



Discussion of the AWE(B) response plan for Children's Home at 79 Clare Green Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, RG7 1DU

Introduction

There is an application to change the use of 79 Clare Green Road from C3 use to C2 Children's care home (4 Children aged 7-18).

The local Emergency Planning Officer has responded thus:

"The application site is situated within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) surrounding Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE).

The DEPZ and Off-Site Emergency Plan is in place to protect individuals living, working and visiting within this boundary, as legislated by REPPiR 2019. Any increase in the population could have a detrimental impact on the Council's ability to implement the Off-Site Emergency Plan. As such, the proposals need to meet the requirements of Policy TB04 of the MDD Local Plan and section 8 of the NPPF. No information has been submitted regarding AWE or the DEPZ as part of this application – therefore they are contrary to the Local Plan and NPPF currently. Therefore, I am unable to determine if this development can be accommodated within the DEPZ.

I would need to provide assurance that a robust emergency plan can be put in place, that would not require any support from the Council or emergency services to implement effectively. We normally ask for conditions for construction and end user emergency plans, however due to the vulnerable nature of the site, I would need to see the end user emergency plan before determination of the full application.

Please could you provide us with an End User Emergency Plan to support this application. This would need to evidence adequately that no Council or emergency service support would be needed in the event of AWE incident."

Risk Assessment

79 Clare Green Road is about 3.8 km from the AWE Burghfield site and therefore outside the 3.16 km zone that AWE plc has identified as potentially benefiting from taking shelter in the very unlikely event that a radiation emergency will occur on the AWE site while the wind is blowing towards the proposed Children's Home.

The location is surrounded by homes, businesses and sports/social facilities with occupants going about their business without worrying about AWE which is appropriate as the individual risk resulting from the operation of AWE can be shown to be well below the 1 in a million that HSE consider to be a risk so low as to not need planning controls¹. Containing a mix of adults and children, with controls on the ratio of adults to children, the site and its occupants are no more vulnerable to the

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/assets/docs/r2p2.pdf> Paragraph 138

impact of a radiation emergency than any of the family homes and businesses in the area.

None the less the local authority has defined a Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) that encompasses the area of Spencers Wood and, in the event of a radiological emergency at AWE Burghfield would recommend that people in this DEPZ take shelter to reduce the radiation dose they might receive from inhaling plutonium dust. The local authority also state elsewhere that it might take up to 48 hours for the shelter advice to be withdrawn following the end of the emergency.

The requested requirement that evidence be provided that no council or emergency service support would be needed in the event of an AWE incident cannot be given without qualification. The Home will be able to take shelter and would normally be able to sustain that for up to 48 hours. It cannot be guaranteed that there would not be calls on the emergency services regarding, for example, coincident fires or coincident medical emergencies on the site during the period of shelter. In this the Home is no different from the hundreds of family homes in the area. Given that the Home is outside the zone identified by AWE as benefiting from protective actions and given that the release is an explosive distribution expected to result in a short-term hazard, the attendance of emergency services to the Home a short while after the alert should present them with no problems.

Functional Requirements

The Children's Home requires an emergency plan that:

1. Can receive the alert from the local authority that a radiation emergency has occurred;
2. Can respond quickly to any advice that may be given to take shelter;
3. Can sustain shelter for up to 48 hours barring unusual events.

Concept of Operations

The home will maintain a landline telephone so long as they are the principle means of promulgating the radiation emergency alert and advice to shelter.

If the alerting mechanism is changed the Home will change its provision to match.

There will be a procedure/plan to alert everyone in the building and grounds to the alert and require everybody to get indoors without delay.

All doors and windows will be shut and the heating turned off.

Radio and social media will be monitored for situation updates.

The end of shelter message will be awaited.

Responsibilities

- The Care Home Manager is responsible for maintaining this plan and ensuring that staff are aware of it. (Annual training consisting of a discussion of the plan and the correct response to an alert call).
- The Care Home Manager is responsible for ensuring that the land line phone is in working order and that the home has sufficient food and other provisions to manage for 48 hours without anybody going in or out.

- The Care Home Manager is responsible for ensuring that at least one copy of the West Berkshire Council publication “*What you should do if there is a radiation emergency at the AWE Aldermaston or Burghfield sites*” is available.
- The Care Home Manager is responsible for ensuring that there is a radio (preferably a battery powered one) available that is capable of picking up the local radio stations.
- The Care Home Manager is responsible for ensuring that there is a supply of covid-style disposable face masks (FFP2 NR/N95) available for use should the need arise.
- The senior staff member on duty when the alert is received is responsible for ensuring that the plan is invoked and that people on site are kept informed and safe.
- All members of staff are responsible for ensuring the safety of the Children including ensuring that they are indoors and that they remain indoors for the duration of the shelter advice.
- The local authority is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate balance is struck between the expected harms and benefits of any particular protective action so as to maximise the benefit of that action².
- The local authority is responsible for the provision of information about and advice on the facts of the emergency, of the steps to be taken and, as appropriate, of the protective action applicable³. Information to be supplied at regular intervals in an appropriate manner, without delay, and without their having to request it, to members of the public who are in that local authority’s area and who are actually affected by the emergency⁴

² REPPIR-19 Schedule 7, Part 1 (1)d

³ REPPIR-19 Regulation 22(1)

⁴ REPPIR-19 Regulation 22(2)