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Environment Agency Report to the Harwell-Chilton Campus Local Stakeholder Group

June 2008

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REPORT
TO HARWELL-CHILTON CAMPUS LOCAL STAKEHOLDER GROUP

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The Environment Agency's nuclear regulators for the Harwell-Chilton Campus are Andrew Stone (for UKAEA), Robert McGregor (for GE Healthcare Ltd.), and Cathy Collins (for all tenants and other organisations on the Nuclear Site/Science & Innovation Campus).

In addition various members of the Environment Management team visit the site for general environment protection matters such as groundwater and contaminated land, waste management and water abstraction permissions.

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We visit the site on a regular basis. Matters are dealt with by phone and e-mail in addition to formal correspondence. We receive regular reports from UKAEA and the tenants on their radioactive discharges. These are placed on the public register. We also receive regular reports from UKAEA on its programme of monitoring in the local environment. We receive regular reports from UKAEA on the results of the groundwater monitoring programme. We also liaise closely with the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, the Food Standards Agency and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority on matters of common interest.

Regulatory issues

UKAEA (Licensed site)

We continue to work with the NDA, NII and UKAEA on the restructuring of UKAEA to separate the organisation into Site Licensee Companies, a new commercial company and the remaining Non Departmental Public Body. We will oversee this process to monitor the environmental performance at sites and we will only transfer environmental permits from UKAEA to the new Site License Company if we are satisfied that the new company can maintain its environmental performance.

We continue to work with the NDA and the NII to facilitate the decommissioning and clean up of the Harwell nuclear licensed site in an

environmentally responsible manner. We look to UKAEA and the NDA to ensure that all strategic decisions regarding the future of the site are underpinned by appropriate environmental assessment. We are currently reviewing UKAEA's decommissioning plans known as Lifetime Plan 2008.

We carried out a routine inspection in April of the arrangements for discharging liquid radioactive waste to the River Thames from the effluent treatment plant.

We carried out a routine inspection in March of the management system and resources for complying with permissions to dispose of radioactive waste.

We liaise closely with UKAEA regarding operation of the groundwater treatment plant at the Western Storage Area and the monitoring of groundwater quality.

Scientifics Limited (Licensed site)

We are processing an application for a variation to its authorisation that will allow the company to dispose of liquid radioactive waste to the sewer with trade waste effluent rather than sent to UKAEA. We expect to consult with the LSG on this within the next three months.

ISOTRON plc (Licensed site)

We carried out a routine inspection in May of the company's arrangements for disposing of radioactive waste from its operations.

GE Healthcare (Licensed site)

We have issued a Warning Letter to GE Healthcare because we were concerned about the number of times that there had been errors in data submitted to us.

REVISS Services Ltd (Licensed site)

We are processing an application for an authorisation to transfer solid low level radioactive waste within a building on the licensed site boundary to UKAEA.

SFTC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory

We have issued a Warning Letter and an Enforcement Notice to the Science and Technology Facilities Council at RAL for failing to comply with

permissions that it holds under the Radioactive Substances Act to accumulate and dispose of radioactive waste and keep and use radioactive materials.

The failures that we identified were:

- failing to make clear records of radioactive waste
- failing to operate suitable systems to account for radioactive material

The Enforcement Notice requires the Laboratory to review and update procedures, to carry out training and auditing and to implement its new system for accounting for radioactive sources. We are pleased with the response from the organisation and will continue to monitor its progress with the actions through regular inspections.

We have issued a variation to the authorisation that allows the laboratory to accumulate and dispose of radioactive waste. One of the changes is that liquid waste will be flushed to the sewer with trade waste effluent rather than sent to UKAEA. During our assessment of the application we assessed the impact of these discharges to ensure that people and the environment are protected. Hospitals, universities and industrial users across the country routinely dispose of liquid radioactive waste via their sewage system under authorisations from the Agency.

The authorisation allows transfer of solid and organic liquid radioactive waste to various incinerators, Sellafield/Windscale, Active Collection Bureau and the Low Level Waste Repository at Drigg.

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