



Ministry  
of Defence

Air Command Secretariat  
Spitfire Block  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4UE

Ref: 2022/00216

Mr James Page  
request-820315-d68d3d9f@whatdotheyknow.com

2 March 2022

Dear Mr James Page

Thank you for your e-mail of the 6 January 2022 requesting the following information.

*Please provide all available information and documentation on 'VESTIS' which is the RAF Future Clothing Program.*

*In particular what considerations and designs are being considered and when will a final decision be made?*

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

Your request asks for all information and documents on 'VESTIS', we have interpreted this to mean any formal documents and minutes that are held regarding Project VESTIS.

A search for the information has now been completed and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held. This information is attached at Annexes A-C.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, under Section 40(2) of the FOIA (third party personal data), some information contained within the documents at Annex A and B, is withheld as exempt information. S40 is an Absolute Exemption and not subject to the public interest test.

Other documents relating to Project VESTIS have been considered under Section 35 (Formulation of Government Policy). Section 35 is a qualified exemption and is therefore subject to a public interest. This means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

A public interest test has been conducted and it is considered that the arguments against disclosure outweigh those in favour of release, and so some information which relates to part 1 of the question: *'Please provide all available information and documentation on 'VESTIS' which is the RAF Future Clothing Program'* has been withheld. To release this information would be likely to prevent the Royal Air Force (RAF) from formulating the RAF Working Dress policy in a free and frank manner and may jeopardise the ability to make an unbiased decision based on full advice and all considerations.

There remains a very strong public interest in the RAF's uniform and disclosure of policy decisions during their formulation may impede and have a detrimental effect on engagement with existing

personnel who may not be apprised of possible new dress policies. I conclude that the balance of the public interest for disclosing policy whilst under consideration by the RAF is firmly in favour of maintaining the exemption under S.35 and therefore, I am withholding the information.

With regard to your question 'In particular what considerations and designs are being considered and when will a final decision be made? There is no information held regarding future designs for the RAF Working Dress. The current planning assumption is that RAF Working Dress options will be presented to RAF Senior Leadership by April 2022, with initial decisions made on RAF Working Dress by mid-2022. However, this timeline is not fixed and will depend on other priorities.

If you are not satisfied with this response or 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.uk](mailto: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 normally investigate your case until the MOD internal 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

Air Command Secretariat

Enc:

Annex A - Royal Air Force (RAF) A4 ASTRA clothing survey.  
Annex B - RAF Order of Dress PowerPoint document.  
Annex C - The proposed timeline.