

NOISE FROM SHOEBURY RANGES - LETTER FROM TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines details of a request from Tendring District Council seeking this Council's support for the cessation of destructive explosions on the Shoebury Ranges.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A letter dated 9 May 2000 has been received from Tendring District Council seeking the support of the Council to petition the MOD for urgent action to be taken to provide relief for coastal residents in the vicinity of the Shoebury Ranges who have for a long period suffered disturbance from noise.
- 2.2 The request for support arises from a motion agreed at a recent meeting of their Council, and to assist Members the full text is attached to this report at appendix one.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The main area of concern relates to the noise disturbance caused by explosions of redundant or time expired munitions, and the impact this has on coastal residents and their properties.
- 3.2 In response to the letter from Tendring, DERA issued a press release and provided a statement to BBC Look East. These documents are attached as appendix two to this report.

Noise Disturbance Reported to RDC

In 1998 this Council received six complaints all between the 1st and 4th of December. In 1999 a total of seven complaints were received, three in March, one in April, one in June and two in November. At the time of writing this report no complaints have been received in 2000. Each week the Range provides the Council with a list of its proposed operations. These times may alter due to weather conditions.

3.3 DISCUSSION

- 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.
- 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.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6 RECOMMENDATION

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

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

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives

Background Papers:

Letter from Tendring District Council dated 9 May 2000.

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on (01702) 318100