



Ministry of Defence

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04 August 2017

Ref. FOI2017/07050

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 17 July 2017 requesting the following information:

"I would like to know please, why Colerne Airfield in Wiltshire, has been selected for closure so far ahead of the Azimghur Barracks site of which it is part, (due for closure 2031) and is the only site on the list of disposals announced in 2016, to close before 2020? No home has been selected for the resident squadron -Bristol University Air Squadron, and the cost of relocating them is going to far eclipse any monies raised from the sale of this County Wildlife Site and the repair of the squadron's hangar. I would, therefore, like a thorough explanation as to why this is being rushed".

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The Section 22 exemption has been applied as some of the information you have requested is intended for future publication.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that Colerne Airfield is not the only Ministry of Defence site intended for closure before 2020 as set out within the Defence estate optimisation strategy "A Better Defence Estate" published in 2016.

The MOD is investing £4bn over ten years to create a Defence estate which supports capability by being of better quality, more cost effective and efficient, as well as 30% smaller overall by 2040. The Defence estate optimisation strategy takes a long-term strategic view to infrastructure planning and concentrates investment around a significantly smaller estate that more effectively and efficiently enables military capability, while reducing costs. Further information regarding estate optimisation can be found in the strategy document found on the government website through the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-defence-estate-strategy>.

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