

Meeting between David Hoadley and Di McDonald for SCANS with Graham Wyeth and Sandy Kissane for Southampton City Council on Wednesday 6th April 2005

Notes

General

There had been a major Rest Centre Exercise the day before involving emergency and social agencies. This would feed into the Sotonsafe Exercise Foxwater06, planned for 22nd February 2006. As there is risk of "exercise fatigue", particularly for other agencies, it is not thought that Fox06 will be brought forward. The date is fixed to accommodate the availability other agencies and the Navy. The cost will be c. £1 million to carry out a full exercise; table-top exercise will not do if SCC is to carry out its hugely demanding obligation under REPPiR to warn and inform the public before and during nuclear use of the port. There must be the maximum opportunity for participation in an exercise that is credible and not terrorism-based. SCC want an honest and open exercise that will reassure the public. Sotonsafe is now published on the SCC website and a range of documents have been released under the Freedom of Information Act (FIA). The Z Berth cannot be used before the Exercise has been evaluated and the Plan passed by the NII as adequate.

Liaison Committee (LC)

The next Sotonsafe Liaison Committee meeting is on 26th April and we will get more details of the plans after they have been presented to that meeting. Although the Minutes of the LC are not published, they can be accessed under the FIA. We requested that SCANS was included in the minutes distribution list on the understanding that we would not personalise issues. We agreed to this since we are not interested in the personal input into decision-making but rather the corporate responsibility of the Navy and City Council. GW will request that we are sent the minutes.

The Liaison Committee title suggests community liaison whereas it actually refers to the liaison between emergency agencies. This confusion may be clarified by the change of title.

Other Z Berth Exercises

Southampton City Council want to influence the Navy to address HSE criticisms of the Portsaf Exercise in Portsmouth for Sotonsafe. SCC also wants a second day of the exercise to be devoted to remedial planning, for one week, one month and one year, as was done at a recent Devonport exercise. The Devonport Exercise has not been published yet, but it will be of interest because it covered a similar size and proximity of the berth the population as in Southampton.

Sotonsafe Leaflets

Distribution of leaflets to household is to be delayed until after the Exercise, and before use of the berth, although some community groups have received copies and it is displayed on the Southampton City Council (SCC) website.

Exercise

The Navy plan to start Foxwater06 planning with the Liaison Committee in July 2005. The exercise is designed by the Navy at the Abbeywood HQ near Bristol, not SCC. It will not cover 360° around the site, even though changing winds may mean an actual

accident would require that degree of response. The scenario will be to protect people in the 90° quadrant downwind of the prevailing SW wind, viz. the highest population areas within the 2km countermeasures zone at Ocean Village, Woolston and Weston. The weather on the day might run up or down channel, but the exercise will act as though there is a prevailing wind as this will test the plan for highest population in the 2km zone.

2km – 2.5km countermeasure zone

Up to 2km is the distance from the submarine berth where it is considered necessary to provide assistance to people. But where an estate would be divided, or one side of a street left out, the zone is extended for up to 2.5km.

PITS

The 2 – 2.5km 90° quadrant is considered sufficiently demanding in size to test the criteria surrounding the distribution of PITS.

Two schools are within the 2km zone for PITS distribution, although 6 will be pre-distribution points. 12 schools and some residential homes have been visited and staff informed about their responsibilities under the Sotonsafe Plan. The Director of Public Health for Southampton and the New Forest have both issued written authorisations for PITS to be administered if they are absent and unable to be contacted after an accident. A decision has been taken not to offer PITS to everyone at risk, as this could involve 35,000 people. Instead self-evacuation is to be relied upon. No attempt will be made to try to contain and shelter people in the event of a Level 1 accident.

Incoming Traffic

The police will regulate traffic coming into the city and decide where it will be turned back.

SCANS Observation

CANSAR, the Plymouth nuclear watchdog group were observers for part of the Devpubsafe exercise in 2004. We confirmed our request to be present at the exercise as observers. Di is to talk to CANSAR to ask what level of observation took place.

Disruption to the Port

If submarines use the Z Berth, there is considerable disruption to shipping (with economic consequences). No passenger ships can be moored in the eastern docks, affecting the Cunard Line operations.

Exercise Evaluation

The NII will evaluate the exercise. We expressed our concern that the NII works closely with the Navy and that an independent assessment would be more valuable. SCC criteria is to discover if the Plan is doable overall. It is not expected to be perfect.