

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 9 February 2005

DEFENCE

Project ISOLUS

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): The Ministry of Defence has today responded to the recommendations that arose from the public consultation to consider the outline proposals from industry for the interim storage of radioactive material from decommissioned and defuelled nuclear powered submarines under Project ISOLUS. The response, which reflects the thoughts of other Government Departments and devolved administrations, considers each of the 50 consultation recommendations and provides a broad, common theme overview. It is available on the Department's ISOLUS website and the Lancaster university website, and copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

The period of consultation that gave rise to the recommendations was carried out between September and December 2003 by the Centre for the Study of Environmental Change at Lancaster University on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. I am very grateful for the work that the University carried out on our behalf, and I would particularly like to thank those members of the public and stakeholders for their contribution.

We undertook to listen to what they said and our response reflects this. In particular, we recognise that future ISOLUS considerations of potential interim storage sites should closely align with the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) deliberations on options for a long-term radioactive waste management solution for the UK, which are expected to be available to Government in 2006. Accordingly, no further work will be carried out under the Project ISOLUS on the potential interim storage sites already named or to identify other potential interim storage sites, until CoRWM has made its recommendations to Government.

In the meantime, work under ISOLUS will concentrate on technical studies aimed at identifying and assessing the various options for dismantling submarine hulls and isolating the irradiated metal.