

**VULCAN NRTE Report to the DSG – July 2023****Health and Safety/COVID-19**

Whilst we have reduced COVID mitigation measures and noting the legal requirement for self-isolation has been removed, we are emphasising to all at Vulcan that if they display any symptoms of COVID – or indeed any other contagious illness – they should not come to site and self-isolate at home.

**Environment**

There have been no challenges to the Approval of Arrangements (AoA) limits during this period.

**Sewage Effluent Discharge Consent**

As reported to the DSG we reported to SEPA a breach of one of our conventional (non-radiological) discharge permits. The incident was due to a flowmeter reverting to a default setting as a result of electrical switching, that went unnoticed for a period of time. Thus the flowmeter was operational and showing readings, though on closer inspection it could be seen that the figures were not representative of the actual discharges. The permit requires us to keep accurate records and equipment is good working order. Whilst this was a breach, I must emphasise that using other methods and records we have proven that the discharge volumes were within the normal range for this period. SEPA have acknowledged our notification and asked to be informed of the outcome of the investigation. This investigation is still in progress.

**Environmental - No Mow May**

As previously reported to the DSG since the start of May, Vulcan has been applying a “No Mow” approach to several large grassy areas on-site, allowing grass, wildflowers, and insects to thrive. Wildflowers growing naturally on the Vulcan site have been identified as being particularly beneficial for the Great Yellow Bumblebee: a species classified as “Vulnerable” on the IUCN Red List ([Bombus distinguendus](#))

[iucnredlist.org](http://iucnredlist.org)). Below are some pictures of these areas.



### Radioactive Waste Disposal

At the end of May, the annual rolling discharge (expressed as a percentage against the maximum detailed in the SEPA letter of agreement) was:

	Type	Percentage
Gaseous	Noble Gases	0%
	Other radionuclides not specifically listed, taken together.	17.8%
Liquid	Cobalt 60	0.17%
	All other radionuclides not specifically listed, taken together.	0.25%
	Tritium	0.002%

	Type	Percentage
<b>Solid</b>	No waste sent off site	N/A

### **Shore Test Facility Programme**

The Site programme continues to schedule with the next phase of operation and the fuel management activities within the STF commencing in early May. This programme of activities will provide data to support the operation of Royal Navy submarines in the longer term.

Work has also been progressed on removing redundant equipment from the Site. The Site has historically kept items 'just in case'. Currently the focus is on non-active items, though still progressing with items that have been used in active areas. The focus will shift from the non-active items. Where appropriate redundant equipment is being offered to the wider submarine enterprise for reuse.

### **Events**

Since the last meeting there has been no events occurring that required reporting to DNSR or ONR in accordance with their mandatory reporting criteria.

### **Emergency Arrangements**

The externally assessed annual security exercise was held in May. Whilst we await the formal report from the external assessors, our internal assessment and the initial (verbal) feedback from the assessors was that it was a satisfactory demonstration of our arrangements, and all aims were successfully achieved with no learning points raised.

Planning for Exercise LONESTAR, the site's annual nuclear emergency response demonstration, which will be held in November, is now underway.

### **Regulatory Inspections / Audits**

As previously reported a routine inspection of our arrangements for Ionising Radiation Regulations (IRR) and Carriage of Dangerous Goods (CDG) by ONR identified some shortfalls in our ability to demonstrate compliance with the Regulations. This resulted in ONR raising a Regulatory Issue (RI). The improvement plan was agreed with ONR in the New Year, we have continually progressed these activities to the agreed schedule. The bulk of the items have now been completed, with the final items on schedule to be finished by September. We are expecting an ONR inspection around this time, which will hopefully allow the RI to be closed.

DNSR undertook a compliance inspection for Authorisation Conditions 2, 8 and 16 on the 7<sup>th</sup> Jun there were no issues raised and we await the formal report.

Our next planned interface with DNSR is the Annual review of safety in August.

## **Vulcan Decommissioning Programme**

Firstly, we welcome the support from the DSG on this project at the previous public meeting. The options are still being reviewed and are currently progressing through due process. In the meantime the Vulcan and Dounreay sites continue to focus on the safe delivery of their missions.

### **Other**

Cdre Sharkey, the Head of the Nuclear Propulsion Project Team, visited Vulcan for the first time in this role, and only his second (the first was a very fleeting visit, about 5 years ago). The visit enabled him to gain a detailed understanding of the Site capabilities and facilities, as well as meet a number of the workforce. He was impressed by their enthusiasm and commitment in delivering the programme which is supporting the operation of the Royal Navy submarines both now and in the future. Caithness itself made an impression on him and he is looking to have a holiday in the area with his wife.

pp ALEXANDER

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