NUCLEAR SECURITY TECHNOLOGIES

Ref: FOI2025-077

[redacted]

18 February 2026

Dear [redacted]

We refer to your request for the following information:

"I would be most grateful if you would provide me, under the Freedom of Information Act, details on your current Facilities Management contract with EMCOR at your Berkshire Estate, covering sites at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

The details we require are:
Actual spend on this contract, from the start of the contract to the current date?
What is the current expected end date of the contract?
Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract is being either extended or renewed?
If the contract is set to be extended, what is the likely term?
Could you please provide a copy of the service specification, including sites if possible, given to all bidders for when this contract was last advertised?
Are you able to provide site map locations?"

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

We can confirm that AWE holds all of the information you have requested, however we are withholding the information under section 24(1) and section 43(2) of the Act. These exemptions allow for the withholding of information where disclosure would result in prejudice to national security and to the commercial interests of the organisation.

As Sections 24 (1) and 43 (2) are qualified exemptions, we have conducted a Public Interest Test (PIT) in respect of each exemption. Having carefully considered the arguments for and against disclosure, we have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding the information. Our reasoning is set out below.

Section 24(1) – National Security

We recognise the general public interest in disclosure of information and that it promotes transparency and accountability in the use of public funds. Disclosure would enhance the public's understanding of how defence-related contracts are managed, how expenditure decisions are made and how contractual arrangements are governed. Openness in public sector contracting supports public confidence in government decision-making and the proper allocation of public resources.

© 2024 British Crown Owned Copyright / AWE
AWE is the trading name of AWE plc. AWE is a Non-Departmental Public Body owned by the Ministry of Defence.
Registered in England and Wales. Registration no. 02763902.
Registered office: Room 20, F161 2, AWE plc, Aldermaston, Reading, Berkshire RG7 4PR

However, disclosure of detailed information relating to contract expenditure, duration, extension arrangements, service specifications, and site-specific details of AWE would understandably prejudice national security. In particular, such information could enable hostile actors to draw inferences about the scale, capability, operational priorities, or geographical concentration of sensitive defence areas and activities.

The contract is covered by provisions of DSPCR 6(3A)(a) and Exclusion 7(1)(a) – Security / disclosure of information under The Defence and Security Public Contracts Regulations 2011 (revoked) .

Releasing the requested data would undermine the provisions set out in the DSPCR.

Furthermore, disclosure must be assessed in the broader information environment. Information which might appear relatively harmless in isolation can, when combined with other information already in the public domain, contribute to a cumulative security risk, the "mosaic effect". Information once released under the Act is effectively released to the world at large and cannot be withdrawn or controlled. There is a significant and enduring public interest in ensuring that defence operations, assets, and supporting arrangements remain secure, resilient, and protected from exploitation.

Accordingly, while we recognise the importance of transparency, we have concluded that the public interest in safeguarding national security and protecting sensitive defence information outweighs the public interest in disclosure in this case. The exemption at Section 24(1) is therefore upheld.

Section 43(2) – Commercial Interests

We also acknowledge that there is public interest in transparency around public procurement and contract management. Disclosure of information relating to public contracts enables scrutiny to determine if public funds are being used efficiently and whether contractual arrangements deliver value for money. Openness in this area can contribute to confidence in the fairness and integrity of government procurement processes.

However, disclosure of the information requested would be highly likely to prejudice commercial interests. The information contains commercially sensitive details relating to a live contract, including actual expenditure, contractual timelines, extension intentions, service specifications, and site-related information. Disclosure of this information would be likely to disadvantage the contractor by revealing current pricing structures, cost information, and operational approaches that competitors could exploit in future procurement exercises.

In addition, disclosure would prejudice AWE's own commercial interests by weakening its negotiating position in relation to any future contract extension, variation, or re-procurement. This could ultimately reduce value for money and lead to increased costs to the public purse. There is a wider public interest in maintaining a competitive marketplace in the defence sector, ensuring that suppliers can engage with AWE in confidence that commercially sensitive information will be appropriately protected.

© 2024 British Crown Owned Copyright / AWE
AWE is the trading name of AWE plc. AWE is a Non-Departmental Public Body owned by the Ministry of Defence.
Registered in England and Wales. Registration no. 02763902.
Registered office: Room 20, F161 2, AWE plc, Aldermaston, Reading, Berkshire RG7 4PR

While AWE recognises the public interest in transparency, we have concluded that the public interest in protecting commercial confidentiality and maintaining effective and competitive procurement processes outweighs the public interest in disclosure. The exemption at Section 43(2) is therefore upheld.

In accordance with Section 16 of the Act, we can direct you to publicly available information relating to our procurement activity. Further information is available on AWE's procurement and supplier webpage:

https://www.awe.co.uk/our-supply-chain/our-suppliers/

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 Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 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

UK Ministry of Defence
© 2024 British Crown Owned Copyright / AWE

AWE is the trading name of AWE plc. AWE is a Non-Departmental Public Body owned by the Ministry of Defence.
Registered in England and Wales. Registration no. 02763902.
Registered office: Room 20, F161 2, AWE plc, Aldermaston, Reading, Berkshire RG7 4PR