



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
JOINT BERKELEY/OLDBURY SITE STAKEHOLDER GROUP (SSG)
HELD AT OLDBURY CONFERENCE CENTRE, OLDBURY NAITE, THORNBURY, BS35 1RQ
WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Attendance/Apologies list

Attendance

Members

Cllr Matthew Riddle	Chair, Oldbury
Cllr Chris Jennings	Vice Chair, Oldbury
Cllr John Stanton	Chair, Berkeley
Cllr Steve Chandler JP	Vice Chair, Berkeley
Cllr Adrian Birch	Forest of Dean District Council
Cllr Chris Bloor	Thornbury Town Council
Cllr Chris Davies	Stinchcombe Parish Council
Cllr Maggie Dutton	Stroud District Council
Cllr Hugh Johnson	Tytherington Parish Council
Cllr Jeremy Warren	Aust Parish Council
Nicola Berry	Hill Parish Council
June Lyons	Olveston Parish Council
Brian Roberts	Thornbury Chamber of Commerce

Operators and Officers

Tracy Braithwaite	Environment Agency
Tom Hibbert	Environment Agency
Alastair Findlay	NDA
Sharon Fry	NRS
John Alderton	NRS
Emily Ciezarek	NRS
James Craig	NRS
Paul Jenneson	ONR
David Carson	Amentum
Geoffrey Dore	Minute Taker

Members of the Public

Tim Davies	Attending on behalf of Dr Simon Opher MP
Diana Gash	STAND
Dr Trevor Hellen	Berkeley Research Group
Bill Otto	STAND
Geoff Wheeler	Berkeley Research Group

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Apologies

Cllr Isaac Bamfield
Cllr John Crook
Cllr Chris Davies
Barbara French
Cllr John Graham
Sue Haverley
Mike Heaton
Janet Hellen
Tony Mitchell
Nic Pehkonen
Cllr Dominic Power
Angela Presdee
Peter Reynolds
Cllr Tony Williams
Cllr Demelza Turner-Wilkes

Berkeley Town Council
Monmouthshire County Council
South Gloucestershire Council
STAND
Alveston Parish Council
STAND
NRS
TAPP'D
Thornbury Town and District Residents Association
Artist and EDF Contractor
Chepstow Town Council
Gloucestershire Council
Environment Agency
South Gloucestershire Council
Stroud District Council

1. WELCOME

The Chair (Matthew Riddle) opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Barbara French, Sue Haverley, Nic Pehkonen, Tony Williams, Isaac Bamfield, Mike Heaton, Janet Hellen, John Crook, Dominic Power, John Graham, Chris Davies of South Gloucestershire Council, Peter Reynolds, Demelza Turner-Wilkes, Tony Mitchell and Angela Presdee. It was noted that John Graham would be replacing Valerie Williams on the SSG, as she had left Alveston Parish Council.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2025

A. Accuracy

Tracy Braithwaite noted that she had highlighted several inaccuracies that she would circulate. Some of the amendments were related to statements she had previously made that were no longer accurate. Subject to the amendments, the minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting held on 28 May 2025.

B. Matters Arising

It was noted that there had been an action to check whether the planning application for the Sharpness development had been withdrawn. Steve Chandler said he did not believe the planning application had been withdrawn. Alastair Findlay said the NDA had registered its interest regarding the immediate and generational issues, but it had not received a response.

It was noted that there had been an action for Angela Presdee and Stephen Bray to check whether Chiltern Vital Group (CVG) could attend the next SSG. John Stanton said there had been no update, though CVG was applying for planning permission.

Planning application by GBN (site investigation) – GBN had submitted a planning application for a depot, to allow it to undertake site investigations on the land to the north of the Oldbury site. Chris Bloor questioned the purpose of the ground investigations. The Chair responded that the scope of work would include investigating the possibility of a new power station to the north of the site.

4. SITE DIRECTOR REPORTS

A. John Alderton – Site Director, Oldbury

John Alderton reported that there had been 11 slips, trips and falls across the sites during the calendar year, resulting in various minor injuries. He highlighted the importance of spatial awareness and hazard perception inside and outside of the working environment.

Demolition activities continued for old, degrading facilities on site. The old planning block and link bridge were scheduled for demolition, and the land would be opened for potential future use.

The ponds team continued with work in the pond filtration plant. The turbine hall de-cabling verification works had been completed, and it was ready for handover to a future contractor. Oldbury continued with its process of governance of assurance, which would allow it to approach the supply chain. The Investment Review Panel (IRP) had endorsed the turbine hall, and it would be presented to the NDA group investment committee on 25 September. If approved, all tender documents would be released to the supply chain. It was anticipated that contractors would be in place at the end of 2026 or start of 2027.

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Early fuel element debris (FED) works had been completed in vaults 3 and 4. The next scope of work was to move onto vaults 1 and 2 and this work would be completed by August 2027.

John Alderton highlighted sustainability and reported that individuals from the site had attended the Gloucestershire skills and careers excellence summit. Oldbury had completed an employer standards assessment and had established a STEM and outreach working group.

Tender construction drawings for the silt lagoon 3 weir chamber recommendation had been approved, and the intention remained to complete this scope of work by the end of the financial year. A new company sustainability strategy would be launched at the end of September, covering business, environment and communities. Workshops and briefings would inform staff of the new strategy and their role.

Oldbury had provided funding for Alveston Primary School, the Tortworth football team and Tortworth Forest Centre and Arboretum. Five apprentices had joined the site, while NRS had recently welcomed a new cohort of apprentices during its apprentice week.

A video was played showcasing some of the highlights of apprentice week.

Oldbury had raised £2,300 as part of its support for the Jigsaw charity. The site would support a fund dinner at Oldbury golf club in November; staff had also volunteered at Jigsaw, Thornbury.

Questions

Chris Davies said he had become aware that all local authorities had to prepare a local nature recovery strategy. He asked John Alderton if he was aware of this. John Alderton responded that he was not but agreed to check this with the site's sustainability and environment team. Chris Bloor said he was aware that South Gloucestershire had undertaken a great deal of work on a nature recovery strategy. Chris Davies said various partners had contributed to the Gloucestershire strategy.

The Chair highlighted a recent uptake in fly tipping in Oldbury. John Alderton said the site was aware of this. Whenever the site observed this, it would raise the issue within its system and contact the local council.

B. Emily Ciezarek – Site Integrator, Berkeley

Emily Ciezarek reported that Berkeley continued to focus on retrieving waste from the vaults. It was currently working in vaults 1 and 3 and was utilising remote technology. The site had currently retrieved just over 10te of waste against a target of 35te. Some of the plant remained under commissioning. Four LLW shipments were planned for 2025/26; one had been completed. 16 packages would be sent to the ISF in 2025/26, with three currently sent. In total, there were 44 completed packages in the store.

A new wireless fire system would be installed. A new kiosk for transformer 5 had been introduced, and new handrails had been installed on the safe stores. Some of the guttering round the safe stores had been realigned. Facilities, including drying rooms and changing rooms, had been updated.

Berkeley had recently helped with the move into the Berkeley Community Hub and Library, building and the site had provided close to £80,000 in funding for projects.

Questions

Geoff Wheeler asked if the blower house buildings had been demolished. Emily Ciezarek responded that they had not been. The blower house had a reduced scope of work, and there was currently no plan to demolish these.

Diana Gash noted that the ILW was being stored in concrete boxes to be transported to an onsite facility, but she also recalled it being previously stated that the concrete boxes were safe for 100 years. She asked if this was a sufficient period. Paul Jenneson stated that the concrete boxes would be dispatched to a UK geological disposal facility (GDF). The GDF

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would exist forever, and there was no intention to revisit the waste. The objective was to move the concrete boxes to a storage facility, and subsequently to the GDF, once it became available. The concrete boxes would remain at Berkeley for maximum period of 100 years. As Berkeley's site inspector, he was mindful that the storage facility was an interim option. He would seek an assurance that the ILW would be safely stored and remain fit for purpose, as well as fit to be moved to a GDF.

Diana Gash asked if there were any definite plans and timescales for the GDF. Alastair Findlay said the current plan was to open GDF in the 2050s, and the NDA was currently working on plans for it. A high level of engineering for the boxes would allow for them to be left alone for 100 years.

Chris Davies suggested that Berkeley check whether the site had been mentioned within Gloucestershire's nature recovery strategy. Emily Ciezarek agreed to check this.

John Stanton thanked the site for its help with the move to the new Berkeley Community Hub and Library.

5. NRS UPDATE

James Craig introduced himself.

NRS had received confirmation of £540 million of funding for its sites for the next four years. Accounting for inflation, there would be efficiencies, and NRS had introduced a mutually agreeable voluntary exit scheme for the 200 most senior individuals across the business. There were currently no plans to roll out the scheme across other grades.

The NRS roadshow was being expanded across the country. As part of the roadshow, NRS would conduct polling activities and report back on its findings.

Questions

John Stanton asked if the overall programme would be suboptimal due to the reduction in funding. Alastair Findlay responded that there would always be a balance between additional spend and value for money. While NRS would gravitate to where the risk lay, it would still make progress at its sites.

The Chair said he had understood that there would be flat cash. Alastair Findlay said the NDA had received an early indication that it would need to make difficult choices, but it had received the funding that it required.

The Chair asked if NRS would now review its plans for each site. John Alderton said Oldbury would now move into the next stage of business planning. NRS would consider its funding priorities and build this into a business plan, which would be presented in November. Alastair Findlay added that the NDA would publish a business plan in December.

Steve Chandler asked what was driving the reduction of senior staff. He also questioned whether NRS risked losing valuable experience. James Craig said NRS had had to account for efficiencies. Any staff would also need to agree to any departure.

Brian Roberts questioned the point at which critical removals would result in mothballing. John Alderton said Oldbury was at least 20 years away from reaching a stage of care and maintenance. While funding had been reduced, the site still needed to carry out a great deal of work.

6. ONR REPORTS

Paul Jenneson introduced himself and highlighted ONR's five purposes: nuclear safety, conventional health and safety, nuclear security, nuclear transportation and safeguarding. The conventional health and safety risks on an operational reactor site were quite low.

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The UK Government had recently commissioned a Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce to review nuclear regulation. ONR was moving towards a risk-informed approach to regulation, and Paul Jenneson worked closely with the site, and site directors, to ensure that potential nuclear safety risks to the public were not diminished.

The turbine hall was on the nuclear licence site, and everything within the fence was subject to nuclear safety regulation. ONR would look to where it could better apply regulation, to drive efficiencies and maintain regulatory standards and expectations. Berkeley continued to reduce risk to the public by removing waste, and Paul Jenneson was generally content with the level of progress.

The shielded areas at Berkeley had been inspected, and the team had worked extremely hard to remove historical waste from the area. The work package to remove the waste stored in the blower halls had reduced in scope, and the project would be re-contracted.

The turbine hall was the next major scope of work at Oldbury. Paul Jenneson would aim to ensure that Oldbury had the right risk-informed regulation and that Berkeley continued to retrieve waste whilst maintaining site safety.

Questions

Bill Otto asked if safety pertained to radioactivity. Paul Jenneson said safety concerned anything that could harm the public. The Ionising Radiations Regulations protected everybody across the UK.

Bill Otto summarised that ONR wanted to outsource its health and safety once it got to a certain safe level of risk. It would outsource risk to the private sector, under HSE regulation. He also questioned the critical threshold that ONR would declare for a safe transfer. Paul Jenneson clarified that ONR would continue to regulate all its purposes on site, but there might be a personal shift in how he might apply nuclear safety regulation and conventional regulation. Bill Otto asked if ONR had authority to do this. Paul Jenneson responded that ONR did under the Energy Act. The HSE had no regulatory authority on a nuclear licence site. Bill Otto asked if this would ever change. Paul Jenneson responded that it would only change if there was a change of legislation.

