



Ministry
of Defence

[REDACTED]
Defence Equipment and Support
MOD Abbey Wood
Bristol
BS34 8JH



Email: [REDACTED]

Our Reference:
07-10-2013-095733-002

Date: 8 July 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Further to our letter of 25 June 2014, I am now writing to provide you with a final response to your FOI request, dated 3 October 2013, in which you asked for the following:

I should be grateful if you would provide me with copies of the following information which may be held by the Ministry of Defence relating to an incident which caused a nuclear weapons convoy to stop on the M6 motorway in the Cheshire / North Staffordshire area in the summer of 2011.

- ***The date and exact location of the incident.***
- ***A summary of what occurred during the incident and the reason the convoy stopped on the motorway.***
- ***A copy of the minutes of any nuclear weapon debriefing meeting which mentions to this incident.***
- ***A copy of any incident reports to Ministry of Defence senior officials which mention this incident.***

Any further information which you may wish to provide under the terms of section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act to put the incident in context will also be appreciated.

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds some information that falls within the scope of your request. We apologise for the time taken to review the information requested.

Please find attached the following documents:

- Convoy Vehicle Fault Report (provides information to address your first and second points)
- Engineering Defect Report Format (provides information to address parts of your first and second points)
- Extract from Record of Discussion from NWM (provides information to address your second and third points)
- Extract from Convoy Commander's Report (also provides information to address your second point)

The Ministry of Defence does not hold any information to specifically address your fourth point. Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to know that incident reports were not produced and provided to MOD senior officials as the incident was considered to be minor.

I must inform you that some of the information has been withheld under qualified exemptions Section 24 (National Security), Section 26 (Defence), Section 31 (Law Enforcement) and Section 43 (Commercial Interests).

Some of the information is exempt under Section 24(1) which has been engaged because its release could prejudice national security. Some information has been excluded under Section 26(1)(b) because it could be exploited by those with hostile intent and could harm defence capability, effectiveness and security, and some information under Section 43(2) because we would not want to jeopardise the present and future commercial position of named companies or the MOD. Additionally, some of the information is exempt under Section 31(1)(a) to prevent crimes/terrorism in this area by those with hostile intent. Release of information could also prejudice the prevention of crime and withholding such information serves to prevent crime or terrorism occurring.

It is recognised that there is a public interest in providing information to reassure people that the transportation of nuclear weapons is undertaken safely, and the MOD maintains a Defence Nuclear Emergency Organisation (NEO) along with robust contingency plans to deal with any convoy related incident. The MOD regularly exercises the NEO to test its effectiveness and to mitigate any potential risks or vulnerabilities. However, it has been concluded that the release of detailed convoy/transportation information could allow deductions to be made which could assist hostile individuals or groups planning theft, sabotage or other malevolent or illegal acts, which would result both in harm to national security and defence capability. It is also recognised that the release of commercial information demonstrates the department's commitment to transparency and openness regarding defence matters. However, in this instance it has been decided to withhold commercially sensitive information in order to protect the MOD and the companies that have contracts with it. For each of these four exemptions the balance of public interest found against release.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please

note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.