



HARWELL CHILTON CAMPUS Site Stakeholder group meeting

Minutes of the 103rd meeting held at The Satellite Applications Catapult Centre, Harwell on Thursday 18th April 2024.

ATTENDEES:

Chair	Chris Broad, Chilton Parish Council
Deputy Chair	John Sharp, East Hendred Parish Council
Secretary	Emma Burwood, Harwell and Winfrith Communications lead
Minutes	Jessica Peart, Magnox

Emma Burwood	NRS
Laura Street	NRS
Paul Brennan	NRS
Jon Blackmore	NRS
Stuart Clark	NRS
Gary Reid	NRS
Mark Pledger	Jacobs
Derek Witmell	Upton Parish Council
Amy Griffin	Diamond Lightsource
Rebecca Cleverley	Environment Agency
Bill Hanks	Member of the public
Mark Beddow	EHPC
Clive Hooker	West Berkshire Council
Michael Fox-Davies	Harwell Parish Council
John Wilkins	Member of the public

Apologies for absence: ONR, Paul Mount (OCC), Chris Williamson (Head of Health & Safety Harwell Campus), Joe Kelleher (STFC), Bill Hamilton (NRS)

1. Chairmans Remarks – Chris Broad

Chris Broad welcomed everyone to the meeting, and provided some opening comments:

- Chris Broad and John Sharp have had regular update meetings with Paul Brennan to discuss decommissioning progress, and any other site issues.
- An issue of particular importance at Harwell is land release, and its impacts on priorities and funding. Typically, priorities for funding are based upon risk. The Harwell site is surrounded by the Harwell Campus which seeks to influence priorities and timescales.
- The NDA is carrying out a review of SSG's. It is not yet clear what the objectives of this review are at present. A guidance document was presented at a meeting in Manchester on March 20th. The document was discussed and criticised with many claiming that they



had never seen it before the meeting. Inconsistencies were identified and it was felt to be overly complicated. It was concluded that it did provide some useful guidance, however, it was not accepted in its current form.

2. Minutes of the 102nd meeting

- The minutes from the last meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.
- Questions from the last meeting, that remained unanswered were captured as actions, and updated accordingly (see below).

Actions

A1. NRS to review the routing of the bridleway.

- Routing of the bridleway was discussed with Oxfordshire County Council, and the Harwell Campus prior to being implemented. The diversion at present is the only viable option available.

A2. More information to be given on the local impacts of Groundwater Remediation.

- Jon Blackmore (NRS) will be covering this as part of his presentation today (Section 7b).

A3. More information to be given on surveys underway at Downs Way East to identify species residing there.

- The preliminary ecological survey determined that the species potentially present in the area were bats and badgers. Subsequent surveys established that the badger setts in the area are disused. Measures are being put in place to ensure that badgers do not return to the area during the planned works. Bat surveys last summer also confirmed that bats were not roosting in the area.

A4. NRS to provide more information on the Waste Chemical Storage Area.

- The Western Storage Area (WSA) is a permitted former landfill site which was historically used for disposal of chemical wastes. These disposals, into unlined pits in the chalk, resulted in chemical contamination of the groundwater. Several phases of remediation work have been carried out at the WSA (covered within presentation under section 7). The environmental permit will not be able to be surrendered in the foreseeable future unless the permitting regime changes, as contamination, albeit at very low levels, remains in the chalk at the site.

A5. Could an appendix be included within the minutes.

- An appendix has now been included.

3. Matters Arising:

4. NRS Harwell Licensed Site Matters

a) Site Directors Report – Paul Brennan

Paul Brennan (NRS) attended the meeting, and provided the group with an update of what has been happening at NRS Harwell.



- Soft rebrand to Nuclear Restoration Services continues. The new brand strategy reflects the joining together of Magnox and Dounreay.
- There has been no Lost Time Accidents (LTA) in 286 days, as of April 2024.
- Atmospheric and liquid discharges from Site remain well within the permitted limits.
- 19 job roles currently open.
- 3 apprentices joined in September 2023. (1 mechanical, and 2 radiation protection)
- An issue associated with effluent monitoring calibration process was identified. Although of no environmental impact, our arrangements within this area have been revised and discussed with the Environmental Agency (EA).

Site Operations

- Nuclear Materials Transfer (NMT) – a target of 85% shipped offsite is now complete.
- Remote Handled Intermediate Level Waste retrievals (RHILW) has exceeded their target retrieving 10.8Te.
- Over 330m³ of legacy waste has been consigned from the site.
- West Meashill has been remediated in preparation for Delicensing and Land Release.
- B220 Characterisation Contract has been awarded.

NRS is currently working on a series of programmes at Harwell including:

- Land Release
 - Working to develop a proposal to accelerate and optimise land release plans to support further development of the campus.
- Nuclear Material Transfers
 - 5697 drums shipped to date.
 - 85.7% of total drums.
 - Company performance target achieved.
 - Forecast 89% drums complete by March/April 2025.
 - Dragon fuel is 52% complete in terms of can numbers.
- Remote Handled Intermediate Level Waste Retrievals
 - 10.8Te was processed versus a 7.38 target for 2023/24.
 - WEP is now operational and has grouted 215 drums to date.
 - RM1 (Retrieval Machine 1) is operational, and the radon abatement equipment has completed phase 1 decommissioning.
 - Post Operation Clear Out (POCO) project continues to develop solutions to allow cleaning for disposal of the waste storage tubes.
 - ILW Box Store (HIBS) is going through work to allow final active commissioning ready to receive the first concrete box inn later 2025.
- Legacy Waste
 - Target exceeded. Have consigned over 330m³ this year.
 - Temporary tented structures have been cleared and removed.



- Compliance and End States Programme
 - West Meashill Area:
 - Minor remediation of 3 areas successfully completed in December 2023.
 - Delicensing case submission in early 2025.
 - Downs Way East:
 - Ecological surveys and mitigation have been completed.
 - A desk study to be commissioned through the supply chain in 2024.
 - Further surveys and sampling will be needed to inform the remediation options assessment, currently scheduled for 2025/26.

5. Reports

a) Nuclear Decommissioning Authority – Report Submitted

NDA were not present at the meeting, but a report has been submitted for overview.

- Regional Stakeholder Roadshow held at Bangor University on March 12th, 2024.
- Draft scope of the review of SSGs will be circulated for SSG review. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the stakeholder voice within the local community over the last 20 years.
- Finalising SSG Chairs and Vice Chairs event, which will reflect a group wide approach involving the NDA and NRS CEO and Chairs.
- In person Stakeholder Conference will be held later this year.
- In the process of designing a biannual stakeholder survey, with more details available later this year.
- Preparation underway for Strategy V, which is expected to be published in March 2026.

Publications and Policy Updates

- NDA 2023 Mission Progress Report was published in November.
- Consulted on draft Business Plan 2024-2027 which reflects the NDAs most recent strategy. It sets out key activities and the progress expected across all its sites during the next 3 years, in line with funding allocated by DESNZ.

Mission Delivery

- NDA and NRS have underlined their commitment to Government, that where possible to safely accelerate land release at Harwell.
- Sellafield have removed the first of 237 Zeolite skips from the First-Generation Magnox Storage Pond.
- NRS is in the process of updating the Dounreay lifetime plan, which identifies a route map to reach the sites interim end state.
- Destination Nuclear has been launched within the UK, to attract and recruit people into the civil and defence nuclear sectors.

b) Office for Nuclear Regulation – Report Submitted



ONR not present at the meeting, but a report was submitted for overview.

c) Environment Agency – Rebecca Cleverley

Rebecca Cleverley attended the meeting and presented the main topics from within the Environment Agency Report distributed for review.

6. NRS Corporate Update – Bill Hamilton, not attending.

Bill Hamilton did not attend the meeting.

7. NRS Site Update – Jon Blackmore

a) Liquid Effluent Treatment Plant Land Remediation Update

Jon Blackmore (NRS, LETP Senior Project Manager) attending the meeting and presented an update on the Land Remediation Project.

- Bulk Land Remediation work carried out between 2018 to 2021.
- Surveys and sampling for radioactivity carried out in summer 2022. As expected, some minor anomalies that required further remediation were identified.
- Nuvia carried out surveys of the drains, with initial assessment of results indicating no concerns.
- Surveys and sampling at the Sewage Farm were carried out in summer 2023 by WSP. The results were all low and below regulatory limits, except for samples from two soakaways to the east side of LETP, where further data assessment is to be carried out.

Remaining Minor Remediation Works

- Remediation is needed to address three specific areas where enabling works were needed and areas where the results from validation sampling in summer 2022 indicated clean up targets may not have been met.
- This work is scheduled for summer/autumn 2024, subject to the groundwater levels.

Remaining Work – SUDS Lagoon and LETP Reinstatement

- A Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) Lagoon is to be constructed on the Sewage Farm to improve management of potential pollutants within the surface water drainage system.
- Due to be completed in summer 2025, subject to groundwater levels.
- The bridleway can be opened once the SUDS and Reinstatement works have been completed.

Delicensing

- NRS objective is to remove the regulatory controls to allow release of land back to the Harwell Campus.
- The aim is to submit a delicensing case in Autumn 2025.

Q1. Will the new lagoon be connected to the Lydebank brook?



A1. Yes

Q2. 500 m3 of waste yet to be removed, what is the definition of this waste?

A2. Waste will be a mixture of out of scope (non-radioactive) waste, and very low-level radioactive waste (VLLW) consisting primarily of Chalk and some drains.

b) Update on Management of Chemical Contamination of Groundwater

Jon Blackmore presented an update on the Western Storage Area Groundwater Remediation Strategy.

- A background on the chemical contamination of groundwater at Harwell was given.
- The groundwater pathway has an extensive monitoring programme, carried out by contractors. Currently WSP.
- The public water supply boreholes within the area are no longer in use.
- Ongoing liaison with the Environment Agency and local environmental health officers regarding potential new private water supplies in the plume area.
- A closure case for the groundwater plant is being prepared in liaison with the Environment Agency.

Q1. What is the current state of groundwater now. Is it at drinking level standards?

A1. A report is shared yearly with the Environment Agency. Some locations off site e.g. Chilton village well still have concentrations of the key contaminants at above drinking water standards, noting that concentrations across the area have fallen over the 30 years since monitoring and remediation began.

Q2. Can an updated version of the borehole map shared within the presentation be produced to show where contamination remains to date?

A2. Jon Blackmore advised this can be produced.

Q3. How much contamination is removed each year?

A3. A few kilograms per year (*post-meeting note: 5.2 kilograms in the 2023/24 financial year. In 1995/96 the equivalent figure was 1,351 kilograms*).

8. Campus Matters

a) Diamond Light Source

Amy Griffin attended the meeting and provided a presentation on recent activities within Diamond Light Source.

- Diamond Light Source has celebrated 22 years as a scientific research facility.
- Solar panel installation has been completed and will be connected to the grid/commissioned within the coming months.
- Diamond II project is underway. Phase 1 consists of the construction of Diamond's extension building which commenced in January 2024.

Public Engagement Activities



- Continue to run 'Inside Diamond' public open days. The next one will be happening October 26th.
- Schools Inside Diamond Day – October 23rd.
- Schools Work Experience – Applications closed for July 2024. Will reopen in December for July 2025.
- Harwell Open Week commences Monday 24th June.

9. AOB

10. Next Meeting – 5th November 2024

APPENDIX 1

Term	Definition
NRS	Nuclear Restoration Services
EHSSQ	Environment, Health, Safety & Quality
NMT	Nuclear Materials Transfer
RHILW	Remote Handled Intermediate Level Waste
WEP	Waste Encapsulation Plant
ODP	Offsite Discharge Pipeline
GWP	Groundwater Plant