

Introduction

The Submarine Dismantling Project (SDP) is the MOD's programme to deliver a safe, secure and environmentally responsible solution for dismantling 27 defuelled submarines. This involves recycling the bulk of the submarine and safely disposing of the remainder.

The submarine's Reactor Pressure Vessel (RPV) contains Intermediate Level radioactive Waste (ILW) and must be stored for an interim period until it can be processed and sent to a proposed Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) sometime after 2040.

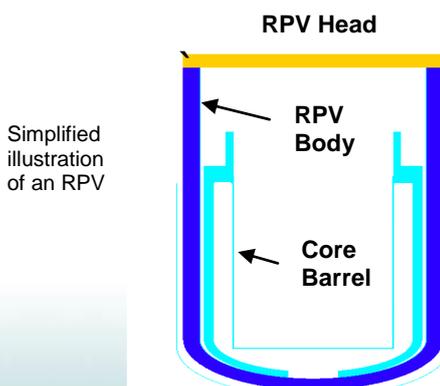
Local Factsheets provide more information on the five shortlisted RPV storage sites (Aldermaston, Burghfield, Capenhurst, Chapelcross and Sellafield) and summarise the results of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

This factsheet gives some background on the Burghfield site. The RPV Store proposals are described overleaf.

SDP

Based on SDP's current assumptions, the project plan will involve four main steps:

- The RPV is removed from the submarine and placed in a secure container for transport.
- The RPV and container are transported to the RPV storage site by road.
- The RPVs and containers are safely stored until a GDF is available, sometime after 2040.
- The RPVs are repackaged and sent for size reduction. The different types of radioactive waste arising are sent for disposal.



AWE and Burghfield Site

The Atomic Weapons Establishment provides and maintains the warheads for the UK's nuclear deterrent, Trident. AWE is contracted to the MOD through a government-owned / contractor-operated arrangement. While the sites and facilities remain in MOD ownership, their management and day-to-day operations are contracted to a private company, AWE Management Limited (AWE ML).

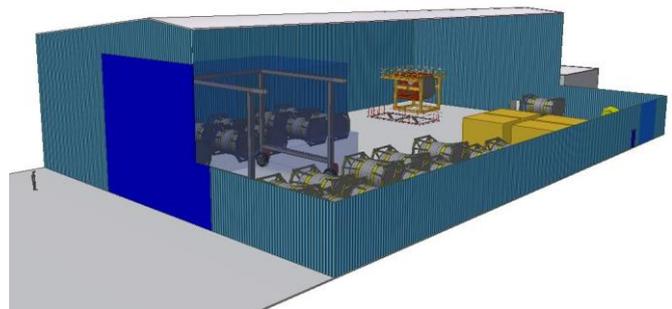
AWE Burghfield is responsible for the final assembly and maintenance of the warheads while in service, as well as their decommissioning. It is situated approximately 0.5 km east of Burghfield village in West Berkshire, and about 3 km southwest of Reading. The site covers approximately 89 hectares. Only part of the site is covered by a Nuclear Licence.

Future Site Plans

The AWE Site Development Context Plan¹ includes 10-year Illustrative Site Development Framework Plans for Burghfield. This plan identifies the longer term land use development plan for the site.

Existing Waste Stores

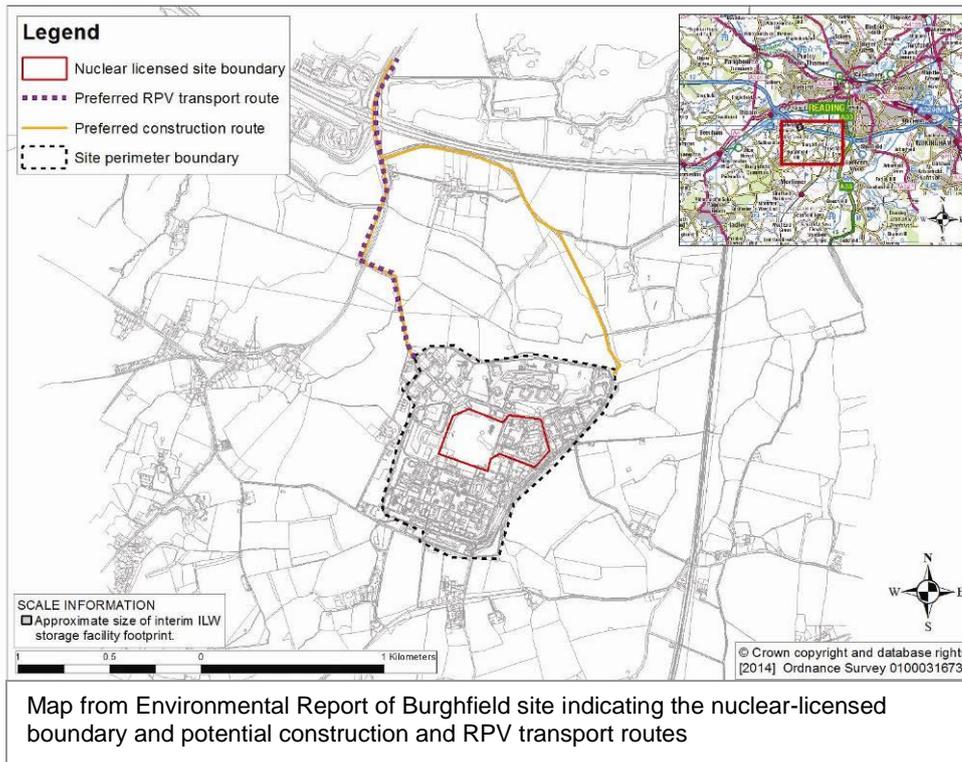
No significant quantities of radioactive wastes are generated at Burghfield and no ILW is stored there. Any waste that is produced is sent to Aldermaston for consignment and/or storage.



One possible arrangement for an RPV store

¹ Available from www.awe.co.uk/app/uploads/2014/09/Site-Development-Context-Plan.pdf





Burghfield Proposals

AWE has confirmed that an RPV Store at Burghfield could be accommodated within the existing Burghfield site boundary. It may, however, be necessary to extend the current Nuclear Licensed Site.

The site map above shows the site boundary. The marker by the scale shows the approximate maximum size of an interim RPV storage facility (3,150m²). A location will be determined in due course should Burghfield be selected as the storage site

SEA

SDP's Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) assesses environmental effects and information on alternatives. It is a major input to site comparison studies. The Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary are available on the project web pages with the Consultation Document.

The SEA studies were carried out by independent specialist consultants, with some input from site owners and operators, supervised by experts from the MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

Impacts at all sites

Most of the SEA conclusions regarding the potential impact of an RPV store apply to all the shortlisted sites. These are summarised below.

On all sites, there would be minor negative effects from greenhouse gases and energy use for all stages of the project lifecycle though construction, use and eventual decommissioning.

Minor adverse temporary effects are anticipated during construction and decommissioning:

- There is potential for temporary disturbance of habitats and/or wildlife.
- Despite mitigation, there will be some noise and vibration.
- Minor changes to local roads may be required but they are expected to be of minor significance.
- There is some potential for mobilising historic contaminants, depending on the site.
- There may be a temporary visual impact from tall plant (e.g. cranes) and traffic (particularly HGVs).
- There may be minor negative effects on waste generation and the capacity of waste management facilities during construction and demolition.



No significant effects are anticipated in the following areas:

- Minimal or no radiological discharges are currently anticipated. This, together with strict regulation, means there are no likely significant effects on local health and well-being.
- There are no land use change issues.

Impacts at Burghfield

A detailed assessment of potential impacts for an RPV store on this site is contained in the SEA Environmental Report. SEA issues specific to AWE Burghfield are summarised below.

Parts of the AWE Burghfield site are within an area of high flood risk but significant parts of the site are not. It is anticipated, therefore, that a location can be found outside the high flood risk area. For these reasons it is considered that there will be no significant effect related to flooding risk during construction, operation and decommissioning.

There is some slight potential during construction to disturb historic or archaeological remains or affect the setting of Cold War heritage interests.

Based on the SEA results, the MOD expects the RPV store to have minimal socio-economic impact - either positive or negative - on the local economy or the community around the chosen site.

No significant impacts are anticipated in the SEA Environmental Report on the number and types of local jobs available though AWE notes that there would be some local employment during construction.

Local Transport Routes

The West Berkshire Council Freight Strategy requires access to AWE Burghfield to be via M4 J12, the A4 and Reading Road to Burghfield Common. Access could then be via AWE Main Gate or Pingewood Gate.

There may be up to 3 RPV transports in the first year. Based on initial dismantling of the submarines at Rosyth and then those at Devonport, the long-term rate is expected to be around 1 a year thereafter. If there were some parallel work at Devonport and Rosyth, it could be around 2 a year for a few years.



Example of type of lorry suitable for RPV transport

Local Public Consultation

SDP has involved local stakeholders in the development of the AWE sites Public Consultation programme and kept local authorities and other stakeholders up to date with progress through regular meetings with the local liaison committee.

The project's Public Consultation includes a comprehensive programme of engagement and local and national events. For the AWE sites this includes:

- A one -day public exhibition and workshops at AWE Recreational Society (17th November).
- A one-day public exhibition and workshops at Burghfield Village Hall (18th November).
- One day public exhibition and workshops at the Community Sports Association (20th November 2104 and 22nd January 2015).
- One-day public exhibitions and workshops at Tadley Community Centre (22nd November 2014 and 23rd January 2015).



There are also two national workshops in January 2015, in Glasgow and Birmingham.

Information on dates and venues will be posted on the project's web pages and also sent directly to local stakeholders and interested individuals known to the project. Advertisements will be taken out in local papers.

Online Documents

Online information and documents are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/submarine-dismantling-project-interim-storage-of-intermediate-level-radioactive-waste>

Contact Information

Comments and questions on the SDP project should be directed to the team administering the Public Consultation on behalf of the MOD.

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If you have any concerns about the Public Consultation, or you wish to discuss some other aspect of the project with the SDP project team, you can contact them directly.

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