



Ministry of Defence

Our Ref: FOI2020/08434

Your Ref: 14/20

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email received on 19 August 2020 requesting the following information:

"The report by the National Audit Office, 'The Defence Nuclear Enterprise: a landscape review' (22 May 2018) states that "the Department must Coordinate around 75 programmes" in relation to the defence nuclear enterprise (paragraph 14, page 8).

I should therefore be grateful if you would provide me with the following information:

- 1. A list of the 75 (or thereabouts) programme which were identified in the figure provided by MoD to the National Audit Office.*
- 2. Titles of any programmes of similar status which have been commenced by the Defence Nuclear Organisation since the National Audit Office was informed of this figure.*
- 3. Titles of any programmes out of the 75 (or thereabouts) which have been concluded since the National Audit Office was informed of this figure.*
- 4. The total budget and intended delivery date for each programme."*

Your correspondence has been considered as a request for information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act').

We can confirm that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) holds information in scope of your request and we are able to provide you with some of the information you have requested, but will not be able to answer all four parts of your request without exceeding the appropriate limit. This is because to locate, retrieve and extract the information in scope of part 4 of your request would involve searching for information held in multiple locations and approaching a large number of individual project teams in doing so, estimated to require a total of some 5 days of effort from an official.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

As your email requested that, should it not be possible to process your request within the cost limits, we proceed by starting at the top of your list and working down the list, we have done so.

Information relating to parts 1-3 of your request which is able to be publicly released is provided at Annex A. The work by the National Audit Office to produce its report, *'The Defence Nuclear Enterprise: a landscape review'*, included some programmes with highly sensitive titles where releasing those titles would effectively reveal sensitive capabilities or technical details. These eight titles have been withheld as they have been found to fall within the scope of the qualified exemptions provided for under Sections 24 (Safeguarding National Security) and 26 (Defence) of the Act.

Section 24(1) states that information is exempt from disclosure if exemption is required for the purposes of safeguarding national security. It is a qualified exemption and is subject to a Public Interest Test (PIT) which means that information requested can be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

In favour of release, there is wider public interest in the nuclear deterrent and its future. Release of the information would provide greater openness and transparency into the names of key elements of our current and future deterrent programme. However, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding national security and in withholding any information that might prejudice this. Providing some programme details on activity relating to the deterrent and where work is taking place to update components and maintain our technological advantage would impinge on the national security of the United Kingdom (UK) by giving potential adversaries the means to build up a picture of the UK's overall capabilities. The very nature of the deterrent requires information on its scope and scale and information which could be perceived as identifying potential vulnerability to be withheld so that it remains effective in its role as a strategic defensive weapon. By extension, any undermining of the capability, credibility and effectiveness of our defence nuclear programmes undermines the UK's nuclear deterrent which at the apex of the UK's national security strategy. Its credibility is vital to it remaining an effective capability.

Section 26(1) states that information is exempt if its disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice (a) the defence of the British Islands or of any colony, or (b) the capability, effectiveness or security of any relevant forces. These are also qualified exemptions and subject to a PIT.

The arguments for release are similar to those considered under Section 24 in as much as release of the information would provide greater openness and transparency about the capabilities of our current and future defence nuclear programmes. However, hostile state actors place high importance on the acquisition of information relating to UK defence capabilities, especially the nuclear deterrent. Such information could then be used to exploit any perceived weaknesses in UK capabilities, enhance their own capabilities, or change the calculus of a decision to attack the UK or its interests.

Considering all of these arguments, the PIT finds that the balance of the public interest lies in favour of withholding some of the information requested for the purposes of safeguarding national security and because release would be likely to prejudice the capability and effectiveness of the Armed Forces. Accordingly, eight programme titles have been withheld under the exemptions provided for at Sections 24(1), 26(1)(a) and 26(1)(b) of the Act.

Under Section 16(1) of the Act, whereby public authorities should provide advice and assistance, so far as it is reasonable to do so, you may wish to note the following information.

The information at Annex A is presented in the form of a table listing programme titles as of the time of information being provided to the National Audit Office for its 2018 report and as of the end of financial year 2019/20. The table rows have been aligned to show those that have continued (noting that some have undergone administrative changes in title), started or finished since the information was provided to the National Audit Office. Some programme titles have been annotated in the third column of the table for the purposes of explaining some of the terminology and acronyms used.

The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of part 4 of your request if you reduce or refine it to bring the cost of compliance under the limit. This could be done by submitting separate requests for budget and delivery date information for particular projects which you are interested in, spread over a sufficient period of time, as public authorities are permitted to aggregate two or more requests where the requests:

- Are made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign;

- For the same or similar information;
- Are received within any period of 60 consecutive working days.

However, while processing such focussed requests may not exceed the appropriate limit, we cannot guarantee that they would result in information being released to you as it is possible that the balance of public interest would be in favour of withholding budget and delivery date information for projects under Sections 24, 26 and 43 (Commercial Interests) of the Act.

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 us in the first instance at the address above. 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.gov.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 normally 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 their website, <https://ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Nuclear Organisation Secretariat

Annex A

2018	End FY2019/20	Advice and Assistance
Astute Boats 1-3	Astute Boats 1-3	
SUBMARINE INTEGRATED TEST ESTABLISHMENT	SUBMARINE INTEGRATED TEST ESTABLISHMENT	
	MARITIME UNDERWATER FUTURE CAPABILITY	
NEST	NEST	NEST - Naval EHF/SHF Satellite Terminal
VULCAN DECOMMISSIONING AND DISPOSAL	VULCAN DECOMMISSIONING AND DISPOSAL	
ASTUTE BOATS 4-7	ASTUTE BOATS 4-7	
CAPABILITY SUSTAINMENT	CAPABILITY SUSTAINMENT	
MARITIME STRATEGIC CAPABILITY AGREEMENT	MARITIME STRATEGIC CAPABILITY AGREEMENT	
SUCCESSOR PLATFORM	SUCCESSOR PLATFORM	Successor is outdated reference to what is now known as Dreadnought class.
INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES	INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES	
CORE PRODUCTION CAPABILITY	CORE PRODUCTION CAPABILITY	
NEXT GENERATION NUCLEAR PROPULSION PLANT	NEXT GENERATION NUCLEAR PROPULSION PLANT	
NUCLEAR WEAPON PRODUCTION	NUCLEAR WEAPON PRODUCTION	
NUCLEAR PROP CRIT TECH FUTURE PLANT R+T	NUCLEAR PROP CRIT TECH FUTURE PLANT R+T	
DE-FUEL DE-EQUIP AND LAY-UP PREPERATIONS	DE-FUEL DE-EQUIP AND LAY-UP PREPERATIONS	
SUBMARINE DISMANTLING PROJECT	SUBMARINE DISMANTLING PROJECT	
VANGUARD CAP SUST PROG THIN FLANK ARRAY	DNO VCSP Thin Flank Array	VCSP - Vanguard Capability Sustainment Programme
VANGUARD CAP SUST PROG LONG TOWED ARRAY	DNO VCSP Long Towed Array	VCSP - Vanguard Capability Sustainment Programme
ROLLS-ROYCE FOUNDATION CONTRACT	ROLLS-ROYCE FOUNDATION CONTRACT	
GENERIC TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	GENERIC TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	
VLOP		VLOP - Vanguard Life Optimisation Programme
COMMON MISSILE COMPARTMENT	COMMON MISSILE COMPARTMENT	
MUFC FUNDING FACING DG NUC	MUFC FUNDING FACING DNO	MUFC - Maritime Underwater Future Capability
Nuclear Propulsion Strategic R+T	Nuclear Propulsion Strategic R+T	
US/UK Tech Exchange	US/UK Tech Exchange	

MARITIME ELECTRONIC WARFARE SYSTEM -MEWS		
	DNO SM Commc Buoy	
	DNO SM Superiority	
INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FACING DG NUC		
	DNO - Cost Transfers In	
	DNO CECS	CECS - Common External Communications System
	DNO VCSP Inboard Processing	VCSP - Vanguard Capability Sustainment Programme
	ACSP	ACSP - Astute Class Sustainment Programme
	Raynesway Additional Material and Infra	
INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR PROPULSION ASSURANCE	INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR PROPULSION ASSURANCE	
Successor Platform Support	Successor Platform Support	Successor is outdated reference to what is now known as Dreadnought class.
Successor SWS Support	Successor SWS Support	Successor is outdated reference to what is now known as Dreadnought class. SWS - Strategic Weapons System
NUC PROPULSION SUSTAIN + AVAILABILITY	NUC PROPULSION SUSTAIN + AVAILABILITY	
NUCLEAR FUEL MANAGEMENT	NUCLEAR FUEL MANAGEMENT	
OPERATOR SIMS + CMD CONTROL SURVEILLANCE	OPERATOR SIMS + CMD CONTROL SURVEILLANCE	
NUCLEAR PROPULSION MINOR ESP CONTRACTS		
HQ Cat D Business Cases	HQ Cat D Business Cases	
Geological Disposal Facility	Geological Disposal Facility	
ASTUTE CLASS TRAINING SERVICE	ASTUTE CLASS TRAINING SERVICE	
ASTUTE CLASS SUPPORT	ASTUTE CLASS SUPPORT	
Teutates Programme	Teutates Programme	
Disposal + Decommissioning - NE-	Disposal + Decommissioning Devonport	
NAG SAFETY	NAG SAFETY	NAG - Naval Authority Group
Warhead Prog ESP Adj P9	Warhead Infrastructure Risk	
Legacy Resin Disposal	Legacy Resin Disposal	
Redundant Nuclear Equipment Disposal	Redundant Nuclear Equipment Disposal	
Liabilities Management	Liabilities Management	
WARHEAD COMPONENT PROCUREMENT	WARHEAD COMPONENT PROCUREMENT	
Rosyth Nuclear Legacy Overhead Recovery	Rosyth Nuclear Legacy Overhead Recovery	

Rosyth Post Nuclear ContraCT	Rosyth Post Nuclear Contract	
NT BLOS RADIOS	NT BLOS RADIOS STRAT PROG SUPPORT COSTS	
Transport and Nuclear Emergency Org	Transport and Nuclear Emergency Org	
CAPITAL PROJECTS	CAPITAL PROJECTS	
LEADERSHIP + INTEGRATION	LEADERSHIP + INTEGRATION	
MENSA PROJECT	MENSA PROJECT	
AWE Non Pillar Costs	AWE Non Pillar Costs	
SITE INFRASTRUCTURE	SITE INFRASTRUCTURE	
Warhead + Core Nuclear Capability	Warhead + Core Nuclear Capability	
NUCLEAR THREAT REDUCTION	NUCLEAR THREAT REDUCTION	
	DNO Infrastructure	
Supply Operations	Supply Operations	
Information Technology	Information Technology	
TRIBUNE	TRIBUNE	
Safety and Assurance Management	Safety and Assurance Management	
United Kingdom Software Facility	United Kingdom Software Facility	
Vanguard - Flight Systems	Vanguard - Flight Systems	
Vanguard - Shipboard Systems	Vanguard - Shipboard Systems	
System Integration Services	System Integration Services	
	Teutates Operation	
	Warhead Research	
	RW Capital	RW - Replacement Warhead
	WCP Future	WCP - Warhead Component Procurement
	MDP Funding - Barrow	MDP - Ministry of Defence Police
AWE M+O		