

26 August 2026

Dear

Request for Information – ATISN 27279

Thank you for your request for information dated 29 July.

You asked for :

Copies of the following information relating to the former RAF St Athan East Camp, Vale of Glamorgan, gymnasium, cinema, and swimming pool buildings, which are under Welsh Government ownership and are reportedly proposed for demolition. Specifically, I request:

- 1. A copy of the structural survey referred to by Welsh Government representatives in discussions concerning the future of the gymnasium, cinema, and swimming pool buildings.*
- 2. Any associated condition surveys, engineering assessments, or technical reports relating to the structural condition of these buildings.*
- 3. Any reports, business cases, options appraisals, or assessments used to support or justify the proposed demolition of the gymnasium and swimming pool.*
- 4. Any refurbishment, repair, restoration, or maintenance cost assessments relating to these buildings, including documents that reference or support the reported refurbishment cost estimate of approximately £29 million.*
- 5. Any correspondence, meeting notes, or briefing papers produced since 1 January 2023 which discuss the structural condition of the gymnasium and swimming pool and their suitability for retention, refurbishment, community use, or demolition.*

The Welsh Government has reached the conclusion that it will cost more than the appropriate limit established in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 to consider your request. The appropriate limit specified for central government is £600. When calculating whether or not your request exceeds the appropriate limit, I am allowed to consider the time it is

likely to take to establish if we hold the information, locate the information, retrieve the information and extract it. If these tasks are estimated to take more than 24 hours of working time, the limit will have been exceeded.

The broad phrasing of the request, which cites *'Any correspondence, meeting notes, or briefing papers produced since 1 January 2023' 'Any associated condition surveys, engineering assessments, or technical reports relating to the structural condition of these buildings' 'Any reports, business cases, options appraisals, or assessments used to support or justify the proposed demolition of the gymnasium and swimming pool' 'Any refurbishment, repair, restoration, or maintenance cost assessments relating to these buildings, including documents that reference or support the reported refurbishment cost estimate of approximately £29 million'* makes the search very difficult and time consuming to deal with.

It would be necessary to search the Welsh Government's electronic filing system. The Welsh Government's Information and Records Management policy is available to view at <http://gov.wales/about/foi/policies/recordsmanagement/?lang=en>. Section 7 of the policy, "What are our Corporate Record Keeping Systems?" explains that our records are stored on an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS), known as iShare. iShare is the corporate repository for the majority of information created and received by Welsh Government Officials in the course of their duties that must be retained for business or historical purposes.

Documents are saved on iShare using naming conventions appropriate to the effective recording of information for our own purposes. Setting our systems in this way, and in line with our Records Management policy, enables effective delivery and will not necessarily lend themselves to being easily interrogated for generic requests for information. Where the Welsh Government believes providing such information would involve tasks that would breach the appropriate limit then, in line with our obligations under the section 45 Code of Practice, we inform the requester of that fact and invite them to narrow down or re-focus their requests.

A general iShare search using the search terms you have identified may yield many thousand of results. It is important to note these points:

- The search timeframe will return items on the date that the document was recorded on iShare, and not the date of the actual correspondence.
- The search would not necessarily return relevant information. This is because the naming conventions that we use do not lend themselves to being easily interrogated for information in the general and broad way that you have specified.

An initial scoping exercise undertaken by a member of staff using the key phrase 'St Athan' identified in excess of 19000 documents. At an estimate of taking 1 minute to investigate each document to see if it contains the additional key words as noted above and to then extract it would take over 24 hours for this exercise alone. Similar searches would need to be undertaken for the other aspects of the requests meaning the time taken to undertake this exercise would be substantially more than 24 hrs. Additional time would also be required to undertake other searches including email correspondence for other relevant staff members, Ministers and different teams.

Assuming it would take at least 60 seconds to open and conduct a quick initial scan of each electronic document to determine whether or not it was captured by the requests, in addition to the search timeframe for searching e-mail records as described above, would significantly exceed 24 working hours. In effect, locating information with a broad description in such a large search space would be very difficult.

Because this exceeds the appropriate limit established in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, I have decided not to process your request.

You may wish to refine your request by narrowing its scope by being more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain. If you do refine your request in this way, this will be treated as a new request. Please be as specific and focused as possible.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at: Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ or FreedomOfInformationOfficer@wales.gsi.gov.uk. Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely