



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HINKLEY A & B STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
HELD AT BRIDGWATER & TAUNTON COLLEGE, CANNINGTON CAMPUS, TA5 2LS
MONDAY 28 OCTOBER 2024**

Attendance/Apologies list

Present

Cllr L Redman
Mr M Pitts
Ms N Fauvel

Chair/Bridgwater town Council & Somerset council
Site Director, Hinkley Point A
Station Director, Hinkley Point B

Elected Members

Cllr K Hewson
Cllr M Hodson
Cllr C Morgan
Cllr R Perrett
Cllr M Phillips
Cllr J Roberts

Bawdrip Parish Council
Spaxton Parish Council
Stogursey Parish Council
Otterhampton Parish Council
Wembdon Parish Council
Nether Stowey Parish Council

EDF

Mr H Dyer
Mr J Mason
Mr D Stokes
Mr D Uminski

NRS

Mrs S Fry
Mr Bill Hamilton

In Attendance

Mr R Wallis
Mr A Jeffery
Ms M Smith
Mr A Debenham
Mr A Harper
Dr P Jenneson
Mr D Wallace
Mr A Wintle
Mr J Ayers
Mr J Burton
Ms L Martin
Mr J Bartrum
Mr C Jones
Ms R Austin

Staff of Ms R Gilmour MP
Green Party
West Somerset Green Forum
Stop Hinkley
NDA
ONR
NDA
Environment Agency
Environment Agency
Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Somerset Council
Minute Taker

OFFICIAL

Members of the Public

Ms A Bedford
Mr D Carson

Amentum
Amentum

Apologies

Ms R Gilmour
Cllr C Allen
Mr B Broadley
Mr M Brown
Cllr P Crosland
Cllr H Davies
Ms N Dawson
Cllr A Govier
Mr M Pardo
Cllr M Rigby
Mr P Stevens
Ms V Thomas

MP for Tiverton and Minehead
Cannington Parish Council
ONR Hinkley B
Vice Chair
Fiddington Parish Council
Somerset Councillor for Watchet, Williton and Stogursey
Somerset County Council
Somerset County Council
EDF
Somerset County Council
Somerset Council
Environmental Agency

1. WELCOME

The Chair (Cllr Redman) opened the meeting and thanked the attendees for their time. He noted that the meeting had been scheduled for earlier in the year but had been delayed by the calling of the General Election. He welcomed the new MP for the area, Ms Gilmour, who had sent her apologies and a representative in her place. The chair also welcomed the new executive member for Somerset Council, Cllr Mike Rigby. The Chair had emphasised to him the importance of sites A, B and C. An A&B site visit for the new MP and executive member would be arranged for early 2025. The Vice Chair had been unable to attend the meeting due to illness, all members present sent their good wishes.

Reports had been circulated at the earliest possible opportunity to give members the chance to review and send questions in advance. All presenters had agreed to reply in writing on questions they were unable to answer during the meeting itself. An independent notetaker was present and was recording the meeting for these purposes.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received as listed above.

3. OPEN PUBLIC Q&A SESSION

No public questions were received.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 26 JANUARY 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. STATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT – HINKLEY POINT B STATION

Ms Fauvel passed on the best wishes of those at Hinkley Point B to Mr Brown, the SSG Vice Chair, in light of his illness.

Ms Fauvel introduced herself and summarised her career. The safety and environmental performance of the site and its defueling progress was noted. Defueling aimed to remove fuel from the site, but also to prepare for the transition from EDF to NRS. An NRS engagement day had been held on 14 October to help staff to understand what the future would look like. Ms Fauvel emphasised that, after safety and the environment, her top priority was looking after staff at the station.

The emergency arrangements exercise programme for 2024 had been completed and emergency plans were otherwise continually reviewed. The 'family and friends' weekend and various community events were highlighted.

Mr Debenham asked when Hinkley B would 'give up responsibility' and 'stop paying for things to happen'. He further asked whether EDF paid for the transport of fuel elements to Sellafield and whether there was an inherent danger in this process. He noted the killing of fish in the Severn and asked at what point in the decommissioning process this would cease.

Ms Fauvel stated that EDF funded the end-to-end rail service for the transport of fuel elements to Sellafield through the Nuclear Liabilities Fund. In terms of risk, well-documented experiments had demonstrated that the flasks had been designed to remain intact even if, for example, there was a collision. The Chair added that he would recirculate the data sheet on flasks provided to members in the past and would add a more detailed note to the minutes explaining the safety measures taken. **Action: Recirculate flask details.**

- 11 On the issue of fish, Ms Fauvel explained that the circulating water (CW) intake, which resulted in fish casualties, had reduced by 50%. Once the defueling process was complete, CW intake would essentially cease, and no fish would be taken into the CW system. Mr Uminski added that the majority of material captured during CW intake was seaweed rather than fish. CW intake had reduced significantly since the station had been shut down.
- 12 Cllr Morgan questioned why Operation Harold had not been put into place during a recent incident in the area. Ms Fauvel suggested that this was a question for the police. The site worked closely with all relevant agencies, but it was not the site's duty to engage with the police when a road traffic incident took place on a public road.
- 13 The Chair noted that this was a question with wider applicability beyond the SSG. As a councillor, he was concerned about the volume of recent road closures and would undertake some research with colleagues from Hinkley A and B on the topic **Action: Circulate Project Harrold details and details of communication flowchart for highways obstruction**. Mr Uminski assured members that the site was fully capable to deal with incidents on site without the support of the emergency services. He would raise the topic at the next emergency planning consultation committee meeting.
- 14 Mr Burton noted that it had been 18 years since the last nuclear reportable event, but there had been one top tier environmental reportable event in the last 14 years. He asked the difference between the two. Ms Fauvel explained that every event, no matter how minor, was recorded and categorised through a complex decision tree. Some events might have both nuclear and environmental safety implications, but one element would be more dominant, and the event would be categorised as such. The categorisation used was consistent with global standards. The Chair suggested that this would be a beneficial topic for the next meeting's deep-dive plenary session. **Action: Discuss option for future plenary – Nuclear & Environmental safety, what is the difference and how will this evolve as decommissioning progresses?**

6. SITE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – HINKLEY POINT A STATION

- 15 Mr Pitts extended the best wishes of those at Hinkley A to Mr Brown, the Vice Chair, in light of his illness.
- 16 Mr Pitts introduced himself and summarised his career, highlighting his particular experience in decommissioning. Hinkley A's successes and 'look ahead' were presented, including the enduring culture programme, which in part had resolved past issues with safety representatives. Apprenticeship and training programmes continued at the site. Compliance and delivery efforts were summarised, including closing of two ONR enforcement letters. Mr Pitts noted his focus on operational fitness.
- 17 The Demin Tank event of 31 August 2023 had been reviewed to ensure that lessons had been learned and applied to other cases. Mr Pitts highlighted that some of the targets for 2024/2025 would become green in the coming weeks. The preconditioning facility was now in active decommissioning and good progress had been made on intermediate-level waste.
- 18 Mr Jeffery noted that it had earlier been reported that the first packages would be put into the interim store by the summer. He asked about progress in this regard. Mr Pitts stated that this remained a target for the financial year, to be attained by March 2025. The modular intermediate level waste encapsulation plant (MILWEP) was being built at a number of sites across the fleet, which had taken priority over Hinkley and had knocked back the targeted data as a result.
- 19 Mr Jeffery further asked if it had been determined how the aforementioned demineralised water tank had become contaminated. Mr Pitts explained that it was an underground tank that had previously had a manhole cover level to the floor. It was believed that rainwater had washed into the tank at some point, with sludge settling at the bottom. The Chair noted that

he would seek to add the specific report on the incident to the meeting minutes. **Action: Circulate further detail about 'demineralised water tank incident'.**

20 Mr Debenham asked if the interim storage facility was currently empty and what the rate of filling it would be. Mr Pitts said that the facility contained empty packages. The Chair stated that he would not ask the site director to answer as to the expected rate of progress. He would ensure that these details were included in SSG presentations once the progress began.

21 Mr Debenham requested an illustrative example of the tonnage of material recovered from the dry vault. The Chair suggested that Mr Pitts provide a written response to this end. **Action: Circulate note to members detailing ISF capacity.** Mr Pitts added that he would update the SSG as to progress going forward. At his previous site, volume had been converted into double decker buses or similar to help members visualise.

7. NRS CORPORATE REPORT

22 Mr Hamilton introduced himself. His presentation would focus on the work NRS was doing on the longer-term future of sites. The priority for NRS was managing, treating and storing waste. Until recently, the long-term strategy had been 'care and maintenance', involving waste management, retrieval and storage, before buildings were clad and left alone for 30 years.

23 More recently, working closely with NDA, NRS had decided that a one-size-fits all long-term decommissioning approach was not appropriate. More site-specific strategies would be developed with due consideration for the workforce, the wider community and the site itself. Mr Hamilton estimated that significant decisions in this regard were 10 years in the future. However, survey efforts and research on the topic had begun.

24 New regulations could facilitate application for a permit to leave some lightly irradiated material behind, which would quicken the process and prevent the need for transporting waste elsewhere. This approach would be trialled in North Wales and Dorset. It would be essential to talk to the community to get recognition of and approval for the work. An independent polling company had been engaged to interview ordinary people in the community outside of the SSG who had less knowledge of or appreciation for nuclear power. One focus group had been set up for young people and one had been set up for adults. The results of the exercise had been included in the pack that had been circulated. Safety was by far the most important issue to members of the public across the country, alongside the environment, jobs and future use of the site.

25 A video produced by Thinks Insight including members of the public interviewed during polling was played.

26 Mr Debenham suggested that the NRS was attempting to 'brainwash' members of the public through these efforts. Mr Hamilton clarified that Thinks Insight was an independent company that had been employed to neutrally seek the views of members of the public.

27 Mr Hamilton added that NRS would start to conduct deep dives into each community, with efforts due to start the next month in Anglesey. The SSG would be involved in discussions to build a more complete picture of a community's knowledge, concerns and aspirations for their local site.

28 The Chair noted the ongoing review of SSG terms of reference and asked how the surveying effort might influence SSG operations. Mr Hamilton stated that the two issues were wholly separate. The polling underway did not relate to the SSG review, but it might be beneficial to take some of the learnings from the review into the upcoming community deep dives. The Chair added that he hoped through the polling process SSG membership might become more representative of the community as a whole.

29 Ms Smith asked if leaving some low-level waste on the site would speed up the decommissioning process. Mr Hamilton emphasised that this was not a strategy yet on the horizon for Hinkley, but it may be in the future. Lightly irradiated materials such as brickwork,

concrete and earth, or material not due to go into the geological disposal facility, would remain on site rather than being transported to an ordinary, licensed landfill site. Regulators had decided that it was no longer necessary for every single non-harmful becquerel to be removed from a site. This would reduce the time and effort required to dig out and transport such material and would arguably be safer. The regulator would grant a permit once a site proved it could identify and safely store such waste.

30 Dr Jenneson added that, in some cases, granite work surfaces in the home might be more radioactive than the level accepted on a decommissioning site. Most sites were built at the end of a poor road network, requiring travel through small villages. The regulator must balance risk to the public and to the workforce. If moving material around the country became arbitrary in terms of decommissioning benefit achieved, this must be rectified to prevent falling into compliance traps leading to poor outcomes.

31 Ms Smith emphasised that none of these complex procedures were required for wind or solar power generation. Such processes did not need to happen in the future.

32 Ms Martin noted that the council was producing a new local plan for the area. Though timelines stretched far into the future, it was vital that local plans did not take a direction that would negatively impact some of the options presented by NRS for the site, chair agreed that SSG should add comments to Somerset local plan.

33 Mr Debenham suggested that the presentation lacked balance, with no real anti-nuclear viewpoint provided. He further raised concerns about the nuclear industry as a whole, noting that the promises of nuclear energy had not been met. He asked how much the NRS and NDA cost in public funds. Mr Hamilton reiterated that those present in the video were members of the public. There had been a deliberate attempt not to speak to the usual stakeholders, but rather to touch base with ordinary people in the community.

34 The NRS budget was around £540 million per year, which was small in comparison to Sellafield's annual budget of £4 billion, for example. In inevitably spending more public money in pursuit of decommissioning, the wider community and the public at large must be engaged and involved.

35 Mr Jeffery said that it made sense not to needlessly dig up radioactive material to transport it elsewhere. The issue of climate change must be borne in mind, to ensure that radioactivity did not contaminate surrounding water.

8. NDA REPORTS

36 The report had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Mr Debenham noted the cost of the Sellafield site. Recent television presentations had demonstrated that the cost and safety of the site left 'much to be desired'. There was insufficient investment being put into Sellafield to make it safe and this was not presented to the public.

