

Emergency Planning

Summary Proof of Evidence

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Section 78 appeal against the refusal of planning permission

Witness: Carolyn Richardson, BSc Hons, CIEH

Subject of Evidence: Emergency Planning

Appeal: APP/W0340/W/22.3312261

Site: Land to the rear of The Hollies, Reading Road, Burghfield Common, Reading, RG7 3BH

Proposal: Full planning permission for the erection of 32 dwellings including affordable housing, parking and landscaping. Access via Regis Manor Road

Date: August 2024

Council Reference: 22/00244/FULEXT



Summary Proof of Evidence

Name: Carolyn Richardson

August 2024

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1. Introduction and Scope of Evidence

- 1.1 I am Carolyn Richardson, Service Manager for Emergency Planning for West Berkshire Council with over 18 years of experience in this field.
- 1.2 I confirm that my evidence is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true professional opinions.
- 1.3 My evidence is in relation to the second reason for refusal of planning permission for the 'Erection of 32 dwellings including affordable housing, parking, and landscaping. Access via Regis Manor Road' at The Hollies, Reading Road, Burghfield Common Reading RG7 3BH (APP/W0340/W/22/3312261). The appeal site is located within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone for AWE Burghfield.
- 1.4 My evidence supports the second reason for refusal and sets out:
 - a. The background to the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (REPPiR 19), the requirements placed upon the Local Authority, and the implications arising from these changes including those that relate to land use and development.
 - b. The implications of the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) around the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) sites and specifically AWE Burghfield, for the Council's emergency planning function.
 - c. The development management consultation process carried out with the Council's emergency planning function, including the considerations taken into account, the background to this appeal site, and the reasons for emergency planning advice against a grant of planning permission.
 - d. The requirements of the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan (AWE OSEP) including the preparation, validation and response and recovery arrangements in the immediate, short and longer term following a radiation emergency and how these impact on matters that relate to land use and development.

- e. The initial emergency response through to longer term recovery implications of new developments in the DEPZ for the OSEP.
 - f. The complexities relating to response and recovery from radiation emergencies, and lessons learned from other emergencies.
- 1.5 My evidence will demonstrate the legal requirements placed on West Berkshire Council to have an adequate AWE OSEP. I will address in detail the risks to the adequacy of the OSEP, and consequently the health, safety and wellbeing of the community in the DEPZ in the event of a radiation emergency, if the population is increased as a result of this proposed development.

2. Emergency Planning Evidence to this Appeal

2.1 My evidence considers and responds to the following:

- a. The complexities and challenges inherent in responding adequately to a radiation emergency at AWE Burghfield;
- b. The overly simplistic and often inaccurate emergency planning evidence presented by the appellant;
- c. The challenges and risks to the AWE OSEP evidenced through recent testing of the AWE OSEP which focused on the AWE Burghfield site;
- d. The cumulative impact of an additional 32 dwellings on the AWE OSEP, and therefore the impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of new residents at the appeal site as well as the existing DEPZ community.

2.2 Supporting evidence is also provided by way of:

- a. My practical experience of non-radiation emergency incidents both during the response and recovery phases, demonstrating the complexities of any major incident, the 'fear' factor and therefore the community impact and the challenges relating to recovery,
- b. Feedback from UK Health Security Agency independent radiation experts,
- c. Other relevant recent appeal decisions.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Throughout the application and appeal process the appellant has sought to downplay the risks of increasing the residential population within the DEPZ, the complexities of the response and recovery for radiation emergencies, the impact of increasing the population on the AWE OSEP, and consequently the impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the existing community in the event of a radiation emergency.
- 3.2 The appellant's evidence fails to demonstrate that the proposed development would not put at risk the adequacy of the AWE OSEP, and so the health, safety and wellbeing of any new residents and the existing community in the event that the OSEP was triggered.
- 3.3 I respectfully request that the Inspector dismisses this appeal.