



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

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**Deputy Leader & Lead Member
Strategic Environment, Planning
and Transport**

Your Ref:
My Ref: tp/aw
Date: 12 February 2014

Dear Secretary of State

ATOMIC WEAPONS ESTABLISHMENT LOCAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

I am writing to you in my capacity as Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to formally request that the Ministry of Defence asks the AWE Local Liaison Committee to view sympathetically a proposal to extend its membership to include local community groups and non-government organisations similar to the practice of other LLCs around the country.

Following the attached questions and answers given at the last Council Meeting on 28 January I undertook to communicate the Council's view in support of wider membership which, in turn, will strengthen local public confidence in the operations of the Local Liaison Committee.

I hope these representations will meet with a sympathetic response and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Tony Page

Deputy Leader & Lead Member Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport

enc

QUESTION NO. 2 in accordance with Standing Order No.9

Peter Burt to ask the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport:

Atomic Weapons Establishment Local Liaison Committee

Does Reading Borough Council support widening the membership of the Atomic Weapons Establishment Local Liaison Committee, and the proposed steering group on decommissioning of the Pangbourne Pipeline, to include representatives of local community groups and non-government organisations?

REPLY by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport:

Yes, in principle we believe there could and should be scope for extending the membership of the LLC in the way requested by Mr Burt.

There is no legal duty for the operator of a Nuclear Licensed site to host a Local Liaison Committee (or Site Stakeholder Group (SSG) as they are called at some Nuclear Licensed sites), nor is there any national guidance stipulating the composition of their membership or Terms of Reference.

The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 (REPPiR) establish a framework of emergency preparedness measures to ensure that the public are properly informed "in advance" about what to do in the event of a radiation emergency occurring. However, there remains no prescriptive regulatory requirement to host a Local Liaison Committee or similar.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/radiation/ionising/reppir.htm>

That said, the formation of an LLC could address a small aspect of Regulation 11 (3) of the REPPiR regulations, as this is the closest link to the legal duty to cooperate with those that are mentioned in the Off Site emergency plan. Although as non government organisations are not specifically mentioned in the AWE Offsite emergency plan, this section of the legislation does not really apply in this instance and hence it is a tenuous link.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2001/2975/regulation/11/made>

Similar principles exist in relation to the steering group for the decommissioning of the Pangbourne Pipeline.

At my request officers of Reading Borough Council requested information about LLCs from other councils. We obtained responses from 9 other Local Authorities covering a number of the 26 Nuclear Licensed sites in the UK. We have found there to be a lack of consistency of membership of LLCs/SSGs. Some groups allow members of the public and non government organisations to attend, and others do not. We could not find evidence of documented best practice covering all sites.

We do however feel that it is good practice to hold some form of consultation with local stakeholders around Nuclear Licensed Sites and LLCs/SSGs allow this to occur.

Reading Borough Council would therefore support the widening of membership of the AWE LLC, although it must be noted that the decision to widen the membership of the AWE LLC will rest with the AWE LLC itself. I am confident the Council's representatives will ensure that this issue is addressed in the near future.

QUESTION NO. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.9

Peter Burt to ask the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport:

Atomic Weapons Establishment Local Liaison Committee

What arrangements will Reading Borough Council put in place to ensure that the Council and members of the public are given adequate feedback about the business of the Atomic Weapons Establishment Local Liaison Committee?

REPLY by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport:

I thank Mr Burt for raising these important questions about the activities of the AWE LLC.

Reading Borough Council is represented at the quarterly AWE LLC meetings by Cllr Stanford-Beale and with effect from last Friday the Mayor, Cllr Livingston.

The minutes of the AWE LLC are available to the public on the AWE website at the following web address: [http://www.awe.co.uk/aboutus/Local Liaison Committee b1478.html](http://www.awe.co.uk/aboutus/Local_Liaison_Committee_b1478.html)

Reading Borough Council will include a link to the AWE LLC minutes on its website in the near future, which will coincide with a review of our website contents currently underway.

Following last year's introduction of a Committee system it would be appropriate for future meetings of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee to receive regular reports following meetings of the AWE LLC.