

Minutes of the 109th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Monday 29th April 2024



AWE, Aldermaston

Present:

Janine Mantle	Chair
Cllr Lyndon Austin	Silchester Parish Council
Cllr Philip Bassil	Brimpton Parish Council
Cllr Michael Bound	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Cllr Graham Bridgman	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Cllr Avril Burdett	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Jonathan Chishick	Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council
Cllr Colin Cooper	Baughurst Parish Council
Cllr Sophie Crawford	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Kevin Cross	Mortimer Parish Council
Cllr Chris Johnson	Wokingham Borough Council
Cllr Robert Jones	Padworth Parish Council
Cllr Mark Keeping	Reading Borough Council
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Clive Littlewood	Holybrook Parish Council
Cllr Ian Montgomery	Shinfield Parish Council
Cllr Susan Mullan	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Vicky Poole	West Berkshire Council
Cllr John Seto	Theale Parish Councillor
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Jo Slimin	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Cllr Paul Woodley	Wasing Parish Council

Andy Burnett-Dale	AWE
Chris Daniels	AWE
Tom Day	AWE
Katie Davidson	AWE
Scott Davies-Hearn	AWE
Douglas Greenway	AWE
Bryan Lyttle	AWE
Louisa Maher	AWE
Janine Mantle	AWE
Hannah Marsh	AWE
Andrew McNaughton	AWE
Ian Rogers	AWE
Kavita Thandi	AWE
Jo Walker	AWE
Brenda Watson	AWE

Regulators:

Gareth Lock	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Karl Pallester	Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator
Rob Green	Environment Agency
Annastasia Clark-Massey	Environment Agency

Before the meeting commenced, the LLC Members received a windshield bus tour of the Aldermaston Site. This tour was delivered by Andy Burnett-Dale, Head of Estate Strategy and Planning.

Cllr Avril Burdett: What is the thought process when building new infrastructure as it is taking very long to demolish the current buildings onsite?

Janine Mantle: Janine confirmed AWE is using more sustainable practices with advanced building practices and building with a longer-term frame of mind.

Cllr Dave Shirt: Dave commented on the article which was published last week on the infrastructure work and that it was bad timing. Janine Mantle agreed and explained that the coverage wasn't sought by AWE. But, as we go through the process of this multi-billion-pound construction programme, there are certain legal requirements for us to go out to the supply chain which is how this was picked up.

Janine Mantle officially opened the meeting.

Introduction

Janine Mantle, Corporate Affairs Director, chaired the meeting and Chris Daniels, Senior Manager, Responsible Business, welcomed members to the 109th meeting.

Membership changes

No changes to report for this meeting.

We welcomed Lyndon Austin from Silchester Parish Council in place of John Durrant.

Apologies

Apologies were received from: Stuart Coker, Malcolm Large, Jane Langford, Jonah Maddocks, Matthew Shakespeare, Jim Thompson, Carolyn Richardson and John Durrant.

Cllr Dave Shirt: On behalf of George McGarvie, George would like it noted in the minutes that he had submitted the security form on Thursday evening and was upset he could not attend the meeting today because he has been on site before, and AWE should have his information on record already.

Katie Davidson: Unfortunately, the deadline for submitting the security form information was the 5th April. This is because new day passes must be raised and approved even if someone has been on site before. In addition, further security forms and risk assessments that must be completed for a visit of this nature have to be approved in advance. Unfortunately, George's information and pass would therefore not have been approved in time for the meeting.

Actions from 108th LLC Meeting – 9th November 2023

Action 108/01: AWE to report car sharing figures at the next meeting.

Response- Car sharing has historically been the key initiative within AWE's Travel Plan and has peaked at 21% travel modal share at both sites in the past.

In 2023, car sharing was measured as 14% at Aldermaston and 17% at Burghfield. Whilst below the historic highs, this is still an impressive travel modal share for car sharing.

There is an agenda item for the LLC 109 Meeting to go through our travel and transport strategy in more detail.

Action 108/02: AWE to advertise the use of public transport across the company.

Response- this has been completed on our internal channels and will be repeated over the coming months.

Action 108/03: LLC members to put together a 'voice of the community' video to be shared with employees about the impact of using public transport.

Response- This is to be incorporated as part of a wider communication campaign for our transport strategy.

Action 108/04: Nick Roberts to attend the next meeting to discuss the new transport strategy.

Response- New transport strategy to be covered at the LLC 109 meeting.

Action 108/05: AWE to put a message about the site cover alarm on the front cover of connect magazine to let residents know there is no action needed when they hear this alarm.

Response- We will include a message in the Spring edition of Connect.

Action 108/06: AWE to discuss the more general practical activities that go on around site. For example, what we do/ what we don't do. A lift the lid on AWE and eliminate the myths.

Response – Agenda item added for LLC 109 meeting.

Action 108/07: Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator to be invited to the next meeting.

Response- Karl Pallester has been invited to attend LLCs going forward.

Action 108/08: Carolyn Richardson and Scott Hearn -Davies to feedback about a potential community DEPZ practice and share the information about the upcoming workshop in January 2024.

Response- Interim virtual webinar held on the 29th January on Emergency Planning/REPP/IR/DEPZ.

Action 108/09: AWE to consider their content with our external communications to the community.

Response- External communications with the community are being reviewed and we will ask for LLC feedback.

Action 108/010: LLC to feedback the usefulness of the Connect magazine.

Response- A survey will be sent out to the LLC and after this meeting. The next edition of Connect will also include a QR code to a survey.

Action 108/11: AWE to send an electronic version of Connect magazine to the LLC members.

Response- A link to the latest connect magazine was sent with the invite to the LLC 109 meeting.

Action 108/12: AWE to provide a timeline for the Burghfield Brook.

Response- Information to be shared with the LLC with the minutes of this meeting.

Action 108/13: AWE to organise a windshield for the LLC members.

Response- Completed during the LLC 109 Meeting.

Approval of the 108th meeting minutes

Questions arising from 108th meeting minutes:

Cllr Graham Bridgman: On the front page of the meeting minutes where the attendees are listed. Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council was abbreviated to SMPC.

This has been amended to state it in full to align with the other parish's which are written in full.

Cllr Johnathan Chishick: On page 6 – Johnathan Chishick's name to be corrected.

Corrected

Cllr John Seto: On page 18- John Seto's comment to be amended to reflect his point more clearly.

Corrected

Chair's update

Organisation update including site operations – Janine Mantle

- New CEO

AWE has appointed Nick Elliott CB MBE as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AWE. This came into effect from 4 March 2024.

Nick was the UK Chair of Helsing, a security and artificial intelligence company. He is an experienced senior business leader, having led major delivery organisations in defence, infrastructure, and government – including the UK Vaccine Taskforce where he was Director-General during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Previously, Nick was the Commercial Director and Deputy CEO of Defence Equipment & Support, the professional acquisition and support organisation of the Ministry of Defence. He has been responsible for delivering some of the biggest rail infrastructure projects in the UK and has served as a non-executive director on the Board of the Submarine Delivery Agency, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, and as a Council Member of the Rail Supply Group.

Janine flagged the LLC to the new CEO and he and the whole executive asked Janine to pass their thanks to the LLC for the role they play. We will try to invite Nick Elliot to one of the LLC meetings to meet everyone.

- Introducing Astraea (A21/Mk7)

Following the publication of the Government's Defence Nuclear Enterprise (DNE) Command Paper and associated messages from the Prime Minister and Chief Defence Nuclear, we can confirm Astraea as the formal name for the A21/Mk7 warhead.

- **Labour Party Support**

The leader of the Opposition, Sir Keir Starmer, has made clear his commitment to the nuclear deterrent and the continuous at sea deterrent (CASD) mission. In his Daily Mail op-ed and visit to Barrow, Starmer stated his personal commitment was “Unshakable. Absolute. Total” and that his potential government promises “to deliver all future upgrades needed”. He was very positive about the British nuclear programme overall describing it and the creation of the NHS as “towering achievements” of previous Labour governments, implying that he sees its maintenance as fundamental as a UK institution.

- **AWE wins at MOD's Sanctuary Awards**

The awards showcase military and civilian efforts across Defence, both in the UK and abroad, to protect the environment and drive sustainability and conservation.

AWE secured second place in the Sustainable Construction and Procurement Award for how the demolition of the redundant Liquid Waste Treatment Plant was undertaken.

The award recognised the work our teams have put in to reduce the impact of the demolition, including efforts to crush and reuse concrete waste on-site. This reduced carbon emissions by saving nearly 2,500 vehicle movements, as well as generating savings of £484,000 by using crushed concrete as infill material. Overall, 99.98% of waste from the demolition was reused or recycled with only 0.02% going to landfill.

Additionally, ecological surveys confirmed that peregrine falcons had previously nested on the structure. To mitigate for the loss of nesting habitat, three artificial boxes were installed on several structures on the AWE estate. A year on, a pair of peregrine falcons have used one of these to raise a pair of chicks, which fledged at the end of June 2023.

- **Industrial Action**

You may remember at the last meeting we prepared you for potential disruption to local traffic because of union action during pay negotiations. Every care was taken to minimise disruption and I'm pleased to say this has now been resolved after the acceptance of the 2023 pay deal by members of the Prospect Trade Union. We are in conversations with both unions for a 2024 pay deal.

5. Questions since the last meeting

Since the last meeting there was an interim webinar on emergency planning, which was well received.

The following questions have been raised since the last meeting.

Dave Shirt -

*UPZ (Ultra Protection Zone). This is a new term to me, and as it includes a significant part of our Parish, I'd like to know a bit more about it (e.g. how it differs from the DEPZ)

*The impact of the current strike at AWE by the Prospect Union (particularly on local residents)

Scott Davies- Hearn: UPZ is the Urgent Protective Area zone. It's a zone calculated by AWE and provided to the local authority in a Consequences Report (which can be found on West Berkshire's website). The local authority uses this distance as the minimum geographical area to then determine the DEPZ. The zone doesn't have any implications for emergency planning. Emergency planning is based on the DEPZ and OPZ (Outline Emergency Planning Zone).

Vicky Poole -

*I hear that there have been some drills completed to assess the ability for persons to unlawfully access site. I wonder if the committee will be able to hear about the feedback on those drills at the meeting?

Scott Davies- Hearn: There's only a limit to what we can say about the security exercises. We do several exercises every year. The MDP do this to determine the threats and what kind of challenges they may have.

Avril Burdett -

*How many football pitches are there at the Rec Soc?

- 6

*Who plays there?

- Aldermaston football club, plus they hold tournaments for local clubs during June.

*What ages play there?

- All ages

*As far as you can know these things, is the future of the Rec Soc secure?

- We recognise the important role the Rec Soc plays in the local community and for our people. We are currently undertaking some refurbishment works whilst longer term plans are developed with MOD and the Rec Soc.

Questions arising:

No questions raised.

Development update

Andy Burnett - Dale

Head of Estate Strategy and Planning

Andy Burnett-Dale shared the development update focussing on travel. He started by sharing a timeline video of what the site could transform into over the coming years. This is a draft mock up and therefore isn't available to share externally. There is also a view of our strategic workforce plan including the number of AWE employees, construction workers, contractors etc. but this hasn't yet been mocked up in a similar way.

Andy continued to thank everyone who helped with the travel plan which has now been agreed with West Berkshire. It is a working document with parts that still need looking at which includes occupancy vehicles. As part of the plan, AWE is going to continue to focus on the most successful intervention which is car sharing. Although there have been changes during COVID, this is still the most successful to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles and we've got this to 68% uptake against a stretch target of 72%. AWE has worked with Mobilityways to understand how to mobilise our people to think differently about travelling to work which also includes public transport, walking and cycling. Although the roads and infrastructure into site doesn't lend itself well to cycle users, we have a very active cycling group onsite, so it is on our radar even though it is not an easy one to deal with.

The connections to AWE sites are also being considered and being evaluated where we can best place our efforts to get high impact. There are three main feasibility studies AWE is looking at associated with the HUB planning condition. These are around cycle footway connection between Aldermaston Village, Tadley and the other is around passenger transport and how employees can get to site easier. It will be difficult, if not impossible to make a cycle connection between Aldermaston Village and the AWE site due to the highways, roads, and land ownership. Usability of Wentworth Lane is improvable, but as it is dark and there are possibly better connections with the A340 so there may be something coming with that. The other aspect is looking at private and public service from Aldermaston station, Newbury and/or Thatcham and if AWE can encourage more busses to be put on during commuting times. If we put on our own buses, it is highly unlikely the public can also use the service because of the nature of what we do. AWE is in the early stages of the study and will report back when we have had more time to dissect the findings.

Andy also shared information on the latest employee transport survey where there was around a 45% response rate and AWE are currently analysing the results but already have some great insights from the responses. We are pushing the agenda with Mobilityways as they have tried and tested techniques so once we understand where our people are coming from and their postcode, we can put travel plans in place and make it more attractive than always driving to site. Following this, our travel plan will be updated ensuring it is sustainable, which we will share with the committee and inform you of what we plan on doing.

Questions arising:

Cllr Sophie Crawford: It appears we are rapidly growing however previously it has been mentioned that the numbers in Aldermaston will stay static and it seems contradictory.

Janine Mantle: When we talk about growing, it is as an organisation and over many different sites. Although the company will be growing in employee numbers, numbers at Aldermaston will be very static.

Cllr Avril Burdett: Have you spoken to Hampshire about their cycle plans as this may be an opportunity for us to join up?

Andy Burnett-Dale: We have sight of their plans but not yet gone into the next layer of conversation.

Cllr Jo Slimin: Jo explained she had put together a video to share internally to encourage employees to take the bus instead of driving but couldn't show it as we are onsite and not allowed electronic devices. She would like to find a way to send this to AWE.

Action 109/01: AWE to find a way for Cllr Jo Slimin to share the video she has created.

Cllr Chris Johnson: Chris asked if within the studies AWE have a map of where our employees live as this will give us a better idea of where the traffic is coming from.

Andy Burnett-Dale: AWE does have this information in a postcode map of all employees, and this is what we can use to highlight different routes to getting onsite and what travel plans look like for our people.

Cllr Chris Johnson: We aren't aware of where the traffic in and out of Wokingham is coming from and the travel requirements from there and if we were aware we could help you with your planning. The committee also asked if they are able to have sight of employee's postcode data to which Janine Mantle said we would look at how we may be able to share without breaking any GDPR rules.

Action 109/02: AWE to share a postcode map at the next meeting of where all employees travel from.

Andy Burnett-Dale: The last time we put a target diagram together to show where employees live, we found that 80% lived within a 20-mile radius of site and he explained that if a line was drawn from the M4 it was roughly 50/50 as to where our people live.

Cllr Vicky Poole: I would be very interested to see where employees live and the mode of transport they use to get to work.

Cllr Graham Bridgeman: There is a belief that a lot of the traffic going through Mortimer is from AWE. They have their own traffic management system where number plates and speeds are recorded. He asked if AWE would be interested in this data, just speeds, not number plates as there is an issue with speeding during commuting times.

Janine Mantle: This can be wrapped into our wider travel and transport communications plan.

Action 109/03: Graham to share the traffic data he has with AWE so that it can be included in the wider travel and transport communication plan.

Cllr Mark Keeping: When he first started at AWE there was an assisted travel scheme for £5 a week and the service from Reading took less than half an hour and ran every hour. It was a great service. If this was brought back it would negate the need for so many parking spaces on site. Andy Burnett-Dale agreed and added we are looking at how we make this attractive for our employees.

Infrastructure Investment Update

Andrew McNaughton

Executive Director Infrastructure, Future Materials Campus

Andrew McNaughton gave context to the meeting that, since the last time he attended LLC, he'd gone through a period of engagement with the government to secure funding for our significant infrastructure investment programme, called the Future Materials Campus. This was subsequently cited in the government's [Command Paper](#), which gives a long-term commitment to the nuclear enterprise as a national endeavour. It puts a much greater emphasis on how AWE delivers its part in the whole enterprise. The United Kingdom has had a national deterrent in some form or another for over 70 years and when the choice was made to go to a single at sea deterrent, we made a commitment to NATO to defend the west 24/7 and since that point we have had a submarine at sea we have had at least one submarine on patrol.

From AWE's perspective, we it's great the Government is prepared to commit on the capital investment programme. This means AWE will continue to be a major employer and neighbour in the local area for many years to come. It has also been in the news that the Labour leader had given his unequivocal support for the continuous at sea deterrent, so we are hopeful of continued political support after the next General election.

The Future Materials Campus symbolises what we do at AWE. It is our future investments, the replacement warhead, and the commitment we need to replace several old facilities. 'Materials' related to the nuclear materials we use that go into our product - we are replacing not only our manufacturing capabilities but also our science and laboratory testing of what we can do with those

materials. 'Campus' because that is what it is. It is a whole series of facilities that we will deliver in the centre of the site, behind our additional security wires.

Last time at the meeting we spoke about engagement with the local councils. AWE has engaged with colleagues from West Berkshire, Reading, Wokingham and Basingstoke Borough Councils. AWE also had a workshop with our colleagues from West Berkshire where we are looking at how we can work together in the future, particularly around the capital programme. We must make sure this investment the government is making flows down into the local community. We will also be having workshops with colleagues from other councils to look at how we ensure economic, educational and employment benefits flow down. Many ways to do that will be through the direct employment we have here and through the infrastructure investment programme. Also, as we provide economic benefit through businesses and services in the local community, we would like to see the secondary and tertiary effects.

AWE would like to build on our engagement with you and do more with you, as the LLC. Over the coming months we would like to do some drop-in centres as we really appreciate how you can help us to give you the right information. The format, the channel the type of information you would like to see both in analogue and digitally while ensuring we get the right balance for everyone. We would be appreciative of your feedback and comments in trying to do that.

Action 109/04: LLC members to feedback, via the feedback form to be sent out post meeting, about the community drop-in sessions.

Foundation piling works have now finished at the HUB and the grounds work have started. The HUB will become our future home of our science and engineering community as well as a training centre and state of the art office space. We estimate it will be complete in 2026 and fully operational in 2027 and when this happens, we will be able to empty around 70 facilities onsite, some of which are underutilised but still have people in them. What the HUB gives them is a new modern centre for the science, technology and engineering and allows us to take away some of the old facilities which are no longer fit for purpose. This is also part of our environmental commitments as many of the older facilities are powered and heated in inefficient ways.

Soon you will see the HUB start to rise out of the ground. One end is made of structural steel because it had lighter loading requirements. But there will be some heavy machinery for the concrete frame. This time next year we are aiming for the building to be weather tight. The façade is currently being manufactured offsite which will be brought to site and cladded. We will then start to fit the inside of the building.

You might have seen that over the last 15 months, we have put up a new building on the Burghfield site, but this is a shell, and we are now going to fit out the building with new equipment and machinery. Once this is complete it will allow us to decommission some of the older facilities around site.

Questions arising:

Cllr Dave Shirt: When building the Gemini buildings, you had continuous pour of concrete over 48 hours. Will we be doing the same for the HUB?

Andrew McNaughton: It is a framed building so there won't be any continuous concrete pouring.

Regulator update

Gareth Lock

Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)

The ONR report was circulated prior to the meeting for the period 1 September to 20 March 2024.

Inspections

Inspections entail monitoring the licensee's actions on the site in relation to incidents, operations, maintenance, projects, modifications, safety case changes and any other matters that may affect safety. The licensee is required to make and implement adequate arrangements under the conditions attached to the licence to ensure legal compliance. Inspections seek to judge both the adequacy of these arrangements and their implementation.

- examination, maintenance, inspection and testing;
- management of operations including control and supervision;
- staff training, qualifications and experience;
- plant construction and/or commissioning;
- radiological protection;
- radioactive waste management and decommissioning;
- fire safety;
- quality assurance and records;
- supply chain management- this started in March 2024
- conventional (non-nuclear) health and safety; and
- emergency preparedness.

In the reporting period the ONR inspectors have continued to work with the AWE Decommissioning team and AWE has now developed a viable plan for the programme of work to address the high hazard decommissioning activities. This will remain a key area of regulatory focus for the foreseeable future.

Gareth continued to say that the ONR have also undertaken further activities to assess AWE's progress in delivering the safety improvements necessary to support the AWE Aldermaston site moving to a routine level of regulatory attention. The outcomes from those activities continue to be encouraging with the site having made significant improvements during the last six months. There remain several areas that will continue to be subject to regulatory focus over the next eight months.

These areas are:

- Organisational Learning
- Capacity and capability
- Effective internal assurance [at all levels within the organisation]
- Supply chain management and demonstration of intelligent customer capability
- Conventional health and safety (specifically construction safety)

Gareth explained that the ONR issued a Prohibition Notice to AWE on the 26 May 2022, prohibiting entry into a part of the Plutonium Technology Centre (PTC) classified as a "confined space" unless a safe system of work is in place. AWE has developed a safe system of work to allow entry into this area and are working to modify the arrangement of the plant such that in future it would not be classified as a "confined space".

