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of Defence

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Ref: FOI2015/07514

27 October 2015

Dear

Thank you for your email of 1 September 2015 requesting information, 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 confirm that we hold some of the information in respect of this request. The answers to your questions are as follows:

"This request relates to Bassingbourn Barracks in Cambridgeshire and the period from 1 June 2014 when Libyan troops arrived, to the present day.

- 1. How much of the total training costs to the UK of £17.2m has been recouped from the Libyan government? In November 2014 only £2.5m had been paid.*

The answer to this question is already in the public domain as it has been answered in an FOI in April 2015. This can be found via the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428924/20150430_Monies_reimbursed_Libyan_government.pdf

- 2. What is the value of the entire Bassingbourn Barracks site owned by the MoD?*

The MOD does not have a valuation for the entire Bassingbourn Barracks site. However, when a site is declared surplus, a valuation is obtained. This is not released as to do so would prejudice the market.

- 3. How large is the site?*

The area of Bassingbourn Barracks site owned by the MOD is 272.76 hectares or 674 acres.

- 4. How much is CURRENTLY being paid per month by the MoD to cover all rates and utilities at the site? How much has been paid in rates and utilities in total since the Libyan cadets left in November?*

The MOD is currently paying some £32, 250 per month to cover all business rates at Bassingbourn Barracks

The MOD is unable to advise you of how much is being paid per month to cover utilities at Bassingbourn Barracks as the very nature of utilities means that there is no standard charge per month, it is all dependent upon consumption which is affected by many external factors.

Since the Libyan cadets left in November, the MOD has paid in total some £544,659 in business rates from the period of November 2014 to March 2016.

Since the Libyan cadets left in November, the MOD has paid in total some £402,000 in Utilities from the period of November 2014 to September 2015. The MOD would have had to pay this cost as it is unrelated to Libyan occupancy.

5. How much is CURRENTLY being paid per month to maintain security at the barracks (since the cadets left in November 2014)?

Section 43 (2) of the FOI Act has been applied because some of the information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Section 43 (2) is a qualified exemption and is subject to a public interest testing which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure. The outcome of the balance of the public interest test concluded that whilst release would promote openness, transparency and a further understanding of government processes in decision making. It has been necessary to weigh the factors favouring disclosure on a case by case basis against noted the strong public interest in protecting the commercial interests of third parties. The balance of the public interest therefore lay in withholding this information you desire.

In addition to this Section 41 of the FOI Act has been applied because withholding the information would protect information obtained from any other person, including another public authority, where release would constitute an actionable breach of confidence (where the provider or a third party would have the right to take the MOD to court. Disclosure of information would be a breach of confidence. Section 41 is an absolute exemption; therefore a public interest test is not required.

6. How many security personnel are employed at the site? Which company do they work for?

Section 38 provides an exemption from disclosing information if such disclosure would endanger any individual. In particular the section provides that information is exempt if its disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to

- endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
- endanger the safety of any individual.

Section 38 is a qualified exemption. This means that even if information is exempt, a public authority is under a duty to consider whether disclosure should nevertheless be made in the public interest. The outcome of the balance of the public interest test concluded that the harm that would be likely to be caused to any individual by the disclosure would be greater than the public interest in the disclosure. The balance of the public interest therefore lay in withholding this information you desire.

The MOD contracts guarding services for Bassingbourn Barracks site through our industry partner, CarillionAmey. CarillionAmey supply a team to guard and patrol the estate 24/7.

7. *How much damage was caused to the site during the time Libyans were stationed there? Please detail damage, when it happened, how much it cost to put right.*

The answer to this question is already in the public domain as it has been answered in June 2015. This can be found via the following link:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-06-17/2850/>

8. *What was the total cost to the MoD of damage at the base including fixing fences during the period June to November 2014?*

Some £138,253

9. *How many expressions of interest has the MoD received in terms of using the base / development requests etc. Please detail when these were received and what the proposals involved."*

Information not held.

I trust that this response is satisfactory

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 DIO Secretariat 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>.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat