

**Civil Aviation Authority**  
Finance and Corporate Services  
Information Management

22 June 2012  
FOIA reference: F0001337

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent application of 23 May 2012, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

*“Please supply all correspondence possible, including emails, between the CAA and members of the Astraea consortium and/or BAE Systems related to the use of civilian Unmanned Autonomous Systems (UAVs) in British airspace.*

*NB: The Astraea consortium comprises seven aerospace companies: AOS, BAE Systems, Cassidian, Cobham, QinetiQ, Rolls-Royce and Thales. The regulatory co-ordinator for Astraea is Andrew Jones from Thales”.*

Our response:

In assessing your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), we are unable to provide the information requested.

The CAA's work with the ASTRAEA consortium is through a commercial contract between the consortium and the CAA's subsidiary company CAA International. It involves various specialist areas of the CAA and a considerable number of individual staff; as a result the information you have requested is extensive and held in various locations. We have asked these areas to review their records and they have identified in excess of 3,000 emails and documents related to ASTRAEA which would need to be reviewed to determine if they meet the scope of your request. Based on an estimation of three minutes per document, we consider that to locate and retrieve the requested information would take approximately 150 man-hours.

Under Section 12 of the FOIA, a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit, which for the CAA is £450.

Charges are to be calculated at £25 per hour and apply to the following activities:

- (a) determining whether the information is held
- (b) locating the information, or a document which may contain the information

**Civil Aviation Authority**

Aviation House GW Gatwick Airport South Crawley West Sussex England RH6 0YR [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)  
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- (c) retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information, and
- (d) extracting the information from a document containing it.

We have estimated the cost that would be incurred in collating this information to be in the region of £3750 and, therefore, the appropriate limit would be exceeded.

It should also be highlighted that much of the information held is commercially sensitive information that was provided to the CAA on a voluntary and confidential basis, and is subject to a confidentiality clause. As such, much of the information we do hold is likely to be exempt from release under Sections 41 and/or 43 of the FOIA.

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

Mark Stevens  
External Response Manager  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Aviation House  
Gatwick Airport South  
West Sussex  
RH6 0YR

[mark.stevens@caa.co.uk](mailto:mark.stevens@caa.co.uk)

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with Freedom of Information requests. The key steps in this process are set in the attachment.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office  
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
[www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx)

Should you wish to make further Freedom of Information requests, please use the e-form at <http://www.caa.co.uk/foi>.

Yours sincerely

Rick Chatfield  
FOIA & EIR Case Manager

## CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.

## **Freedom of Information Act : Section 12**

### **Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit.**

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) "the appropriate limit" means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority-

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,

the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.