Information

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For Members

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| From: | Joanna Whitehead, Service Manager – HPC Programme |

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| Date: | 1st October 2020 |

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| To: | All Somerset County Council Members |

**Update on the Hinkley Point C programme**

**Site Update** – Despite Covid-19 restrictions, construction activity at the HPC build has been continuing and progress is reported as being good. Recent major achievements relate to the three tunnel boring machines all being in place and operational, the bases and containment cups for both reactors are now in place, the conventional island (non-reactor area) is being developed, and the supports for the turbines are being put in place. Some site pictures are included at the end of this report.

**Dredging –** a rig is in place off the coastline adjacent to site, taking samples of mud from the seabed. This relates to testing for radioactive material and particles ahead of a planned dredge of the sediment for the intake heads of the cooling tunnels. This has attracted concerns from some parties over the contents of the sediment, and the transit and placing of the dredged material in the assigned place off the coast of Wales. The process is licensed by Natural Resources Wales and Marine Management Organisation. Natural Resources Wales have conducted public consultation and will do so again for final dredging.

**Workforce Update** –

Covid – following a site inspection, the Office for Nuclear Regulation has issued a positive report stating in particular that the site management were doing all that could reasonably be required to manage the situation. ONR will repeat inspections in due course. Covid testing for all new workers is in place and they cannot enter site without a negative result. Heat sensitive cameras are in place at the site entrances and a testing facility is in place for workers who display symptoms. A Covid outbreak at a sub-contractor site in Bristol was managed by Bristol Public Health team, with support and input from the Somerset Public Health team. The HPC Community Relations team continue to respond to community concerns regarding, in particular, the main site activities, accommodation matters and in relation to the movement of workers.

Workforce Uplift – in the early part of 2021, an initial meeting was held with EDF to hear about the need for an increase the size of the workforce on site beyond the 5,600 originally assumed. The focus of our preliminary discussions since then has been to understand the planning and legal implications of an increase in the workforce. EDF has stated that the purpose of their review of the effect of the proposed workforce increase is to ascertain the nature and extent of the likely effects that will enable consideration in relation to the Development Consent Order, the S106 agreement and the relevant strategies and plans under the S106 agreement. At this stage, it is unclear what the effect will be and how any changes should therefore be handled. The Joint Councils (Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton, and Somerset County Council) have written to the Planning Inspectorate for early guidance, but a response has not yet been received. In the absence of any such opinion or advice, we have highlighted to EDF that our engagement in the process is at their own risk, notwithstanding that we remain supportive of delivering the HPC Project and recognise the importance of working in partnership with EDF to reach consensus on how to manage any proposed changes to the workforce profile.

The Joint Councils have highlighted that their engagement will require additional and separate resources, and some positive movement is being made with this. In the meanwhile, some initial discussions have taken place about the assumptions, methodology and data to underpin the assessment process. It is important these technical discussions take place before any consideration of the impacts of an increase in the workforce, let alone what needs to be done to mitigate/ address them and how they might be determined in planning terms. We have, however, highlighted that a plan for communications that incorporates our own organisations, elected members and councillors, stakeholders and importantly, the community, needs to be agreed.

**BEIS and Hinkley Strategic Delivery Forum (HSDF)** – HSDF meetings have been taking place, the most recent was September 4th, 2020. The most significant discussions related to the delayed Energy White Paper (no fixed date for this), the National Supply Chain Programme and agreement that securing the HPC Legacy should become a priority of the HSDF group ensuring local, regional and national benefits are realised with learning passed to other nationally significant infrastructure projects. The Terms of Reference for HSDF will now be amended to take account of this.

**Planning issues** – HPC is progressing a number of planning related items. Of particular note are the non-material material change to the DCO sought involving a number of the on-site buildings, the potential material amendment to the DCO in respect of the acoustic fish deterrent, Combwich Wharf works and noise management, and ongoing discussion about EDF’s proposal to defer the delivery of the Bristol Road/Wylds Road scheme to post peak of the project.

**National Grid –** whilst a separate project, the National Grid Hinkley Connection Project continues. Installation of overhead lines between Horsey levels - near Bridgwater; and Loxton - commenced in May. Undergrounding lines through the Mendip Hills continues with underground cable trenching and horizontal directional drilling. The developer contributions to workforce and education continue with the third year of activity well underway. National Grid have been communicating well with the relevant Parish Councils to keep them updated.

**Pictures from Site**

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| 49,000 tonne base for Unit 2 in place. July 2020 | C:\Users\GCUser\Desktop\EDF in GB Leadership Team Presentation\materials\picture slides\Nuclear_20Island-2020-06-01_2013-50-50.jpg  Nuclear Island Unit 1. July 2020 | View from 1km inside Unit 1 intake tunnel looking seaward |
| 170 tonne liner cup lifted in to place for Unit 2. | Liner cup. | Rig in place for taking core mud samples as part of application to dredge sediment from the seabed in 2021. |
|  | (pic right) TG Columns – 17m high, 40tonnes each. Support the turbines (which are the largest in the world). This is on the Conventional Island (non nuclear)  (pic left) one of the three drilling machines being lowered into place. |  |

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