

BERKELEY NUCLEAR LICENSED SITE AND OLDBURY ON SEVERN

POWER STATION SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING HELD AT OLDBURY

ON WEDNESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2006

PRESENT:

Cllr M Lynden (in the chair)	-	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Cllr Mrs P Wride	-	Ham and Stone Parish Council
Mr S Andrews	-	TU Representative, Berkeley
Mr F Baker	-	National Farmers Union
Cllr D Burgess	-	Alkington Parish Council
Mr R W Dawson-Marsh	-	Lydney Town Council
Cllr C Evers	-	Glos Assocn of Parish & Town Councils
Cllr Dr K Graupner	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Mr L Hales	-	Environmental Consultant
Mr E Holmes	-	Berkeley Town Council
Mr A Jardine	-	Berkeley Estate
Cllr Ms S O'Neill	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Mr A Pinder	-	Friends of the Earth
Cllr C Price	-	Bristol City Council
Rev D Primrose	-	Oldbury Power Station Chaplain
Cllr M Riddle	-	South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr V Shenoi	-	Forest of Dean District Council
Dr C Smitton	-	Consultant
Cllr Ms V Watts	-	Berkeley Town Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr B Archer	-	NII
Mr S Barker	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr J Beckett	-	Stroud District Council
Mr J Close	-	Osborne Clarke
Mr D Gatehouse	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Mr P Gilbert	-	Stroud District Council
Mr P Holden	-	SWRDA
Mr T Howes	-	Civil Nuclear Constabulary
Mr J Lindsay	-	NII
Dr J Spindura	-	Food Standards Agency
Dr D Warner	-	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr J Lamonby	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Mr J C Bishton	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Ms A Chapman	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Mr P Clarke	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station

Ms A Kentish	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Ms R Lyon	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Ms S Postans	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Ms A Ryan	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Ms E Vaughan Lewis	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Mr J Worthington	-	Oldbury on Severn Power Station
Ms J Young	-	EHSQ Site Inspector
Mr R Phillips	-	Berkeley Centre
Ms H Atkin	-	Berkeley Centre
Mr J Crocker	-	Berkeley Centre
Mr S Houston	-	Berkeley Centre
Mr T Jones	-	Berkeley Centre
Mr S Payne	-	Berkeley Centre

Dr C Chudley
 Mr R Dalrymple-Smith
 Mr B Delve
 Mr W Gill
 Mr S Kirk
 Ms A Presdee

Mr M J Davis (Secretary)

APOLOGIES

Mr M Hawkins - Vice Chairman

I WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

1 Cllr Lynden welcomed members of the Oldbury and Berkeley Site Stakeholder Groups to this joint meeting. The meeting was being held jointly for the consideration of monitoring reports and other items of interest to both SSGs.

II APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Bartlam, Mr R Beddis, Mr R Beeby, Mr G Buchanan Mr M Eagle, Mr R Griffin, Cllr N Halsall, Ms M Hausrath, Mr P Sprague, and Cllr D Wride.

III MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2005

(a) Accuracy

3 The minutes of the meeting of the joint meeting held on 2 November 2005 were approved as a correct record.

(b) Matters arising

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

IV PUBLIC FORUM

5 Cllr Lynden invited members of the public attending the meeting to raise any issues of interest to them which they felt might not arise during discussion on subsequent agenda items. There were no issues raised by members of the public.

V ITEMS OF JOINT INTEREST

(a) CoRWM Recommendations

6 Mr Bishton outlined briefly the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management. He referred specifically to the recommendation that intermediate level wastes should be dealt with by deep geological disposal. Mr Bishton said that the government had accepted the recommendations of the Committee and had proposed that the NDA should have responsibility for pursuing the deep geological disposal option. He understood that the process of selecting a site was likely to start in 2007 with a decision on the choice of a site during 2007 or 2008.

7 In response to a question from Cllr Ms Watts on the relationship between the NDA and Nirex, Mr Barker explained that the government intended that its shareholding in Nirex should be transferred to the NDA. He explained that these arrangements were in the early stages of development and further consultation was needed between Government and Nirex.

(b) DEFRA Low Level Waste Policy Update

8 Mr Bishton explained that the public consultation undertaken by DEFRA on the long-term management of low-level waste had ended in May 2006; he understood that a large number of responses had been received and the publication of the outcome had been delayed. It was now anticipated that the outcome of the review would be published by the end of this calendar year.

(c) NDA Socio-economic Strategy

9 Mr Barker drew members' attention to the NDA's draft Socio Economic Strategy document, copies of which were available at the meeting. He encouraged members to read the document and submit comments to the NDA on any issues if they wished. He pointed out that the policy tended to focus attention on those areas where the closure of nuclear sites had the greatest impact. Rev Primrose suggested that the draft strategy appeared to have been prioritised on economic rather than social issues and it appeared that only limited resources would be made available to the vicinity of Oldbury. Mr Barker said that it was for each site to develop its own plans for social economic development and justify funding by the NDA.

10 Mr Barker referred to other recent NDA publications including its first Annual Report and Accounts and a Health, Safety, Security and Environment report. He drew attention to the efficiency savings which had been achieved and

to the good safety performance; the role of the NDA's contractors in achieving this performance had been acknowledged by the Chief Executive, Dr Roxburgh.

11 Mr Barker encouraged members to participate in the consultation which was currently being undertaken in relation to the preferred end state for the Oldbury site. Exhibitions were being held in the local areas, doorstep interviews were being undertaken and questionnaires had been circulated. Cllr Lynden emphasised that the consultation was focused upon persons living within a five-mile radius of the site; he acknowledged that some problems had been encountered in the arrangements for the delivery of leaflets to homes within the area.

VI ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

(a) Food Standards Agency

12 Dr Spindura drew attention to the report on the results of the monitoring of radioactivity in food and the environment undertaken during 2005 by the Food Standards Agency and the Environment Agency. Copies of a summary of the monitoring results relevant to Oldbury and Berkeley had been circulated to members. Dr Spindura said that the results of the monitoring during 2005 had been similar to those in previous years. She said that the largest potential dose to a member of the public from the consumption of local foodstuffs during the year was assessed as 10 microSieverts (μSv) which could have been received by a member of the local fishing committee consuming locally caught fish and shellfish. She said that this potential exposure was small compared with the annual dose limit of $1000\mu\text{Sv}$ for members of the public from artificial sources of radioactivity and the average annual UK exposure from all natural sources which was more than $2200\mu\text{Sv}$.

13 Mr Kirk, a member of the public attending the meeting, asked whether there were any plans to carry out additional environmental monitoring during decommissioning of the site. Dr Spindura said that the results of monitoring in the vicinity of decommissioning sites would be kept under review but she envisaged that the environmental monitoring programme would remain largely unchanged; there were certainly no plans to reduce the monitoring undertaken. Cllr Lynden pointed out that the monitoring programme appeared to have been adequate during the years since Berkeley Power Station had been shut down.

14 Mr Baker referred to the large volume of paper used in preparing reports to this group and suggested that more effort should be made to keep reports brief, avoid unnecessary repetition and print on both sides of the paper.

(b) Environment Agency

15 Reports on the regulatory activities of the Environment Agency in relation to the Berkeley and Oldbury sites had been circulated to members but there was no representative of the Agency present at the meeting. Cllr Lynden invited comments from members on the reports which had been circulated.

16 Mr Hales drew attention to the reported concern of the EA in relation to aqueous discharges of caesium 137 which had exceeded the quarterly notification level set in the station's authorisation. He understood that the increased level of caesium 137 in the fuel storage pond water was attributable to contaminated fuel skips returned to the station from Sellafield. He questioned whether sufficient efforts were being made to tackle the source of this problem at Sellafield and whether appropriate steps were being taken at Oldbury to minimise the discharge. He noted the report that submersible caesium removal units had not worked effectively. Cllr Ms Watts said she understood that these caesium removal units worked effectively at other sites.

17 Mr Lamonby pointed out that the quarterly notification level, which was based upon the level of discharges made in the past, provided only very narrow margins as the conditions in the Oldbury ponds had historically been very good. He said that considerable efforts had been made at Sellafield to remove contamination from fuel skips. He said that the operation of submersible caesium removal plant was affected by the nature of the water treatment plant used and whilst the operation of this plant had been effective at some stations, it had not worked satisfactorily at Oldbury. He said that the plant could be made to work at Oldbury but the spent filters produced by its operation represented a large volume of radioactive waste and a balance was required; he said that the preferred option was to recommission the station's caesium abatement plant and to have it ready for operation in the event of need. Mr Lindsay said that he had worked previously at Sellafield and confirmed that improvements had been made as a result of the efforts to minimise the transfer of contamination to other sites on fuel skips. Mr Hales was glad to receive confirmation that the problem was being addressed at its source.

18 Mr Evers questioned the report that cooling water discharge temperatures had been slightly above permitted limits. Mr Lamonby explained that during the unusually hot weather in August the temperature of the incoming water from the estuary had been raised and the temperature of the water discharged from the station had been correspondingly increased. The Environment Agency had been satisfied that this had no significant environmental effect and had allowed a slight relaxation for a short period of time.

(c) British Nuclear Group

19 Ms Chapman reported on the environmental monitoring undertaken by Oldbury on behalf of the Oldbury and Berkeley sites. She said that the results of the monitoring had been consistent with those in previous years and there had been no unusual or unexpected results.

20 Cllr Lynden asked whether the station's monitoring would be able to detect any effects of the testing of nuclear weapons by North Korea. Mr Clarke said that no such effect had been detected; the effect of atmospheric weapons tests undertaken by China had been apparent in previous years as had the effect of the Chernobyl accident.

21 Mr Baker reiterated his earlier comments about reducing the amount of paper used in relation to the preparation of the British Nuclear Group's environmental monitoring report.

22 Mr Hales and Mr Evers suggested that the presentation of information in Figures 4.8 and 4.9 might be improved to show more clearly the changes in relevant limits in recent years. These comments were noted by Mr Clarke.

VII "HOW TO TAKE A NUCLEAR REACTOR APART"

23 Mr Bishton described the processes involved in dismantling a nuclear reactor. He explained the way in which radioactivity decayed over time and how the rate of this decay varied for different elements. He described how decommissioning plans took account of the effect of the decay of the radioactivity within the reactor structures to enable man access for dismantling work. This was the basis of current plans which involved a delay of 80 years before dismantling components within the reactor structures. Mr Bishton said that after a delay of 80 years it would be possible for men to enter the reactor structure for dismantling work using conventional demolition techniques although the reactor core itself would still require the use of robotic techniques.

24 Mr Bishton said that reactors had been dismantled completely in the UK and overseas. It was possible to dismantle on an accelerated timescale but this involved greater use of remote handling techniques. Cllr Ms O'Neill referred to discussion at earlier meetings on completing decommissioning within a 25 year period; she asked whether that approach would be more expensive. Mr Bishton said that this matter was being considered by the NDA; potential increased costs from the use of more remote handling techniques might be offset by other advantages from early decommissioning.

25 Cllr Ms Watts questioned whether early decommissioning presented greater hazards for the public. Mr Bishton said he was confident that earlier decommissioning could be achieved safely but said that the success of this approach was dependent upon having waste storage facilities available. Mr Baker said he was concerned at the prospect of transporting large volumes of radioactive materials away from sites, particularly as at Berkeley where all such transport would pass through the town. He felt that it would be better to leave the waste materials at the sites.

26 In response to a question from Mr Kirk, Mr Bishton confirmed the intention that all of the decommissioning activities at Oldbury would be contained within the existing site boundary fence.

27 Cllr Ms O'Neill referred to recent media comment about global warming and increased sea levels and suggested that this was a strong argument against deferring decommissioning work. Mr Bishton said that these issues would be addressed in the environmental impact assessment.

28 Mr Barker acknowledged the development of various techniques for immobilising waste materials and referred to the NDA's proposals for ensuring

that the industry's requirements for skilled personnel were met. He emphasised that safety was an absolute priority for the NDA and that it was committed to working with its contractors and regulators to ensure that high safety standards were maintained.

VIII ANY OTHER BUSINESS

29 Mr Lamonby provided an update on the current position at Oldbury Power Station. He said that in recent months additional data on the strength of graphite samples had been collected and analysed. The statutory outage of Reactor 1 had been completed and graphite samples taken during that outage had also been used to reinforce the safety case. He said that the inspection of channels within the Reactor 2 core had involved the removal and replacement of more than one third of the reactor's fuel. These inspections had covered the channels which were considered the most likely to show the effects of reactor operation and no defects had been found. He said that the safety case analysis was nearing completion and it was hoped that the case would be submitted to the Nuclear Safety Committee during the coming month. Subject to endorsement by the Nuclear Safety Committee the safety case would then require NII approval before the reactor could be returned to service. Mr Lamonby said he hoped that if the necessary approvals were obtained the reactor would be returned to service early in 2007.

X DATE TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT JOINT MEETING

30 It was noted that the next joint meeting would be held in November 2007.

MJD

5 November 2006