



Ministry
of Defence

Secretariat
Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Kingston Road
Sutton Coldfield
B75 7RL

E-mail: diosec-parli@mod.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/DIO

16 January 2019

Ref. FOI 2018/15635

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 6 December 2018 requesting the following information:

"I wish to request the following under freedom of information legislation and would accept any response to this e-mail address:

Copies of all correspondence in which there is any discussion about the potential future uses of the following sites:

- 1) *Fort George barracks, near Inverness*
- 2) *South Sutor Fort, near Cromarty"*

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 of the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested in relation to Fort George can be found enclosed at annexes A and B, but some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at Section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been redacted.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

The information you have requested in relation to South Sutor, near Cromarty is information not held.

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.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made in writing 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

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 May 2018 11:55
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS - 4 MAY 2018

[REDACTED]

I would concur with your view that establishing a "Working Group" would be not be a proportionate response to dealing with this matter.
As you say, I have indicated on several occasions that we are more than happy to meet with HC and other external stakeholders at their convenience to talk about Fort George and other MOD sites in their area. This offer of engagement remains but has yet to be taken up.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Assistant Head Estates

**Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation**
Kingston Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 7RL

MOD telephone: [REDACTED] | Telephone: [REDACTED] | Fax: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED] | Website: www.mod.uk/DIO

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 May 2018 10:52
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS - 4 MAY 2018

[REDACTED]

I agreed, your proposed lines which cover the points raised by [REDACTED] well. The only additional point I would suggest we add is an offer to meet with Highland Council and wider stakeholders such as HES including HIE.

[REDACTED]

As you know there is an letter in from [REDACTED] (attached) and clearly these lines need to align with the reply so grateful for your comment. I have not yet seen the draft response. The suggestion of a Working Group is in my view slightly over stated but early engagement with HC and wider stakeholders would be the best way forward. [REDACTED], has I believe, offered to meet with [REDACTED] but there has been no take up.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Estates Policy (Engagement)

Fin Mil Cap | CAP Infra Policy | Ministry of Defence (Head Office) | [REDACTED] | Catterick Garrison | North Yorkshire | DL9 3LR | Mil: [REDACTED] | Civil: [REDACTED] | Fax: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED] | iPhone: [REDACTED] | Intranet: [FinMilCap Infra](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 May 2018 08:32

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS - 4 MAY 2018

[REDACTED]

As it is part of a scheduled monument, the assumption is that we will have to negotiate a transfer of Fort George to HES and therefore we might be able to insist that the museum is also transferred into the their care. I think your response covers this possibility.

[REDACTED]

Senior Development Surveyor
Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Estates – Acquisitions and Disposals
Forthview House | Hilton Road | ROSYTH, Fife | KY11 2BL

Please note this email address has changed to [REDACTED]

Rosyth switchboard MOD: [REDACTED] Telephone: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]

Website: www.mod.uk/DIO

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 11 May 2018 08:21

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS - 4 MAY 2018

In reply to the question posed by Highland Council, I suggest the following,

- **Fort George** has had a long history with the Army but it is not fit for purpose, with significant annual running costs (£1.6m per year). The planned release date of Fort George is **2032**. The closure of Fort George is not expected to have a direct impact on the Black Watch Museum, which will be reprovided for. On-going routine engagement will continue with Historic Environment Scotland.

Services Families Accommodation, if not required to meet military housing need within the region would be released through the normal disposal route.

Comment,

It may well be that the Museum will continue as a part of disposal but it is too early to say, therefore the comment about reprovion should remain although it is not necessarily accurate, and could be a liability, or it can be removed, which?

Grateful if you can confirm you are content, the statement on SFA was made at the meeting.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please note an e mail change is about to be made as a result of changes in MoD IT arrangement, with the addition of gov after mod, as in [REDACTED] probably from the 10th of April.

Deputy Head Estates Directorate North

Formerly Land Management Services

Defence

Infrastructure

Organisation

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Alternative [redacted] internal [redacted]

Reception [redacted] internal [redacted], but consider my mobile or e mail please

Email: [redacted]

Post MOD DIO LMS Forthview House

30 Hilton Road Rosyth Inverkeithing KY11 2BL (14 miles from Edinburgh)

Website: www.mod.uk/DIO

From: [redacted]
Sent: 09 May 2018 17:26
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS - 4 MAY 2018

[redacted]

Thanks again for attending the meeting on Friday. Somewhat against the clock, I squeezed in a final question, on behalf of Highland Council, about timelines for the rundown of Fort George and any disposal plans for c200 houses in Inverness.

