



Luke Tovey
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Our Reference: ISS/COS/2014/06468

24 November 2014

Dear Mr Tovey

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Your correspondence dated 28 October 2014 is considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You requested the following information:

“Could I please have a copy of the full unedited video survey and the plans of Corsham / Burlington Underground Facility please?”

The underground area at Corsham is split into two distinct areas; the larger area is predominantly managed as a mine and is known as Burlington Underground Facility and the smaller area is still being used by the MOD and is known as Corsham Underground.

We have interpreted your request to be seeking information relating to the Burlington Underground Facility.

A search for the information 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 does not hold information relating to a video survey of the Burlington Underground Facility.

Information relating to plans of the Burlington Underground Facility is held. However, the MOD manages and operates the Burlington Underground Facility on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence and the area has been managed and operated by the Department since before World War II. Given the length of time that the Burlington Underground Facility has been in MOD hands, there are potentially a vast number of plans in scope of your request which may be dispersed across various areas of the Department.

Section 12 of the FOI 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 MOD holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it. To fully answer your question, a survey would need to be carried out across various MOD departments to identify, retrieve, search and extract all information in scope of your request and it has been estimated that this would take around 157 man hours to conduct. This would equate an approximate cost of £3,900.

Section 16 of the FOI Act requires a public authority to offer advice and assistance on how to reduce or refine a request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit by narrowing or limiting its scope. In this case, it is difficult to advise how this might be done due to the very significant

number of plans held. However, you will wish to be aware that the MOD is assessing if some of the plans of the Burlington Underground Facility that we hold may be released into the public domain via the internet. Clearly, given the dispersal of the vast number of plans across the organisation due to the passage of time, and that their release will need to take security considerations and public safety into account, this work may take some time. If it is decided that they may be released, it is likely that they will be offered in the first instance to the National Archives, and if they do not require them they are likely to be offered to local authorities and museums. However, we do not expect this to happen until around Financial Year 2016/17.

In the interim, you may be aware that there is already much information in the public domain which you may find of use. Information on the entire Corsham underground area, including the Burlington Underground Facility, is already widely available in the public domain via a number of excellent books and various websites, details of which are shown below. These will provide you with many photographs and maps.

<http://corsham.thehumanjourney.net/index.htm>

<http://www.nettleden.com/venues/burlington/>

<http://www.burlingtonbunker.co.uk/maps/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawthorn,_Wiltshire

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Secret-Underground-Cities-Britains-Subterranean/dp/0850527333>

The Department has also developed an information booklet covering the Corsham underground which I have attached for your reference.

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 me in the first instance. 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, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.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 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 the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

**Information Systems and Services HQ
Policy Secretariat**