



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
JOINT BERKELEY/OLDBURY SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
HELD AT OLDBURY CONFERENCE CENTRE, OLDBURY NAITE, THORNBURY, BS35 1RQ
WEDNESDAY 31 January 2024**

Attendance/Apologies list

Attendance

Members

Cllr Matthew Riddle
Cllr Chris Jennings
John Stanton
Cllr Steve Chandler JP
Cllr Liz Ashton
Cllr Chris Bloor
Cllr Chris Davies
Cllr Chris Davies
Gillian Ellis-King
Cllr Kevin Evans
June Lyons
Angela Presdee
Cllr Dominic Power
Cllr Valerie Williams
Cllr Isaac Bamfield

Chair, Oldbury
Vice Chair, Oldbury
Chair, Berkeley
Vice Chair, Berkeley
Berkeley Town Council
Thornbury Town Council
Stinchcombe Parish Council
Thornbury Town Council
South Gloucestershire Council
Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
Olveston Parish Council
Gloucestershire County Council
Chepstow Town Council
Alveston Parish Council
Berkeley Town Council

Operators and Officers

Rebecca Cleverley
Fae Davis
Sharon Fry
Bill Hamilton
Mike Heaton
Mark Pitts
Rebecca Austin

Environment Agency
Environment Agency
NRS
NRS
NRS
NRS
Minute Taker

Members of the Public

Brian Roberts
Tony Mitchell
Tony Acton
Peter Barrett
John Crook
Barbara French
Peter Hazelwood
Janet Hellen
Trevor Hellen
Alisha Raman
Geoff Simms

Thornbury Chamber of Commerce
Thornbury Town and District Residents' Association

SGS

TRAPP'D
Berkeley Research Group
Royal College of Art

Apologies

Siobhan Baillie MP
Cllr Adrian Birch
Nick Easley
Rev Steve Godsell
Luke Hall MP
Stuart Henderson
Paul Jenneson
Paul Reynolds
Cllr Brian Tipper
Cllr Jeremy Warren
Geoffrey Wheeler
Cllr Tony Williams
Gethin Vaughn-Lewis

Forest of Dean District Council

ONR
Environment Agency
Gloucestershire County Council
Aust Parish Council

South Gloucestershire Council

DRAFT

1. WELCOME

The Chair (Cllr M Riddle) welcomed attendees to the joint Oldbury/Berkeley SSG. He thanked the Oldbury site for hosting the meeting and introduced himself as the new Chair of Oldbury SSG. The location and chair of the meeting would alternate. A round of introductions was conducted.

The Chair noted the attendance Alisha Raman, a student at the Royal College of Art working on an MA in Architecture. She was interested in the legacy of the sites and attendees were invited to speak with her following the meeting on their reflections.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received as listed.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

A. Accuracy

There were no comments and the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

B. Matters Arising

The Chair asked if there was any update on the railhead issue. John Stanton said that he had not heard anything further, despite having contacted Berkeley railway. He was not aware of any meetings having taken place.

Bill Hamilton noted that, in the absence of an NDA representative, he could feed back the group's views. He summarised that the NDA was reorganising the government affairs and stakeholder relations team, meaning that it was unclear who would now attend SSG meetings, if there was a representative sent. Having spoken to the previous representative, it was clear that the railhead was planned to be operational and that Berkeley rail group could not use it. This appeared to be the final decision.

Steve Chandler disagreed with the suggestion that there had been a line drawn on the issue as, per his last conversation with the representative, there was to be a meeting set up on the topic. There must be clarification as to exactly what could be done or not done. It was also essential that an NDA representative attend SSG meetings.

4. SITE DIRECTOR REPORTS

A. Mark Pitts – Oldbury Site Director

Mark Pitts recognised the work of Sharon Fry's predecessor, Eirian Vaughn-Lewis, and welcomed back Mike Heaton after his period of illness. He shared a safety reminder about site accommodations for workers with disabilities. He asked attendees to particularly look out for safety cords in disabled facilities in their daily lives, ensuring they were untied and usable. Discussions about accommodations on the Oldbury site were ongoing.

There had been a security incident at the Oldbury site on the evening of 2 January, with two individuals seeking to cross the fence. The site's security team and alarm systems had worked efficiently, with police on site within eight minutes. Police enquiries were ongoing.

The site had already met its legacy waste target for the year and was expected to deliver more shipments up to the end of March. The previously discussed solar panels had been successfully installed and were now operational, contributing to the site's 5% cost reduction challenge with an anticipated £25,000 per year saved.

The Turbine Hall decommissioning was ongoing. 500 cables had now been cut, in line with the year's target. There were close to 3,000 cables in total to be cut through a systematic and lengthy process. The Vac Fill House project was ongoing. It was possible that Oldbury might be the last site to start but the first to finish in this regard. It was also the only site with two manifolds. The initial install had gone well. The 'conundrum' of Early Fuel Element debris retrieval rates would hopefully be resolved by the bringing in of new kit to make early contact

OFFICIAL

with the waste. This kit would likely be able to run by the end of March, with the first waste retrieved by the end of the calendar year. This would inform the scope and challenges of the entire process.

There were a number of sustainability initiative ongoing at the site, including reducing coffee cup usage, removal of paper towels and consideration of air compressor energy usage.

Mark Pitts summarised the donations made to community causes in past months, including rugby clubs and the Thornbury Christmas lights. The blood donation drive had been highly successful and more sessions would be run.

Cllr Isaac Bamfield suggested that the classification of waste removed be included in the presentation in future. He asked if a waste hierarchy was used. Mark Pitts noted that waste at Oldbury had largely been low-level. A waste hierarchy was used regularly.

Liz Ashton asked about stretch targets. Mark Pitts explained that there was a base target set for the amount of work to be done, followed by a stretch target when the site did more than expected.

Tony Mitchell asked about silt lagoon 3. Mark Pitts stated that a project manager had been appointed to work with the NDA, whatever the final agreement. The Chair noted that it would be beneficial to have feedback in terms of the local response on next steps in this area.

ACTION: Chair and Bill Hamilton to bring together information on the lagoon 3 consultation.

Gillian Ellis-King noted that it seemed the restoration proposals for lagoon 3 could fulfil planning permission requirements. She encouraged consultation with the local authority on this point.

Kevin Evans asked about the form of the low-level waste mentioned. Mark Pitts said that this could be resin, metals, solids or a number of other forms, which were separated out from one another.

The Chair thanked Mark Pitts for the early indication given of the site intruders on 2 January.

B. Mike Heaton – Berkeley

Mike Heaton said that he was pleased to return to meetings after his absence. He highlighted the rebranding of Magnox as NRS, which would likely be discussed further by Bill Hamilton. He shared a reminder, after an injury to a contractor at the Berkeley site, that clean workspaces were safe workspaces. The contractor in question had returned to work, but the site's 1,000 day safety record had been broken and lessons had been learned.

The Berkeley site had a significant proportion of an intermediate-level waste. All retrievals equipment had been installed and some was operational. Since the last SSG meeting, six more concrete boxes had been filled with intermediate-level waste and safely stored on site prior to disposal. The site was 29 tonnes against its target of 37 for the end of the year. There had been four shipments of low-level waste, with the remaining three to meet target scheduled to take place before the end of March.

Waste in Vault 3 was starting to be handled, with sludge fluidised, stabilised and storage cans disposed of. Canisters in Vaults 1 and 2 required cutting prior to safe handling and there was a large cutting tool in place to do this. Site workers had also developed a method by which waste inside a box could be flattened, reducing cost and minimising the risk that ISF might be of insufficient size.

The MILWEP facility had been operating well for the past four months, with some improvements made in terms of working environment. Boxes had been filled, lidded and moved to the intermediate storage facility using cross-site transporters seven times over past months.

Mike Heaton provided an overview of the Blower House project. Contractors were on site starting ground sampling prior to construction and it was expected that the project would run for close to 10 years, as there was a significant volume of waste to be removed.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

The working groups on sustainability, wellbeing, mental health and diversity and inclusion had been brought together in a larger forum to reflect the cross-cutting nature of each area. Site vehicles were being replaced with electric, with on-site charging points installed, and hand towels had been removed from site facilities. It was noted that the 'magnoxsites.com' email for funding requests would soon change to reflect the rebrand. A significant contribution had been made to Dursley Rugby Club towards the installation of solar panels.

The site, in conjunction with Oldbury, had raised money for the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity, responsible for airlifting Mike Heaton to hospital in March 2023, through various Christmas events. Berkeley had focused on volunteering as well as financial donations, with site volunteers recently involved in improving the facilities at Dr Jenner's House. Various apprenticeship opportunities at Berkeley were being widely promoted.

Geoff Simms asked if it had been a psychological hurdle for the workforce to get past the breaking of the 1,000 day safety record. It was possible that such a record might discourage the reporting of issues. Mike Heaton said that some reinvigoration had been required. It had been beneficial to 'go back to basics' and restart the conversation around workplace safety. Tony Mitchell asked if contractors had been inducted into the same safety culture. Mike Heaton said that he felt contractors felt part of the Berkeley team and had ownership over safety. He had been pleased in this case that a contractor had felt able to report an injury.

Gillian Ellis-King asked if there were initiatives in place to promote apprenticeships at both sites within local colleges and schools. Mark Pitts said that there were ongoing initiatives in this regard at Oldbury, as well as across social media. Mike Heaton stated that there was a staff member in place coordinating such efforts.