Could you give me some lines on this that I can relay back to Highland?

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] Deputy Head of Defence Policy Unit | The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG
| T: [redacted] | Email: [redacted]

From: [redacted] [[mailto:\[redacted\]](mailto:[redacted])]
Sent: 20 April 2018 14:46
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS - 4 MAY 2018

[redacted]

Subject to capacity we propose to have,

[redacted] Estate Director DIO MOD
[redacted] Estates Disposals DIO MOD
[redacted] Estates Town Planner DIO MOD
[redacted] FMC Capital Infrastructure Policy MOD

And me!

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Please note an e mail change is about to be made as a result of changes in MoD IT arrangement, with the addition of gov after mod, as in [REDACTED] probably from the 10th of April.

Deputy Head Estates Directorate North – Scotland Northern Ireland Central England & Overseas

Formerly Land Management Services

Defence

Infrastructure

Organisation

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Alternative [REDACTED] internal [REDACTED]

Reception [REDACTED] internal [REDACTED] but consider my mobile or e mail please

Email: [REDACTED]

Post MOD DIO LMS Forthview House

30 Hilton Road Rosyth Inverkeithing KY11 2BL (14 miles from Edinburgh)

Website: www.mod.uk/DIO

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 20 April 2018 14:38

To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS - 4 MAY 2018

Colleagues

Just to say that we will be happy to take agenda items until this Monday, 23 April, and the agenda will follow on Wednesday 25th.

Grateful if you could also confirm who will attending from your area.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Deputy Head of Defence Policy Unit | The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG
| T: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 April 2018 12:33
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS

Colleagues

Apologies for the delay in being able to confirm the date of the meeting of officials from Scottish Government, MOD, Scotland Office and Local Authorities. It will take place in St Andrews House, Edinburgh, from 1400 - 1530 on 4 May 2018. Agenda and venue details will follow during w/c 23 April.

If there are any specific issues that Local Authorities wish to be discussed at the meeting, please let me know by 20 April and they will be included on the agenda.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Deputy Head of Defence Policy Unit | The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG
| T: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 March 2018 15:08
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: Head DPU; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS

Colleagues

For those yet to confirm officials' attendance and availability as requested below, grateful if you could do so by close of play tomorrow (23rd) to enable us to go firm on a date.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 March 2018 13:27
To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: MEETING TO DISCUSS PROPOSED MOD CLOSURES AND LAND IMPLICATIONS

Colleagues

I have written to council leaders today, forwarding a copy of [REDACTED] response to [REDACTED] about disposal of surplus MOD land. A copy of [REDACTED] letter is attached for information.

While I am aware that there has been continuing dialogue between some councils and MOD, you will recall that it was agreed that there should be an official level meeting, hosted by the Scottish Government, with MOD, Scotland Office and Local Authority officials.

Unfortunately, the only dates that MOD can make are 10 and 30 April and 4 May so we will go with the date that suits the majority of the local authorities. The meeting will be in Edinburgh.

Grateful if you could let me know if these dates suit and I will confirm the best option as soon as possible. Grateful for responses, including confirmation of who will represent your council, by 21 March 18.

Thank you

<< File: Ministerial correspondence - [REDACTED] - March 2018.pdf >>

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Tha am post-d seo (agus faidhle neo ceanglan còmhla ris) dhan neach neo luchd-ainmichte a-mhàin. Chan eil e ceadaichte a chleachdadh ann an dòigh sam bith, a' toirt a-steach còraichean, foillseachadh neo sgaoileadh, gun chead. Ma 's e is gun d'fhuair sibh seo gun fhiosd', bu choir cur às dhan phost-d agus lethbhreac sam bith air an t-siostam agaibh agus fios a leigeil chun neach a sgaoil am post-d gun dàil.

Dh'fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh'fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

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The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Edward Mountain MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for the Highlands and Islands Region

The Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

19th April 2018

*Please find this letter
for your information*

Fort George – Closure 2032

As you know, in 2017 the UK Government announced its intention to close the barracks at Fort George in 2032, a decision that was badly received in the Highlands. It also proved the perfect opportunity for nationalist supporters to bemoan the failures of Westminster.

Prior to the announcement I publicly made my position clear in that I supported the closure of the Fort. My reasoning is that I do not think it provides suitable accommodation for the modern army. Furthermore, the remoteness of the location does not enhance military training or family life. Having served 12 years in the Army and having a son who is a soldier (and deployed to Helmand with 2 Scots) many people were prepared to listen to and accept my position.

