

PUBLIC TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON LOCAL PROPOSALS FOR LAND STORAGE OF REDUNDANT NUCLEAR SUBMARINES

11 September 2003
191/03

A further round of public consultation on outline proposals put forward by industry to store radioactive waste from redundant nuclear powered submarines on land was announced today by the Defence Procurement Minister Lord Bach.

He said:

“When we launched this project three years ago we promised we would take it forward in an open and transparent manner. This latest round of public consultation reflects that commitment. We are anxious to hear the public’s views on what industry is proposing as this will help us to evaluate the proposals over the next few months and select those that warrant more detailed consideration.

“I want to make it clear that this is not an exclusive list and that other options may yet arise. I would also like to emphasise that no decision will be made on the location of any work or subsequent storage of waste for around three years. I am determined that the process of clear and transparent consultation that we have already begun will continue throughout that period.

“The Government is determined to find a sustainable solution to this issue and Margaret Beckett and her colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have commissioned a wide ranging review of options for managing the UK’s radioactive waste in the long term.”

As part of MOD’s public consultation process, local communities are being invited to have their say about proposals from industry. This will lead to the down-selection of companies to be invited to take part in detailed negotiations from early next year. No decisions on storage solution or site will be made until negotiations with down-selected companies and further public consultation have concluded in around three year’s time.

Following an invitation to industry earlier this year to put forward outline proposals, suggested schemes have been received from Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd; British Nuclear Fuels plc; Babcock Support Services Ltd and Motherwell Bridge Nuclear Ltd; Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd; Serco Assurance, Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd and RWE Nukem Ltd.

The public will be asked to comment on proposed land storage methods and also possible locations. The detailed proposals are: -

Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd – The use of existing docks and facilities on its nuclear licensed site, renovated and adapted as required, to separate the Reactor Compartments (RCs) from existing submarines in afloat storage and future submarines as they leave service. Transfer the separated reactor compartments to a site yet to be determined for interim storage followed by dismantling and packaging. Subject to schedule, cost and authorisation considerations, possibly carry out the reactor separation process on some or all of the submarines in afloat storage at Rosyth, before transferring the reactor compartments to the interim storage site.

British Nuclear Fuels plc – Outline proposal is to remove RCs from submarines at Devonport and/or Rosyth, remove the Reactor Pressure Vessel (RPV) and waste, and package separately for transport to Sellafield, Cumbria, for storage.

SERCO Assurance, Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd. and RWE Nukem Ltd. - To fully break up the submarine and consign the residual Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) for storage in approved packages at a location yet to be identified, or to remove and store the RCs in situ at a suitable location.

Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd - Evaluate and consult upon the possible renovation and use of the disused oil rig construction docks at Ardyne Point on Loch Striven on the Firth of Clyde to cut up decommissioned and defuelled nuclear submarines. The RCs would be removed intact from the

submarines and stored in purpose built facilities on site. At a later date the RCs might be cut up in additional purpose-built facilities to reduce their volume prior to long term storage in a national waste management facility.

Babcock Support Services Ltd and Motherwell Bridge Nuclear Ltd – Break up existing submarines at Rosyth and store ILW as packaged waste at Coulport, Dunbartonshire, or Sellafield.

As well as giving the public an opportunity to comment on the industry proposals, they will also be asked for their views on the issues that will need to be addressed during detailed negotiations with the short listed companies.