9. PLENARY SESSION

37 Mr Harper introduced himself and noted his role as socio-economic manager at NDA. He explained the statutory purpose of the NDA in terms of socioeconomic factors. The social impact and communities strategy had been published in April. Prior, he had attended SSGs and met with stakeholders to request their input, which had been reflected in the strategy. In addition, there had been a 12-week public consultation, with a comprehensive response provided from Somerset Council amongst others. The strategy was available on the government website and had been circulated prior to the meeting.

38 The NDA's socioeconomic work covered the entire estate, including Sellafield and Dounreay. Economic impact assessments provided insight into the strengths and challenges of each community. Economic experts had been asked to use the standard modelling and scope for their work and priority areas had been identified as a result: North West Wales, Caveness and

Sutherland in Scotland, and West Cumbria. The NDA took an equitable rather than equal approach, considering interventions across the estate with a proportionate approach based on economic need.

39 Now the strategy was in place, the NDA could move into the delivery phase for a vast range of projects, including capital projects, grants. The organisation had invested somewhere in the region of £60 million over the past five years through grant giving and worked with local authorities to lever in more funding through growth deals, levelling up and similar. The NDA played a small part in a larger funding pot and financial leverage would be a key part the approach going forward.

40 The budget for the current financial year was almost fully committed, and 50% had been committed for the next financial year. The NDA worked with partners in advance to create a pipeline of projects, rather than working in-year and delivering only low hanging fruit. Mr Harper presented some Hinkley-specific projects from the past years. In total, these amounted to just below £1 million invested in the area.

41 The Chair requested a link to the strategy document mentioned. **Action: Circulate document.** He noted that Strategy 4 was in place, with Strategy 5 due imminently. The report referenced a consultation in early 2025. He asked how wide this consultation would be. Mr Wallace explained that the Strategy 5 consultation was due to be published in March 2026. It would be a long and wide consultation period. Some discussions had commenced already at the recent stakeholder summit. **Action: Consider future agenda item to discuss Strategy 5 and potential impact on Hinkley sites.**

42 Mr Wallis observed that the economic impact assessments mentioned were on three-year cycles and due for recommissioning in 2025. Given that Hinkley B was due to transfer to NRS in 2026, there would not be a new assessment until 2028. More updated figures would be beneficial. Mr Harper noted that the transfer would take place on a phased basis, with a need to consider when the impact of assessment was refreshed.

43 Ms Smith highlighted that Somerset was deemed to be one of the lowest social mobility areas in the UK. EDF had paid for a training centre at the local college 10 years prior, but it had only intermittently been used. The take up of retrofit training was low and it was challenging to find suppliers. There should be a way to join this up with the NDA's **socioeconomic** approach. Mr Harper explained that he could not speak on EDF funding specifically. However, the challenge of training and retention of young people existed elsewhere, though the subject matter may be different. He would put Maureen in contact with the NDA's skills lead on this topic.

44 Mr Debenham asked how the NDA's work tied into the Hinkley C community foundation. He asked the value of the NDA's budget in this area and raised specific causes which required investment. Mr Harper stated that the NRS element of the budget was £1.1 million, with a central pot of £2.5 million for topping up. The socioeconomic grant programme value for the entire estate was around £14 million. The Chair suggested that Mr Debenham put any specific proposals forward through the NDA's grant application process.

10. OFFICE FOR NUCLEAR REGULATION (ONR) REPORT HINKLEY A & B

45 Dr Jenneson introduced himself. He observed that this was the first time Hinkley A had gone six months with no inspection recorded. This did not mean that there had been no interventions. There had been a number of enforcements in the past period, and it was important to give sites the time and space to resolve such issues. As soon as the quarter had ended, inspections had recommenced but had just missed the reporting period. Enforcement issues and actions had mostly been addressed and progress was positive.

46 There had been enforcement around a canteen accident at Hinkley A. The ONR tried to regulate a nuclear site to the same standard as any other site, particularly as it had sometimes been felt that nuclear sites were easy places to hide in terms of health and safety. It was

pleasing that Mr Pitts was now site director. Issues the ONR had been concerned about had been addressed.

47 Dr Jenneson read a prepared statement on Hinkley B in the absence of Mr Broadley. The supporting habitat regulations assessment had not met the ONR's expectations and work was ongoing with the site to raise its standard, after which the consultation period would recommence. It was recommended that questions specific to Hinkley B be provided through the Chair or to the ONR directly. Emails to the generic ONR contact email related to either Hinkley site were redirected to Dr Jenneson and Mr Broadley.

48 The Chair asked if, as Hinkley B transitioned from EDF to NRS, there would be only one site ONR visit. Dr Jenneson stated that this was something for NRS to decide going forward. The ONR would respond to any relicensing request as it arose.

49 Mr Debenham asked how pro- and anti-nuclear views were balanced when training to become an assessor. Dr Jenneson emphasised that the ONR held neither such view on nuclear power. If there existed a nuclear sector in the UK, the ONR would regulate it to ensure its safety.

50 Mr Debenham further asked at what point the ONR would become involved in Sizewell and Hinkley C. Dr Jenneson stated that the ONR would be involved in the very early stages of both processes. It was currently engaged in the ongoing generic design assessment for small modular reactors.

11. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REPORT HINKLEY A & B

51 Mr Wintle stated that an aqueous waste inspection had been conducted at Hinkley A in January and a fire water inspection in October. Information on the latter would be available at the next SSG. Colleagues from the Environment Agency (EA) office had attended the Hinkley A site for new member training. Environmental module data and emissions had all been compliant in the period.

52 At Hinkley B, the COMAH exit inspection had been conducted and restrictions lifted. No non-compliance had been identified through the environmental monitoring programme. The EA would be involved in ongoing discussions about moving a laboratory to Hinkley B. Some tweaks, but nothing significant, had been suggested on sediment and seaweed monitoring. A habit survey had been conducted in August.

53 Discussions with the site on the pond debris action extension were ongoing. The EA was keen to have this resolved prior to the site's transfer to NRS.

54 Mr Jeffery noted that, once the defueling of Hinkley B was concluded, one of the EA's biggest responsibilities would be cooling pond debris. He asked what would happen to the water in question. Mr Wintle stated that all options presented by the site would be considered at the relevant time and a permit granted if the EA was satisfied. As yet, no decisions had been made.

55 Mr Debenham asked about the six-monthly environmental impact report. Mr Wintle said that he was unsure to what Mr Debenham referred. The EA considered environmental emissions on a quarterly basis, though Hinkley B had provided such data monthly.

56 Mr Wintle added that, since his report had been circulated, there had been an apparent elevated sample in the EA's independent monitoring. Further investigation had shown that it did not match the monitoring carried out by the site. This discrepancy had been looked into, despite the elevated level being well below the investigation threshold. By the second quarter, the results had been as expected and the EA believed that the discrepancy had been caused by an erroneous sample.

57 Mr Jeffery asked where the increase in caesium had been found. Mr Wintle explained that the site had a range from west to east across the Severn estuary. The levels recorded had been raised across the entire testing range, which would not be the case in a true result. The Chair requested that a more detailed note from the EA be added to the minutes on this issue.

12. CHAIR'S REPORT AND TO NOTE ITEMS CIRCULATED BETWEEN MEETINGS

- 58 The Chair noted that he had hoped to bring a revised SSG review document to the meeting, but this had been held up. It would be presented at the next meeting. The Vice Chair and Chair had been involved in the ongoing SSG review discussions with others from around the country to ensure that Hinkley's concerns were covered by the report.
- 59 The Chair thanked members of the secretariat for their support in operating SSG meetings and thanked the attendees for their time.

13. TO NOTE ITEMS CIRCULATED BETWEEN MEETINGS

- 60 Circulated between meetings had been the HPB decommissioning consultation letter, the NDA's announcement of the appointment of the Sellafield Ltd interim chair of the board, the NDA's 2024-2027 business plan, the NDA social impact and communities strategy, the radiological habits survey and the NWS annual review 2023/2024.
- 61 The Chair observed that events would naturally occur in the six-month gap between meetings. Rather than hold information back, reports had been shared electronically to capture questions in the interim period. A note had also been sent out at the SSG's request about Hinkley B's R4 defueling.
- 62 Mr Debenham noted that it was impossible to print tens of pages of reports ahead of the SSG meeting. In the past, physical copies had been circulated. The Chair stated that physical copies were no longer provided in the interests of saving paper. Physical copies could be provided for Mr Debenham if he contacted the Chair ahead of the next meeting.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 63 Mrs Fry communicated the scheduled meeting dates. Mr Jenneson noted difficulties attending meetings on the first Monday of the month. The Chair confirmed that meeting dates would be reviewed and issues considered going forward. Best efforts were made to accommodate everyone.
- 64 There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

Next meeting dates: 3 March 2025 and 23 September 2025.