Information

Sheet Number:

2022-27/33

Providing support for County Councillors

for County Councillors

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| From: | Nicola Dawson, Civil Contingencies Unit |

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| Relevant SLT Director and sign-off date:  | Michele Cusack2/12/2022 |

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| Date:  | 2/12/2022 |

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| To:  | All County Councillors  |

**Re-determination of Hinkley Point B Detailed Emergency Planning Zone**

**Background**

Hinkley Point B site ceased generating electricity in August 2022 after over forty-five years of operation. Under the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations 2019 (REPPIR), EDF is required to produce an evaluation of its continuing work with ionising radiation at the site and to identify any hazards that could cause a radiation emergency. This assessment, called a “consequence report” is used to inform the off-site emergency plan, including the size of the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) around the site. The DEPZ currently extends to 3.5km from the Hinkley Point B site.

The purpose of defining a DEPZ is to allow for rapid activation of protective actions in the areas closest to the site and the provision of prior information to local residents.

Under the REPPIR 2019 regulations, it is the responsibility of Somerset County Council (SCC) to use the consequence report to redetermine the size and shape of the DEPZ within two months of receiving the consequence report. SCC is also responsible for maintaining the multi-agency Hinkley Point off-site emergency plan. This work is delivered by the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU.)

SCC was previously required to redetermine the DEPZ boundaries in late 2019/early 2020 following the revision of the REPPIR regulations. At that time, there had been no changes to the operations at the Hinkley Point B site so the decision in 2019 was to maintain the DEPZ out to a distance of 3.5 km from the site but to adjust the boundaries slightly to follow local landscape features rather than a circle on a map.

**Current and Planned activities**

EDF sent the consequence report to the Chief Executive on 7th November. SCC now has two months to confirm changes to the boundaries of the DEPZ.

Over the last three weeks CCU officers have shared the consequence report with a number of subject matter experts including the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Public Health, District Councils, and other agencies (including Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum Partners) and have engaged with EDF for Hinkley B and C.

Once the CCU receives feedback from the UKHSA scientists and other subject matter experts, they will look to engage with local residents who might be affected by the change in DEPZ. It is intended to follow the process used for the 2019/2020 re-determination e.g. send information to all DEPZ residents and offer them the opportunity to attend drop-in sessions.

Feedback from the subject matter experts and the community engagement will be used to prepare a recommendation for the SCC’s redetermination of the DEPZ. The recommendation will be captured in a Members Key Decision report in January 2023.

**Consequence Report recommendations**

EDF is recommending that:

* The DEPZ, currently 3.5km from the site, is reduced to 800m.
* Sheltering remains an appropriate urgent protective measure within 800m.
* Potassium Iodate tablets are no longer required.
* There is no recommended change in the distance of the Outline Planning Zone (OPZ) which will remain at 30km.

**Considerations**

There are no occupied residences within 800m of the Hinkley Point B site.

In addition to the technical assessments, SCC is required to consider the practical aspects of implementing the off-site emergency plan arrangements in the (very unlikely) event of an off-site nuclear emergency. So, it is within SCC’s gift to maintain the current or similar DEPZ area. However, consideration will need to be given to how the prior information provided to local residents will need to change.

 As aforesaid, SCC has two months to respond to the consequence report however officers are dependent on UKHSA and others to provide the required technical guidance. The Christmas and New Year period is approaching and it does not seem appropriate or effective to carry out community engagement with DEPZ residents over the Christmas period. This may, therefore have an impact on the timetable for the Key Decision. CCU officers have asked the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) about the possibility of an extension to the current 2 month timescale for redetermination, but have been told this is not possible.

It is also the time of year when EDF prints and distributes an information calendar to residents of the DEPZ to inform them of actions to take in the event of an off-site nuclear emergency. As the information cannot be confirmed before the re-determination process has been completed, it has been agreed with EDF to delay the preparation of the Hinkley calendar until January. A letter is being sent to all residents within the current DEPZ to inform them of this action and local Members are being briefed.

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