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Ref: FOI 2016/01886

8 March 2016

Dear

Thank you for your email of 9 February 2016 requesting the following information:

- The MOD policy in relation to the Prestwick Carr drainage ditches.
- Does the MOD accept responsibility for dredging its own property.
- Does the MOD support the objectives of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

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 the information in scope of your request is as follows:

**1. What is the MOD policy in relation to Prestwick Carr and are there any documents relating that you can send me (PDF by email would do nicely):**

There is no MOD stand alone policy specifically relating to Ponteland Ranges (which encompasses Prestwick Carr), however MOD via the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) will carry out its land owning responsibilities where identified. Prestwick Carr is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and subject to a formal Management Plan. The current Plan (attached at tile 2 of the email) is being reviewed and will be available upon request during the stakeholder consultation phase later this year.

**2. The clearance of the Colliery Drain is within the remit of Newcastle City Council. Is this correct or does the MOD accept responsibility for dredging on its own property? Furthermore, will the MOD dredge the drains on its land if requested to do so:**

MOD via DIO will carry out its land owning responsibilities where identified. The dredging of main drains requires consent from the Environment Agency. Prestwick Carr is designated SSSI because of its hydrological features (raised Mire) and therefore consent may also be required from Natural England. Land management works are planned and budgeted in advance taking into consideration delivery of associated plans such as the SSSI Management Plan.

**3. Does the MOD support the objectives of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust?**

MOD has worked in partnership with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust to deliver conservation projects, including a number at Ponteland Ranges. Defence training is the MOD's primary objective for Ponteland Ranges; all third party proposals and aspirations are judged against this for their merit.

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, 1<sup>st</sup> 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.org.uk>.

DIO Secretariat