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of Defence

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2 June 2014

Dear ,

Thank you for your letter of 15 May, where you requested the following information:

I have twice before requested information under the Freedom of Information Act relating to the closure of the TA Centre in Kidderminster.

1. What will be the cost of redundancy for the 30 or so staff members based there?
2. How does the closure fit into the plan to increase the TA by 30,000 and reduce the Army to 80,000?
3. Does the MOD have ground premises facilities available for troop training in Kidderminster, storage of goods?
4. How will the MOD tackle the issue of TA Recruitment in Kidderminster without the TA Centre?
5. Where will the artefacts relating to Kidderminster and the local area in past wars (WW1, WW2) be transferred to?
6. What alternative provision for those currently using the TA Centre users be provided?
7. Will Kidderminster TA Centre's current land footfall be maintained by the MOD or will the buildings be flattened and the land sold off?

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

I would like to begin by apologising for the fact that you had not received a reply to your earlier requests. Unfortunately, they were not forwarded to this branch to answer.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held. The information you requested is attached.

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. Providing the applicant with all the information requested.

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>.

Q1. What will be the cost of redundancy for the 30 or so staff members based there?

A1. All being well there should be no cost as no-one should be made redundant. The manning at Kidderminster is currently 20 Reservists, one Regular and 2 civil servants. When the 4 MERCIAN Platoon vacates the Reservists will be encouraged to join either the Wolverhampton ARC or go to either the Arty Bty in Worcester or the MI Det in Stourbridge. At present the site is co-habited by HQ SPVA and 2 Cadet detachments. The civilian posts would only go if there was no appointment available with the SPVA or Cadets. If all units go, then the civilian staff would go into the RDP and be encouraged to apply for other Civil Service jobs in the area.

Q2. How does the closure fit into the plan to increase the TA by 30,000 and reduce the Army to 80,000?

A2. While the strength of the Army Reserve is set to grow from c.19,000 to 30,000, the liability is reducing by c.18% from c.36,500 to c.30,000. Growth in the strength of the Army Reserve to 30,000 is not directly associated with the reduction in Regular liability to c.82,000, as it should have occurred under the recommendations of the Independent FR20 Commission, regardless of Regular reductions. Along with its parent company (F Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Mercian Regiment (4 MERCIAN)) in Burton-on-Trent, the Platoon in Kidderminster is being withdrawn from the Army's ORBAT as a result of reductions in the Reserve Infantry liability and their relative abilities to support the new integrated Army. Under this plan, 4 MERCIAN will be required to reduce its six companies today to three in the future.

As announced by Philip Hammond on 3 July (Official report, Column 51WS), the decisions on how to rebalance the Army Reserve structure have been based on military judgement, driven primarily by the changed function and roles of the Army Reserve in the future integrated force and by the need to reach critical mass for effective sub-unit training. While unit size was certainly not the only factor, sub units with less than 30 personnel will generally be either removed if there is insufficient liability (as in this case) or consolidated to enable greater efficiencies in manpower, equipment and infrastructure, increased proximity to paired regular units and to deliver a more integrated and better trained Army. Overall, these changes will be reflected in the number of units and sub units held under each cap-badge, with some units being re-roled, some new units being raised and others being withdrawn from the Army's Order of Battle.

These changes followed much detailed work by the Army and are necessary in order to restructure the Army Reserve to maximise the military capability required of it as part of an integrated force by 2018. The structure and laydown of the Army Reserve is required to endure long after full manning has been achieved. In implementing the plan, it has always been accepted that this should be achieved with appropriate acceptance of the impact on current manning, to retain as many serving reservists as possible. Serving reservists should already have been advised by their Chain of Command of how best to continue their valuable service. This may include re-training in a different trade or transferring to another unit. The nearest alternative location is Wiggin House Army Reserve Centre at Stourbridge, home to a detachment of 63 Military Intelligence Company. The closest

Infantry location is 18 miles away in Wolverhampton, where the battalion headquarters and headquarters company of 4 MERCIAN are based.

Q3. Does the MOD have ground premises facilities available for troop training in Kidderminster, storage of goods?

A3. No other premises in Kidderminster

Q4. How will the MOD tackle the issue of TA Recruitment in Kidderminster without the TA Centre?

A4. General recruiting activity will continue to be coordinated by the Service Careers Advisor (SCA) from the Worcester office which currently covers Kidderminster. Recruits will be managed through either the Stourbridge, Wolverhampton or Worcester ARCs and in the specific case of 4 MERCIAN recruits would continue in the Kidderminster area using resources based in Wolverhampton.

Applications for the Army Reserve as well as the Regular Army are undertaken online, via the Army website at [www.army.mod.uk](http://www.army.mod.uk)

Q5. Where will the artefacts relating to Kidderminster and the local area in past wars (WW1, WW2) be transferred to?

A5. All items of property at Kidderminster ARC that are not MoD Property are held on account and managed in accordance with the relevant service regulations by 4 MERCIAN. There are many artefacts in Kidderminster relating to the regimental history of the Worcestershire Regiment and latterly the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment. These artefacts are owned by the said Regiments. If the ARC is closed or 4 MERCIAN leave Kidderminster ARC, these items would be returned to their owners. Any privately owned items would be returned to their respective owners unless they gave permission for artefacts to be transferred elsewhere. Any decision to relocate to another 4 MERCIAN location would be made in consultation with the owner.

Q6. What alternative provision for those currently using the TA Centre users be provided?

A6. Kidderminster TAC has been identified as surplus to requirements of the Army 2020 concept, specifically due to a reduction in the Infantry liability in the area. Many sites identified as surplus to requirements have cadet elements and lodger units on site. They will be re-provided for on a value for money basis once the affected sites have been scheduled for release.

Q7. Will Kidderminster TA Centre's current land footfall be maintained by the MOD or will the buildings be flattened and the land sold off?

A7. Too early to say at this time- site has yet to be passed to the DIO who will consider its future use- inc disposal.