Bill Otto questioned the threshold that would be applied to make the transition. Paul Jenneson responded the legal definition within the Nuclear Installations Act stated that ONR must be satisfied that there was no danger from ionising radiation. The requirement was extremely high, while the dose was exceptionally low. Bill Otto asked if the remaining isotope could get into any biological system. Paul Jenneson said any potential amount would be insignificant.

Steve Chandler highlighted the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce and stated that there was a concern that there would be an emphasis on new build. Additionally, the taskforce had not engaged in any dialogue with the SSGs. Alastair Findlay said the interim report had been issued in August, while the actual report would be published in the autumn. The report would likely include recommendations.

Tracy Braithwaite noted that the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce had outlined five actions that needed to take place swiftly, and these had been outlined on the government's website in August. The nuclear regulation group had set up a group that would review how NRG regulated. Steve Chandler said it appeared that SSGs should be consulted on this. Paul Jenneson stated that this would be a decision for government. Alastair Findlay agreed to include a link to the interim report within the meeting minutes.

7. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REPORTS

A. Oldbury

Tracy Braithwaite provided a report on behalf of Peter Reynolds.

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The EA was due to review Berkeley and Oldbury's aqueous waste. A draft RIFE report had been completed and would be published in November. There had been increase in milk, seaweed, potatoes, wheat and barley. A dose assessment would also be conducted.

The effluent discharges and activity concentrations of radio-nuclearized waste would be measured monthly at Oldbury. Peter Reynolds had undertaken an inspection of the gaseous waste in May while reviewing the pond building. The gaseous omissions were low. Activities at the site were limited and not expected to produce substantial gaseous emissions. Several recommendations had been issued, including ones to improve the traceability of commissioning actions, review the flow calibration frequency and confirm the terms of the maintenance contract. All liquid and gaseous discharges from Oldbury were below the 1% relevant annual limit.

Oldbury was discharging 0.002 grays from the site, which was significantly below the legal limit of 1 millisievert. The EA had supported ONR's themed inspection on climate change. Climate change risks were being appropriately considered, and there was no immediate threat to the site's environmental permit. The EA and ONR would develop further joint guidance on the management of climate change effects on site. The EA had issued revised guidance on designing and conducting an environmental monitoring programme, also reviewing the criteria.

B. Berkeley

Tracy Braithwaite reported that an environmental leadership and sustainability inspection had recently been conducted. As part of its inspection, the EA had undertaken a site walkover, reviewing the site's competency and its best available techniques (BAT), as well as environmental improvements. Work would take place to clearly define the enhancements within the environmental improvement plan.

Tracy Braithwaite explained that as part of her level 4 interactions she would meet with the head of environment fortnightly, the site director monthly and NRS fortnightly. Her line manager would also meet with the corporate head of environment and the NDA. Level 2 meetings were run by account holders, while level 1 meetings took place with chief executives and executives. The level 4 review currently occurred quarterly.

It was noted that flooding had been highlighted as a concern at the last SSG due to the new development. The EA would comment on this in due course. The EA had developed an adaptive pathway study to identify ways to mitigate flooding across the coastline. Discussions had commenced between the EA, local authorities and NRS on funding.

Questions

Steve Chandler questioned when the EA's final review on site discharges would be available. Tracy Braithwaite said it was being peer reviewed. She would provide feedback on this within her next report.

ACTION: Tracy Braithwaite to provide feedback on the EA's final review on site discharges for the last two years within her next report.

Maggie Dutton noted that the EA had obligated industrial sites and waste sites to review a wider range of climate hazards and asked if this had taken place for the sites. Tracy Braithwaite explained that ONR was responsible for flooding on nuclear sites, and she was only aware of developments within nuclear sites. Maggie Dutton asked if the EA would review other climate hazards, such as prolonged rainfall and extensive droughts. Paul Jenneson said ONR had looked at climate change from a broad perspective, accounting for anything that could impact safety security.

Maggie Dutton asked if there were plans to look at adaptation for both sites. John Alderton stated that the site exerted a great deal of effort to ensure that its buildings were safe and secure. Paul Jenneson agreed to include a link to the chief nuclear inspector's report.

ACTION: Paul Jenneson to include a link to the chief nuclear inspector's report within the meeting minutes.

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Chris Bloor noted that there had been footpath warnings in Thornbury, and the [wet and dry by the styles on the banks of ditches?] was undermining structures. He asked if this affected the sites. Paul Jenneson said water erosion was an issue across the sites, and this would be brigaded under asset care and management. ONR would ensure that the sites were assuring asset integrity.

Tim Davies noted that local MPs had been informed of the defences required for each site in order to allow them to be used to be used in the future. This included a requirement for a 6-to-8-metre wall. Tracy Braithwaite agreed to check this. An adaptive pathways project would not normally involve erecting a concrete wall. The Chair noted that John Buttivant had stated that the adaptive pathway study would be published by the end of the current financial year. Tracy Braithwaite said the EA would only be informed of developments relating to nuclear sites.

Adrian Birch asked if the EA's work was likely to inform the new development at Oldbury. Tracy Braithwaite said the EA would have oversight of any new developments at a permitted site, but it had received no formal approaches for a new development at Oldbury or Berkeley.

Adrian Birch asked if there would be a formal approach for a new development at Oldbury or Berkeley. Tracy Braithwaite replied that this was dependent on a company, with a design, wanting to build at a certain place. If there was a permit on site, the permit would need to be surrendered or transferred. The EA would not allow for a permit to be surrendered. Paul Jenneson said there were several companies with generic designs. There was a difference between an operator and a vendor, and so far, there had been little indication of operators stating that they would buy a generic design assessment from a vendor.

Bill Otto welcomed the low levels of discharge and queried the possibility of a sink effect in the estuary. Tracy Braithwaite said the EA used the RIFE report, and there did not appear to be anything available to uptake. There was currently nothing that suggested that humans would be exposed to risk by consuming fish from the River Severn, while the EA had also checked seaweed, milk cattle, beef, barley, oats and wheat. OSPAR had reviewed the migration of radioactive isotopes in the UK, and it had not identified significant risks.

8. NDA UPDATE

Alastair Findlay reported that the NDA had launched its consultation on strategy 5 in July, and the 12-week consultation period would close on 29 September. A webinar had also been held on 5 September. Strategy 5 had five underlying themes and ambitious milestones. These included repackaging plutonium stockpiles, establishing new interim waste storage centres and identifying the right occasions for a GDF. The NDA's purpose was to remediate and remove risk. Alastair Findlay agreed to include a link to the consultation within the minutes.

The NDA would undertake a volunteer redundancy scheme. Lord Vallance had been appointed as the new Minister of State in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The NDA continued to cooperate closely with GBN regarding actions on site. A cooperation agreement would form part of both ONR and the NDA's licences. The NDA was engaging with the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce.

Questions

Steve Chandler stated that he had been disturbed to hear that the Treasury believed that the GDF would be undeliverable. Alastair Findlay said the NDA was reviewing all its programmes. The GDF formed part of the Government Major Project Portfolio (GMPP) and remained a government priority.

Steve Chandler said the GDF did not appear to be within the NDA's five-year strategy. Alastair Findlay said the project would not be in the strategy.

9. SSG CONSTITUTION

The Chair reported that the NDA had published a new constitution for both Berkeley and Oldbury, which had been shared with SSG members.

Geoff Wheeler noted that the NDA had said there should be other forums that dealt with projects outside of its remit. He proposed that the SSG website contain a signpost that would direct individuals to the most appropriate areas to address their concerns. The Chair welcomed this suggestion.

Trevor Hellen requested a sub-attachment that highlighted the changes within the constitution. The Chair agreed to circulate this. Paul Jenneson said the NDA had attempted to devise a constitution that enabled good practice across all SSGs.

10. AOB

Geoff Wheeler explained that he and Dr Trevor Hellen had commissioned a report on the history and achievements of the Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories. The booklet had been developed by approximately 25 individuals and had been published with support from Cavendish Nuclear.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 15.37.

Next meeting date: TBC