Chris Davies (Stinchcombe) noted that waste retained at Berkeley might be there for a long time. Mike Heaton stated that the safety cases had 100-year lives. The on-site treatment done in terms of concrete and lidding was the final waste treatment.

The Chair suggested that he and John Stanton write a joint letter of appreciation to Eirian Vaughn-Lewis on her departure.

5. NRS CORPORATE UPDATE

Bill Hamilton highlighted the Magnox rebrand. He noted that it had cost a insignificant sum and had been conducted through engagement with the SSG chairs and the workforce. Driving the rebrand had been the fact that there were new sites due to come under the organisation's purview, putting Magnox sites into the minority. The Magnox email address for funding requests would remain active for six months or so and emails would be forwarded to the relevant individual.

The company's 10-year strategy would be finalised in the next month, with a summarised version also to be made available online and in paper form for the community. There had been significant work done on the 'Big Conversation', seeking feedback from the community. Two three-hour working group sessions, with adults and younger people, had been conducted, from which a questionnaire had been formulated. The questionnaire had been circulated to 1,000 people geographically close to the sites and 1,000 beyond that radius. Those living closest to sites were more likely to support innovative decommissioning and there had been broad support for nuclear power across the piece.

Chris Davies (Stinchcombe) noted that GE Hitachi had been awarded a £33 million government grant for their SMR general design and assessment process. He asked where this left Rolls Royce. Bill Hamilton said that he believed the competition in this regard was still ongoing, with GE Hitachi and Rolls Royce two of the companies in contention. Gillian Ellis-King confirmed that this was the case.

Gillian Ellis-King said that she had heard from another SSG meeting talk of reviewing the SSG structure, as well as engaging with local communities on decommissioning approaches. Bill Hamilton stated that the latter referred to the polling and working groups already mentioned,

which would form the basis of future engagement, planning and strategy. Any formal proposals put forward would include structured consultation with local authorities.

There had been a discussion with SSG chairs on a forum review, given that it was nearly 20 years since the groups had been set up. There was no question of their existence, but rather an ongoing conversation about challenges, improvements and future engagement. The Chair said that there had been significant support for such an endeavour at the SSG chairs' meeting. The groups must remain fit for purpose in an ever-changing landscape.

Angela Presdee emphasised the importance of early engagement with stakeholders. Sharing the data and views received from wider community engagement would also be valuable.

6. NDA UPDATE

The Chair noted that there was no NDA representative present. Peter Hazelwood asked the reason for this. Bill Hamilton explained that the community engagement team at the NDA had always been small. The head of stakeholder engagement had recently been seconded to Great British Nuclear, while the other individual who had attended SSGs in the past had himself been on secondment at the NDA from elsewhere. The two-person team had therefore all but disappeared. Somebody from the NRS had been seconded to the NDA to help fill in on communications.

7. ONR REPORTS

The Chair noted that written reports had been submitted, but there was no ONR representative present to field questions. Steve Chandler said that he believed the representative had been taken ill.

Steve Chandler highlighted that Paul Jenneson had referred to the chief inspector's report, which included a number of details of which the SSG had not been made aware. The ONR chief inspector had visited Berkeley in autumn 2023 to feature the work being done there. It was concerning that neither Steve Chandler nor John Stanton had been made aware of this. It also would not have been clear without the report that Berkeley was under enhanced ONR scrutiny due to shortfalls in the security plan.

Mike Heaton explained that contractor performance in terms of security arrangements had been poor for a number of years, primarily due to high staff turnover. The site had also been asked to review its site security plan, which was taking longer than expected. These had been the reasons behind the enhanced regulatory measures. Steve Chandler reiterated that his main concern was that the ONR had not made the SSG chairs aware.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY REPORTS

A. Peter Reynolds – Berkeley

Peter Reynolds had sent his apologies. Rebecca Cleverley covered both site reports.

B. Rebecca Cleverley – Oldbury

Rebecca Cleverley stated that no non-compliance with environmental permits had been found at Berkeley or Oldbury in the time since the last SSG meeting. She had fortnightly meetings with Chris at Oldbury and was kept up to date with operational events and project updates. Since the last SSG, there had been two regulatory interface meetings held for the Wessex sites, also attended by Mark Pitts, Mike Heaton and various ONR officers. The NRS had presented programme updates and had answered questions on performance indicators, covering areas such as environmental protection, sustainability, waste management and safety.

At the last SSG, it had been noted that the attributed total radiological dose to the representative person, as per the RIFE report, had increased in 2021. The report for 2022 demonstrated that the dose had decreased back to the levels of previous years. Both gaseous and liquid discharges at Oldbury were well within permitted limits. The notification process had worked well after the breach of the fence line on 2 January. The next Oldbury inspection would focus on environmental leadership at the site.

Rebecca Cleverley noted that EA representatives had been in discussions with South Gloucestershire council regarding SMR and the generic design process. Gillian Ellis-King said that it had been suggested that a slot at a future SSG might be allocated to the topic.

In terms of the Berkeley site, Peter Reynolds was due to follow up on asset management arrangements in the next quarter. The apparent increasing trend in carbon-14 and beta emitting particulate emissions since Q3 2022 had been investigated and explained by a spreadsheet error, which had led to overreporting. The overreported figure, if correct, would have still been within the permitted limits. Peter Reynolds had received a copy of the site investigation report, likely too late to include in his report. He would update the SSG further at the next meeting. Attendees were welcome to contact him directly if they had immediate questions.

Steve Chandler thanked the EA for the investigation into and explanation of the carbon-14 and beta emitting particulate emissions issue. He noted that it illustrated the importance of quality control during the analytical process. A matter of underreporting might have more significant implications.

9. AOB

A. Summary of Railhead issue

The item had been covered under matters arising.

B. Internet Access at Oldbury

John Stanton said that it would be beneficial for attendees to be given internet access during meetings at Oldbury to prevent unnecessary printing of papers. Mark Pitts said that he would explore this possibility.

C. Consultations

John Stanton stated that the chairs had replied to a number of consultations on behalf of the SSG, including on the NDA draft business plan, social impact and community, and regarding celebration the history of the nuclear industry. As Berkeley had been the first civil nuclear site in the UK, it seemed the ideal place to host such a celebration. Bill Hamilton said that he would take this suggestion away, in the absence of an NDA representative.

D. SGS College Berkeley Green

Chris Davies (Stinchcombe) noted an article stating that SGS Berkeley Green had been sold. Peter Barrett explained that terms had been agreed for the sale of the college's holdings at Berkeley. There would now be a five-month due diligence process prior to the sale taking place. He was not able to disclose the plans for the site, but the buyers had recognised its potential. There would be further announcements in due course.

E. Berkeley Book

Chris Davies (Stinchcombe) noted that a book had been written on the Berkeley nuclear centre. It was ready for printing and was seeking funds. Trevor Hellen stated that he and a number of other scientists had written the book collaboratively. It covered a wide number of areas and contributed to the question of what would be done in decades hence in terms of educating the next generation. Funds were needed for the initial launch. Bill Hamilton said that the NRS was looking into the book and considering how to get the funding together.

F. SSG Format

Tony Mitchell noted that the meeting had already run over time, with two presentations missing. He questioned whether it was logical to combine the Berkeley and Oldbury SSGs, rather than have a separate meeting for each site. The Chair stated that the current thinking was to combine both sites and alternate meeting locations.

G. SMR

OFFICIAL

The Chair suggested that a representative of Rolls Royce might be invited to the meeting to discuss SMR and reflect on government policy. Though the group was focused on decommissioning, it may be that SMR was built either wholly or partly on NDA land. Tony Acton questioned whether it was appropriate to invite a representative of only one company to the meeting, when there remained multiple companies in contention.

Bill Hamilton suggested that the SSG invite a representative of Great British Nuclear to speak and give an insight into government policy, rather than a filtered view of a company currently competing for a contract. Tony Mitchell said that he had previously worked with the chief of Great British Nuclear and could get in contact. The SSG agreed to this plan.

ACTION: Tony Mitchell to contact Great British Nuclear to have a representative attend a future SSG meeting.

H. Policy Update

Gillian Ellis-King stated that she would circulate a list with issues for attention following the meeting. Western Gateway had published a 'vision for Severn Edge', including both Berkeley and Oldbury, on their website. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) had published a civil nuclear roadmap, of interest because it reference the NDA's role in decommissioning and reusing sites. The Department were also consulting on nuclear power generation, extending to smaller technologies, as well as the market for more advanced technology.

South Gloucestershire Council had responded to the NDA on their recent business plan consultation and would soon respond to the consultation on social impact and community strategy. The Council also planned to respond to DESNZ consultations.

Gillian Ellis-King thanked the EA for their offer to discuss the generic design process in more detail. South Gloucestershire Council had asked a number of questions regarding the Rols Royce process and its response would be published on the website.

I. Closing

Barbara French thanked Steve Chandler for his diligence in picking up the carbon-14 and beta emissions issue, even before the EA themselves. This was a fundamental role of the SSG.

The Chair thanked Gillian Ellis-King for her valuable contributions to the group upon her retirement.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

Next meeting dates: Wednesday 29 May 2024 (venue TBC) and Wednesday 25 September 2024 (Oldbury Conference Centre)