



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HUNTERSTON SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
HELD AT THE WATERSIDE HOTEL, ARDROSSAN ROAD, WEST KILBRIDE, KA23 9NG
THURSDAY 13 JUNE 2024**

Attendance/Apologies list

Attendance

Ms Rita Holmes
Mr Stuart McGhie
Mr Jamie Woodburn
Mr Graeme Buckley
Cllr Eleanor Collier
Cllr Tom Marshall
Mr William Jack

Fairlie CC (Chair)
EDF (Vice Chair)
Largs CC
West Kilbride CC
North Ayrshire Council
North Ayrshire Council
NFU Scotland

Operators and Officers

Mr Mark Blackley
Mr Joe Struthers
Ms Fiona McCall
Mr Paul Dale
Mr Keith Hammond
Ms Melanie Hayes
Mr Bill Hamilton
Mr David Wallace
Mr Steve Saunders
Mr Peter Hughes
Mr Geoffrey Dore

NRS (Site Director, Hunterston A)
EDF (Station Director)
Senior External Affairs Manager, EDF
Director, SEPA
SEPA (Site Inspector, Hunterston B)
SEPA (Site Inspector, Hunterston A)
External Affairs Director, NRS
NDA (Stakeholder Lead Scotland)
ONR (Site Inspector, Hunterston B)
ONR (Site Inspector, Hunterston A)
Minute taker

In Attendance

Ms Anne Bannatyne
Mr Calum Corral
Ms Linda Hepburn
Mr Alan Holden
Mr Michael Mann
Mr John Riddell

Member of Public
Journalist
Member of Public
Member of Public
Member of Public
Member of Public

Apologies

Dr Clare Bond
Mr Angus Cochran-Patrick
Ms Aileen Craig
Ms Diane Hamilton
Mr Colin Hargreaves
Mr Craig Hatton
Cllr Alan Hill
Mr John McHenery

Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM)
Hunterston Estate
North Ayrshire Council
Scottish Government
NRS Site Inspector
Chief Executive Officer, North Ayrshire Council
North Coast and Cumbraes Council
Hunterston Estate

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1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair opened the meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves. Apologies were noted from Dr Clare Bond, Angus Cochran-Patrick, Aileen Craig, Diane Hamilton, Colin Hargreaves, Craig Hatton, Cllr Alan Hill and John McHenery.

No interests were declared.

2. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR UPDATES AND CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair reported that she and the Vice Chair had received monthly updates from Mark Blackley. They had also met with Joe Struthers to discuss changes and the transition at Hunterston B.

Stuart McGhie reported that the recent NRS national forum had included a proposal for SSG chair and vice chair payments to be recorded as part of NRS's payroll. He cautioned that this proposal would remove individuality and independence from the Chair and Vice Chair. Stuart McGhie noted that the draft documents from the November 2023 meeting had yet to be circulated. The next meeting was scheduled for 8 and 9 July.

Bill Hamilton explained that HMRC had provided new guidance concerning national insurance and income tax payments. The guidance had been reviewed by external auditors, who had confirmed that SSG chairs and vice chairs would be added to the payroll system in order to comply with HMRC guidance. However, the chairs and vice chairs would not be classified as employees of NRS. NRS had been extremely open in explaining this guidance. Bill Hamilton noted that the SSGs had been formed under the auspices of the NDA, and NRS only helped administer the SSGs. He also understood that the NDA had requested that an additional independent accountant provide a second opinion. The current proposal was on hold, and there would be further discussions.

Stuart McGhie stated that there was great concern that, should a chair or vice chair be paid by NRS/NDA, they would no longer remain independent. He acknowledged that Bill Hamilton had been transparent during the process. Bill Hamilton said NRS did not want to alter the current arrangement.

Stuart McGhie proposed that a document be shared at the next Chair and Vice Chair national forum that would outline the proposal. Bill Hamilton welcomed Stuart McGhie's suggestion.

ACTION: A document to be shared at the next Chair and Vice Chair national forum outlining the proposed changes to Chair and Vice Chair payments.

Stuart McGhie proposed wording that set out the independence of the Chair and Vice Chair. Bill Hamilton said that, while this was a possibility, the priority was to continue as normal.

3. ACTIONS AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

Cllr Eleanor Collier proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Stuart McGhie. The minutes of the meeting of 7 March 2024 were approved as a true and accurate representation of the meeting.

4. HUNTERSTON B SITE REPORTS

Hunterston B Site Report

Joe Struthers presented his report.

Defueling of Hunterston B reactor 4 had been paused, as planned, for three weeks in February to complete a fuel route outage. 86 of the 308 channels had been defueled. A process had

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been put in place to address the challenges in relation to removal of the tie bar end fitting component, and the mechanism would not prevent defueling for more than 24 hours.

There had been another fuel route outage that had been completed, and reactor 4 defueling had been resumed.

Joe Struthers reported that there had been an issue with the Charge Machine CO₂ supply in March. Pressurisation of the fuelling machine had been initiated for a short period before protections had kicked in. The cause of this had been a valve opening due to the incorrect positioning of a switch. While there had been no safety consequences, a full investigation had commenced. This had led to process improvements and additional training.

Following the completion of defueling, Hunterston B would seek to adjust its site arrangements to transition the site from defueling delivery to deconstruction delivery. Work was progressing well to design and justify the arrangements, while engagement continued with NRS to deliver a seamless transfer of site.

Safety performance had remained strong, and the total recordable injury rate (TRIR) sat at zero. Joe Struthers reported that there had been one event in which a rain cover had been ejected from a diesel generator exhaust stack. Although no harm had been caused, an investigation had been conducted to understand the failure of the mechanism and to prevent a reoccurrence.

There were no significant environmental events to report during the period.

The level 1 emergency demonstration exercise had been completed. Work continued with NRS and associated trade unions to design and agree the deconstruction organisational structures for Hunterston B. The structure would be in place once the station transferred to NRS in 2026, approximately nine months after fuel-free verification (FFV). After continued consultation and engagement with internal and external regulators, staff had been briefed on the joint-agreed structure. Staff engagement would continue as Hunterston B moved through collective consultation. It was noted that the new structure would involve a reduction in the staffing level, to 244. Staff morale remained high, and individuals were keen to demonstrate their peak performance in defueling.

ONR Report

Steve Saunders presented his report.

Due to the reduced risk of the site, the ONR had targeted the continued safety fuelling and preparations for transition and transfer. In the preceding six months, it had conducted inspections in the areas of management of change. The overarching management of change paper would only set out the changes. There would be further interactions with Hunterston B as each justification for the various departments was implemented.

It was noted that, under LC11, Hunterston B was required to perform an annual demonstration of its emergency arrangements. Although this had changed, as the number of possible events and accidents at the site had reduced significantly, areas of improvement had been identified in crime scene management. On site medical treatment of contaminated casualties had also been highlighted as a potential area of improvement. This area would be monitored as part of routine business.

The ONR, in conjunction with SEPA, had reviewed the proposed station decommissioning plan. The ONR was satisfied that Hunterston B had an appropriate strategy and plan in place.

Hunterston B had submitted its Nuclear Reactors (Environmental Impact Assessment for Decommissioning) Regulations (EIADR) document, and the ONR was considering the application and consultation responses. It hoped to issue a consent decision in early July.

SEPA Report

Keith Hammond presented his report.

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The ONR and SEPA had conducted a joint inspection on the decommissioning and delivery plan. SEPA had specifically reviewed the waste management plan. The decommissioning and delivery plan had matured significantly, and SEPA was satisfied that Hunterston B was on track. However, it had highlighted that the waste management plan required further clarity.

The EASR permit application remained ongoing. The next habits survey of the combined Hunterston site was scheduled to be undertaken by the University of Stirling in the summer.

Questions & Answers

Stuart McGhie recorded that, during their meeting with Hunterston B, he and the Chair had been provided with sufficient information. The meeting had been incredibly productive.

The Chair referred to the charge machine incident and asked if it had been due to a different reactor pressure now that Hunterston B was not generating energy. Joe Struthers explained that it had been related to a different process for defueling. The defueling machine had been designed to operate at 40 bar but was operating at a much lower pressure. The switch for the defueling machine had been incorrectly positioned. The process had been changed to prevent a reoccurrence.

The Chair asked if there had been any danger. Joe Struthers said there had not been any danger. The fuel had been safe. More robust steps had been taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

The Chair asked if SEPA had concluded on the discharge. Keith Hammond explained that it had requested information regarding the short-term release. EDF had conducted this work and had submitted it to SEPA, and SEPA was reviewing it.

The Chair queried the discharge amount that a swimmer would be exposed to. Keith Hammond said that, should both stations discharge their annual limits in one setting, an individual swimmer would be exposed to approximately 200 micro sieverts. The Chair asked if there had been any studies regarding contamination of the sediment near the discharge pipe. Keith Hammond said there had not been any. He added that he understood that a survey would be conducted as part of the decommissioning project plan.

Cllr Eleanor Collier asked if SEPA undertook any independent checks for water quality. Keith Hammond explained that SEPA, in conjunction with several other regulators, published Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) reports annually.

The Chair asked if there were any plans for temporary or permanent asbestos storage on site. Joe Struthers suggested that he provide information on this at the next SSG. He also noted that any previously disposed asbestos would have utilised asbestos approved disposal routes.

ACTION: Joe Struthers to provide information regarding Hunterston B's plans for temporary or permanent asbestos storage on site at the next SSG.

The Chair noted that the Hunterston B report had highlighted legionella and asked if it was present within many areas of the plant. Joe Struthers stated that Hunterston B had approved contractors who would help manage the risk of legionella.

The Chair asked if there would be changes in shift work. Joe Struthers responded that any changes would be subject to an appropriate approval process.

The Chair requested an update on the crime scene management. Steve Saunders explained that, as the station moved to deconstruction, the balance of risk would change from nuclear to conventional. He was confident that Hunterston B could appropriately respond to a nuclear emergency, and he wanted to identify areas that the site could test that would be relevant for the next phase of operation. This included an individual suffering a serious injury on site. Should this be a fatality, the site would need to follow guidelines such as preserving the scene.

5. HUNTERSTON A SITE REPORTS

Hunterston A Site Report

Mark Blackley presented his report.

There had been no new significant safety issues during the reporting period. The site had successfully demonstrated the implementation of its contingency arrangements to the Company Internal Assurance Team.

The final box of bulk material had been retrieved from the bunker. The team would Hoover the dust within the bunker. The WILWREP had been reconfigured to start retrieving acid. The site had identified that it needed to undertake further work to reassess the aerial discharge monitoring techniques and the associated reporting arrangements.

Decontamination work on the pond and miscellaneous delay tanks had commenced the previous week. Hunterston A had decided to process the ILW packages in SILWE manually and without the KUKA robots. The design was currently being amended.

The reactor roof repairs were expected to be completed by July. A steel cradle rail system had been removed from the perimeter roof fascia of the charge machine maintenance building glazed tower structure.

The mental health first aid group had organised several activities to support the 2024 Mental Health Awareness Week campaign. This had coincided with the opening of a dedicated wellbeing cabin on site.

ONR Report

Peter Hughes presented his report.

Peter Hughes stated that an inspection in March had focused on radioactive waste management. It had been determined that Hunterston A's current arrangement was suitable and sufficient.

A security inspection focusing on information had been held, and the findings had been suitable and sufficient. Peter Hughes had attended the site during the week commencing 10 June to perform an inspection on the Construction (Design & Management) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. The ONR had determined that Hunterston A was appropriately implementing its arrangements.

SEPA Report

Melanie Hayes presented her report.

There had been no site inspections since the last SSG.

A walkdown of the SILWE facility had been undertaken in order to support the variation application that SEPA had received last year. SEPA had requested further information, of which Hunterston A had submitted.

Melanie Hayes highlighted the gaseous discharge returns and reminded the SSG that Hunterston A had been issued with an information notice. The site continued to work through the three actions, and it was expected that they would be closed during the second half of the year.

The permit variation application to include the SILWE gaseous discharge stack within the site permit was expected to go out to public consultation in the coming months. The aqueous discharge variation application had yet to be submitted, as SEPA had requested further information. SEPA would review this information before deciding whether the application would be duly made.

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There had been another minor leak of F-gas on site. SEPA's F-gas specialist had requested further information, which Hunterston A had provided.

Questions & Answers

The Chair referred to the permit variation application to include the SILWE gaseous discharge stack within the site permit. She asked if it was common for this to go out to public consultation. Melanie Hayes responded that it was.

The Chair asked if the increase was due to the additional discharge pipe. Paul Dale replied that it was. The additional discharge was associated with the facility becoming operational. The Chair asked what would happen if the public decided that it did not want an additional discharge pipe. Paul Dale said this was part of the risk. SEPA would follow a statutory process.

The Chair asked if the reconfiguration of the WILWREP had identified any problems. Mark Blackley said it had not. The Chair asked if all discharges would go out to sea. Mark Blackley responded that Hunterston A was working on the aerial discharges. It had measured the discharges from the site, and it had added additional sampling onto the discharge route. It was currently reassessing the additional equipment.

The Chair asked if the acid was being contained in one tank. Mark Blackley said it was being contained in two tanks. The acid would be pumped through the tanks, into the facility and then encapsulated within the WILWREP.

Mark Blackley referred to the miscellaneous tanks and said it would likely take several weeks to decontaminate them because there was not as much activity in the tanks, as had been previously anticipated.

The Chair queried the potential dosage for the SILWE encapsulation plant. Mark Blackley stated that a dose assessment had been produced as part of the initial concept design. The concept design had included 100 mm of shielding, and the dose had been approximately 0.1 millisieverts per year for each operator. The Chair queried the dose from the package minus shielding. Mark Blackley responded that this would vary depending on the packages. The dose had increased to more than 1 millisievert per person, remaining within legal and safety limits.