I arranged a meeting with Tobias Ellwood MP in 2017 and travelled to London to ask him to join with me to launch a working group to discuss what to do with the Fort and local accommodation post closure. He graciously agreed to meet me and rejected my request outright saying that there were other bases which were closing earlier.

Whilst I accept the point he made, it is deeply unhelpful. I personally believe that the MOD may wish to close Fort George earlier than suggested. It maybe that budget constraints and operational reasons hasten the existing closure programme.

If this does happen, and no work is done regarding the assets beforehand, then the MOD will be in a completely untenable position.

Parliamentary Office: Room M3.18, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Tel: 0131 348 6143
e-mail: edward.mountain.msp@parliament.scot



@EdMountainMSP



@1edmountain



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Edward Mountain MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for the Highlands and Islands Region

May I suggest that it would be in all our interests to take this matter forward and establish a working group (we can agree membership) as doing nothing is completely unacceptable.

As a matter of courtesy I have copied this letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland for his information.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Edward Mountain MSP
Highlands and Islands Region

Cc The Rt. Hon. David Mundell MP, Secretary of State for Scotland

Parliamentary Office: Room M3.18, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Tel: 0131 348 6143
e-mail: edward.mountain.msp@parliament.scot



@EdMountainMSP



@1edmountain

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 April 2018 10:00
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Fort George Letter

[REDACTED]

Thank you for copying me into the correspondence regarding Fort George.

I can confirm that following previous representations from Highland Council and local politicians following the November 2016 announcement I responded to both [REDACTED] office (Director of Development, Highland Council) and the political assistant to the Convenor (leader) of the Council offering to meet to discuss long term planning for the closure of Fort George. On both of these occasions the offer of a meeting was not pursued by the Council at either officer or political level.

I remain more than happy to engage with the Council and attend meetings at their offices at whatever level they consider appropriate to discuss matters appertaining to Fort George.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

BAHons MA DipTP(dist) MRTPI
Assistant Head Estates

**Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation**
Kingston Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 7RL

MOD telephone: [REDACTED] | **Telephone:** [REDACTED] | **Fax:** [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED] | **Email:** [REDACTED] | **Website:** www.mod.uk/DIO

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 April 2018 10:23
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Fort George Letter

[REDACTED]

Please see attached and the e mail below for your information.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Estates Policy (Engagement)

Fin Mil Cap | CAP Infra Policy | Ministry of Defence (Head Office) | [REDACTED] | Catterick Garrison | North Yorkshire | DL9 3LR | Mil: [REDACTED] | Civil: [REDACTED] | Fax: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED] | iPhone [REDACTED] | Intranet: [FinMilCap Infra](#)

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 26 April 2018 10:18

To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Fort George Letter

[REDACTED] thanks for sharing this letter from [REDACTED] regarding Fort George.

DIO Parli Team, grateful for early cite of the propose response in due course please. My understanding is that [REDACTED] has offered meetings to Highland Council in the past with no take up from [REDACTED] the CEO. Highlands & Island Enterprise have expressed some interest in holding a meeting with stakeholders regarding the future of the site.

Many thanks.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Estates Policy (Engagement)

Fin Mil Cap | CAP Infra Policy | Ministry of Defence (Head Office) | [REDACTED] | Catterick Garrison | North Yorkshire | DL9 3LR | Mil: [REDACTED] | Civil: [REDACTED] | Fax: [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED] | iPhone [REDACTED] | Intranet: [FinMilCap Infra](#)

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 26 April 2018 09:13

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: FW: Fort George Letter

Thanks [REDACTED] I'm forwarding this to our Defence Infrastructure Organisation Team for you to liaise direct as we don't normally have the capacity to track letters from MPs and MSPs on individual sites unless the MSPs are Scottish Govt Ministers.

[REDACTED]

Assistant Head Devolution Team, Defence Strategy & Priorities
Ministry of Defence, I [REDACTED] D Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB
Telephone [REDACTED]
Work mobile [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 April 2018 18:40
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fort George Letter

[REDACTED]

To see, we have received a copy of this letter on Fort George. As usual we'd appreciate sight of MOD's draft response and feed in our view.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] Defence & International Policy (Scotland)
E: [REDACTED] @scotlandoffice.gsi.gov.uk | M: [REDACTED]
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