

Planning & Trading Standards
West Berkshire District Council
Council Offices
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

Attn: Colin Inwards

Anita Cacchioli
F.Inst.SRM.Hons MCMI MInstD
**Director of Environment, Culture
and Sport**

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Our Ref:
Your Ref: 09/02396/COMIND

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5th February 2009

Your contact is: David Breeze, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr Inwards,

COMMENTS ON APPLICATION - 09/02396/COMIND - AWE Aldermaston

Proposal: Replacement facility for the storage and handling of enriched uranium covering 18,489 sq.m gross floor space on a 10,496 sq.m footprint, including office accommodation, storage facilities, material handling areas and ancillary support services. Construction related infrastructure is also proposed including access roads, construction compound, fencing, gates and ancillary facilities.

Applicant: Ministry of Defence

Date consultation received: None received

I refer to the above planning application. You declined this authority's request that we should be formally consulted but confirmed that any comments received would be considered when the application comes to your scheduled committee meeting on 10th February. (email from Gary Rainer dated 15th January).

The application was considered by Reading's Planning Applications Committee at its meeting on 3rd February (a copy of the report is enclosed) and the Council's decision was:

That West Berkshire District Council be informed that this Council considers

that it was unacceptable that this Council was not consulted on this application.

It is accepted that in planning terms the planning application does not represent a material change in use (this establishment has been used for processing explosives since the WWII and has been used since the 1950.s as part of the UK Atomic Weapons Programme with many of the existing buildings and facilities dating from this period) nor an intensification of use in terms of resultant floor area. It is also accepted that in general the principle of using this brownfield site for continued employment use complies with national guidance and local plan policies. However, the nature of the proposal raises material planning issues in term of health and safety and amenity issues, which this Council considers, given the nature of the operations carried out at the site, to have relevance to residents, employees and visitors to Reading.

We therefore formally request that Reading Borough Council is consulted on all future planning applications at AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield in order that this Council can be given adequate time to consider the scope of the planning applications and provide an appropriate response to the applications.

It is worth stressing that Members failed to understand West Berkshires' decision to not consult Reading Borough Council, which was simply based on the distance of the application site from our boundary. It was felt that this showed a lack of appreciation of the concerns held by many residents in Reading for the continued presence of AWE so close to this highly populated area.

David Breeze (Planning Manager - Implementation) confirmed to the Committee that officers of the former Berkshire unitary authorities are drawing up guidelines for consultations with neighbouring planning authorities on Major planning applications and the Committee asked for a progress report on this matter in due course.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

David Breeze

Planning Manager