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John Cross

By email: request-104652-59d596fd@whatdotheyknow.com

20 April 2012

Dear John Cross

REVIEW OF REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000
Cabinet Office Internal Review Reference: IR316140
(Original Case Reference: FoI316140)

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 March 2010 in which you requested that I review the decision made in relation to your earlier request for information concerning all the official committees that exist in relation to the honours system, including those concerned with nominations, awards, and forfeiture.

You said that whilst some of the information provided in our letter of 29 February 2012 was helpful, you feel there is more information that could be provided within the scope of your request. You said:

- 1. I note that you have interpreted my request as relating to the 'honours system that produces the Prime Minister's biannual honours list'. I ask that you interpret my request more generally to include all UK honours. This should include information you hold about the system surrounding honours awarded by the Queen in any capacity and honours awarded by any other UK public official or UK public body.(You can regard this email as a separate FOI request if necessary).*

We interpreted your request as we did as we took "UK honours" to mean the UK honours system. You asked us to interpret it more generally to include *all* UK honours. In which case, I should be grateful if you would clarify your request to let us know which honours you had in mind, eg did you also mean honours/awards to individuals, businesses etc?

I have included here details of the George Cross Committee which considers cases of civilian and military gallantry. We know that King George VI authorised the institution of the George Cross and the George Medal in September 1940 but we have no information regarding the establishment of the Committee. The processes involved in considering nominations for gallantry awards has evolved over many years. There are no formal terms of reference for the Committee but its role is to consider cases of military and civilian bravery; each nomination is studied in detail, taking into account all the evidence presented, the criteria and precedents.

I can also confirm that the Cabinet Office holds no information in scope regarding the questions you have asked in respect of the committees involved in the Foreign Secretary's and the Defence Secretary's honours lists.

2. You have not provided details of the legal basis for all the honours committees [please refer back to my original request]. In each case I was expecting to be referred to a specific statute or else told that the committee was established by royal prerogative.

3. You provided terms of reference for just one of the honours committees when this requested for each committee. [please refer back to my original request] if there are any committees without any terms of reference please let me know that this is the case.

I have reviewed the information provided in our letter of 29 February 2012. I can confirm that the basis of the UK honours system lies in the royal prerogative with The Queen as the fount of all honours. The Cabinet Office holds no further information in scope in relation to your questions about the committees' terms of reference. We

provided all the information we have in relation to those requests in our letter of 29 February 2012.

If you are not content with the outcome of this internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Should you wish to clarify your request further still, it may be more appropriate, as you have suggested, to treat this as a new request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Smethurst', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

ROGER SMETHURST