The Chair asked if the design had been completed. Mark Blackley responded that the shielding aspect of the design was close to completion, but the change of the control system remained at the concept stage.

The Chair asked if there was a large volume of radioactive dust within the vaults. Mark Blackley said that, over four weeks, the plant had not accumulated enough material to fill one box. It was anticipated that up to six packages of fine dust would need to be retrieved.

The Chair asked if SEPA and Hunterston A had considered the recharacterisation of the waste within the stainless-steel boxes. Mark Blackley recollected that Hunterston A had previously briefed the SSG that it had initiated a scope of work in this area, and it expected to complete this by the end of the calendar year. SEPA would be kept informed throughout the process.

Paul Dale said there was a clear driver for the encapsulation of bunker 1, and this had been agreed with the ONR. The other bunker waste would need to be properly characterised before a decision was made on the management functions.

John Riddell recalled that he had previously highlighted the removal of the temporary cladding on the Hunterston A station reactor, but nothing had happened. He asked who was responsible for this. Mark Blackley responded that Hunterston A had intended to replace the current weather membrane with a metal cladding. This had been based on a care and maintenance strategy. Much work had been undertaken across all NRS sites to have site-specific strategies for decommissioning, and Hunterston A was reviewing implementing a

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site-specific strategy. The result of the demolition survey would determine the most appropriate solution.

John Riddell said he had heard the same comments the last time he attended a SSG meeting. His question had not been answered. He again asked when the temporary cladding would be removed, adding that immediate action was necessary. The Chair noted that the SSG had repeatedly suggested that the height of the site be reduced. She added that she suspected that the NDA and NRS would be responsible for deciding this.

The Chair stated that she recalled it being said that the NDA and NRS would adopt a process whereby it would continually decommission Hunterston A. Bill Hamilton said this was one plan. NRS, under the guidance of the NDA, was reviewing site-specific strategies that would meet the needs of the site and the community. He added that patience needed to be exercised.

The Chair stated that it appeared that, should work commence to decommission the site, Hunterston A would remain 'stuck' with a temporary barrier. Mark Blackley said this was not necessarily the case. The temporary barrier had a limited lifespan, and the site-specific decommissioning strategy would outlive its lifespan. A decision needed to be taken on the most appropriate approach to decommission whatever was inside the barrier.

Cllr Tom Marshall stated that, while he appreciated the comments, nothing had been done. The situation was 'appalling', and he was disappointed. Mark Blackley said that, should the cladding be covered, it would impact the properties and the weather barrier. The cladding could not be easily coated.

Jamie Woodburn stated that he had repeatedly raised the same issues. He asked how many individuals were working on the strategy and when it was due to be completed. Cllr Eleanor Collier voiced her support for John Riddell, Cllr Tom Marshall and Jamie Woodburn's comments. She was of the view that NRS did not want to accommodate the requests of residents. David Wallace stated that there needed to be recognition that there was a major problem. He, Mark Blackley and Bill Hamilton would need to inform the business that there was real concern and also re-emphasise the strong feelings that were emerging from the SSG.

ACTION: David Wallace, Mark Blackley and Bill Hamilton to inform the NDA and NRS of the concerns highlighted by the SSG regarding the removal of the temporary cladding.

William Jack noted that, should the barrier be removed, the building would remain in position. Cllr Eleanor Collier stated that there was neither a plan nor a timescale. Local members wanted some comfort that it could provide to constituents. Jamie Woodburn said the community had not been informed about the future of the site.

6. AYRSHIRE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES TEAM UPDATE

It was noted that there was no report.

7. UPDATE FROM NDA

David Wallace presented his report.

Peter Hill had been appointed as the new NDA chair, while Chris Train had been appointed as the new chair of Sellafeld.

The first meeting of the Cross Party Group on Civil Nuclear Industry had taken place on 27 March, and the next meeting was scheduled for 11 September.

A consultation was being prepared for strategy 5, which was due for publication in March 2026. The next stakeholder conference would be held on 17 and 18 September, in Manchester.

Jamie Woodburn asked what had driven the need for SSG reviews. David Wallace said the SSG reviews would address best practice, and it did not necessarily mean that there was an

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issue with the groups. The NDA would assimilate all comments and decide upon the best way to move forward.

The Chair asked when Dungeness B would be fuel free. Fiona McCall responded that it would likely be fuel free by 2028-29.

8. NRS CORPORATE UPDATE – INTRODUCTION TO THINKS INSIGHT

It was noted that, due to the upcoming general election, Bill Hamilton would not provide a presentation on Thinks Insight.

9. UPDATE FROM SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Report

Diane Hamilton was not present.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked those present for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting date: Thursday 5 September 2024.