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PETER LUFF MP
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE EQUIPMENT, SUPPORT AND TECHNOLOGY

Our ref: D/Min(DEST)/PL MC00407/2012
Your ref: J156332

16 February 2012

QAWL,

Thank you for your letter of 25 January, enclosing a letter 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).

I am grateful to Dr Burt, and his colleagues in the NIS, for taking the time to look into this issue. We take the need for transparency on the nuclear programme very seriously, reflecting the fact that although there are significant constraints on what can be discussed in public in certain areas, there is a strong public interest in the effective management and operation of the UK's nuclear deterrent.

The report raises a number of interesting points relating to the AWE, the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and wider Government. As Dr Burt notes, he will be meeting with representatives of AWE plc on 17 February to discuss those issues that relate to the AWE specifically, given that, as the site operator, the management of the AWE LLC is primarily a matter for them. We will, however, work with AWE plc, where necessary, to address any issues arising from that meeting that are relevant to the MOD.

For those points in the report that relate to the MOD specifically, you will appreciate that we need to take time to study the report, including liaising with regulators and other Government departments, before reaching any firm conclusions. I will therefore write to you again when we are in a position to provide a more detailed response.

With kind regards,

PETER LUFF MP

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