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4 November 2002

Dear Roger

**HSE Response - UKOPA Views on HSE Proposals to Amend Land Use Planning Zones for High Pressure Gas Pipelines**

I am replying to your letter dated 29 October 2002, in which you present the UKOPA request that the HSE move to change its methodology for assessing risks from high pressure natural gas pipelines, be deferred until the outstanding technical issues have been resolved.

The paper setting out the detail of our proposals was discussed at MHSC on 31 October 2002. Members were given an outline presentation of the key issues. These included the need and timing for change, how the changes had been developed, the significance of the respective roles of the Pipelines Working Group and Transco, both in respect of what had already been achieved, but also what remained to do to complete the model. It was in this latter context that the UKOPA request for deferral was considered. Although members understood your concern to have the best model in place they supported the need to have something in place now. However, in reaching this conclusion they were particularly reassured by the amount of joint work already taking place and likewise what its continuance would produce.

Although I only received your letter the day before the meeting I did ask for colleagues to let me have their comments on the points raised in your letter. Stuart Pointer, who you already know, was able to provide me with a particularly informative note. Not only does it answer the points raised by you but I think it also puts an important marker against why we see joint working so relevant. For information Stuart's note is attached.

As to the MHSC paper, this was accepted, subject to:  
LGA representatives seeking the views of the LA Land Use Planners and the Chair responding to UKOPA's letter.

I trust that this answers your questions, and I can only reiterate my remarks made at the MHSC meeting that I look forward to working with UKOPA on these matters.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Allars

Head of Nuclear and Hazardous Installations Safety Policy Division/  
Chairman - ACDS Major Hazards Subcommittee