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Thank you for your letter of 8 June, enclosing a letter, summary and report from Dr Peter Burt of the Nuclear Information Service (NIS), regarding the management of the Local Liaison Committee (LLC) at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE).

As I mentioned in my letter dated 16 February 2012, I am grateful to Dr Burt, and his colleagues in the NIS, for taking the time to look into how the AWE LLC works and highlight in their report potential areas where improvement could be made to transparency on AWE's business. In my previous letter I undertook to write to you on the points raised which relate to the MOD specifically, and this letter covers both that and the further points raised in Dr Burt's letter dated 4 June 2012.

I assure you that my Department recognises the importance of LLCs in keeping the local community informed and we are keen to provide support to LLCs where appropriate, including attending meetings and providing briefings as requested. LLCs are, however, primarily a matter for the licensee, the relevant contractor for the site, for local representatives, and for the regulators. Given there are a diverse range of defence related nuclear licensed sites, the most effective approach to establishing and running LLCs will vary between sites and needs to reflect the particular local circumstances that apply. We would not therefore wish to impose a single approach on all LLCs at all sites. Where there is recognised good practice, however, we would always encourage LLCs to consider whether it is relevant to them, and to adopt it if appropriate.

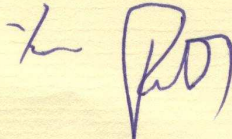
I understand that Dr Burt met with representatives of AWE plc on 17 February 2012 to discuss the areas of the NIS report that relate specifically to the AWE LLC. As the site operator, the management of the AWE LLC is primarily a matter for them. As Dr Burt has mentioned in his letter, AWE plc has now begun a review of its LLC, and a joint working group is being formed from LLC members and AWE staff to take this review forward. As well as taking account of the points raised by the NIS in their report, the AWE plc review will address any wider areas which may arise following discussions with

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interested parties. My officials will be kept up-to-date with progress of this review and its findings.

Finally, with regard to Dr Burt's request for the issue of a statement and for a meeting to discuss his report, given the work AWE are now undertaking I do not propose to follow up these requests at this time.

I would be delighted to talk to you about this if that would help you
appreciate our perspective on this important question
With best wishes



PETER LUFF MP