

Minutes of 110 AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 7 November 2024

Aldermaston

Present:

Ian Rogers	Chair, AWE
Cllr Adrian Betteridge	Wokingham Borough Council
Cllr Mike Bound	Basingstoke and 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 West End Parish Council
Cllr Robert Jones	Padworth Parish Council
Cllr Mark Keeping	Reading Borough Council
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Parish Council
Cllr Ian Montgomery	Shinfield Parish Council
Cllr Susan Mullan	Tadley Town Council
Cllr Vicky Poole	West Berkshire Council
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council
Cllr Jo Slimin	Basingstoke and Deane Council
Cllr Jim Thompson	Wokefield Parish Council
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council
Cllr Paul Woodley	Wasing Parish Council
Nick Bolton	AWE
Andy Burnett-Dale	AWE
Chris Daniels	AWE
Scott Davies-Hearn	AWE

Richard Doe	AWE
Sam Earl	AWE
Doug Greenway	AWE
Kadri Hamit	AWE
Richard Hare	AWE
Matt King	AWE
Bryan Lyttle	AWE
Hannah Marsh	AWE
Sharif Narouz	AWE
Ian Rogers	AWE
Sarah Sharpe	AWE
Nicole Targett	AWE
Kavita Thandi	AWE
Piran Borlase-Hendry	AWE
James Platt	AWE
Tom Stevens-Light	AWE

Regulators:

Rob Green	Environment Agency
Gareth Lock	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Karl Pallester	Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator

Local Authority:

Carolyn Richardson	West Berkshire Council
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Introduction:

Ian Rogers, Chief Nuclear Officer, chaired the meeting and welcomed members to the 110 LLC meeting.

Membership changes

- John Seto appointed as Theale Parish Council LLC representative, replacing Stuart Coker.
- Adrian Betteridge appointed as Wokingham Borough Council LLC representative replacing Chris Johnson.
- Lyndon Austin appointed as Silchester Parish Council LLC representative, replacing John Durrant.
- Michael Bound re-appointed as Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council representative.
- Jo Slimin re-appointed as Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council representative.

Apologies

Apologies were received from: Philip Bassil, Clive Littlewood, Jonah Maddocks, John Seto.

Ian Rogers gave a collective thanks to Janine Mantle, the previous chair of the Local Liaison Committee, who is now Director of Corporate Affairs for London Fire Brigade.

Ian Rogers introduced himself as the Chief Nuclear Officer at AWE, who has been specifically asked to chair the LLC for appropriate representation as a member of the Executive Committee.

Colin Cooper: What is the Chief Nuclear Officer responsible for?

Ian Rogers: I am here to hold the Executive Committee to account for all matters to do with nuclear safety and nuclear security. I ensure nuclear safety and nuclear security are given due consideration within the executive decision-making discussions. I am also there to hold them to account and act as their point of veto should I consider that anything invalidates our legal duties over safety, security and environmental legislation.

Approval of 109th LLC minutes

Questions arising from 109th LLC minutes

David Shirt: 26 pages is rather excessive. Rather than record the comments of each individual it would be better if you just put decision made?

George McGarvie: Since I missed the last meeting, I find it useful to see what people said.

Graham Bridgman: If you weren't in the meeting, it's useful to see how the conversation developed.

Ian Rogers: We put these minutes on our website so that members of the public can also have access to them.

Sophie Crawford: It could have been a summary of issues and then actions.

Actions from 109th LLC Meeting – 29th April 2024

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

Response – a member of the Communications Team has contacted the Councillor regarding how this could be incorporated into the travel plan as part of travel options and our Liftshare scheme.

Closed

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

Response – Postcode maps will be part of the Development Update presentation at LLC 110.

Closed

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.

Response – Thank you – this has been very useful and will support our current work on the wider travel and transportation plan.

Closed

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

Response – Sent out with LLC 109 minutes. Two responses received.

Closed

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

Response – Connect Magazine is currently under review for content and delivery.

Closed

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

Response – an update on this will be given as part of the Emergency Planning and Response Update

Ongoing

Questions arising:

Avril Burdett: Are you doing myth busting (109/05) at the community engagement events?

Ian Rogers: We are taking the opportunity to address concerns that the community have about our site.

Chair's Update

Organisation update including site operations – Ian Rogers

A new Government

Over the summer, the Labour party was elected to form a new government. The Labour party was running a pro nuclear deterrent campaign, with Sir Keir Starmer having some newspaper coverage about his unequivocal support for the UK's nuclear deterrent. Although it is early days for this Government, AWE is not expecting any fundamental changes to the UK Government's defence policy.

A New Brand

AWE have a new brand and a new strapline: AWE Nuclear Security Technologies.

In 2023 AWE conducted comprehensive research into their brand and company perception. The insights were clear: the brand was either unknown or misunderstood and at times detracting. The impact of this was affecting perceptions, recruitment efforts and partner relationships.

This new brand will help AWE with talent attraction and also marks a step change of AWE being more of a public presence.

Nuclear Test Veterans

There is currently a public campaign on nuclear test veterans, which seeks to deliver greater recognition and compensation for veterans who participated in Britain's nuclear testing programme.

AWE has been connected to the campaign in relation to some historical documents that it holds on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, some of which remain classified. The Ministry of Defence has already made many of these documents publicly available, with AWE's support.

An individual can also make a Subject Access Request to AWE or the relevant military service to have sight of what records are held that may relate to them.

Community Engagement Events

AWE has started community engagement events to tell their neighbours and the broader public about their infrastructure activities. Thank you to those LLC members who have attended and for your continued community support.

The Fire at Barrow

Recently, there was a fire at BAE Systems' nuclear submarine shipyard at Barrow-in-Furness. BAE has confirmed that those taken to hospital with smoke inhalation have since been released. Those visiting from AWE have been accounted for and are safe. Cumbria Police have said there was "no nuclear risk".

AWE has a close relationship with BAE Systems and will be kept informed.

Questions arising:

Avril Burdett: It would be interesting to know how the undercover worked at BAE. Did people go undercover? How easy was it to get the message out? What was people's responses?

110/01 ACTION: Ian Rogers to give an update on the site undercover as a result of the fire at Barrow.

Questions since the last meeting:

QUESTION: Councillor Sophie Crawford – Aldermaston Parish

Sophie had heard through Tadley Town Council that Nick Elliott, our CEO was in favour of loosening AWE's position on objecting to new development within the DEPZ.

Nick has confirmed that is not the case.

Sophie also asked about the planning application for Aldermaston Recycling. AWE's current view is that it would not pose an unacceptable adverse impact. Andy Burnett-Dale will cover this further in his update.

QUESTION: Councillor Avril Burdett – Tadley Town Council

Avril pointed out the traffic issues on the A340 and asked if we could work with our staff to push car sharing and traffic calming measures.

Our travel and transport efforts are being covered as part of the agenda today, including car sharing.

Avril also asked about if there was anything AWE could do to push improved broadband access in the area. Unfortunately, this is not something AWE is able to influence.

QUESTION: Councillor Vicky Poole

Vicky passed on a concern she saw on social media of locals borrowing our grass maintenance equipment from site. We do not comment on security matters. However, we have a full range of security measures that robustly protect our people, information, assets and sites.

110/02 ACTION: Vicky Poole to give update on broadband access in West Berkshire parishes.

QUESTION: Chris Gunnell Clerk on behalf of Silchester Parish Council

Chris Gunnell shared insights from their Speedwatch Team after completing some speed calming activities. We are including this information in communications we send out to our people. Thank you to Chris and Silchester Parish Council.

Communications Update

Due to significant uplift in External Communications activity, the AWE Press Office wanted to share insight into the types of issues, queries and communications that it faces and how AWE can work with the LLC to ensure that it is delivering a good service and meeting the expectations of all its stakeholders.

There has been an increase in communication activity across many areas of the business including recruitment, community engagement and charity work. The role of the AWE Press Office is to act as a gateway and a gatekeeper to ensure that people can have information as required, but also to ensure the security and integrity of AWE and its colleagues. It works closely with regulators and colleagues in our local authorities. The AWE Press Office receives press queries regarding: planning, freedom of information, nuclear test veterans campaign, traffic, science and supply chain work.

It not only focuses on the national press and broadcasts, but also at a local scale as its communities are key. Any impact AWE has on its communities is something it needs to be mindful of and accountable for.

Social media is something that AWE has no control over outside of its own corporate channels. Everyone in External Communications receives a daily press summary so that they can be best prepared to support with external queries and those from the community.

When guidance is sent to LLC members, they are given security instructions on whether it is for sharing in the public domain or for their awareness only (in the case of queries from constituents).

Questions arising

George McGarvie: It is normal for a LLC at other nuclear sites to have the press attend. Is that something you have looked at yet?

Nicole Targett: I am very much in favour of transparency and accountability, however this would be a matter for the Chairman.

Ian Rogers: It is something that the Executive are now looking at.

Development Update

Main topics of discussion: future planning, external planning, travel and transport update and postcode map update to close action 109/02

110/03 ACTION: Reformat future planning slide into black and white (slide 7) and send to all LLC members

Piran presented on all the actions that AWE is taking to avoid, mitigate and compensate (which is the hierarchy within the National Planning Policy framework) to protect all of AWE's wildlife assets within the estate, particularly bearing in mind the future capital new build.

Avoiding, mitigating and compensating impacts of all the work that is happening

AWE undertake ecology and heritage surveys in advance of all construction and demolition work. This covers all levels of development, from large capital new builds, to taking down small bus shelters and smoking sheds on site. The ecologists will visit everything before work starts. The direct and indirect

impacts of lighting and noise are also taken into consideration. Ecologists recently supported the upgrade of the perimeter lights to ensure the impact on commuting bats was reduced. AWE has great examples of Habitats of Principal Importance (UK biodiversity action plan habitats) such as: lowland heath and deciduous woodland on the estate.

AWE works with new build contractors and delivery partners to make sure that biodiversity is built in at an early stage using biophilic design as well as nature-based solutions. Any unavoidable losses are compensated. For example adding a peregrine falcon nesting box to a new building to replace the demolished building that was once used by the birds. This was all completed outside of the nesting season. In advance of the next nesting season, three bird boxes were placed around the estate and subsequently, two generations of peregrine falcons have used these boxes successfully.

Enhancement – Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain became a legal requirement in February 2024. AWE was well prepared as this was introduced internally in 2019 and has subsequently been part of all of AWE's new major builds. AWE ecologists are always keen to use native species, however to maintain a climate resilient landscape may mean that non-native species are introduced to cope with climate change.

Piran is part of the landowner working group of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy- which covers all of Berkshire. This is to make sure that their priorities on habitats are reflected in AWE's own planting and landscaping schemes.

AWE's ecologists are working alongside the Estates team to improve ecological connectivity across the site, rather than just creating isolated pockets of habitat.

Enhancement – Nature Recovery Plan

Nature Recovery Plan is part of AWE's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. We are discussing using nature-based solutions such as using tree planting to capture carbon, or tree planting for passive cooling on buildings, which can reduce the energy used to cool those buildings. Enhancing and protecting tree planting is in line with the Greening Government Commitments, which are an increase of ten percent across the whole country. AWE is contributing to that by planting a traditional style orchard of two and a half hectares near our Burghfield site. Increasing pollinator habitats, primarily through creating 250,000 square metres of reduced mown grassland has been achieved this year. AWE is increasingly taking a natural capital approach where they put financial and other values on the benefits they get from nature as an organisation. This includes ecosystem services, so that this can be built into their decision making and financial planning.

AWE shares best practice with the local Nature Recovery Strategy, as well as other ecologists from across the nuclear sector, with similar size organisations, to learn from each other. AWE is undertaking an increasing number of conservation surveys so that they can really understand what they have on their estate, and then start looking at the impact of all the new work on those species. AWE has had positive feedback from the Environment Agency when they presented Nature Recovery Plans to them this year.

Questions arising:

George McGarvie: Biodiversity Net Gain – is it all internal on site or can AWE pay somebody else to do something?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: AWE follow the biodiversity gain hierarchy which is in the legislation. AWE will look first at the opportunities within the red line boundary. Then, AWE would look at the rest of the estate and then the rest of the defence estate before going to a third party. AWE won't buy credits as this is against MOD policy.

Jo Slimin: There has been some discussion about renewables and getting solar farms that may supply some electricity. Is that under your brief or is somebody else going to discuss it?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: Andy Burnett-Dale to discuss in his presentation.

Avril Burdett: You obviously have strong links with West Berkshire with what you are doing as part of your planning, but you have two SSSIs (Site of Special Scientific Interest) yards away from your gates that are in Hampshire. Are you having any talks with Basingstoke or Hampshire Councils about all the biodiversity out there and the SSSIs?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: The closest SSSIs to AWE are still in Berkshire, including Decoy Pits, Pools and Ponds. AWE do speak to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxon Wildlife Trust particularly about those issues and through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. AWE does interact with landowners throughout all of Berkshire. AWE does have less contact with Hampshire as a district, but through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy we do talk to their chair who is in contact with the chair of the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. There is future work to develop that connectivity across our estate.

Avril Burdett: There are several areas of common land right on the border including Pamber Forest, Tadley Common and Longmores Meadow. There is an awful lot out there that you could be affecting.

Piran Borlase-Hendry: Any development AWE does will take account of the environment through the planning process regardless of which county or unitary authority it is in. AWE is trying to build connectivity so where there are really good habitats outside the fence, they can start introducing it within the fence line and creating a connection across the estate wherever possible.

Ian Rogers: Does everyone understand what a SSSI is?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: A Site of Special Scientific Interest. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are areas for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for terrestrial species.

Vicky Poole: You have lots of unique landscape and habitats – I am curious about ground moving animals such as deer, badgers, foxes. How do those animals navigate your biodiversity areas especially if you are looking to bring more of the outside of the fence inside of the fence. How are you going to be able to support animal travel?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: AWE do get deer, foxes, hedgehogs and badgers all within the estate. The security fence must be maintained for security and AWE is unable to make holes in it to create wildlife passes.

George McGarvie: I believe the wire has a positive impact on your animals because they are protected from hunting and pollution. For your Biodiversity Net Gain, are you scoring yourself on a normal level, for a protected status or are you already a step above on the biodiversity counts?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: Some of the terrestrial species are less able to transit across into the site. Insects, birds and some of the other animals such as snakes and reptiles really benefit from the site because dog walkers are kept out. One of the biggest impacts on all the common land is people walking their dogs and recreation. In terms of Biodiversity and Net Gain, there is a statutory metric that will take account for habitat quality, so there is no way for AWE to change that metric.

Susan Mullan: Are there any plans to try and keep an eye on the number of species inside the wire to ensure that there is a balance and prevent damage to the ecosystem?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: AWE has already surveyed for great crested newts on a biennial basis. We also do annual breeding bird surveys, winter wetland bird surveys and reptile surveys. AWE would like to do more survey work on pollinator species because they have created 250,000 square metres of reduced mow grassland. The next step is to see what impact this is having.

Susan Mullan: Would you put beehives on site and then check the honey for pollutants?

Piran Borlase-Hendry: Beehives are essentially livestock and they are mostly non-native bred. AWE has looked at introducing beehives multiple times. It also brings in health and safety concerns in explosive areas. As a general rule, beehives take pollen away from native species, so AWE would much rather have native species there than introduce beehives.

Recently, it has been quiet on planning applications being submitted. However, AWE has attended hearings on the new West Berkshire Local Plan. The Inspector has yet to make their final conclusions on this future Plan. The Wokingham Local Plan is also out for consultation. There are a number of policies directly relating to AWE and the DEPZ and, like the new West Berkshire Local Plan, no new proposals for development inside the DEPZ is proposed in the Wokingham Plan. For Basingstoke and Deane – they held a call for sites for the new Local Plan and the submission draft is due to be published in the Winter of 2024/2025.

We had a planning appeal and decision over the Summer for a development inside the AWE B DEPZ. The Planning Inspectorate refused the appeal for development in August 2024. The Hollies planning appeal public inquiry was held in September for 32 residential properties. AWE is still awaiting the decision on this appeal from the Planning Inspectorate. We are expecting more planning appeals in the New Year.

Questions arising

Sophie Crawford: West Berkshire local plan – we had the examination hearings over the Summer and although there are no proposals for development, they did change the wording as a result of those hearings. Is the change in wording because of the change of emphasis or just a simplification of the way they described it?

Bryan Lyttle: The Inspector requested that the Council together with the Office for Nuclear Regulation and AWE come up with a form of words that would clarify the AWE policy without changing what was in the policy at Regulation 19. That, in due course, may come out as an Inspector's recommended proposed change which will then go out to consultation before the final decision.

Sophie Crawford: The Aldermaston Recycling development, will significantly increase HGV movements within the area. AWE, in the past has objected to developments because it is necessary to have a low congestion road on the external perimeter, the A340 particularly, in the event that emergency services need to access it. That has been an official response to refusals for example at Youngs last year for nine new industrial units. The site, has a current capacity for 25,000 tonnes a year and want to increase it to 175,000 tonnes. If you live locally, it is a significant increase and a worry for our residents that live along that road.

Bryan Lyttle: It's nuanced and each application is looked at on a case by case basis.

110/04 ACTION: Bryan Lyttle to investigate AWE's possible reasoning from Sophie Crawford's statement

Data shared to show the results of the Mobilityways AWE Travel Survey 2024.

Postcode data infographics shared as requested by action 109/02 from the 109 LLC meeting. AWE analysed this data and then looked at bus routes, train routes and options for employees to car share to reduce traffic and promote sustainability. The transport route differences between Aldermaston and Burghfield are significant, due to the location of the Burghfield site, however AWE is trying to promote and reward employees for car sharing.

Travel Plan short term activity includes:

- Promoting existing travel initiatives to staff
- Relaunch the car share in November 2024
- Promote active travel in Spring 2025
- Looking at a pilot bus route from Aldermaston railway station to Aldermaston site. AWE did look at a bus route from Newbury and Thatcham, although there are some complexities associated with being a Non Departmental Public Body which include financial restrictions.

Questions arising

David Leeks: Are there buses inside the site to move employees from one area to another?

Andy Burnett Dale: AWE has in the past had shuttle buses that move around the sites, so there is the opportunity to reinstate this should there be the need or demand for it.

Jo Slimin: The Labour Government is bringing in some new legislation to allow councils to run bus services. There may be a future opportunity there.

Sophie Crawford: The 44 bus that did use to run very infrequently from Aldermaston Station up to AWE stopped at the beginning of November and it has been replaced with a mobility bus service. It is no longer a scheduled service.

Avril Burdett: What option is there to get people through Tadley on bikes?

Andy Burnett Dale: As part of AWE's planning conditions associated with the Hub development, AWE had to carry out some studies. One of those was for more cycle ways in the South West and East of Aldermaston as well as bus routes, the time of bus routes and the duration of journeys. AWE is looking towards Basingstoke and Andover as well as Reading and Newbury.

Infrastructure Investment Update

Since Andrew McNaughton last presented to the LLC, AWE has continued building work on the Hub at Aldermaston and on the MMF and MENSA at Burghfield. With regard to the Future Materials Campus (FMC), AWE is still doing a lot of design work at the moment and also capitalising from learnings from other builds to bring a single programmatic view to all of the projects that sit within the Future Materials Campus. Four weeks ago, AWE launched the new programme delivery organisation which allows them to get a single view on everything that sits within FMC. There will also be a significant recruitment campaign going out in the future to support this. AWE continues to engage with local authorities and have already run several local community engagement drop ins on the benefits that the FMC programme can bring but also generally around AWE, what they do and how they do it.

Working in conjunction with many local parishes and parish councillors, since 17 October, AWE has started a more proactive approach, aiming to deliver six in-person events with two online events. It is the start of AWE getting out into the community and explaining who they are because the communities generally know very little about the work at AWE and there are a lot of myths to be busted. AWE has already run three events to date, with one hundred people in attendance across those events – 32 at Aldermaston, 18 at Reading and 46 at Burghfield. Because of the pandemic and many changes that have been made, the way that was traditionally used to engage with the community has had to flex, so we are also going to offer online webinar events as well, which will help us reach a wider population and varying demographics. All of these community events will involve subject matter experts from across the business.

Areas of interest from the initial feedback from the three community events hosted so far have been: myth busting, recruitment, apprenticeship training schemes, graduate training schemes, individuals wanting to change careers, ex-military wanting to work at AWE, individuals wanting to learn about our STEM approach and engagement in schools.

An AWE community website has been set up: [Atomic Weapons Establishment \(AWE\) - Citizen Space](#). The point of this is for transparency. AWE is asking the public and their communities to engage with them through the website, record any questions that they may have about AWE and in return, will be offered an answer.

Questions arising

George McGarvie: The online community sessions – will they be interactive or one way?

Hannah Marsh: The online session will be a twenty-minute presentation. AWE is asking the public to pre-register and as part of this they are asking them to submit their questions, which will then be answered throughout the presentation.

Sophie Crawford: We were very grateful that you included all of us in the Aldermaston community drop in event. The kick-off event was very impressive and I would encourage anyone to go along because of the sheer number of specialist staff who are able to answer your questions.

Vicky Poole: I would encourage you to think about university seminars, workshops, meet the employers. I am sure a lot of us here have connections, so if you want to reach out for our support, please do.

Graham Bridgman: One of the things to think about would be attendance at annual parish meetings.

Ian Rogers: If you ever want someone from AWE to support your meeting, please get in touch.

David Leeks: How is the Hub coming along?

Ian Rogers: Very well. Shell and cores are almost complete on two of the four wings. The other two are going up to steelwork. Still a full construction site, but is progressing.

Jim Thompson: Where will I find a link to publicise to people about the online community engagement events?

Hannah Marsh: We will make sure that you have it. It is on our website. We will also get it sent out to all Local Liaison Councillors today after the meeting.

110/05 ACTION: Send out details of how to join the online community drop-in sessions to all members of the Local Liaison Committee on 7 November 2024.

Estates and Liabilities update

Updates for current demolition and decommissioning programmes.

Demolition: Removal of a stack from a laboratory last used twenty years ago. This is from one of the older facilities on site that stopped operation. This is now the fourth example of a safe stack demolition in a high hazard area. The second demolition is ahead of schedule and should be cleared by March 2025, which would then be useful for AWE in terms of footprint for the new build.

Decommissioning: AWE have re-started decommissioning which is the first stage. They have removed the first glove box in over thirty years. It is a complex, slow, safe process that takes time. The glove box material was size reduced and sealed into drums. AWE has now started work on decommissioning a second glove box.

An overview of Community Concerns.

There were six registered calls to the community concerns line. Four of them were not directly associated with AWE and in those cases they were redirected if possible to those that could help.

AWE has received multiple emails from one person relating to traffic.

AWE also received a report of a long sounding alarm which was investigated by AWE Shift Managers. It was found to be a faulty storm warning. The issue was resolved and the caller was informed.

Protestor activity – there are no upcoming planned events that AWE is aware of. AWE has a good relationship with those types of groups and, if they choose to protest, AWE do their best to make it as safe and accessible as possible.

Questions arising

David Shirt: I am struggling to read the current slide on the presentation.

110/06 ACTION: Triage slide pack for any future LLC meetings to ensure colour contrast and size of text is appropriate.

Robert Jones: How many of the demolitions require special disposal in terms of radiological contamination and how much is regular demolition?

Ian Rogers: The vast majority of demolition is in non-radiological areas.

Mark Keeping: Why was there a pause between 2015 and now?

Richard Doe: AWE has to get the facility right before decommissioning. It has to be made safe first. This may mean that a new ventilation system is required, paperwork, permissions to carry out the work, checking and testing supplies to the building – it is a long process.

Jo Slimin: I watched a programme and there was mention of using artificial intelligence and robots to do some of this work which is obviously very dangerous. Will these new technologies help you on this site?

Richard Doe: Wherever possible AWE will use that type of equipment and there is already a significant amount of this in place as part of the demolition and decommissioning processes.

Graham Bridgman: What do you do with the drums filled with decommissioned material?

Richard Doe: They are processed through the next stage. The material will go through various techniques, characterisation and then there will be a suitable disposal route.

Ian Rogers: All waste has to be characterised, there has to be an approved waste stream for the various categories of waste that we have. Part of AWE's sustainability programme is to try and reduce the amount of waste produced and when produced it is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

Vicky Poole: Where are these drums stored and is there any impact on the immediate environment that you may be concerned about?

Richard Doe: AWE is regulated and work with the regulator throughout the process. The drums are stored currently at AWE. Further monitoring is carried out and they are then sent to a waste repository.

Ian Rogers: AWE is also held to account by the Regulators for the amount of waste that they allow to accumulate on the site at any point in time. AWE have to demonstrate a commitment to moving them offsite when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Tim Whitaker: What is a glove box?

Richard Doe: A glovebox is a controlled environment that protects the operator from the radiation hazard or the toxic hazard from the materials that are being operated.

Avril Burdett: How much of a problem is asbestos on site?

Richard Doe: AWE know where asbestos is throughout the site and this is taken into account with every job that they do. It is part of the deconstruction process.

Community Update

Update on what we are doing in the community and schools. Highlighted new events and activities that have been put in place. AWE now has a new charity partner – the organisation is supporting Parents and Children Together (PACT). AWE selected PACT through employee votes.

AWE has had around 850 volunteering activities take place, which is an increase from last year.

AWE has their annual gift collections happening to collect gifts for PACT, The Trussell Trust, Barnados and also second hand clothes and new toiletries for the Cowshed and SWAT.

West Berkshire Museum in Newbury will be having an exhibition of some of AWE's on site collection. It opens on 4 December 2024 and will be open to the public to view. It includes video, games, artefacts and information about AWE's future as well as a celebration of 75 years of AWE next year.

AWE has invited PACT on site to talk to employees and have discussed how we can work together through the partnership. AWE is organising a charity science show where all proceeds go directly to PACT. AWE is also supporting PACT through volunteering opportunities using their 27 hours of employee volunteering time.

Questions arising

Jo Slimin: What date is the West Berkshire Museum AWE exhibition opening?

Kavita Thandi: 4 December 2024

Sophie Crawford: Will you be creating a flyer that we can promote through our social media?

Kavita Thandi: It will be on the museum communications as well as AWE's communications.

David Leek: Whereabouts is it in Newbury?

Kavita Thandi: It is right in the centre of Newbury, opposite the Town Hall in Newbury Museum.

Part of AWE's community engagement work is working with primary schools and secondary schools in the local area. AWE work in approximately a 20 mile radius from Aldermaston with any school that would like their STEM support. This zone encompasses 65 secondary schools and 200 primary schools. To help deliver this work in schools, AWE has over 250 STEM Ambassadors – an employee at AWE who chooses to give up some of their time to support the work that we do in primary and secondary schools, focusing on the STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. Last academic year, AWE reached 60,005 students in their local communities. AWE's main focus last year was secondary schools, delivering careers fairs and apprenticeship presentations to raise an awareness of their apprenticeship programme and early careers opportunities at AWE.

To develop their work in primary schools, AWE wanted to increase the reach that we have. This year AWE has created self-service STEM kits for STEM Ambassadors to take into schools and deliver exciting and engaging workshop activity for the students. The STEM kits are linked to the Primary National Curriculum to support the learning of the students for year 3 – 6.

AWE will continue with their Primary Science Challenge which will be launched in 2025 and be open to all primary schools in the local area. The details are currently being finalised, with the prize being a live workshop delivered by the Royal Institution.

AWE will continue their work with Queen Mary's College in Basingstoke, by continuing to sponsor the Primary Science Centre. Schools in the local area are able to visit for free and receive science lessons linked to the National Curriculum. They also provide free transport to and from the centre for primary schools.

AWE also work with other partners such as Enterprise Business Partnership (EBP) who help AWE to extend their reach in Primary Schools through activities such as Guess My Job and People Like Me.

Questions arising

Vicky Poole: What are you doing to support students that are home schooled or independently schooled?

Sam Earl: At the moment, AWE work mostly with state and private schools within the community. In the future, AWE may provide online materials and resources to support all students, including those that are home schooled.

Ian Rogers opened the afternoon session by confirming AWE will invite Doug Greenway to share AWE's environment strategy with the LLC members at the next meeting.

110/07 Action: Doug Greenway to have an agenda item at the next LLC meeting

Regulators Update

Environment Agency (EA)

The Environment Agency report was circulated to the LLC members prior to the meeting for the period 12 April to 17 October 2024.

The Environment Agency do a number of engagements with AWE each month which varies between compliance assessments or meetings and routine and non-routine engagements. They have been taking part in a regulatory piece of work with Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR) looking at organisational capability (not just for AWE but across the whole Defence Nuclear Enterprise) and this is an ongoing piece of work - looking at nuclear safety and environmental controls.

This was a very good engagement with AWE executive team and phase two of this will be completed next year.

Last meeting, the Environment Agency mentioned there were some non-compliances which resulted in a warning letter being issued to AWE. Tied to this, they have raised a regulatory issue on the organisation to improve the shortfalls being identified. Since, there have been monthly engagements to track progress against the remedies. This is ongoing, however, AWE is progressing in accordance with the Environment Agency's expectations.

A formal compliance inspection will take place in quarter one of 2025.

A climate change inspection took place working with ONR specifically on external hazards that ONR has identified and touched on wider work undertaken by AWE. This was a positive intervention and was good to draw all information together in the findings.

There have been three compliance activities in the reporting period looking at AWE's radioactive waste in the waste stores and some of the legacy facilities at Aldermaston. There were two minor environmental non-compliances for which actions have been placed on AWE and are looking to agree dates for completion of those actions soon.

A separate activity was completed at Burghfield site looking at the radioactive permits and there were no non-compliances noted. The most recent inspection was of the uranium facilities at Aldermaston and again no non-compliances were raised, although a few recommendations and observations were raised which AWE will be taking forward.

A water abstraction licence inspection was carried out in Burghfield and Aldermaston. Issues were found with both, which resulted in non-compliance. AWE will be taking this forward and working to rectify.

Questions arising

Vicky Poole: Will any of the non-compliances have an impact on the community with regards to the water etc. or is it purely governance?

Rob Green: The water abstraction non-compliance was due to the meters being placed in a location where they shouldn't have been, so there is no direct impact on the water services. With the radioactive substances, these are relating to procedural compliance, so again, no impact on the community and environment.

Regulators Update

Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator

DNSR only pick up where there are Disapplications, Exemptions or Derogations (DED) from Statute. Their focus on AWE sites is when explosives and radioactive come together, through life safety so interested in the product and the quality of the product rather than the facility itself.

The touch points in Aldermaston and Burghfield are currently Assembly Technology Centre (ATC) at Burghfield, the Explosives Technology Centre (XTC) at Aldermaston and EPURE which is a joint UK and France facility based in France.

The DNSR outlined the enforcement outstanding on AWE from the hierarchy of enforcement which ranges from 'stop' or 'prohibit notices at the top down to an 'observation'. Currently, there are no prohibit notices and no improvement notices on AWE. There are corrective action requirements on each of the areas shown on slide 36 of the PowerPoint slides.

The Suitably Qualified Experienced Personnel (SQEP) of the AWE board is down due to a few new appointments to the AWE board, so the action is to get them up to speed with what AWE does in each of the areas. This can be closed out soon, DNSR are just gathering the evidence to do it.

There were three interventions carried out since the last report. These included a themed inspection with design colleagues on the specifications used for the design, manufacture and testing of the explosive components. This inspection was rated a yellow as there is a little work to be done on the specifications.

The next investigation was AC17 compliance, which is management arrangements inspection carried out at Burghfield looking at the adequacy of the document arrangements of the assembly and disassembly which was rated a green with no enforcement coming out from this.

There was a reactive inspection in September at ATC with limited notice given to AWE in conjunction with the convoy and looking at the cooperation between the two teams. This is an ongoing inspection and therefore there are no conclusions yet.

The final one is of a recent emergency response exercise at Aldermaston carried out in October. This was assessed as adequate by the joint regulators. There are two assessment grades 'adequate' or 'inadequate'.

Questions arising

George McGarvie: Some people may not be aware of DNSR until recently when a representative started to join and present at LLC meetings.

Ian Rogers: This is because they were recently invited by me and they will be a regular occurrence as one of our regulators.

Regulators Update

Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)

The ONR report was circulated to the LLC members prior to the meeting for the period 1 April to 30 September 2024.

ONR completed several assessments in the reporting period including the level one exercise carried out at Aldermaston mentioned by DNSR. They have done a lot of work with the nuclear liability team this year and

they have a level two issue around decommissioning which is quite high in ONR. They will be closing this down next month as they are happy that AWE is doing a very good job.

The other focus this year has been to gather evidence to see if Aldermaston can be moved to routine regulatory attention (from enhanced). Some of the areas being looked at are around maintenance, learning, RADOR reporting and leadership capability. Gareth Lock is happy that AWE moves to Routine attention. All the evidence will be put together into a briefing to take to the leadership team.

The other item to mention is The Hollies. This was discussed at the last meeting and the most recent update we have is that we're still waiting on a decision from our objection.

The other thing to pick up is Artificial Intelligence (AI). The ONR are looking at AI as something new to them as well. They are looking into the resources they need and how they can regulate AI. There is an internal team looking into this and next year. There will be a line in the report to cover AI and how ONR and AWE can work together.

These are the routine matters. With regards to non-routine matters, ONR know on 6 July 2023 there was a fatality at the Hub at Aldermaston. The investigation is very close to being concluded and the findings will be shared early in 2025. Nothing more can be shared with regard to this at the moment.

An event in April 2024 required intervention and the decision was made to have a 'holding to account' meeting with AWE executive team. This was to inform them of the event, and to give them a chance to make improvements. The meeting was held in July 2024 with Ross Powlesland the Chief Operating Officer and a number of commitments were made which ONR were happy with. Another event occurred not long after the meeting which is still being investigated, however it is good to understand that actions were agreed just days prior to the second event meaning there was no time to put the actions in place. Therefore, ONR will be looking at both events together and think about how to assess the event.

It has been a positive reporting period overall.

Questions arising

Jo Slimin: How did the Hollies case go and did you feel as though you were given a good opportunity to put your case forward?

Gareth Lock: It was the land use planning team who did it, but it is understood that all parties were allowed adequate time to share views and put their case forward.

Jo Slimin: It will be very interesting for those who live locally to hear the outcome as it will set a precedent for future development.

Environment, Safety, Health and Quality Update

Presented slides to cover personal safety performance, process safety performance and AWE's commitment to protecting the environment and people.

In the 12 month period from September 2023 to September 2024, 22 people sustained workplace injuries in AWE. 14 of those were to employees and 17 of those required one or more days away from work to recover. Overall, 454 workdays were lost due to workplace injuries.

AWE measures against an American classification, US Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), which enables benchmarking against a broader community than just the UK nuclear industry. OSHA also starts from the day after the incident whereas RIDDOR starts after 5 days. The days away from work is used to calculate the OSHA rate which is calculated per 200,000 hours worked. The current rate at AWE is 0.234 which is world class. The AWE target is to be below 0.3.

It was confirmed that none of the 22 injuries were due to hazardous materials.

This year, AWE have launched a large campaign under the banner of 'We Care' and is a campaign around safety, security, health, wellbeing, environment and learning from experience.

There were six process safety events in the period which are all being investigated, some of which include what was shared by the ONR.

The Process Safety team have been looking into the use of virtual reality and bringing the technology into training to improve learning experience.

The table shown at the bottom of slide 41 relates to the number of incidents reported to the regulator and in the year to the end of September 2024 there have been 20 reports which is slightly down on previous years.

The rise in numbers shown from 2020 to 2022 doesn't highlight a rise in incidents but an understanding of what should be reported within the process and around this time and the scope was broadened.

With regards to waste management, AWE continues to divert 99% of waste away from landfill and radiation doses to any member of the community is lower than consuming a bag of brazil nuts.

110/08 Action: Nick Bolton to share more on the 'We Care' campaign at next meeting

110/09 Action: Nick Bolton to share a breakdown of the type of injuries at the next meeting

Questions arising

Vicky Poole: How many of the incidents were due to travelling around the workplace and how many were while performing a work task.

Nick Bolton: Eight occurred while people were moving around site, the remaining 14 were during workplace tasks.

Graham Bridgman: I would like a breakdown of how the 22 injuries resulted in 454 days lost as this sounds a lot.

Nick Bolton: Broken bones would result in longer time off which impacts the numbers.

Adrian Betteridge: Who regulates AWE's health and safety onsite?

Nick Bolton: The ONR regulate the nuclear licence sites and the Health and Safety regulators will regulate the non-nuclear licence parts, although ONR will still take an interest in the non-nuclear areas. The Environment Agency regulates the whole of Aldermaston and Burghfield sites.

Emergency Planning and Response Update

Since the last meeting, there have been two Level 1 exercises. A Level 1 exercise is a major exercise required by the regulators to demonstrate AWE's site emergency response arrangements to address the consequences that could occur from an emergency on our sites. Aldermaston and Burghfield sites are required to run these annually. The latest exercise was on 8 October 2024 and the regulators all touched on the exercise and the 'adequate' rating.

This exercise focused on an emergency in one of AWE's radioactive material facilities and a simulated release of material from that facility.

A wide range of responders participated including the Fire and Rescue Service, Ministry of Defence Police, Paramedics, Safety Shift, Health Physics, RPAs, Emergency Managers, Facility Staff, Security, West Berkshire District Council, Duty Site Manager and a full suite of Subject Matter Experts from across the business. As well as the CEO and Executive team members to observe.

Some of the highlights that came from the exercise included strong command and control in all areas, wider use of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) and a good understanding of risks and hazards.

The CEO was very interested in why things were done in the way they are and understood the importance and seriousness of the exercise to protect the public and the personnel on site.

AWE is good at analysing exercises and understanding what went well and where improvements lie and is able to have open discussions with regulators and put improvements in place where needed and commended the response teams too.

The Burghfield Level 1 exercise was held on 14 May 2024 and assessed as 'adequate'. This exercise focused on an emergency in one of our radioactive and explosives material handling facilities. Again, a wide range of responders participated including the Fire and Rescue Service, Ministry of Defence Police, Paramedics, Safety Shift, Health Physics, RPAs, Emergency Managers, Facility Staff, Security, Duty Site Manager and a full suite of Subject Matter Experts from across the business.

Highlights from this exercise included strong responder monitoring of contamination and the time this took to assess and continued deployment of JESIP which is something AWE are focussing on across the whole organisation.

The last time the offsite plan was tested was in April 2023. The wording and detail of the communications isn't shared widely so as not to inform hostile groups and countries of our plans. This is run every three years and the next one is due in 2026 in line with our regulation by REPPiR. The exercise takes around a year to plan with around 200 people involved.

AWE and West Berkshire Council work together to co-deliver briefings to schools as part of the awareness program in respect to the Off Site Emergency Plan. And there is an AWE internal REPPiR review in accordance with regulatory renewal periods taking place and new leaflets will be issued next year.

A report has been created following ALDEX 2023 from which actions have come out. These actions have been summarised and a revision of the plan following a workshop has been made. The last step is signoff of the revised plan which should be done soon.

Overall, there are around 20,000 people who live within the DEPZ.

Questions arising

Jo Slimmin: I would like to understand how long each process in the exercise takes. For example: how long it takes to get measurements of the level of contamination.

Scott Davies-Hearn: This can be put down to the evidence and the type of exercise. The level 2 exercise, which is a test of the offsite arrangements, Aldex. It is important to appreciate not all incidents are done in a particular timeframe and in particular circumstances. With the offsite exercise, there are modular bits where elements are run over different time periods to focus on how each would work in conjunction.

Jo Slimmin: How would members of the community know what to do in the case of an emergency and would they know that they may need to support themselves for a period?

Carolyn Richardson: There is a section on the West Berkshire Council website with information on what to do in an emergency.

Avril Burdett: The information vacuum can be the hardest in an emergency as not knowing can scare the community more.

Carolyn Richardson: I agree and confirm that the community will be given the information as soon as the Council has it through the communications group who are stood up within the Council.

Vicky Poole: What alarms can be heard by the community from the AWE sites and when should be any action taken?

Carolyn Richardson and Scott Davies-Hearn: confirmed that the alarms within AWE are not for the community and there should be no action taken. Should there be a requirement for the community to act, there will be a phone call to the members of the community impacted. There is a project to move from landlines to mobile phone systems to pick up the gap where people no longer have a land line. This will be followed by radio and website communications being published.

Susan Mullan: I am concerned about the mobile phone alerting system as some community members, who are facing trouble which could include domestic abuse, may have a second phone which is hidden.

Scott Davies-Hearn: There would be communications, similar to those that the government provided, prior to testing.

Sophie Crawford: Do you feel as though there is enough resourcing within West Berkshire Council to manage the DEPZ?

Carolyn Richardson: There have been additional hires and this is continuously being analysed and other options are being discussed.

Uncrewed Vehicle System Team Update

Members of AWE's Uncrewed Vehicle System (UVS) team shared a variety of drones they operate at AWE. The team was established in 2018 with the proof of concept and approvals received in 2021 and the team have continuously looked to build their capabilities.

The fleet of drones have previously been used to support the community by providing a view of the top of buildings such as churches with the drones being able to take photographs and videos.

On site, drones are used to find leaks through thermal imaging and to look at the steam network at AWE. There is a drone which is caged and can go into pipes and underground where necessary to provide key intelligence back to the team as well as mapping. The drones have also been an important factor with trials and the footage the team have been able to provide has aided the analysis post trial.

Each time a drone is due to fly, there is a two week lead up time which includes planning, speaking to key stakeholders, sharing plans with employees and sharing plans with the local police. The drones are flown within AWE sites only which is part of the 'safe operating' procedures as no other aircraft will be flying into AWE airspace.

Questions arising

Mark Keeping: What considerations have been made for using electric drones in close proximity to buildings with explosive materials?

Matt King: The drones have been tested within half a meter of the buildings.

David Leeks: Thank you to the UVS Team for supporting St Mary's Church by using a drone to look at the lightning conductor which saved the community a lot of money.

Tim Whitaker: At what point has AWE got to with regard to drone detection systems and dealing with the possible problem of incoming drones to the site?

Ian Rogers: We don't publicly discuss our security arrangements.

Any other business

No other business raised

Meeting closed

Date of Next meeting:

Thursday 24 April 2025