

MOD CONSULTATION ON REDUNDANT NUCLEAR SUBMARINES GOES ON LINE

12 April 2001

The public will get a greater chance to express their views on ideas for future land storage of redundant nuclear submarines through a new internet site, Defence Minister Lewis Moonie announced today.

On the new website (<http://www.nucsubs.org.uk>), hosted by Lancaster University but linked from MOD's own Internet site, the public can read about the MOD's study into alternatives to storing these submarines afloat and take part in on-line discussion forums.

Dr Moonie said:

"It's important that we reach as many people as possible as we carry forward our consultations to help decide what we should be doing to tackle this issue. Lancaster University is helping us explore, for instance, exactly how much the public would like to be involved in the study, and how we should evaluate the storage options. The new website will add another dimension to that work".

A study last year found that the current practice of storing submarines afloat at Devonport and Rosyth remained safe, but that the lack of alternative afloat sites meant that storing the radioactive components on land was the best option for the longer term.

Dr Moonie launched a consultation exercise last May, when he said that MOD would be seeking proposals from industry in order to identify the best storage method and site. He also announced last November that an academic institute would be engaged to actively find out what people think. Lancaster University has since been appointed and has begun a series of stakeholder groups and focus groups across the country. Details of these events, and the opportunity to take part in on-line discussions on the topic, are now available on the new website.

A further period of consultation will be undertaken in 2002, once a shortlist of proposals from industry has been drawn up. There will be a fourth consultation period in 2003 on the recommended storage method and site before a final decision is taken.