

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Submarine Dismantling Project

The Minister of State for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology (Philip Dunne):

I am announcing today that, following public consultation, the Submarine Dismantling Project (SDP) has passed a Main Gate decision point.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has previously proposed that the Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) storage site selection process should start by narrowing the range of options to a particular type of site, i.e. by deciding whether Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) or MOD and industry sites should be considered further, and discounting the other types. However, based on the findings of the public consultation, alongside recent legal advice, it has been decided that the process of selecting a specific site for the interim storage of ILW should consider all UK nuclear licensed and authorised sites that might be suitable. This will therefore include MOD sites, industry sites and NDA sites on an equal basis. The MOD will carry out further public consultation as part of this process. No radioactive waste will be removed from the submarines until a disposal or storage solution has been agreed.

We have decided to demonstrate the initial dismantling process for nuclear-powered submarines that have left service with the Royal Navy by removing all radioactive waste from a single nuclear-powered submarine at Rosyth. The Reactor Pressure Vessel from this submarine will be removed and stored whole. Subject to the successful conclusion of this demonstration, we then intend to carry out dismantling of the remaining submarines at both Rosyth and Devonport.

These decisions have taken account of the findings of the public consultation that was announced by the then Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology (Official Report dated 27 October 2011, column 16WS) and ran from 28 October 2011 until 17 February 2012.

More than 1,200 people attended consultation events and the MOD received over 400 written responses, all of which were recorded and considered by the SDP team. We are grateful to everyone who took part in this consultation, and the wide range of comments provided valuable input to the MOD's options analysis, which has changed and matured significantly as a result.

We have today published the MOD Response to Consultation, which summarises the comments that were received and explains how they have been taken into account. This is available from the SDP consultation page on the www.gov.uk web site:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-submarine-dismantling-project>

A copy will also be placed in the Library of the House.

Friday 22 March 2013