

[REDACTED]

Date: 21 May 2025
Reference: F0007376

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request of 30 May 2025, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). For reference your original enquiry was as follows:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting: A list of all applications submitted by local authorities to operate drones for environmental enforcement (including fly-tipping). The outcomes of these applications (approved, rejected, pending).

Any internal or public guidance provided by the CAA to local authorities on such uses. This request covers the period from 1 October 2024 to the present day (30th April 2025).

Your request has been considered in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that the CAA holds information within scope of the above request; if I may I shall address each of your points in turn:

A list of all applications submitted by local authorities to operate drones for environmental enforcement (including fly-tipping). The outcomes of these applications (approved, rejected, pending).

Please find attached the information being released to you.

It should be noted that the CAA has interpreted your request as referring to local councils, regional constabularies, and fire services. The authorities listed in the attached operate under Pre-Defined Risk Assessment 01 (PDRA-01) authorisation issued by the CAA.

PDRA-01 is a standard authorisation issued by the CAA for certain types of drone operations. It does not specify the exact operational use (e.g., surveillance, search and rescue or in the case of this enquiry 'environmental enforcement (including fly-tipping)').

PDRA-01 authorisation outlines a set of predefined operational parameters that must be adhered to. These include limitations such as maximum flying altitude, minimum separation distances, specific remote pilot competency requirements etc.

The authorisation provides a streamlined pathway for organisations to operate drones within a known and controlled risk framework, without the need to submit a full Specific Operations Risk Assessment (SORA) for each individual operation.

Civil Aviation Authority

Aviation House, Beehive Ring Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH6 0YR. www.caa.co.uk

Email: foi.requests@caa.co.uk

The CAA does not maintain details of how each authority applies this authorisation in practice. I can, therefore, only suggest, if you have not already done so, that for specifics information with regards to the nature of operations carried out under PDRA-01, you contact the respective local authority directly.

As separate and unique authorities I am unsure as to what, if any, additional information they would hold or be in a position to release to you.

Any internal or public guidance provided by the CAA to local authorities on such uses. This request covers the period from 1 October 2024 to the present day (30th April 2025).

The CAA holds no specific information with regards to local authorities who 'operate drones for environmental enforcement (including fly-tipping)'. Public guidance the CAA has provided relates to the PDRA-01 authorisation process at the following link:

PDRA01 overview | UK Civil Aviation Authority

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:-

FOI.Requests@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 out below. A request for an internal review should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

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

Information Commissioner's Office
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF
<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at FOI - Freedom of Information (caa.co.uk).

Yours sincerely

Communications & Engagement Team
Information Rights Specialist
Civil Aviation Authority

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At the CAA we respect agile working so, while it suits me to send this now, I do not expect a response or action outside of your own working hours.

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- 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.