



Ref: FOI2021-022

[REDACTED]
18th January 2022

Dear

Further to our letter of 21st December 2021 regarding your request for the following information:

I should be grateful if you would provide me with the following information which I believe may be held by the Atomic Weapons Establishment in relation to flooding which took place at AWE Burghfield on 20 July 2007.

Please provide me with the following information in relation to this matter:

- *Copies of video footage, still photographs, still images created from video footage, and / or sketches held by AWE showing flooding of external areas (ie outside any building) at AWE Burghfield on 20 July 2007.*

To assist in handling this request, I understand that flooding took place on the Burghfield site on 20 July 2007 over the period 14.00 – 18.00 hrs.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).

We can confirm that the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) holds all of the information you have requested, however we are withholding the information under regulation 12(5)(a). This regulation provides an exception to disclosing requested information if it would adversely affect international relations, defence, national security or public safety.

Regulation 12(5)(a) is subject to the Public Interest Test (PIT) which has been conducted and has fallen in favour of withholding the information. It is acknowledged that the Regulations make a presumption in favour of disclosure wherever possible, and there is a general public interest in the operations of Non-Departmental Public Bodies being as open and transparent as possible.

However, there is a much stronger public interest in safeguarding national security and in withholding any information that might prejudice it. When information is released under the EIR, it becomes publicly available and is not limited to the requester. We must therefore consider the likelihood of the released information being helpful to potential adversaries or those who wish to harm the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent or the members of the public, when considered in isolation or in conjunction with information from other sources and build a larger and more detailed picture of the UK's nuclear weapons programme.

AWE Burghfield assembles and maintains the warheads for the UK's nuclear deterrent, and the requested photographs would provide information about the location of buildings and infrastructure, access points to



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buildings, and security arrangements in place at the nuclear regulated facility. This information may assist the nation's adversaries to sabotage the nuclear capability, thus it would not be appropriate to release it into the public domain. Therefore the information requested is withheld in full under Regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIR.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to information.requests@awe.co.uk or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Regulation 18 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team