



Consultation response summary

BAE Systems Marine Ltd, Barrow Shipyard –
radioactive substances permit variation

Date: July 2022

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Introduction

We received an application from BAE Systems Marine Ltd to make changes to the existing radioactive substances activities (RSA) permit for the Barrow Shipyards site in Cumbria. The permit controls receipt and disposal of radioactive waste and imposes conditions and limits on radioactive discharges to the environment.

The proposed changes to the permit are as follows:

- An extension to the boundary of the permit
- Addition of conditions and limits relating to keeping and use of radioactive material, in the form of open sources
- Addition of conditions and limits relating to accumulation of radioactive waste.

How we ran the consultation

The consultation requirements were identified in accordance with the Environmental Permitting Regulations and our statement on public participation, "[Environmental Permits: When and how we consult](#)".

The application was publicised on the GOV.UK website on 23 February 2022.

A briefing was sent by email to 500 local stakeholders, and the application was made available to the public on our Citizen Space website. Members of the public were able to comment between 23 February and 22 March 2022.

We also directly consulted the following organisations:

- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
- Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)
- Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR)

Consultation responses

Citizen Space consultation

We received two responses on the Citizen Space consultation, one from a member of the public and one from the COMARE Authorisations Working Group.

We did not set specific questions for consultees to respond to. We have summarised the consultation responses which will be included in our decision document below, along with our response to the comments:

Response received from
Member of the public
Brief summary of issues raised
Unnecessary release of sensitive information Waste of time and money to consult when no increase in risk
Summary of actions taken or show how this has been covered
Advice was provided to BAESML during the application regarding claims for national security and/or commercial confidentiality. The information provided as part of the application did not meet the tests for these claims. It is a statutory requirement under the Environmental Permitting Regulations for us to consult on most applications for permit variations. Consultation on the application was planned and undertaken in line with our operational instruction LIT 12477 <i>Handling and determining applications for radioactive substances activities on nuclear sites</i> (September 2021).

Response received from
COMARE Authorisations Working Group (AWG)
Brief summary of issues raised
No objections to the proposed changes. The AWG recognised that the variation is necessitated by work essential to national security and work activities will be undertaken at the new Devonshire Dock Quay as were undertaken at the Wet Dock Quay, and considered that the variation was very well justified by the supporting documents. Specific comments related to the permit and Nuclear Licensed Site boundary no longer being coincident; evidence to support the assertions that the waste arising from Dreadnought submarines will be bounded by those for Astute; and whether there is potential for overlap of timetables such that Wet Dock Quay and Devonshire Dock Quay could be in use at the same time.
Summary of actions taken or show how this has been covered
ONR's decision not to extend the Nuclear Licensed Site boundary is summarised in a Project Assessment Report, PAR-18-018 (available here). Submarine testing and commissioning activities at Devonshire Dock Quay will be authorised by the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR), and the management of waste arising from these operations will be permitted. Submarine reactor designs are not owned by BAESML, and are subject to national security considerations. We discussed the assertions regarding waste arising from Dreadnought with BAESML, and consider that their past experience of testing and commissioning submarine reactors is a reasonable basis for estimating likely future discharges. We discussed the potential for testing and commissioning activities to take place concurrently at Wet Dock Quay and Devonshire Dock Quay with BAESML, and conclude that there is no likelihood of this happening.

Consultation with organisations

We received responses from the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR) and from the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). Neither had any objections to the proposed changes.

Next steps

We are determining the permit variation. We had to ask the operator for additional information in order to determine appropriate limits for keeping and use of radioactive material and accumulation of radioactive waste.

We have consulted the operator on the draft permit, variation notice and decision document. We are now finalising these documents for issue. Copies will be made available on the consultation page when they are issued.

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