



Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Ref. 2015/5482

[REDACTED]

6 July 2015

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your e-mail of 22 June asking for copies of air safety reports.

You requested the following information:

"Copies of all flight safety occurrence reports or air safety occurrence reports containing the terms 'wind turbine', 'windfarm', or 'windmill' for the period 1 Jan 2010 to 30 May 2015."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. 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. Details of Report ID, Incident Type, Date of Occurrence, Brief Title, Description, and Perceived Severity are provided at Annexes A to F.

However, some information has been withheld under Section 26(1)a and Section 26(1)b of the FOI Act. Section 26(1)a provides that we should withhold information which would be likely to prejudice the defence of the British isles or any Colony. Section 26(1)b of the Act provides that we should withhold information which would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of relevant forces. The Act requires that we have to carry out a public interest (PI) in this respect to show that the reasons for withholding the information outweigh the reasons for releasing the information.

Public Interest (PI) factors in favour of disclosing the information requested:

- The public interest in ensuring that the UK is protected from airborne threats and that the resources invested in air defences is properly employed.
- To provide reassurance to the public that air defence equipment and procedures are efficient and effective.
- To promote an understanding of the RAF's ability to respond efficiently, effectively and appropriately to potential threats in UK airspace.

Public Interest (PI) factors against disclosing the information requested:

- If precise or comprehensive information on the capability, limitations and procedures surrounding UK air defence radar were released, any potential aggressor or terrorist organisation wishing to use aircraft as a means to attack the UK could extrapolate this information if they were probing our defences.

Because radar capability is an integral part of the air defence of the UK, the disclosure of information that might identify details of the operational capabilities of UK radar which is an ongoing operational capability, would also be a disclosure prejudicial to the defence of the UK. As a limited amount of information has been released of how the RAF is able to defend UK airspace through its radar network, the public interest in further disclosure of detailed capability or procedural details is therefore limited. There remains a very strong public interest in preserving the RAF's ability to defend the UK through the effectiveness of its air defences and to maintain its full deterrence value.

I conclude that the balance of the public interest for providing full details of air safety reports and radar capabilities is firmly in favour of maintaining the exemption under S.26(1)(a)&(b) and thus of withholding the information.

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,


Air DRes Sec 3a1