

## **LLC JOINT STEERING GROUP DISCUSSION PAPER**

### **Options to broaden membership of the Local Liaison Committee**

#### **Revised proposal – May 9 2014**

#### **1. Background and recap**

Since its inception, the AWE Local Liaison Committee (LLC) has been made up of elected local council representatives although specific guidelines on which councils should be eligible were not formally documented or included in the original Terms of Reference.

The review has provided a good opportunity to explore options to extend the membership of the committee to enable engagement with a broader range of local stakeholders whilst balancing the need for openness and transparency with the confines of security and the Site Licence.

An updated Terms of Reference for the Committee has been prepared which extends membership to include advisory members and co-opted experts. It also formalises the inclusion of the relevant regulators, emergency and health services, and emergency officers from local councils as well as making provision for subject matter experts to attend when necessary.

The JSG has also discussed in some detail, the elected representatives membership criteria and agreed that fundamentally the Committee was there to represent the interests of local people who were affected by and/or interested in the activities at AWE's site, fully recognising Government nuclear deterrent policy and associated scientific/technical operational matters fall outside the scope of the LLC agenda.

On this basis the JSG put forward a proposal at the December 2013 meeting to align the elected membership on the Committee with the Detailed Emergency Planning Zones for both sites and to extend an invitation to local Members of Parliament covering the same areas. The option put forward meant councils that fell between perimeters of the two DEPZ's would be excluded. The proposal suggested that all current elected members that did not meet the proposed criteria should however stay on the Committee until the end of their tenure.

This proposal was not accepted by members at the full LLC meeting in December 2013 on the grounds of the criteria being too narrow. Following on from that decision the Chair (Andrew Jupp) took an action to work with the JSG and provide alternative options for the Committee to consider.

In March a discussion paper was circulated to the JSG outlining a number of possible options for reviewing and extending the membership of the Local Liaison Committee. The paper set out three options:

- i. to retain the existing membership without any changes,
- ii. to align membership to the DEPZ for future membership, whilst retaining existing members not meeting that criteria until the end of their current tenure and,
- iii. a new structure involving the creation of sub-groups to allow greater depth of discussions and extend community engagement.

## **2. Feedback from the JSG**

Members of the JSG were invited to review the revised proposals. In summary, responses confirmed the LLC should continue to be made up of elected representatives from the local area and the current membership retained with the addition of the parish of Ashford Hill with Headley because of its close proximity to AWE Aldermaston, falling within the Detailed Emergency planning Zone (DEPZ) for the site.

JSG members were also content to invite Local MPs to join the committee so that elected representatives at all levels were included, Whilst their attendance at meetings was unlikely, they would benefit from routinely receiving copies of LLC papers and minutes.

There was consensus that issues of local interest should be the top priority for LLC agenda items. In fact, one of the key reasons cited for the rejection of the original paper was that members felt using the DEPZ as the defining criteria implied that the primary focus of the LLC membership was about emergency planning and consultation. JSG members felt strongly that the LLC is more about sustaining and building a relationship between local communities and what is the area's most significant employer.

Members suggested a number of areas where relationships between AWE and the local area could be strengthened. These included engaging more broadly with local schools, businesses and voluntary organisations.

The JSG did not consider the LLC as an appropriate forum for pressure groups or trade unions to share a dialogue with AWE on issues of concern. Members felt a separate channel of communication would be more appropriate for any dialogue with these groups.

There was support for the suggestion of sub-groups but this was tempered by concerns over the additional administrative burden and time commitment from the extra meetings that would need to be scheduled throughout the year.

On the subject of frequency of LLC meetings views varied with some members preferring to leave the cycle of meetings on a quarterly basis and others suggesting that two or three meetings a year may be sufficient providing that interim updates on topics of interest were provided via emails and the new AWE website in the intervening periods.

### **3. Future Membership Criteria**

Based on this feedback from JSG members the following revised proposal is suggested:

- a. Leave the existing committee membership intact but introduce the suggested DEPZ criteria (proposed by the JSG) as the principle criteria for agreeing new membership of elected members in the future.
- b. Using the DEPZ criteria, extend representation to include the one parish that currently falls within the DEPZ and is not represented on the LLC. (i.e. Ashford Hill with Headley Parish Council).
- c. Using the same criteria, extend an invitation to local MPs whose constituencies cover the areas of the Detailed Emergency Planning Zones for each of the sites.

### **4. Meeting Structure and Content**

- a. Local Liaison meetings will continue to be held on a quarterly basis.
- b. Ad-hoc sub-groups will continue to be convened on a temporary basis as necessary to deal with emerging issues. Two recent examples of where these types of sub-group have proved extremely useful have been the JSG which has led on the LLC review and more recently, the group which has provided valuable input and ideas on the new AWE ESH quarterly report.
- c. All Environment, Safety, Health and Quality issues and Site operations will continue to be addressed at the main LLC meeting

### **Extending AWE's community engagement**

It is proposed to set up a new AWE Community Partnership Group which will meet in the afternoon of the LLC meetings and at the same location.

This group would be separate from the LLC and focus on all aspects of AWE's work with the community, including links with local businesses, support for community projects, charitable giving and the work carried out under the auspices of the AWESome Education programme.

It will have its own separate Terms of Reference and membership will include representatives from AWE's Schools and Community Committees, representatives of local community groups (e.g. business groups, volunteer organisations and residents associations), and representatives of local schools such as educational charities, head teachers and school governors.

This group will have an active input to helping AWE shape its wider community strategy and programme, an important element of the company's overall corporate sustainability plan.

In the same way as the revised LLC Terms of Reference set out the criteria for membership, consideration should also be given to the process for nomination and appointment of Community Partnership Group members given the same security and safety constraints will apply to these individuals as they do for elected LLC members.

For the group to be manageable it is likely to consist of approximately 12 members (quorum of 8)

## **6. Considerations and Implications**

The implications on the secretariat, management and administration of the LLC, currently undertaken by AWE plc (meeting format, length and frequency) would continue unchanged.

Some additional resource would be required to set up and administrate the Community Partnership Group but by synchronising dates and venues with the main LLC the workload would be kept to a minimum.