

Street Survey Results

Enriched Uranium Facility, AWE Aldermaston

Introduction

This report summarises the results of a series of street surveys conducted by Nuclear Information Service, co-operating with other local environmental groups, to determine public opinions in the west of Berkshire on the planned new Enriched Uranium Facility at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston. The surveys were conducted in December 2009 – January 2010 to coincide with the official period allocated by West Berkshire Council to receive comments on AWE's planning application for the new facility.

550 members of the public (472 of whom were residents in the RG postcode area) gave responses to three questions about the Enriched Uranium Facility:

1. Had you heard about this new project before now?
2. In your opinion, should the new Enriched Uranium Facility be built at Aldermaston?
3. Do you think information about the environmental and safety impacts of the new Enriched Uranium Facility should be made publicly available before permission is given to build it?

Headline findings

- Over 70% of those asked had not heard about the project before being approached to complete the survey.
- Over 60% of those who were surveyed believed that the facility should not be built.
- Over 90% of respondents felt that information about environmental and safety impacts should be made publicly available before permission to build is given .

Methodology

Survey work took place in the following locations on the dates shown. Passers-by were invited to answer the survey questions using the form shown in the appendix.

Location	Date
Reading (Broad Street)	Saturday 12 December 2009
Reading (Great Knollys Street)	Saturday 19 December 2009
Newbury Theale Mortimer Tadley Burghfield Common Reading (Broad Street)	Saturday 9 January 2010
Reading (Broad Street)	Saturday 16 January 2010

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Question 1: Had you heard about this new project before now?

	Yes	No
RG	120 (25.4%)	352 (74.6%)
Total	141 (25.6%)	409 (74.4%)

Question 2: In your opinion, should the new Enriched Uranium Facility be built at Aldermaston?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
RG	63 (13.4%)	289 (61.2%)	120 (25.4%)
Total	73 (13.3%)	340 (61.8%)	137 (24.9%)

Question 3: Do you think information about the environmental and safety impacts of the new Enriched Uranium Facility should be made publicly available before permission is given to build it?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
RG	436 (92.3%)	21 (4.4%)	15 (3.2%)
Total	501 (91.1%)	25 (4.6%)	24 (4.4%)

Conclusions

- The high proportion of individuals – almost three quarters of those residing in the RG postcode area - who had not previously been aware of the proposed Enriched Uranium Facility calls into question the adequacy of steps to consult the public on the development by AWE and the Ministry of Defence. The statement by AWE that “Public consultation has been a key aspect in the preparation of this planning application and is an important element of the planning process” would appear to be baseless (Planning Support Statement – Project Pegasus. Paragraph 2.15).
- With 61% of survey respondents indicating that, in their opinion, the development should not go ahead, plans to construct the Enriched Uranium Facility at AWE Aldermaston appear to enjoy little popular support amongst members of the local public.
- An overwhelming majority (92% of RG postcode residents) felt that information on the environmental and safety impacts of the Enriched Uranium Facility should be made available to the public before planning permission is given. However, a full environmental impact assessment study for the development has not been conducted, and key information on processes, wastes, and risks to public safety arising from the development is absent from the planning application.
- Given the very high level of support for the view that environmental and safety information should be made available before any decision on the projects future is decided, any decision by West Berkshire Council to grant planning permission for the development in the absence of such information would run contrary to the wishes of the public.

Appendix

Street survey – new development at AWE Aldermaston

We are conducting a street survey today about the new Enriched Uranium Facility which is to be built at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston.

The Enriched Uranium Facility is also known as Project Pegasus, and it will manufacture uranium parts for the warheads of nuclear weapons. It will cost an estimated £500 million to build.

Please help us by answering the following three questions:

1. Had you heard about this new project before now?

Yes

No

2. In your opinion, should the new Enriched Uranium Facility be built at Aldermaston?

Yes

No

Don't know

3. Do you think information about the environmental and safety impacts of the new Enriched Uranium Facility should be made publicly available before permission is given to build it?

Yes

No

Don't know

What is your postcode, please?

Thank you for your time and for your help with this survey.