Gareth clarified that the ONR is aware of the planning permission that has been applied for privately-owned property development for the erection of 32 dwellings including affordable housing, parking and landscaping on land to the rear of The Hollies, Reading Road, Burghfield. ONR, along with AWE and West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) emergency planning team objected on the grounds that this development potentially compromised delivery of the off-site emergency plan and the local planning authority refused planning permission. The applicant appealed against this decision and a planning inquiry was held in July 2023 by the planning inspectorate. This inquiry granted planning permission. Immediately following this, AWE, along with MoD and the ONR appealed to the high court against this decision. Following submissions to the High Court the Planning Inspectorate agreed to quash their original decision and to constitute a new inquiry. ONR, along with AWE, WBDC and other interested parties are gathering their evidence for this revised inquiry, the exact form of which is currently not determined.

In addition, AWE has completed its response to the Chief Nuclear Inspectors' industry-wide themed inspection on climate change and the on-site follow up inspection is planned for June 2024.

Update on Non-Routine Matters and Events

There were 2 events of significance to note during the reporting period. They were as follows:

- On the 6 July 2023, AWE notified us that an incident had occurred on the Hub Construction Enclave resulting in significant injuries to two workers. One of these workers was airlifted to hospital where he subsequently died from his injuries. In accordance with the 'death at work protocol' Thames Valley Police were the lead agency for the ongoing investigation until December 2023, at which point primacy was handed over to us. ONR are now undertaking their own investigation into the incident. ONR are not in a position to provide any further information at this stage.
- XTC has had a recent increase in the number of events, the majority of which are concerned with explosives safety and compliance. It is not sufficiently clear at this stage whether these events are linked. However, they are indicators of drift and can be grouped as 'deviations in standards and behaviours. ONR are content that AWE took immediate action and the necessary precautions to prevent reoccurrence and is currently undertaking an internal investigation.

Questions arising:

Cllr Jo Slimin: With regards to planning appeals, have the ONR commented on the Skates Lane development?

Gareth Lock: No, the ONR, hasn't commented on this development. The ONR have commented on The Hollies development.

Cllr Jo Slimin: How is it consistent between councils? Because Hampshire might say one thing, West Berkshire might say something else, the ONR might then say something else. How do we make sure it's all consistent?

Gareth Lock: We're just one of the parties to contribute and we give advice and guidance from a technical point of view.

Cllr Sophie Crawford: I'm interested to know whether the ONR thinks that West Berkshire Council and the other the planning authorities in the area have the resources and independence to effectively manage the DEPZ.

Ian Rogers: ONR appoint a Nominated Site Inspector whose role is to manage the on-site regulatory team. They regulate the site against the relevant health and safety and nuclear safety legislation. A separate team in ONR regulates the local authorities. ONR appoints a lead inspector from this team to regulate the local authorities against the requirements of REPPiR. So, there will be an equivalent of Gareth who looks after West Berkshire. That inspector has already raised concerns about the capacity and capability within West Berkshire to support their emergency response.

Graham Bridgman: Was a decision made?

Ian Rogers: The planning inspector's decision last year has been quashed by the High Court and the planning appeal is being redetermined. The exact form and date of this is not currently known.

Estate Services Update

Johann Walker

Director Estate Management

Protester Activity

Protestor activity continues with the 'Women's Peace Camp' on the second weekend of each month. There is no other planned activity scheduled at this time.

Community Concerns

There have been 2 community concerns raised.

Summary of concern	Outcome
1. Tannoy noise able to be heard East of the Boiler house gate.	Immediate corrective action taken to minimise impact. Categorised as a concern and closed.
2. Report of sandy/murky water in neighbours' fishpond. The caller was convinced it was coming from AWE.	Following extensive investigation determined that the cause was not AWE. Person was satisfied with process and outcome.

Major Exercises

- **4th October (AWE A Level 1) & 5th December (AWE B Level 1)**
- **31st January (AWE B Security Exercise) & 21st Feb (AWE A Security Exercise)**

Several AWE and regulatory assessed exercises have been delivered at AWE sites since October 2023 (as per above). Level 1 exercises focus on safety responses and Security Exercises (Secure and Safe aspects). All exercises naturally have joint safety and security facets.

The exercises are jointly observed by the from Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR), Defence Fire Service, MoD, Defence Nuclear Security and our own Internal Regulation Team.

The exercises were assigned as an 'adequate' (green) assessment of our arrangements which is a positive outcome.

Estate Improvements

In the last year AWE has demolished 20 facilities totalling a gross internal area of 4201m².

Most buildings take months to demolish because of asbestos. The target is to eventually demolish 3-4 buildings a month once fully up and running. Currently AWE is out to tender for a demolition partner.

Questions arising:

Cllr Sophie Crawford: How close was the fishpond to AWE? Was it the manor house?

Johann Walker: It wasn't nearby, and it wasn't at the manor house.

Cllr Vicky Poole: In regard to your MOD Police exercises, I am encouraged that you passed. What were the main takeaways from your recent exercises?

Scott Davies-Hearn: I will pick this up in my Q & A session.

Regulators update

Rob Green

Environment Agency (EA)

The Environment Agency report was circulated prior to the meeting for the period 12 October 2023 to 12th April 2024.

Rob explained that the EA has a nuclear regulation function. This function looks at radioactive wastes and discharges on nuclear sites and water discharges on nuclear sites. EA and ONR work with each other.

Site Environmental Review 2024-25

The EA issued the 2024-25 Site Environmental Review (SER) for AWE sites. This underpins what has happened and what is coming up.

The SER draws together the evidence and information EA use to support their strategic regulatory outcomes. It allows the EA to identify their regulatory priorities and actions to help carry out and demonstrate risk-based regulation. SER priorities for the EA's regulation of AWE's Aldermaston and Burghfield Sites this year include:

- Progress of AWE's high activity waste programme to reduce fissile inventory/hazard.
- Decommissioning planning and progress, as well as management of contractors to support waste management and decommissioning activities.
- AWE's corporate plans and approaches regarding sustainability, climate adaptation and minimisation of carbon impacts.
- AWE's Environment and Waste Functions' capabilities to support enduring compliance.

- The Monitoring required improvements to environmental permit compliance assurance/oversight at facility level.

Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report for 2022 (RIFE 28)

The annual 'Radioactivity in Food and the Environment' (RIFE) report presents results of nationwide monitoring programmes conducted by the Environment Agency and its partners (Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Environment Protection Agency). These monitoring programmes support the EA's regulatory function and provide a check that public radiation exposures remain low and within legal limits.

The report shows that doses of ionising radiation to members of the public from radioactivity discharged from the Aldermaston and Burghfield Sites remain at very low levels. In 2022, the 'total dose' from all pathways and sources of radiation was 0.005mSv. This has decreased from 0.008mSv, compared with 2021 data. The assessed dose was less than 0.5% of the UK national and European legal dose limit of 1 millisievert (mSv, a measure of dose) per year.

Other key highlights from the report:

- The data from the EA's monitoring programme demonstrates that radioactivity in food and the environment is safe and the public's exposure to man-made radiation is low and within legal limits, as in previous years.
- The dose received by the public near to nuclear licensed sites and industrial and landfill sites in the UK is low and again well within legal limits.
- Radioactivity from natural background, rather than nuclear sites, continues to be the more significant source of exposure to communities in all areas of the UK.

Compliance Assessment

The following compliance assessment activities have been completed:

Main Production Facility:

The EA completed a regulatory compliance inspection covering AWE's management of solid radioactive waste in its Main Production Facility (MPF). The EA recorded no permit non-compliances but noted one recommendation, for consideration by AWE.

Aqueous radioactive waste management arrangements

The EA inspected AWE's written arrangements for the management of aqueous radioactive waste at its Aldermaston Site. The EA recorded no permit non-compliances but noted a regulatory recommendation, for consideration by AWE.

Assessment of Site Wide Environmental Safety Cases (SWESC) and Waste Management Plans (WMP):

The EA completed an assessment of AWE's SWESC and WMP for its Aldermaston and Burghfield Sites. The EA require AWE to produce and maintain these documents as part of its obligations under the joint environment agencies' guidance document 'Management of radioactive waste from the decommissioning of nuclear sites: guidance on the requirements for release from radioactive substances regulation' (also known as GRR). We noted no non-compliance with permit conditions.

Old Waste Management Group Yard:

The EA completed an inspection focussing on AWE's management of radioactive waste in the Old Waste Management Group area of Aldermaston Site. The EA noted several deficiencies and recorded 2x category 4 non-compliances (no potential impact on the environment) and 1x category 3 non-compliance (minor potential impact on the environment) with the environmental permit and have agreed corrective actions with AWE.

Failure to report radioactive waste discharges data:

Further to the summary on this item provided in our October 2023 LLC report, which concerned AWE's failure to report discharges of relatively small amounts of gaseous radioactive waste from Aldermaston Site, between 2013 and 2023, we have now completed our investigation. The EA recorded 2x category 4 non-compliances (no potential impact on the environment) and 1x category 3 non-compliance (minor potential impact on the environment) with the environmental permit and have agreed corrective actions with AWE.

Stack Sampling Failure:

The EA completed an investigation into an event concerning AWE's failure to appropriately monitor the discharge of a small quantity of gaseous radioactive waste from one of its laboratory facilities at Aldermaston Site. The EA noted several shortfalls in AWE's management arrangements and recorded 4 x category 4 non-compliances and 3 x category 3 non-compliances. The EA have agreed corrective actions with AWE and will monitor delivery of the required improvements.

Warning Letter -February 2024

While all the above reported non-compliances were minor in nature and did not result in a measurable impact on the environment, the EA identified what they consider to be organisational weaknesses in AWE's management and oversight of environmental permit compliance at facility level. The EA issued a Warning Letter to AWE in response to the non-compliances and will monitor the delivery of agreed improvement activities during 2024-25.

Questions arising:

Cllr Mark Keeping: Do you conduct independent sampling or survey of what AWE provides regarding discharges?

Rob Green: Yes, independent sampling is conducted, and we have an independent assessment monitoring system in place. It's mainly on the liquid effluent side of things rather than gas discharges.

Cllr John Seto: What happens after a warning letter and if the compliances are not met?

Rob Green: We have a range of other sanctions we can implement. For example- an enforcement notice, prosecution or civil sanctions depending on the appropriate course of action.

Doug Greenway: We also now have our own internal procedures put in place to retrieve the data we need.

Karl Pallester

Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR)

Karl explained that he works for the Ministry of Defence for an organisation called DNSR -Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator. He is part of the Defence Safety Authority within the Ministry of Defence, which is a head office branch. Karl explained there is a range of defence regulators. For example, a fire regulator and an explosives regulator. The DNSR operate under the Charter from the Secretary of State. The DNSR's focus on AWE is very much on the product. The actual thing that's made at the end. In doing so, they spend a lot of time at B site where a lot of the assembly happens. The DNSR have also been looking at some of the manufacturing processes in each of the technology centres.

The DNSR is also focused on safe operations continuing in the existing facilities, some of which are getting a bit old. Karl explained that it is then about moving from those facilities into some of the new facilities and getting assurance that the people, processes and equipment are safe. In addition, the DNSR interact with the other external regulators, they work together so there is no duplication of effort.

Questions arising:

No questions raised.

Environment, Safety and Health Update

Douglas Greenway
Head of Environment

Process Safety

Process safety performance is at an acceptable risk level. There have been four process safety loss of control/containment events raised since November 2023. All four events have been investigated and appropriate preventative actions have been put in place. Process safety training remains a priority and the process safety leadership training in partnership with cogent skills continues to be delivered and is now reaching out into other areas. The intention remains for this course to become a key course for all senior leaders at AWE.

The Process Safety Team is also continuing to develop virtual reality training that can be used to raise hazard awareness amongst staff at all levels of the organisation.

Personal safety

The OSHA TRI (Occupational Safety and Health Administration/Total Recordable Incident) rate to the end of February 2024 was 0.306 per 200,000 hours worked. 17 injured parties required one or more days away from work to recover resulting in 359 working days lost. There was a total of 26 Recordable Injury Events that occurred in the 12 months to the end of February 2024.

Our Commitment to Protecting the Environment & People

99.8% of waste was diverted from landfill.

Public Dose Assessment:

Doug refers to slide 30 for the facts and figures related to doses. 3 μSv for the direct dose at the site boundary are for Jan – Dec 2022. AWE is about to start assessing this for 2023. ONR normally requires this data by the end of May. The model concludes that there is no hazard to members of the public.

The relevant radiation protection team continually monitor doses and radiation levels in the facility to ensure that doses are being kept as low as reasonably practicable.

Questions arising:

Cllr John Seto: With the number of cars coming on to site, do you have things in place to monitor pollution? And do you have EV points on site?

Doug Greenway: We do have EV charging points and we're looking to significantly increase that in next 12 months as it forms part of our sustainability performance. We know something of the types of vehicles that individuals are driving to work but we don't have that right now in terms of the information. It's quite difficult to measure.

Emergency planning update

Scott Davies-Hearn

Senior Manager Emergency Response

Scott gave an update on what had happened since the last meeting before opening to a Q&A session.

Update

Apologies that Carolyn Richardson is unable to attend today. The AWE off site emergency plan is being updated. It's quite an extensive piece of work that needs updating, so it's taking a bit more time than anticipated.

AWE is jointly working with West Berkshire Council and the Cabinet Office to look at the alerting process and the telephone alerting system. In January there was a joint session online with West Berkshire Council to go over the DEPZ.

Questions arising:

Cllr Sophie Crawford: What does this practically mean?

Scott Davies-Hearn: It means seek shelter immediately if the public is notified there is a radiation emergency.

Cllr Dave Shirt: Does it extend beyond the fence?

Scott Davies-Hearn: Yes, it does.

Cllr Jo Slimin: I was told quite specifically that the DEPZ was treated in the same way. So, if it was an objection, it was an objection because it was in the DEPZ. However, there seems to be still some anomalies that are going on. Can I go back to members of the public who asked me the question and say that there is a straight line that an objection will be had for any house that is in in the DEPZ? And if there is a building that sits across it, then an objection will apply to the rest of the site because part of it is in it.

Bryan Lyttle: AWE has a process internally about how we are looking at planning applications near our sites. AWE's current position is that we will typically object to any development that increases the population inside the DEPZ or that poses a threat to AWE's operations. Where developments might touch on the DEPZ but does not impact the operations of the off-site emergency plan in the DEPZ, it is unlikely we will object. We typically only comment on applications that are currently inside the DEPZ. We also comment on the future local plans with our four local planning authorities. We will be attending the West Berkshire local plan examination meeting in May 2024.

Cllr Chris Johnson: There's been previous rejections for a school in the Wokingham area. There's been rejections for other things also, like a plan for 150 homes. As a councillor I see these come through, but we don't seem to see any sort of joined up approach between AWE and planning.

Bryan Lyttle: If AWE is asked to comment directly on an application a response is sent even if it is a "no comment" response.

AWE Myth busting

Ian Rogers

Chief Nuclear Officer

Ian Rogers attended the meeting to bust common myths surrounding AWE and what it does.

Working through the 9 common myths surrounding AWE, Ian discussed each one. Myths are referenced on slide 33 of the LLC presentation.

Ian's responses to each myth-

1-How dangerous are the radiation levels around AWE for local residents?

Response-

- AWE sets an annual limit of 3 mSv for its [nuclear] workers.
- Max direct dose at the Aldermaston Site Boundary for 2023 – 0.003 mSv
- Max dose from discharges to atmosphere for 2023 – 0.018 mSv
- At Burghfield the max dose for both for 2023 was less than 0.0001 mSv
 - Just by living in the UK you will receive an annual dose of 2.7 mSv.
 - If you live in Devon or Cornwall this increases to 6.9 mSv.
 - Each transatlantic flight gives you 0.08 mSv.
 - Chest x-ray gives you 0.014 mSv.
 - Dental x-ray gives you 0.005 mSv.
 - CT Scan of the head gives you 1.4 mSv.
 - Level at which changes in blood cells can be readily observed is 100mSv.
 - Acute radiation effects including nausea and reduced white blood cell count – 1000 mSv.

2- Do you all make bombs?

Response-

We are the only organisation in the UK that designs, manufacturers and tests nuclear warheads. That's not the only thing we do. We don't just make warheads for the UK government. Also see the response to Myth 8.

3- Do you have dangerous materials on site?

Response-

We do have dangerous materials on site, but they are all very carefully controlled in accordance with the regulations. To put your minds at rest on explosives, it's not a case of you drop it and it goes off. It actually requires another explosion to set it off. Very carefully controlled in accordance with the regulations.

4- Do you have a red button to press to set off 'the bomb'?

Response-

We do not have a red button to press. Contrary to common belief it is not fully configured to be detonated as a nuclear device until all the components come together and this does not happen at AWE Aldermaston or Burghfield. This only happens just before it is loaded onto the submarine and when it's on patrol. That's the only time that all the components come together.

5- Do you test the warheads?

Response-

No, we don't test the warheads. We carry out simulations and test the components to ensure they are operating as they should.

6- Do you have underground tunnels that lead to Tadley and beyond?

Response-

These underground tunnels do not exist.

7- Do you have a nuclear reactor on site?

Response-

We have no operational nuclear reactors on site. There have been operational reactors on site and these are either fully decommissioned or defuelled and awaiting decommissioning.

- Horace – 0.01 kW – Defuelled & Decommissioned
- Herald – 5000 kW – Defuelled & Decommissioned
- Vera – 0.1 kW – Defuelled & Decommissioned
- Viper – 0.5 kW – Defuelled – Awaiting Decommissioning

8- Building warheads is all we do

Response-

We don't just make warheads for the UK government. We also do something else which is very important. We do something called Nuclear Threat Reduction. This is a service we provide to the UK Government which looks at the terrorist aspects of radiological issues. We support UK border force. We make sure materials that shouldn't be coming into the country don't come into the country. We carry out analysis of the materials that are found on behalf of UK government.

9- AWE decides when to use the bombs

Response-

No, AWE do not decide when to use the warheads.

Questions arising:

Cllr Avril Burdett: There is a common misconception that if something happened, all Tadley residents would be gone.

Ian Rogers: On site we are dealing with lumps of metal. So, there's a limit to what can actually go wrong. There's the potential for an energy pulse which will extend only so far but we're not going to create lots of radioactive gases which are going to throw up into the atmosphere and deposit overtime. That scenario is associated more with a power reactor which generates lots of radioactive fission products in gaseous form. On this site, we're a processing facility and we manufacture.

Rob Jones: When it is on the submarine and when it's on patrol is the only time that all the components come together?

Ian Rogers: Yes. All the components only come together on the submarine.

Cllr Jo Slimin: How much do you store on site?

Ian Rogers: Not a lot. We focus on manufacturing and simulation testing.

Cllr Graham Bridgman: What is the life cycle of a warhead?

Ian Rogers: On the submarine to start, then it's removed when an exercise/mission is completed. It then goes through maintenance.

Cllr Dave Shirt: As a community there have been concerns around the security and safety of the convoys when they leave site.

Ian Rogers: I would be more concerned about the pollution coming from the convoy vehicles because of the safety and security measures we have in place when sending out the convoys.

Cllr Avril Burdett: This myth busting information would be great if it could be used in the Connect magazine for others to read.

Action 109/05: AWE to consider included a myth busting segment in an issue of The Connect magazine.

Nuclear Test Veterans

At the end of Ian's section, Janine Mantle (the LLC Chair) updated everyone on the topic of Nuclear Test Veterans.

AWE does not hold records that have been suggested in the media. We have been inspected and are in the process of publishing documents that we hold. Any documents we had are now old enough that they can be published, that was going to be happening anyway.

Community update

Katie Davidson

Responsible Business Specialist

All attendees were updated on what AWE had achieved in the community since the last meeting in November. Katie discussed slides 35-37 and shared the figures of how many young people had been reached between September 2023 and March 2024. This figure being over 47,000 young people across 112 schools. There are other events booked in from March to July 2024, so these figures are likely to rise. The extensive programme AWE offer to primary schools and secondary schools/colleges was explained to the attendees.

Katie invited attendees to

- Share volunteering opportunities in their local area
- Share any local school connections that might benefit from a visit from AWE

Questions arising:

Cllr John Seto: The programmes you offer primary schools, secondary schools and colleges, is this information on your website for them to see?

Katie Davidson: Not at the moment, but we are looking to refresh the website and will look to include this in the future.

Cllr Vicky Poole: Do schools contact you directly?

Katie Davidson: Yes, if they can email the communityandschools@awe.co.uk email address and then we can get back to them about their request.

Cllr Jo Slimin: There was a question a few meetings ago about the school contact numbers on the emergency list in the event of an incident at AWE.

Scott Davies- Hearn: That's an issue relating to emergency planning and something I will confirm with Carolyn Richardson.

Action 109/06: AWE to follow up on the school contact numbers on the emergency list in the event of an incident.

Any other business (AOB)

No other business raised.

Meeting closed.

Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 7th November 2024