

## **Briefing Note – Unplanned Naval Base Siren Activation adjacent to HMS RALEIGH on 19 Dec 17**

The purpose of this short brief is to provide you with background information relating to the sounding of a Naval Base siren adjacent to HMS RALEIGH for a short period of time on 19 December.

### **Event**

It appears that following some routine maintenance on some systems associated with Naval Base sirens, the single siren located adjacent to HMS RALEIGH was inadvertently activated whilst the systems were being reverted back to normal using a standard procedure. Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council were notified immediately the Site operators became aware of the false alarm. Additionally, the Office for Nuclear Regulation, Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator and Environment Agency were also informed of the event.

### **Immediate Action taken to inform the public**

To help address any concerns and inform the public that there was no nuclear emergency on the Devonport site HM Naval Base Devonport provided early information using social media. There was also early promulgation of the false alarm on local news websites. This was followed up by a formal news release issued by the HM Naval Base Devonport's Press and Public Relations Office to the local media and news channels in the South West of England:

214/20 issued on Tuesday 19 December 2017 (attached for information)

*"The Royal Navy can confirm a nuclear alarm which was heard tonight in the Torpoint area as a false alarm. The alarm was triggered just outside HMS RALEIGH by a power outage and there was no cause for concern. The Royal Navy apologises for anyone who was worried by the alarm which sounded briefly at about 6 pm and was switched off as soon as possible"*

A full investigation has commenced and the outcomes will be shared with Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council as well as the Office for Nuclear Regulation, Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator and Environment Agency.

### **Key Background**

The Naval Base sirens warn people on the Devonport site that there is a nuclear emergency. This detail is contained in a public leaflet "What you should do if there is a Nuclear Emergency at the Devonport site" which was last issued in June 2017 (a copy is enclosed with this brief for your ease of Reference). The leaflet also advises members of the public that they may also be informed of a nuclear emergency via announcements on television, or radio or Plymouth City Council's Emergency Notification System. It is produced by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Devonport Royal Dockyard Limited (DRDL) in consultation with Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council. Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations 2001 (REPPPIR 2001) requires that the MOD and DRDL provide prior information to people who live or work in the area surrounding the Devonport site who may be affected by a nuclear emergency.

The Naval Base sirens form an important element of the Devonport site's emergency arrangements. To ensure the system will operate correctly in the highly unlikely event of a nuclear emergency they are supported by an uninterruptable power supply, and are subject to a rigorous maintenance and testing regime. All the Naval Base sirens are tested every Monday morning at 11:30 to confirm they function correctly and routine maintenance is undertaken on a periodic basis.

S A FRENCH  
Assurance Director  
Babcock Naval Marine