



Ministry
of Defence

Secretariat
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6 June 2017

Ref. FOI2017/05615

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 26 May 2017 requesting the following information:

"1. Upon the sale of Waterbeach Barracks land (Cambridge) was there ever an agreement with Urban and Civic (the developer) in principle or as an option to buy at the point of sale, subject to permission for residential and commercial development being granted?

1. Please provide evidence?
2. If not, please provide evidence or confirmation as such?

2. How much has the Waterbeach Barracks site been sold for by the government?

3. Has the planning proposal to build 6,500 – 13,000 houses and community/retail units at Waterbeach Barracks already been pre-determined or prior agreed by the Secretary of State or any senior government ministerial decision? Two employees of the Planning Inspectorate for England and Wales have directly informed me that the application has indeed been prior agreed and details kept from public domain.

1. If it has not, please provide formal confirmation of such.
2. If it has please provide evidence."

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.

Some of the information you have requested can be found below, but some of the contractual information falls entirely within the scope of the qualified exemptions provided for at section 43(2) (Commercial Interests) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption and is subject to 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. 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).

In this case, placing the contract between MOD and Urban and Civic into the public domain has been deemed by the public interest test, to be against public interest as it holds commercially sensitive information.

Urban & Civic submitted a planning application (Ref. S/0559/17/OL) on behalf of MOD in February 2017 for a redevelopment scheme of 6,500 new homes. MOD and Urban and Civic as their partner, are obliged to follow the planning application process in the same way as any other applicant. The application is determined by South Cambridgeshire District Council following their usual procedure for large planning applications. Urban & Civic have the option to buy a percentage of the land at market value once planning consent is granted.

Under Section 21 of the Act (Information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means) you will find some of the information in respect of information in the public domain using the link below.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/events-help-have-your-say-proposals-new-town-north-waterbeach>

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that Waterbeach Barracks has not been sold. MOD still owns the site freehold. MOD is engaged with a contracted Development Manager, Urban and Civic, who have been tasked with holding the site, gaining planning consent and then selling the land on behalf of MOD.

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, Ground 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