Dear xxxxxxxxxxx

Request for Information: Fort Halstead, Kent

I am responding to your enquiry dated 23 May 2007 which was passed to Defence Estates for attention on 12 July. This has been dealt with as a request for information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and do I hope you will accept my apologies for the delay in dealing with your request.

You asked various questions relating to the sale of the above site to QinetiQ. I am advised that the site was transferred to QinetiQ on 1st July 2001 as part of the business transfer. There was no specific sale value attributed to the sale as it was part of a bulk transaction where the value was in the complete business although valuations were obtained for each of the constituent sites.

As part of the sale process the majority of the site was leased back to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) for the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), using commercial arrangements as a basis and sub leases granted back to QinetiQ for some of the individual properties that they still needed to occupy for the short term.

The master lease for 90 years included terms and conditions relating to the rationalisation of the site and these still apply today to QinetiQ and Hines. These include provisions relating to claw back. There are no covenants relating to restoration of farmland or wood land as this is a matter for the planning authorities as part of any consent for the future development of the site. There are no such requirements in MOD’s title deeds.

The terms and conditions of the sale from QinetiQ to Hines are a matter for QinetiQ to comment on rather than the MOD.

If you are unhappy 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 Director of Information Exploitation, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail info-XD@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 unhappy following an internal review, you may take the 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 the case until the internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and the powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioners website http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,