



Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Councillor Nigel Manning

nigel.manning@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

Ref: 2021/TO08992

Dear Councillor Manning,

DIO Secretariat
St George's House
Defence Infrastructure Organisation
DMS Whittington
Lichfield, Staffordshire
WS14 9PY

E-mail: diosec-parli@mod.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/DIO

16 September 2021

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 August 2021 concerning public access to Ash Ranges. Your correspondence has been passed to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), the Ministry of Defence (MOD) organisation with responsibility for the Defence Estate. In accordance with standard procedures I am responding to this matter. Unfortunately, your letter dated 14 June 2021 was not received by the Department, however I hope to address the concerns raised in this response.

Further to our previous correspondences (ref: FOI2020/12542; TO2021/00751 ME2021/00652), I can confirm there remains no intention to prevent ongoing public access to the majority of Ash Ranges when such access is permitted. However, public access to the Ash Range floors/Technical Areas has presented a range of ongoing concerns, resulting in their closure.

I am pleased to advise that in line with Ministerial direction we are currently considering a number of options to provide additional access to Ash Ranges when public access is permitted. Alongside this I must reiterate that residents still have access to the remaining 88% of Ash Ranges on days when the Ranges are not being used for Military training.

With regards to the release of information on the loss of training hours and cost of vandalism which you requested in your Freedom of Information (FOI) request (ref: FOI2020/12542). Under the FOI Act, the Section 12 (disproportionate costs) exemption was applied to your request because to answer, would have exceeded the appropriate cost limit under the Act. Following a subsequent internal review, the Departments decision to apply the S12 exemption was upheld and therefore, our response still stands. It should also be noted that under the FOI there is not obligation to create information purely to answer any query that has been raised.

I hope this goes some way to answering the concerns raised and clarifies the MOD's current position.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat