

FIVE VC

cc: MAFF
CO
Dr Nicholson.
D/En.
PofE



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

16 November 1984

Dear Mr. Allday,

Thank you so much for your letter of 29 October. I remain keen to pay another visit to Sellafield, and your kind suggestion that I might open the two new plants next year is a very attractive one. I have asked my office to contact yours to explore the possibility further.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Delisle

—

C. Allday, Esq., C.B.E.

SA

PRIME MINISTER

OK
Re despatch Pni's letter and return
this minute, with a copy of

SELLAFIELD

Mr. Con Allday, the Chairman and Chief Executive of British Nuclear Fuels has written to renew his invitation to you to visit one of their plants. You were originally due to open an office building for them in the summer, but your plans were postponed because of the prosecution pending against the firm. Mr. Allday suggests that, if you were able to visit in 1985, you may like to open the two major plants at Sellafield itself. One is a new Magnox processing plant, and the other deals with effluent discharge.

The Department of the Environment, the Department of Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture all have an interest in this invitation. In each case they support acceptance, as does Robin Nicholson. There is, however, a complication in that the Crown Court hearing is unlikely to be over until March and, if the verdict goes against the company, there may then be an appeal. So colleagues suggest that you should aim to leave at least three months between the final outcome of the case and any visit.

Given the importance of Sellafield for the future of the nuclear power programme, and the need to raise morale there after a very difficult period, I think you may wish to accept Mr. Allday's invitation in principle. I attach a draft letter to this effect which, if you agree, I would supplement with a telephone call to explain the timing considerations.

Content?

ans
Yes not

15 November 1984



FILE

RW

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 November, 1984

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's advice, and for the views of the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for the Environment, on Mr. Allday's invitation to her to visit Sellafield next Summer.

The Prime Minister agrees with her colleagues that such a visit is desirable in principle, but should be distanced from the court hearings. I enclose a copy of the reply which the Prime Minister has sent to Mr. Allday. As you see, it leaves the timing of her visit open, and I propose to explain the considerations to him on the telephone.

As I read your letter, and David Harbourne's advice, we shall have to defer a final decision at least until we know the outcome of the Crown court hearing - and possibly later, if there is an appeal.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Harbourne (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) and to Andrew Allberry (Department of the Environment).

(David Barclay)

J. Neilson, Esq.,
Department of Energy.



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY
THAMES HOUSE SOUTH
MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QJ

01 211 6402

David Barclay Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

14 November 1984

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 1 November about BNFL's invitation to the Prime Minister to open their new plants at Sellafield. We have also seen David Harbourne's letter of 8 November to you.

Mr Walker is keen that the Prime Minister should undertake this visit. BNFL have told us that their prosecution for last year's discharge of radioactive material should be complete by late March or early April, although the timing of the case is not yet settled and there could be an appeal. The Company must then put the prosecution behind them and step up their efforts to recover public confidence and restore staff morale. Mr Walker considers that a visit by the Prime Minister to Sellafield would greatly advance their efforts. As Mr Allday says, both plants are significant developments. SIXEP is particularly important as the first step in reducing radioactive discharges to sea. Mr Walker agrees that a visit in mid-summer would be most opportune, although he agrees with Mr Jopling that a certain cooling-off period after the prosecution would be appropriate.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours

John

J S NEILSON
Private Secretary

Visit to Liverpool : PM. Sept 81.



14 NOV 1984



COMMUNICATIONS



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

No. CF file I think.

Await DEn.

My ref:

Your ref:

sub
4/11

13 November 1984

Dear David

VISIT TO BNFL

You copied to me your letter of 1 November to John Neilson at the Department of Energy enclosing a letter from Mr Allday which invited the Prime Minister to open two plants at Sellafield next Summer.

The two plants concerned will bring about a very welcome improvement to operations there, all the more so because construction difficulties have delayed SIXEP for several years beyond the original target. More generally, a visit by the Prime Minister to Sellafield would be a welcome boost to confidence in West Cumbria generally. My Secretary of State would therefore hope that time can be found in the Prime Minister's diary for such a visit.

I am copying this letter to John Nielson, Ivor Llewellyn (MAFF), and Dr Nicholson and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

A C Allberry

A C ALLBERRY
Private Secretary

David Barclay Esq

Liverpool file to DB.
Await other responses.

SW



W.0827

9 November 1984

MR BARCLAY, NO 10

INVITATION FROM BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS LIMITED

The Chairman of BNFL, Con Allday, has repeated his invitation for the Prime Minister to visit one of the Company's sites following the cancellation of her visit to Risley last summer. He suggests that a visit to Sellafield would be more valuable now.

2. I would advise the Prime Minister to accept this invitation. I visited Sellafield in July and I am sure that she would find it of very great scientific interest. The scale of the reprocessing activities, and of the associated problems, are such that they can only be appreciated fully at first hand. The site and its operations have changed greatly since the Prime Minister's last visit six years ago.

3. I take the view that the successful operation of reprocessing activities at Sellafield, and the public acceptance of them, is an essential component of our nuclear power programme. The morale of BNFL has dropped considerably over the last year or so, following management changes, operational failures leading to accidental discharges, the uncertainty about elevated incidences of childhood leukaemia in parts of Cumbria, and the Government decision to introduce tighter controls on discharges. A visit by the Prime Minister would be taken as an indication of Government confidence in the Company and in the nuclear power programme.

MBN

ROBIN B NICHOLSON
Chief Scientific Adviser



CF PPS? No. - sorry!
Try again

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

GR

David Barclay Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

8 November 1984

Dear David,

Avail Jen

INVITATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER FROM BNFL

In your letter of 1 November to John Neilson at the Department of Energy, you invited comments on Con Allday's letter to the Prime Minister inviting her to open the two new plants at Sellafield in the early to mid-summer 1985.

In my Minister's view, it is clearly in line with Government policy to rehabilitate Sellafield following the damaging aftermath of last November's incident. A visit by the Prime Minister could help to do just that. However, he considers that the invitation must be looked at in the light of the current Government prosecution of the Company over the alleged management failures at the time of the incident.

It is not possible to forecast the outcome of the prosecution nor, indeed, when the matter will be finally settled in the Courts. We understand that the Crown Court hearing will not be over until some time in March. Even if the verdict were to go in favour of the Company at that time, a cooling off period of say some three months might be advisable before the Prime Minister visited Sellafield, otherwise it might be implied that the Government was too ready to forgive and forget. If, however, the Company were to lose the case, then they might well appeal and the date of the final verdict would be difficult to forecast. But, in the view of my Minister, the public is likely to be critical of a visit by the Prime Minister too soon after a conviction.

To sum up, my Minister's advice is that the Prime Minister should make the visit but that there should be a breathing space of at least three months following the final verdict on the prosecution, whatever the outcome. Hopefully this might enable a visit to take place in the late summer or autumn of 1985. Such a delay would help to ensure that some of the early teething troubles following the introduction of SIXEP in particular might have been ironed out before the visit.

/I am sending ...

I am sending copies of this letter to John Neilson (Department of Energy), Andrew Allberry (Department of the Environment) and to Dr Nicholson and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

David Harbourne

D W HARBOURNE
Assistant Private Secretary

29 NOV 1984





12/11

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 November 1984

I enclose a letter to the Prime Minister from the Chairman and Chief Executive of British Nuclear Fuels, renewing their invitation to her to pay them a visit.

I should be grateful for your Secretary of State's advice on this invitation.

I am sending copies to Andrew Allberry (Department of the Environment), Ivor Llewelyn (MAFF) and to Dr. Nicholson and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office). Any comments they may have would also be welcome.

(David Barclay)

J.D. Neilson, Esq.,
Department of Energy.

WJ

From the Chairman and Chief Executive

British Nuclear Fuels plc



Head Office: Risley Warrington Cheshire WA3 6AS
Telephone: Warrington (0925) 35953 Telex: 627581

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP.,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON SW1.

29th October, 1984.

Dear Prime Minister,

When your visit to open Hinton House at Risley had to be put off last summer, you kindly left open the possibility of reinstatement.

Time has moved on and we now have two new major plants coming into commission at Sellafield early next year. The first is the replacement Magnox fuel receipt, storage and decanning plant (Pond 5 - cost £M315) which will replace an existing old plant and will enable us to continue reprocessing into the next century to complete the Magnox programme. The second is a comprehensive site ion exchange plant (SIXEP - cost £126M) which will treat all our pond waters and some other effluents in order to help reduce still further our discharge of radioactivity to sea. Both these plants contain advanced nuclear engineering of a very high order indeed. Bringing them on line will signal a major step in our modernisation programme, making Sellafield a first-rate modern reprocessing facility second to none in the world, and a showpiece of which we can be justly proud.

Knowing that you would like the opportunity to visit Sellafield again - the change is enormous since you were there in autumn 1978 - I wonder whether you would now prefer to honour us by opening these plants rather than Hinton House at Risley.

As I said in my last letter, I believe the Company is now going from strength to strength, that we are restoring public confidence, and that as the new plants we have under construction progressively come on stream we will be able to meet our commitments and satisfy the public of the safety and acceptability of nuclear power, as well as continuing to be financially very successful. A visit by you would be an enormous fillip to our endeavours and I know would be much appreciated by both the Board of the Company as well as its employees.

I do hope you are able to visit us. If so, perhaps your office could identify with mine an appropriate date, which I suggest should be early to mid-summer 1985.

Yours sincerely,

C. Allday

C. Allday

BNFL

Regd. Number: 1002607 England Regd. Office: Risley Warrington Cheshire WA3 6AS

P.M. P.M. visit to Lwepooor & poss. visit to Br. Nucleon
Fuels : Sept 1971