
NOISE FROM SHOEBURY RANGES – LETTER FROM TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines details of a further request from Tendring District Council seeking this Council's support for the immediate cessation of destructive explosions (not test firing and proving of munitions) on the Shoebury Ranges.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This matter was last considered by Council in July 2000 (Minute 256/00). In response to a letter received from Tendring District Council at that time, Council resolved that Tendring be informed that this Council is not persuaded to support their action to seek the immediate cessation of destructive explosions on the Shoebury Ranges.
- 2.2 Tendring have now written a further letter requesting this Council's support. They refer to a meeting that they have held with Colchester Borough and Canterbury City Council to discuss issues surrounding the MOD establishment at Shoeburyness.
- 2.3 At that meeting, it was resolved that the three authorities should seek to secure the immediate cessation of destructive explosions (not test firing and proving of munitions) at the site. It was also agreed that the MOD should be requested to seek alternative sites in remote areas of the Country for such explosions, so that they could be carried out without disturbing a residential population. All agreed that test firing and evaluation activity, although undesirable having regard to the number of people adversely affected, was likely to have to continue in the interests of national defence.

3 DETAILED OBSERVATIONS

- 3.1 There is no doubt that explosions of any type on Shoebury Ranges, whether from controlled firing or from destructive explosions, have the potential to cause noise and vibration disturbance for coastal areas. However, as far as this District is concerned, the level of complaints received is negligible. In 1998 some 6 complaints were received. In 1999 the figure was 7 and last year it was zero. So far this year it is also zero. Each week the Range provides the Council with a list of its proposed operations. These times may alter due to weather conditions.

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- 3.2 However, it must also be borne in mind that the facility on Shoebury has been in operation for many years and provides a unique test facility for long distance firing over soft sand.
- 3.3 The ranges and associated facilities do not provide the same level of employment now as they did several years ago when in excess of 1000 people were employed there. The current total is understood to be around 200. Nevertheless, the facility is important not just as a source of employment, but also for its effect on the economy of the surrounding area.
- 3.4 Whilst there can be some sympathy with the concerns raised by Tendring, it is considered that the frequency of explosions on the ranges and the actions taken to limit disturbance do not warrant action to limit activity.
- 3.5 In any event, it seems slightly odd that Tendring District Council should accept the continuing existence of the facility, but seek to curb an activity that makes up only a proportion of the loud explosions that take place there.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The detonation of explosives does have the potential to create noise and disturbance.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**

That Tendring District Council be informed that this Council still is not persuaded to support any action to seek the immediate cessation of destructive explosions on the Shoebury Ranges. (CEX)

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

Letter from Tendring District Council dated 9th May 2000.

Letter from Tendring District Council dated 10th July 2001.

Letter from Rochford District Council to Tendring as a holding response dated 17th August 2001.

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