



Ministry
of Defence

Secretariat
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12 October 2017

Ref. FOI2017/08915

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 14 September 2017 requesting the following information:

"I have been advised by the Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council that the MOD has made a statement that "The MOD has not held flying or landing rights at Chalgrove Airfield since it has been occupied by Martin Baker"

I have a copy of the RAF Benson Defence Aerodrome Manual V8 issued 15th March 2017. In this manual, there are many references to Chalgrove Airfield, and details in particular the letter of agreement between Group Captain S A Patterson OBE, Officer Commanding, RAF Benson, and A. M. Gent, Head of Flying, Martin Baker, dated March 2016. This letter of agreement sets out the parameters under which Martin Baker undertakes to make Chalgrove Airfield airfield surface available to all RAF Benson based air systems for training purposes. RAF Benson air systems are permitted to use Chalgrove Airfield for training and crash diversion purposes. In addition, Figure 7 sets out the Hover Training Area for RAF Benson helicopters.

I would like clarification as to the actual situation regarding how RAF Benson, and any other RAF stations, are permitted to use Chalgrove Airfield for Hover Training or any other uses. The letter of agreement does not specifically refer to landing rights except in the case of emergency, but the fact that it is used regularly for hover training (regularly observed from the village of Chalgrove) would imply that the statement on flying rights is incorrect"

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.

MOD has had no legal right to fly or land at Chalgrove Airfield since it has been occupied by Martin-Baker Aircraft Co Ltd. There is an existing agreement with Martin-Baker Aircraft Co Ltd regarding the use of the airfield; however this does not represent a legal right and can be withdrawn at any time.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request 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 should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat