

23 June 2017

## Introduction

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Hinkley Point A & B nuclear sites and related issues for the period February 2017 to June 2017.

## Radioactive substances regulation

We regulate radioactive waste disposals to the environment. We do this through environmental permits that contain limits and conditions aimed at minimising wastes and protecting the environment. We also check compliance with the permits by making regular inspections at Hinkley Point A & B.

Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCAR) detailing our inspections and any non-compliances found, are put on the Public Register<sup>[1]</sup>.

We maintain regular contact with the sites by telephone and e-mail in addition to our formal correspondence and visits to the sites.

### Hinkley Point A

Our work at Hinkley Point A (HPA) has been focussed on the following themes and issues in the last quarter:

- We have informed the site of our areas of focus for this financial year, which forms the basis of our interactions with the site. This includes inspections on asset management, training and competence, gaseous discharges as well as continued interactions on plans for Intermediate Level Waste retrievals, conditioning and storage and other decommissioning projects.
- We have responded to the Somerset County Council consultation on the planning application for the planned Modular Intermediate Level Waste Encapsulation Plant (MILWEP) which will

be used to encapsulate Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) into Robust Concrete Boxes (RCBs) for interim storage on site.

- We continue to monitor the progress of the project to remove the remaining residues from the site storage tanks as well as the other waste projects on site, such as the sludge and resin tanks consolidation and the Fuel Element Debris projects.
- We have responded to a member of the public regarding their suggestion of using a drone mounted radiation monitoring system at the Hinkley Point site. We advised that this was not considered necessary given the extensive monitoring programmes already in place, which show the impacts of the sites to the public and environment are very low.

### Hinkley Point B

Our work at Hinkley Point B (HPB) has been focussed on the following themes and issues in the last quarter:

- We have informed the site of our areas of focus this year, which forms the basis for our interactions with the site. This includes inspections on environmental leadership, environmental monitoring resilience, asset management and gaseous discharges. We will also arrange waste quality checking of Low Level Waste sent for incineration.
- In March members of the Environment Agency Board and Executive Director team visited HPB. The visit focussed on the challenges of continuing to operate the plant while preparing for defuelling and decommissioning. The Board were particularly interested in the contribution of nuclear safety culture to good environmental performance.

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information>

- In April we carried out an inspection focussed on the management of aqueous radioactive waste. No significant issues were identified during the inspection, but we did note examples of good practice.
- In June we carried out an inspection of environmental survey arrangements. No significant issues were identified but the operator has made a number of changes to improve resilience.
- In June we also carried out an inspection against the non-nuclear permits held at the Combwich District Survey Laboratory. No significant issues were identified and we were satisfied with improvements made following non-compliances in 2016.

### Events and enforcement

No enforcement action has been necessary at either Hinkley Point A or B.

The main site surface water interceptor on the B site has been out of service since March when internal damage was identified after routine maintenance. The operator has made temporary alternative arrangements. The interceptor will be rebuilt to a more robust design. This is a complex task; the operator expects this to be complete by mid-July.

### Discharge reports

The operators at Hinkley Point A and B are required to report liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment to us on a regular basis. We assess these to check compliance with the site permits. The site discharge reports and our assessments are placed on the public register.

Liquid and gaseous discharges from Hinkley Point A and B were within the permitted limits and notification levels during this period.

### Environmental impact

Nuclear sites are required to carry out a rigorous environmental monitoring programme that requires the operator to monitor and assess the impact of their discharges on the environment.

Additionally, the Environment Agencies and Food Standards Agency carry out independent environmental monitoring around nuclear sites. The results of this work are published in our annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report.

In the RIFE report the Hinkley Point sites are considered together for the purposes of environmental monitoring because the effects of both are on the same area. The report presents a yearly assessment of radiological dose to the group of people in the local population who are most exposed to radiation from the sites. In the latest report for 2015 (RIFE-21)<sup>[2]</sup>, the total radiation dose to this group of people as a result of discharges and radiation shine from the sites was very low at 0.016 mSv/year. This is about 2% of the Government dose limit of 1 mSv/year and an even smaller percentage of the average amount of radiation we all receive from natural sources, which is approximately 2.2 mSv/year.

### Habit survey

The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) undertakes regular surveys on behalf of the Environment Agency and the Food Standards Agency to determine the habits and consumption patterns of people living, working and pursuing recreational activities in the vicinity of nuclear licensed sites in England and Wales.

The information collected, which includes food consumption data and information from interviews with members of the public, helps determine possibly factors that may influence local radiation exposures. These are then used to inform the radiological dose assessments which are presented in our annual RIFE reports.

<sup>[2]</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/monitoring-radioactivity>

This year, CEFAS plan to undertake surveys in the vicinity of the Hinkley Point sites. This is likely to occur in July 2017. The last survey was carried out in 2010 and this can be accessed via the CEFAS website<sup>[3]</sup>.

### Further information

Further information on our role in regulating the use of radioactive substances and related activities on nuclear licensed sites can be found on the Environment Agency section<sup>[4]</sup> of the GOV.UK website.

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Hinkley Point A site is Robert MacGregor. The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Hinkley Point B site is Richard Lee.

Robert and Richard are both Nuclear Regulators and part of the national Nuclear Regulation Group (South) which is based at the Environment Agency's Wallingford office in Oxfordshire.

Robert and Richard undertake environmental regulation of radioactive substances on nuclear licensed sites in southern England. They work closely with the local Environment Agency teams in those areas as well as external bodies such as the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

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<sup>[3]</sup> <https://www.cefass.co.uk/cefass-data-hub/search-publications/>

<sup>[4]</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-regulation-in-the-environment-agency>