Policy Title:

LP31 - Oldbury A station: decommissioning

Existing Policies Which adopted Core Strategy or Policies Sites and Places (PSP) policy would eventually be replaced	**Decommissioning previously included in CS37 and PSP46**
Non-Strategic / Strategic	**Non-Strategic**

Purpose

Along with other relevant policies in the plan, this policy will be a material consideration in engaging with the site licensee, NDA and the NNB promoter and other potential developers, providing pre-application advice, assessing and determining individual planning applications and notifications, as well as responding to other consultations related to the decommissioning of the existing Oldbury power station.

This policy will support decommissioning of the existing station in a way that considers both interim and end states, including:

a. Recognising the:
   i. Potential for beneficial temporary / interim and or long term uses including integration with NNB, green energy uses and
   ii. Benefits of significant quality employment opportunities provided by the site over many years and promotion of this into the future
   iii. Existence of Grid connection infrastructure
   iv. Environmental sensitivity of the locality, adjacent international and national biodiversity designations, the presence of priority habitat and the declining biodiversity value of lagoon 3 on site, and
   v. Constraints of road access and flood risk

b. delivering sustainable outcomes in environmental, socio economic and transport terms, and net gain for biodiversity, as well as

c. minimising impact and maximising benefits and legacy throughout the life of this intergenerational project.

The existing nuclear power station at Oldbury ceased generation in 2012, and is being decommissioned by Nuclear Reclamation Services. The site comprises 15ha nuclear licensed and 32ha non-licensed land as shown on the policies map. Decommissioning is expected to be completed in the 2080's. It is therefore expected that decommissioning plans and interim and final end state proposals will evolve over time, and will continue through and beyond the Local Plan period.

The existing power station is site is located in a rural, sensitive and visually prominent location on the banks of the internationally designated Severn Estuary, in an area of high archaeological potential and immediately adjacent to the nominated nuclear new build (NNB). It is accessed via a minor road that also serves villages and other settlement on the Levels as well as areas of more recent residential development in the vicinity of Thornbury, and the pylon lines that served the power station remain. The site includes Lagoon 3, which formerly provided open water habitat for birds associated with the estuary designations. Although the 1992 planning permission for Lagoon 3 required restoration to its' former or an improved condition following cessation of its' use, the biodiversity value of this feature is declining as the water area reduces due to scrubbing over.

Decommissioning involves a range of activities including the removal and temporary storage and/or disposal of hazardous waste such as asbestos and radioactive waste, the rationalisation and/or demolition of buildings and reuse of land for activities relating to of decommissioning. It is possible that land needed in the longer term for site clearance related activity, may in the interim become available for beneficial interim and/or temporary uses. Given the timeframes for decommissioning, consideration of the end state for the site is well beyond the Local Plan period.

As part of these, in view of the potential for implications and interdependencies within and between decommissioning related works and development and NNB needs, the Council will want to understand how both how individual decommissioning proposals will relate to the wider decommissioning plans and uses, and also what implications the proposals may or may not have for new build on the adjacent site. The Council will wish to explore potential opportunities for beneficial reuse of infrastructure and/ or the restoration of land, recognising that the timeframes are very long and there are uncertainties in relation to the detail of the long term decommissioning plans.

In terms informing of the LPA's role, Policy xx sets out an overarching framework for the decommissioning and restoration of the Oldbury site against which pre-application advice and planning consents will be considered, and will also help inform the Council's response to any consultations on consents, licenses or permits from other organisations, while policy LP32 addresses on radioactive waste issues. Policy LPS14 relating too Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and associated or related development and Policy LPS15 on nuclear new build may also be relevant.

This policy will also help inform the Council's response to any consultations on consents, licenses or permits from other organisations.

Policy wording

1. **The Council will work in collaboration with the NDA, relevant statutory organisations, the operators of the existing Power Station site and the promoters of nuclear new build, to agree a co-ordinated, and integrated and phased site wide strategic masterplan to deliver sustainable decommissioning proposals and beneficial use, reuse and restoration proposals as appropriate, while recognising the context of regulatory, strategy and guidance applying to nuclear decommissioning proposals.**
2. **All land use, development, demolition and waste planning proposals and applications should be set within the context of that agreed strategic masterplan. The masterplan will provide a clear and consistent framework, to ensure that each application can be considered in the context of delivering on the overarching proposals for the Oldbury site. Given the long term nature of decommissioning, spanning many years and generations, it is acknowledged that plans for the site will evolve over time, and the masterplan will therefore need address both interim and end states and be capable of review and revision.**
3. **Given the importance of decommissioning the existing station, and the potential benefits of reusing or redeveloping existing infrastructure and/or brownfield land in reducing the overall impact of NNB, priority will sequentially be given to meeting the needs of:**
    a. **Decommissioning;**
    b. **Nuclear new build proposals;**
    c. **Other employment and/or low/zero carbon energy related uses.**
4. **Application of these priorities is subject to compliance with the criteria set out below and other relevant policy in the development plan.**
5. **The masterplan, including any necessary revisions, and individual proposals should seek to minimise impact on and maximise benefits and positive legacy for communities, the economy and the environment, including by:**
6. **Addressing policies LP 23 - Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, LP25 - Embodied Carbon LP 28 - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain and LPS 11 - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure regarding climate change, green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity,**
    a. **Securing sustainable and beneficial use and/or reuse and restoration of the site in terms of both interim and end states; and**
    b. **Protecting the site for high quality employment uses and/or green energy related uses in both in the near and longer term, while also:**
    c. **Ensuring that both the proposed works and their timing avoids impact on biodiversity designations and protected species, and where possible restoring, enhancing and managing Priority Habitats;**
    d. **Reinstating the habitat value of lagoon 3 for bird species associated with the designations on the Severn Estuary;**

e. **Conserving and where appropriate enhancing landscape character and visual amenity of the site and the locality including views across the local and wider landscape and estuary;**

f. **Undertaking detailed archaeological and geoarchaeological assessment and investigation, recording and publication where development may impact on buried archaeological and environmental remains;**

g. **Protecting the routes and amenity of the Severn Way and other PRoW links;**

h. **Ensuring that any associated transport proposals are effectively controlled to avoid impact on local communities and ensure the safety of other road users;**

i. **Demonstrating resilience to climate change and any increase in flood risk.**

7. **Policy LP32 on Radioactive Waste is also of particular relevance to the development of a masterplan for decommissioning.**

Supporting text

1. Due to the evolving and emerging position in relation to decommissioning and radioactive waste management and disposal, and the likely duration of the decommissioning process, it is envisaged that a strategic masterplan for the site would need to be an iterative document that is reviewed and revised in response to changes in the national policy, context, practice and permissions.
2. This masterplan should set the overall strategy for the site, and provide the context for more detailed development proposals. It should set out the overall parameters for the future evolution of the site, including:

   a. Identifying areas and features of biodiversity or heritage value that require protection;

   b. The existing, interim and end states for the site, along with an outline phasing and timetable for works;

   c. The location and scale of existing and proposed structures, buildings, voids, boundary treatments and any proposals for their retention, modification and/or restoration;

   d. Demolition and restoration proposals both above and below ground;

   e. Identification of assets, infrastructure or brownfield land that may be available for nuclear new build, either on a temporary or permanent basis;

   f. Proposals for new or changed earthworks, hardstanding or changes to land use and /or external appearance;

   g. Any locations, proposals and protection measures for onsite waste treatment, management and/or disposal of all types;

   h. Design approaches for new and altered buildings, structures and open areas;

i. Strategic landscape and biodiversity proposals, including the protection of environmental assets and designations, the management and or restoration of the mosaic of semi-natural and Priority Habitats for the benefit of protected Species across the NRS estate, including the reinstatement of Lagoon 3 as open water for birds' species associated with the estuary.

3. The masterplan proposals will also need to address the sensitivity of the site and its' surrounding environment, including but not limited to, consideration of the effects on:

   a. The international and national designations on the estuary, including avoiding disturbance to protected wildlife both on the estuary and the levels, reversing biodiversity decline at Lagoon 3 and delivering net gain;

   b. The high archaeological potential of the Severn Levels and the potential for surface or sub surface features and finds;

   c. The open character of the surrounding Levels Landscape;

   d. Flood risk;

   e. The capacity and/or suitability of the geometry of the road network, effects on residential settlement and the safety of other road users;

   f. Protecting the amenity of local communities, including along transport routes;

   g. Ensuring flood and climate change resilience as well as the protection of air and water quality; and

   h. The distinctive rural character of the surrounding landscape and the public rights of way network, including the Severn Way, for interim states as well as end state.

   i. The existing reactor buildings, with their distinctive blue and white stripes that form a distinctive feature of the local landscape and are locally listed. The visual implications of any proposals for change would need to be carefully considered.

4. Given the location of the existing power station on the edge of the Severn Estuary and surrounded by low-lying Levels, and the timeframes involved with decommissioning, resilience to flood and climate change will be important considerations for both decommissioning and planning relating to radioactive waste. The need to protect habitats and species associated with the international designations on the estuary, including the seasonal presence of migratory species, may also constrain the timing, phasing and nature of decommissioning related activities and works.

5. An explanation as to how any necessary Environmental Impact Assessment requirements will be met and Habitats Regulations compliance achieved, should accompany the strategic masterplan and individual proposals for the site. These should consider not only the individual effects of the proposals, but also any cumulative effects.

6. Given the timeframe for decommissioning, it will be important that the masterplan is an evolving document, and that phasing and review mechanisms for all relevant socio-economic and environmental considerations are built in.

7. This policy will be applied in conjunction with other relevant policies in this plan, in particular policies LPS14 on NSIPs, LPS15 new nuclear development and LP32 radioactive waste, and policies LP 23 - Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, LP25 - Embodied Carbon LP 28 - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain and LPS 11 - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure relating to climate change, nature recovery and biodiversity. In line with Local Plan policy on NSIPs (policy LPS14), Council engagement in the preparation of a strategic masterplan on decommissioning should be appropriately resourced via a Planning Performance Agreement or other suitable mechanism.

Additions	
Key evidence	
Other relevant policies to cross-reference?	LP 23 - Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience LP25 - Embodied Carbon LP 28 - Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain LPS 11 - Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure