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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
JOINT BERKELEY/OLDBURY SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
HELD AT OLDBURY CONFERENCE CENTRE, OLDBURY NAITE, THORNBURY, BS35 1RQ
WEDNESDAY, 28 MAY 2025**

Attendance/Apologies list

Attendance

Members

John Stanton	Chair, Berkeley (Coopted member)
Cllr Steve Chandler JP	Vice Chair, Berkeley
Cllr Matthew Riddle	Chair, Oldbury
Cllr Chris Jennings	Vice Chair, Oldbury
Cllr Chris Bloor	Thornbury Town Council
Cllr John Crook	Monmouthshire County Council
Cllr Chris Davies	South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Maggie Dutton	Stroud District Council
Dylan Griffiths	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council representative
Cllr Hugh Johnson	Tytherington Parish Council
Cllr Valerie Williams	Alveston Parish Council

Operators and Officers

Tracy Braithwaite	Environment Agency
Peter Reynolds	Environment Agency
Caroline Richards	Environment Agency
Alastair Findlay	NDA
Sharon Fry	NRS
John Alderton	NRS
Mike Heaton	NRS
Stephen Bray	Great British Nuclear
Geoffrey Dore	Minute Taker

Members of the Public

Nicola Berry	Hill Parish Council
Gillian Ellis-King	Strategic Projects Manager, South Gloucestershire Council
Barbara French	STAND
Sue Haverley	STAND
Peter Hazelwood	Birdwatcher
Nic Pehkonen	Artist and EDF Contractor
Angela Presdee	Officer, Gloucestershire County Council
Peter Williams	Liverpool University

Apologies

Cllr Isaac Bamfield	Berkeley Town Council
Cllr Adrian Birch	Forest of Dean District Council
Cllr Chris Davies	Stinchcombe Parish Council
Cllr Kevin Evans	Oldbury on Severn Parish Council

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Janet Hellen
Dr Trevor Hellen
Paul Jenneson
Tony Mitchell
Elizabeth Norton
Angela Paine
Cllr Dominic Power
Brian Roberts
Jon Severs
Cllr Demelza Turner-Wilkes
Cllr Jeremy Warren
Geoff Wheeler

TAPP'D
Berkeley Research Group
ONR
Thornbury Town & District Residents Association
NDA
Friends of the Earth/Green Party
Chepstow Town Council
Thornbury Chamber of Commerce
Officer, South Gloucestershire Council
Stroud District Council
Aust Parish Council
Berkeley Research Group

1. WELCOME

The Chair (Cllr John Stanton) opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Angela Paine, Elizabeth Norton, Cllr Chris Davies of Stinchcombe Parish Council, Paul Jenneson, Tony Mitchell, Cllr Adrian Birch, Cllr Isaac Bamfield, Cllr Kevin Evans, Janet Hellen, Dr Trevor Hellen, Jon Severs, Cllr Dominic Power, Brian Roberts, Geoff Wheeler, Cllr Jeremy Warren and Cllr Demelza Turner-Wilkes.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2025

A. Accuracy

There were no comments on accuracy. The minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting held on 5 February 2025.

B. Matters Arising

It was noted that the actions arising would be addressed within the site director reports and Tracy Braithwaite's report.

4. SITE DIRECTOR REPORTS

A. Mike Heaton – Site Director, Berkeley

Mike Heaton reported that NRS had undertaken a safety share for all sites, and the near miss events had only resulted in minor injuries. Berkeley's safety record remained exemplary.

Berkeley was currently utilising robotic systems to retrieve intermediate level waste (ILW) from its dry vaults, and the programme would likely run for a further eight years. The site was also developing methods to deal with containers within the vaults. Work was taking place in vaults 1 and 3, and the site was due to retrieve 35 tonnes of ILW during the year. Four low-level waste (LLW) shipments were planned for the year. The waste would be packaged into concrete boxes in anticipation for final disposal. 16 packages would be sent to the ISF waste store in 2025/26; three packages had been completed.

The project to remove waste stored in the blower house safe stores had been terminated. Work had commenced on the Berkeley safe store and waste handling area, and the site intended to use these facilities once it had closed the contract positions. Excess was being redeployed across the fleet, and work continued to address deteriorating assets.

The site had attended the careers fair at SGS College, and Springboard Opportunity Group had been selected as Berkeley's site charity. Berkeley had also participated in No Mow May.

Mike Heaton highlighted socio-economic funding. £1.1 million had been donated through the NRS sites during the previous year, and Berkeley had awarded £50,000 to the community hub solar panels. The site had also invested in local organisations, and a community roadshow had taken place in Berkeley and Oldbury.

Questions

Cllr Chris Jennings queried the funding for Berkeley for the previous year. Mike Heaton stated that Berkeley's funding for the current year amounted to approximately £30 million against £38 million for the previous year. Total funding for NRS for the previous year had equated to £540 million.

Cllr Matthew Riddle asked if near miss reporting was taking place. He also asked how the site would respond to these and how it encouraged near miss reporting. Mike Heaton stated that

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Berkeley had recorded 800 near miss reports the previous year, which had had little to no significance. The site would review all near misses at the end of the year to identify any trends. An individual whose near miss report was selected as the best of the month would receive a small reward.

John Alderton said Oldbury's strategy was similar to Berkeley's. It would review the information to identify any commonalities, as well as conduct training. Human performance training had been a major success for the previous year. The site would also conduct hazard perception training.

The Chair asked if training took place on lifting and handling materials. Mike Heaton responded that it did.

B. John Alderton – Site Director, Oldbury

John Alderton reported that the site had carried out a stand down of all staff. It had encountered a near miss event while offloading an electrical cabinet from a lorry, which had tipped and fallen onto the side of the road. Nobody had been in the fall zone. Having conducted a site stand down, Oldbury was working through the list of corrections.

The site had secured funding for most projects, including the turbine hall preparation works, ponds decommissioning and early FED retrievals. However, it had been unable to secure funding for the construction of the Advanced Vacuum Drying System (AVDS). Instead, it had received seed money to investigate building a simpler option on site.

Oldbury technical centre had been demolished. The equivalent of 18 tennis courts had been removed, totalling 1,951 tonnes of waste. No accidents had occurred.

The ponds team was performing decommissioning de-planting activities in the ponds filtration plant. Turbine hall de-cabling verification works were nearing completion. The final cuts of the 12 cables were planned for 2 June, and once this took place, the facility would be electrically isolated. This would allow the site to engage a contractor to de-plant and demolish the turbine hall complex. Contractors would likely be on site within 18 to 24 months.

The site was currently gathering information from its five waste vaults. The material would be used to determine the design of the future retrieval systems. Oldbury had obtained information from vault 3, and vault 4 work was underway. The information-gathering exercise would likely last for 20 months.

Three individuals from local schools had completed work experience on site, and a further three would undertake work experience later in the year. Discussions had taken place with Gloucestershire Careers Hub. The site was preparing for volunteers' week, and it had selected JIGSAW Thornbury as its site charity.

Oldbury had also participated in No Mow May. In relation to the wetlands projects, the site had cleared vegetation, allowing it to insert ball holes for monitoring. The monitoring would allow the site to measure the fluctuations of the water within the lagoon over four seasons.

John Alderton highlighted socio-economic funding and Oldbury's funding applications. Oldbury had held a bike ride event, in partnership with JIGSAW Thornbury, raising £800.

Keely Salter had been announced as intermediate-level apprentice of the year and UK Nuclear apprentice of the year.

Questions

John Alderton recalled that Peter Hazelwood had asked why the weir gate had not been sealed in March and had also questioned the result of a public consultation regarding the end state for Lagoon 3. There was now a final design for the weir gate, and the site would go out to market in the coming weeks. It planned to seal the weir gate in the summer months. After the site had been able to monitor water for 12 months, it would then determine the best final solution for the area.

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Peter Hazelwood queried the outcome of the public consultation. John Alderton responded that the options highlighted during the public consultation would be considered once the site had been able to monitor the water for 12 months.

The Chair recollected that a vacuum operated dewatering facility had been developed for Berkeley. John Alderton said Oldbury was assessing whether it could use some of the equipment housed at Berkeley.

Cllr Matthew Riddle asked how much of the turbine hall was below ground. John Alderton replied that approximately 9 metres of the turbine hall complex was below ground.

Cllr Chris Jennings queried Oldbury's funding for the current year. John Alderton responded that Oldbury had been assigned a funding budget of £21.4 million against £22.1 million for the previous year. Cllr Chris Jennings asked if the reduced budget had affected any projects. John Alderton replied that it had only impacted the AVDS project.

Cllr Steve Chandler noted that Oldbury was sampling its vaults and asked if its records were better than Berkeley's. John Alderton said while Oldbury did have records that detailed what had entered the vaults, it still had to verify them by analysing the samples.

Cllr Chris Jennings asked if the site would analyse the contents of a vault immediately after it had been emptied. John Alderton clarified that Oldbury was not emptying vaults but rather was retrieving a small amount of material from it that it could analyse. Once it had obtained material from vault 3, samples would be sent off for analysis.

The Chair said he assumed the materials in the turbine hall had a scrap value. John Alderton confirmed that there was a large proportion of semi-precious materials. During negotiations with the contractor, the site would assess how it could secure the most favourable share of the material value.

Gillian Ellis-King questioned the strategy for the hole in the ground. John Alderton stated that the site was conscious of removing the protection from the rain. Part of the design requirements for the end state would include an appropriately designed pumping system. It would maintain the hole in the ground, and the hole would be appropriately fenced. Gillian Ellis-King asked if this was a long-term solution. John Alderton responded that the site would determine a long-term solution during final site clearance.

5. NDA UPDATE

Alastair Findlay noted that his report had been included within the pack. Lord Hunt had retired as Minister of State in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and had been replaced by Baroness Curran. The Government's Spending Review on 11 June would set out detailed spending plans for individual departments for the next three years. The NDA would work with the sites and operational companies to understand the impacts. This would not be disclosed to the public until business planning in December.

The NDA had given evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on 20 March, and it expected to receive a report within the coming weeks that would include clear recommendations.

The NDA was formulating the results of its engagement survey. Strategy 5 was due to be published in 2026, and a consultation event would take place imminently.

A video recognising 20 years of SSG engagement was played.

6. ONR REPORTS

It was noted that Paul Jenneson had offered his apologies.

7. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REPORTS

A. Berkeley

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Tracy Braithwaite reported that Berkeley had performed retrieval and packaging work while also reviewing its blower houses. The EA had worked with Mike Heaton, who was the Head of Environment and the national team on the regulation and permitting of voids. This would take 18 months to solve.

The EA had undertaken a leadership inspection during the previous week. There had been no instances of non-compliance, and the EA had been happy with the thought processes.

The effective dose for the site was now less than 5 microsieverts at 0.005 millisieverts. This is 0.5% of the public dose limit.

The EA had closely monitored Berkeley's gaseous discharges. The site had experienced periods of both activity and inactivity in retrievals and decommissioning, leading to fluctuations within the gaseous results.

Tracy Braithwaite presented the discharges assessment. The EA would set limits within the site permits that could not be exceeded. Under the limit, the EA would expect the site to do everything in accordance with the best available technique (BAT), as the law outlined that the discharges to public should be as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA).

Tracy Braithwaite highlighted the gaseous waste emission limits for Berkeley. The table outlined the outlets that were able to discharge radioactive gaseous waste from Berkeley. There were several small outlets for which the amount of discharge was less than 5% of the gaseous waste emission limits. Berkeley's discharge per year amounted to 3.7 microsieverts, significantly less than 1,000 microsieverts, which was the amount that would cause radioactive harm.

Tracy Braithwaite presented the RSR high level permit requirements for water. The EA would usually check the permits of each site annually. The actual reporting was checked monthly, and a Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Report (RASCAR) would be issued to each site quarterly.

Tracy Braithwaite presented an example of the gaseous discharge report that Berkeley would send to the EA. Once she received the report, she would extract the results and include them in a spreadsheet. From January 2023 to January 2024, the site had discharged 0.742 MBq of beta particulate, which amounted to 3.71% of the permit limit.

Tracy Braithwaite presented the trending results for Berkeley for gaseous waste and beta particulate gaseous discharge (MBq) from 2020 to 2024. The actual discharge did not tend to exceed 0.5 MBq. The facilities on the graph had been split; there had been periods during which the site had been actively retrieving. It was also noted that there had been site outages in March 2022, January 2023 and December 2023. The site had tracked the activity and discharge against work on site, and the EA would query occasional blips.

The EA would account for site activity when determining the permit limits. It would also ensure that sites had sufficient headroom and complied with the BAT. Berkeley had been extremely forthcoming in this area, and it had advised of its intention to set its own working limit.

Berkeley's environmental monitoring programme fed into an annual dose assessment. The EA would then compare the annual assessment with its work through the Radioactivity in food and the environment (RIFE) report.

B. Oldbury

Peter Reynolds introduced himself. He had observed no incidents on site during his routine engagements. Although the site had several old, deteriorating buildings, the EA was not concerned that these buildings would produce extra waste or hazards. Having reviewed the sampling arrangements for the surface water and waste treatment plant, he had been satisfied that the samples had been representative and that the initial screening was adequate.

There had been no environmental events of concern during the previous three months. Moving forward, the EA would review gaseous and aqueous discharge and the arrangement for managing ILW.

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Oldbury had produced a site-wide environmental safety case, which would combine with a waste management plan and develop into a strategy for removing all waste from the site.

Questions

The Chair asked if the EA would regulate new build in addition to the NDA site. Peter Reynolds responded that this remained unknown. A separate group was regulating new build.

Cllr Steve Chandler noted that there had been an increase in carbon-14 and beta particulate levels, which had been attributed to a spreadsheet error. He asked if the error had been eliminated. Tracy Braithwaite explained that Lucy[?] had checked the formulas and calculations within the spreadsheet, also initiating an improvement programme. The graphs had been updated. Carbon-14 was inherent within fuel element debris (FED), which accounted for the rising levels.

Cllr Steve Chandler noted that there had been a change of measurement equipment and asked if this had been an isolated change. Tracy Braithwaite replied that it had been. Mike Heaton said the information demonstrated that the Berkeley site was well below the EA's site discharge limits and public discharge limits.

Cllr Maggie Dutton welcomed visibility of the lower emissions and invited Tracy Braithwaite to share any potential BAT improvements. Tracy Braithwaite stated that the EA had reviewed the BAT for the blower house project. As Berkeley would need to characterise the pipework within the blower house, the EA had suggested that the site obtain its sample from the inside of the pipe and document this. The site had a firm design process, and any proposed improvements were usually minor.

8. GREAT BRITISH NUCLEAR

Stephen Bray introduced himself and his role. GBN had existed for two years and had recently purchased the Wylfa and Oldbury sites from Horizon. Over the last 18 months, it had been running a selection process for UK small modular reactors (SMRs)

GBN had submitted a planning application for a site office and compound in Oldbury. The technology selection process for the SMRs was nearing completion, and it was hoped that Oldbury would have a fleet of up to six reactors. The Government would likely pay for the first two reactors and would pick up to two reactor technologies. GBN would also engage with the Government regarding its upcoming spending review. GBN would assess which technologies were best suited to specific sites. He noted that the attendees could join the stakeholder list at oldbury@greatbritishnuclear.uk.

The pre-application process for the development consent order (DCO) would likely take four to five years before early work would commence.

Questions

Gillian Ellis-King asked if the site office and compound would be located on the same site for which Horizon had previously obtained a DCO. Stephen Bray confirmed that it would be.

Cllr Chris Davies of South Gloucestershire Council asked if the Government was likely to view a single reactor technology design as the cheaper option. Stephen Bray highlighted the benefits of diversity but cautioned that GBN would need to recognise the state of public finances. It would await Government action.

Tracy Braithwaite asked what site allocation would be based upon. Stephen Bray responded that it would be based upon several factors, including aquifers and the environment.

Barbara French asked if there would be further sites. Stephen Bray replied that there likely would be. Barbara French highlighted the size of the SMRs. Stephen Bray said the SMRs were medium sized and tended to produce between 300 megawatts and 500 megawatts per reactor. Rolls Royce's reactor size was 470 megawatts, while the reactor size for the other three vendors amounted to approximately 300 megawatts.

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9. AOB

Cllr Steve Chandler highlighted the proposed housing development near Berkeley. Mike Heaton stated that NRS had not been asked to comment on the application. Cllr Steve Chandler observed that the planning application window had closed. Mike Heaton said he understood that the planning application for the Sharpness development had been withdrawn. He agreed to check this.

ACTION: Mike Heaton to check whether the planning application for the Sharpness development has been withdrawn.

Cllr Steve Chandler noted that the land on the Berkeley site had been leased to Chiltern Vital Group (CVG). Stephen Bray stated that CVG was proposing a small modular reactor to the north of the existing decommissioning site. However, this was a medium to long-term plan.

Mike Heaton explained that the Chair and Cllr Steve Chandler had raised that several tenants residing on the plot of land had been informed that they might have to leave. This was causing concern within the local community. Stephen Bray said the some of the older buildings on the estate required renovations, and CVG was struggling to secure insurance. The organisations would need to be moved, and CVG was working with them to identify a solution. Angela Presdee reiterated Stephen Bray's comments. Active discussions were taking place with the tenants to identify alternative solutions, and CVG could be invited to attend the next SSG.

ACTION: Angela Presdee and Stephen Bray to check whether CVG can attend the next SSG.

Cllr Steve Chandler said the SSG members of Berkeley would be interested in what was happening with the site. Mike Heaton suggested that the chairs and NRS corporate centre address the issue, as it would take the committee outside of its terms of reference. Cllr Steve Chandler suggested that the topic be discussed at the SSG Chairs' meeting. The Chair highlighted the Men's Shed and Physionet as key issues. The local community would welcome a solution.

Gillian Ellis-King highlighted the proximity of the new development to the waste facility and remarked that ONR would directly influence this.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 14.56.

Next meeting date: 10 September 2025.