



Ministry  
of Defence

## Information Systems and Services

Joint Forces Command/ISS HQ, Chief of Staff Secretariat, Bldg 405, MOD Corsham,  
Westwells Road, CORSHAM, SN13 9NR

Reference: ISS/COS/2014/02259

26 June 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 10 June 2014 seeking the following information:

“I would like to have a copy of everything on your bunker at Corsham.”

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

The MOD manages and operates the Corsham underground on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence and the area has been managed and operated by the Department since before World War II. Due to the very general wording you have used and the length of time the area has been in MOD hands, there are potentially a huge number of documents in scope of your request which may be dispersed across various areas of the MOD.

Section 12 of the FOI Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the MOD holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it. To fully answer your question, a survey would need to be carried out across various MOD departments to identify, retrieve, search and extract all information in scope of your request which would take at least 120 man hours to conduct. This would equate an approximate cost of £3,000.

Section 16 of the FOI Act requires a public authority to offer advice and assistance on how to reduce or refine a request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit by narrowing or limiting its scope. In this case, it is difficult to advise how this might be done, however, there is already much information already in the public domain which you may find of use.

Within the cost limit, I am able to advise you that, from a MOD perspective the underground area is split into two distinct areas; the larger area is predominantly managed as a mine and the smaller area is still being used by the MOD.

Information on the entire Corsham underground area, including many photographs and maps, is already widely available in the public domain via a number of excellent books and various websites, details of which are shown below.

<http://corsham.thehumanjourney.net/index.htm>

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/wiltshire/underground\\_city/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wiltshire/underground_city/)

<http://www.nettleden.com/venues/burlington/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawthorn,\\_Wiltshire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawthorn,_Wiltshire)

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Secret-Underground-Cities-Britains-Subterranean/dp/0850527333>

The Department has also developed an information booklet covering the Corsham underground which I have also attached for your reference.

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 Deputy Chief Information Officer, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto: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,

**Information Systems and Services HQ  
Policy Secretariat**