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of Defence

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5 March 2019 .

Ref. FOI 2019/02152

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 17 February 2019 requesting the following information:

*"I live on a Persimmon Homes new build estate in Wiltshire called [REDACTED]. I know that the MOD has purchased some of the houses, but they wasn't advertised how much they were bought for, like mine was. The information I am after is to know how much the MOD paid for each house on my estate.*

*As you may be aware I have already asked you for this information last year on the 14th of March which I did not receive a reply from. Could you also explain the reason for this too?"*

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

A search for the information you have requested has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held. The MOD purchased 159 houses on the [REDACTED] Wiltshire with prices ranging between £174,510 and £304,683.

I am unable to provide you with the details of the purchased houses as the release of such information would potentially put at risk the security of our Armed Forces personnel and the safety of their families and dependants. Section 26(3) and Section 38(2) of the FOIA provides that there is no duty to confirm or deny whether we hold the information.

S26(3) and S38(2) are qualified exemptions and therefore public interest tests have been conducted to determine whether the balance of the public interest lies in favour of MOD meeting its section 1 duty to confirm or deny whether it held information in scope of your request, or not.

The arguments for the application of the exemptions provided for at S26(3) and S38(2) are closely linked. Whilst there is a public interest in providing this information, it does not outweigh the very strong public interest in protecting the safety and security of those who live in Service Family Accommodation. If the MOD confirmed that information was held in relation to specified address details, this would provide public confirmation that the addresses in question provided a home for Armed Forces personnel. Providing such confirmation would give anyone with malicious intent the address of a Service person which would potentially place them and their family, or indeed anyone who occupied the property in the future, at risk of harm.

I am satisfied in this case that the balance of the public interest lies in the application of the Neither Confirm Nor Deny position as provided for at Section 26(3) and Section 38(2) of the FOIA.

With regards to your previous correspondence sent on 14 March 2018, I can confirm that we do not have any record of receiving this.

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](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.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