

Minutes of the 54th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 4 September 2008

Present:

Dr Don Cook	Managing Director, AWE	Chairman LLC
Dr Andrew Jupp	Director Infrastructure, AWE	
Gareth Beard	Head of Environment, AWE	
Alan Price	Head Corporate Communications, AWE	
Lindsey Appleton	Corporate Affairs Manager, AWE	Secretary LLC
Cllr Malcolm Bryant	Wokingham Borough Council	
Cllr Bill Cane	Mortimer West End	
Cllr Terry Faulkner	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Geoff Findlay	West Berks Council	
Cllr Valerie Frost	Tadley Town Council	
Cllr Mick Hall	Burghfield Parish Council	
Cllr John Heggadon	Shinfield Parish Council	
Cllr Peter Hobbs	Sulhamstead Parish Council	
Cllr Dudley Ives	Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	
Cllr Kay Lacey	Pangbourne Parish Council	
Cllr David Leeks	Tadley Town Council	
Ian Lindsay	Wasing Parish Council	
Cllr George McGarvie	Pamber Heath Parish Council	
Jeff Moss	Swallowfield Parish Council	
Cllr Irene Neill	West Berks Council	
Cllr Murray Roberts	Padworth Parish Council	
Cllr David Shirt	Aldermaston Parish Council	
John Southall	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council	
Cllr Clive Vare	Aldermaston Parish Council	
Cllr Tim Whitaker	Mapledurham Parish Council	
Cllr David Wood	Theale Parish Council	

Regulators:

David Senior	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Martin Sayers	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Stuart Parr	Environment Agency

Introduction

Dr Cook welcomed members to the 54th meeting.

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Heather Young, Cllr Philip Bassil, Cllr Mike Broad, Cllr Jonathan Chishick, Cllr Pennee Chopping, Ms Julie James, Cllr Royce Longton, Ms Carolyn Murison, Mr Tom Payne, Mr Barry Richards, Cllr Tony Stanley, Cllr Alan Sumner, Cllr Gerry Traynor and Cllr R. Willis.

Actions from the last meeting

Action 53/1: Jugs of water were provided at the meeting as opposed to bottled water.

Action 53/2: The update on the Pangbourne Pipeline is covered in the Infrastructure report.

Minutes of the 53rd Meeting

Cllr Leeks wished his apologies to be removed from the minutes of the 53rd meeting. These were then accepted as a true record.

Chairman's remarks – Dr Don Cook, Managing Director, AWE Plc.

Strategic Weapon Support System

In July, the MoD launched the Strategic Weapon System (SWS) Support Project to ensure the ongoing future effectiveness of support for the UK deterrent at Coulport. The project will consider

both how the existing public sector deliverer might address the business issues, but also how the relevant private sector experience might be applied to this national security work.

As one of the existing compliant contractors delivering support to the MoD's Strategic Weapon System activities, AWE, working in alliance with Babcock Marine and Imes Strategic Support Limited, has been invited to participate in the search for a sustainable solution to the challenges facing RNAD Coulport.

2008 Stocktake

The 2008 Stocktake has been completed successfully as we celebrated 50 years of the UK/US Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA). The overall conclusion was that very good progress has been made over the last two years and the foundations are now laid for continued successful collaboration in the future.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) Funding

AWE, in partnership with Dstl, has secured government funding to help develop commercial uses for new technologies generated by its scientists and engineers.

A grant of £780,000 was awarded by the Department of Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS) Public Sector Exploitation Fund, which supports the development of research ideas, or intellectual property from all areas of the public sector.

The funding over a three-year period will enhance AWE's capacity to capture intellectual property at an early stage, increasing the likelihood of filing patents and improving their assessment for commercial exploitation.

This will mean that novel and innovative ideas, which emerge as a natural by-product of AWE work on the nuclear deterrent, can be developed for commercial use in other industry sectors.

CMR Planning Decision

West Berkshire Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee has approved AWE's planning application for the construction of a Conventional Manufacturing Rationalisation (CMR) facility. The facility will consolidate existing operations, currently undertaken in three separate buildings at Aldermaston to a single customised building at AWE Burghfield.

CMR will allow the Company to bring together 130 staff, providing improved working conditions as well as efficiency and environmental performance improvements.

Uniform to Work Day

On 16th July, AWE supported the national 100th anniversary celebrations of the Territorial Army by inviting the reservists within the Company to wear their uniform to work.

Around 40 people took part and, as well as the TA reservists, members of the Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force were also encouraged to wear their uniforms to work.

As part of the celebrations, Brigadier Robert Sutcliffe, the senior serving TA Officer, presented AWE with a Certificate of Support from SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employees).

Microsoft Challenge

Two AWE teams competed in the 2008 Microsoft Challenge in Scotland during June. This event brings together some of the UK's leading businesses and public sector organisations to do battle in what is known as "intelligent sport"- a test of fitness, stamina and mental agility.

After a gruelling weekend of both mental and physical challenges, the AWE teams finished 8th and 26th out of 117 teams. In doing so, they collected two trophies for the "Best Public Sector Team" and "Best Novice Team" respectively.

Distinguished Scientist honoured

Hugh James, Distinguished Specialist and Research Leader in Material Modelling at AWE has been awarded an MBE for services to the Defence Industry.

Health, Safety & Environmental Report – Gareth Beard, Head of Environment

Slides attached

Key Performance Indicators

The first quarter results show a disappointing start to the year in terms of Lost Time Accidents and events when compared with the first quarter of 2007. In reviewing the underlying causes, early indications point to the need for additional effort in raising awareness of Manual Handling across sites as this is the single largest source of injuries. Significant efforts to improve the recycling of waste have been made and we are achieving in excess of 85%.

Safety Performance Indicators

A new complementary set of indicators, agreed with the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII), has been designed to allow better focus on the nuclear aspects of AWE's safety management systems. The key areas are process safety and proactive safety leadership. These will be reviewed during the next quarter.

Annual Review of Environment

In July, the Company presented a review of the previous year's environmental performance to the Environment Agency (EA). In summarising their perception of the Company's performance, the EA described AWE as an exemplar of environmental management within the nuclear industry for the second year running.

Planning

AWE has joined the West Berkshire Partnership to support their work in helping to make the local community greener, safer, prosperous, accessible and healthy.

Security Exercise

A Security exercise will take place at AWE Aldermaston on 21 November 2008. Pyrotechnics and blank ammunition will be used to enhance realism. There will be restrictions on entry to the site during the day. Safety and security remain the highest priorities for AWE sites and the exercise is part of normal security training conducted regularly to ensure we have the appropriate response to potential threats. Immediate neighbours will be notified of the exercise.

Cllr Findlay asked whether the Company discusses waste minimisation policies with its contractors. Andrew Jupp said that regular sessions are held with contractors and the issue is considered in contracts.

Cllr Bryant asked whether any trends can be identified with the data concerning absence cases by month. Gareth Beard replied that no correlations have been found.

Infrastructure Report - Dr Andrew Jupp, Director Infrastructure

Slides attached

At the last meeting, an issue was raised regarding the use of bottled Evian water at the meeting rather than a more local supplier or use of tap water. (Action 53/1). Dr Jupp reported that Evian is the nominated supplier for bottled water to AWE's catering contractor and other suppliers are 13p per bottle more expensive. Jugs of water will be supplied at future meetings.

Cllr Whitaker had asked whether there had been a final decision on the future of the decommissioned Pangbourne Pipeline (PPL) Pumphouse. (Action 53/2). The future of the Pumphouse is part of the overall Pangbourne Pipeline Remediation Project. Initial characterisation work has been undertaken and this information is being used to develop a project delivery strategy.

A question was raised as to whether the PPL could be used to move flood water. The PPL was designed for slow discharge of effluent from AWE into the River Thames. The capacity of the PPL would not therefore be suitable for carrying flood water.

Corporate Complaints

Recent complaints have been about noise from AWE Aldermaston at night and about road closures whilst the Tadley Gate roundabout was under construction. These complaints have been dealt with and all the complainants were happy that their concerns had been dealt with promptly. **Action 54/1: Secretary to notify Parish Clerks of the complaints procedures.**

Heavy Rainfall

On 20 July 2007, both Aldermaston and Burghfield experienced rainfall over a four hour period equivalent to what would have normally been expected over a two month period. Flooding to the roadways was dealt with by Emergency Response teams and these swift actions prevented the majority of buildings being flooded.

Emergency arrangements worked well and the North Ponds Surface Water Management system operated as designed. There was no impact on safety and no staff were injured.

LLC members were updated on actions being taken as a result of the Review, learn and Improve process undertaken after the rainfall event, including the purchase of flood protection equipment and enhanced flood modeling.

Environmental Programmes

Pangbourne Pipeline

Richard Hedley reported that a Contractor for West Berkshire Council caused minor accidental damage to the protective covering of the Pangbourne pipeline whilst carrying out flood protection to weirs in a stream during August. Following an investigation, the outer protective pipe covering was found to be punctured, but the main pipe inside was intact. Work was carried out to ensure that the affected area of pipeline was left in a safe state and any rubble cordoned off. The Environment Agency (EA) was informed of the incident. Repairs have since been carried out.

EA Warning Letters

The EA has issued two warning letters to AWE. One was for an extraction plant when 0.9kg of TCE- the equivalent of a large mug of "TIPPEX", in 50m³ of water was released back into the plume on site. Process controls have been reviewed and the control system remedied. The other letter followed the discharge of 15m³ of trade waste effluent that was discharged to the ground within a compound. There was no offsite release. The liquid discharged was well below World Health Organization drinking water limits. A review of process controls has been completed and improvements have been made in configuration management and operational controls.

Cllr Bryant asked whether there is a target date for the demolition of wartime buildings remaining at AWE. Don Cook said buildings were being demolished as they became redundant, but the speed with which this can be achieved is limited by funding.

Cllr Bryant further asked whether AWE is considering the possibility of housing a museum. Don Cook said such proposals would require a robust business case to merit consideration by the MoD.

Planning Applications & Approvals

John Steele reported that a planning application for a new assembly/disassembly facility at AWE Burghfield, will go before West Berkshire Council for approval in December. This facility would eventually replace the Gravel Gerties and it would be designed to meet the BREEAM excellent environmental standard. Mr Steele said full Stakeholder engagement would be undertaken and he offered to speak to all local Councils.

Travel & Transport

John Steele reported that the construction of the roundabout at the Aldermaston gate had been completed in July and the one at Tadley gate, shortly thereafter.

John reminded members of the 2006 Travel Plan with the primary aim to reduce the number of vehicles on the highway. Single occupancy vehicles target was 65% by 2012. This figure is currently at 76%. Car share figures are up to from 6% to 10%.

Cllr Lacey raised the issue of the lack of landscaping around Paices Hill. John Steele confirmed the area will be landscaped during the next planting season.

Systems Engineering

Slides attached

A presentation on the work of AWE's Systems Engineering Directorate was given by Dr Brian Bowsher, Director Systems Engineering.

Ask the Regulators

David Senior of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate will give a presentation to LLC members on the NII at the next meeting.

Cllr Whitaker expressed concern over the delays on reaching a decision over the Pangbourne Pipeline (PPL). Dr Cook said the Company was undertaking a detailed study to determine the best practical environmental option for dealing with the PPL in its entirety. Stuart Parr of the Environment Agency (EA) said that the decision is a complicated one and should not be rushed. AWE is keeping the EA fully informed of progress.

John Southall requested a briefing of all the relevant Parish Councils along the PPL route to discuss the current and future options. **Action 54/2: Secretary to arrange**

Any Other Business

Cllr Leeks asked who monitors the height and distance of aircraft overflying AWE Sites. Andrew Jupp stated that there is a no fly zone over a certain height and management procedures are in place to monitor the situation.

Cllr Moss congratulated AWE on the recent issue of "Connect", the community newspaper that goes out to over 20,000 local homes.

Cllr McGarvie wished to record his thanks to Heather Young and team for the construction comparisons figures from the last LLC. Cllr McGarvie felt they were very informative, clear and concise.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 11th December 2008

The meeting ended with a visit to two Systems Engineering Facilities.

Lindsey Appleton
Secretary to the AWE LLC
0118 982 5862