



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

DE&S Policy Secretariat Submarines



#2043 Maple 0a
 MOD Abbey Wood
 Bristol BS34 8JH

DESSEC-PolSecShipsandSubs@mod.uk

Bob Earnshaw
 c/o June Love
 DSG Secretariat
 Dounreay.com
 Traill House
 7 Odrig Street
 Thurso,
 Caithness
 KW14 7BJ

Our Reference:
 TO01307/2012

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Via: info@dounreaystakeholdergroup.org

Dear Mr Earnshaw,

Thank you for your letter dated 15 May 2012 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Ministerial Correspondence Unit, regarding the future of the Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (NRTE) at Caithness. Your query has been passed to the Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) area of the MOD, which has the responsibility of considering the future options for the Vulcan NRTE site.

Options for the future of the Vulcan NRTE site are currently being assessed. These range from placing the prototype facilities into care and maintenance while retaining the site's capabilities, through to the decommissioning of the site and termination of the lease with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. As the assessment work is ongoing, it is too early to comment on what the eventual decision will be, and on current plans, it is anticipated that this will not be made until 2016 at the earliest. It might be helpful to explain that the vital work Vulcan NRTE conducts in support of the PWR2 reactor, the reactor used in the latest of the Royal Navy's fleet of submarines, will continue until 2015. Related activity at the site is planned to continue until at least 2020.

We appreciate that this does not provide the assurance that you, and the community in Caithness, are seeking. Please be assured that the MOD does recognise the value of the highly skilled workforce at Caithness and their ongoing service in support of maintaining our national security. The Naval Superintendant Vulcan attends the local Stakeholder Group and we should be in a position to share more details on the options being considered for the future of the Vulcan NRTE site by the end of the year. In the meantime,

we will, of course, continue to engage with local stakeholders and other agencies as the options are developed further.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Equipment & Support Policy Secretariat Submarines