mrs Wride pointed out that a drop-in session was to be held in Thornbury on 8 February on the generic design assessment process being applied to the type of reactor under consideration for possible future construction at Oldbury.
- 31 Cllr Mrs Wride encouraged all those present to report back to their member organisations on issues discussed at the meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No Business

DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

- 32 It was noted that the next meeting of this Group was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 26 April 2017. It was hoped that this meeting would be held in the college facilities on the Berkeley site.

MJD

29 January 2017