



Ministry
of Defence

Secretariat
Defence Infrastructure Organisation
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www.gov.uk/DIO

21 April 2016

Ref. FOI 2016/04248

Dear

Thank you for your email of 12 April 2016 requesting the following information:

"Thank you for your letter of 4 April and I quite understand that limitations have to be placed on the number of days research allocated. Consequently would you be able to provide any communications that Defence Estates and its predecessors might have had with Natural England or its predecessors over imposing a SSSI on Tweseldown from 1993 and later? Defence Estates have been accused of doing nothing to resist the imposition of SSSI requirements on legitimate equestrian activities which take priority over such requirements. Evidence to the contrary is being sought."

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

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

Section 21 (Information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means) of the FOIA has been applied as the only communication that DIO holds on file relating to the notification of Bourley & Long Valley SSSI is the notification package itself, copies of which are available on the Natural England website at:

http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation_photo/1006761.pdf

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that the only valid reason for objecting to SSSI notification is that a site does not meet the published criteria for the selection of biological SSSIs. There is no correspondence on our files giving evidence of an objection from the MOD and so it is our understanding that no objection was made at the time, presumably because it was clear that the site did not meet the scientific selection criteria.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat

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.org.uk>.