

[REDACTED]

Date: 30 July 2024
Reference: F0006923

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request of 21 July 2024, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). For reference your original enquiry was as follows:

- 1. Is every individual drone/unidentified object airprox report (e.g. 2023136) discussed separately, at any level, by the full Board at the monthly meeting? Yes / No*
- 2. Are Board members made aware each month at their meetings, when dealing with drone/unidentified object reports, that UKAB has in its possession ADS-B based evidence and analysis which gives a totally different explanation of the majority of encounters? Yes / No.*
- 3. Has UKAB made the CAA aware of the fact that before every UKAB meeting, UKAB has in its possession ADS-B based evidence and analysis which gives a totally different explanation of the majority of drone/unidentified object reports, which UKAB does not reveal to the board members, and which they take no account of before publishing their original anti-drone narrative? Yes / No.*

[NOTE: the numbering from the original enquiry have been removed and new, unique to this enquiry, question numbers added]

Please note the above questions have been taken from a much larger enquiry. Some elements of the larger enquiry (copied below in the explanatory annex) have been considered as an internal review request for F0006892. A response for the internal review will be supplied separately.

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 some information within scope of the above request; if I may I shall address each of your points in turn:

1. Is every individual drone/unidentified object airprox report (e.g. 2023136) discussed separately, at any level, by the full Board at the monthly meeting? Yes / No

A. For those Airprox where the drone operator has been traced and a report provided by that operator, then a 'full' report is generated. These incidents are then discussed at the Board meeting in the same manner as an Airprox involving 2 crewed aircraft.

Civil Aviation Authority

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

Email: foi.requests@caa.co.uk

B. Where the drone operator cannot be traced, the report is included in the Drone Summary Sheet which is circulated to Board members prior to the meeting.

Should any Board member wish to discuss, in depth, any particular case they are given the opportunity to do so at the start of the meeting.

2. Are Board members made aware each month at their meetings, when dealing with drone/unidentified object reports, that UKAB has in its possession ADS-B based evidence and analysis which gives a totally different explanation of the majority of encounters? Yes / No.

As stated in our previous correspondence, dated 26 June 2024 (reference F0006892), Board members are aware that there are multiple, publicly-available aircraft tracking applications and that the data presented by these applications is often unassured. The data presented to Board members to support their analysis and assessment of every Airprox is taken from assured sources - for example, but not limited to, radar data and radio recordings. All Board members are made aware of the sources used when the information is presented.

The input referred to in the above request utilises information from unassured sources – the accuracy of which cannot be quantified – and makes assumptions regarding the reporting aircraft. This information is not made available to Board members, although, it should be noted, they are equally at liberty to conduct their own research using similar sources if they so wish.

3. Has UKAB made the CAA aware of the fact that before every UKAB meeting, UKAB has in its possession ADS-B based evidence and analysis which gives a totally different explanation of the majority of drone/unidentified object reports, which UKAB does not reveal to the board members, and which they take no account of before publishing their original anti-drone narrative? Yes / No.

As stated in our previous correspondence, dated 26 June 2024 (reference F0006892), both the Civil and Military Aviation Authorities exercise due diligence and governance over the activities of the UK Airprox Board. Both organisations are fully aware of the UKAB's processes and both organisations receive regular updates on the activities and findings of the UK Airprox Board.

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.

Please consider our environment. Think before printing.

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.

Explanatory Annex

Thank you for the FOI response dated 26th June 2024 relating to my request F0006892. Unfortunately the responses have not produced the information I sought, so could I clarify as follows.

1. Referring to my Q1, the response was:

Following a review of held information it has been reasonably determined that no information is held with regards to this element of your request.

That is to say no information recording individual Board member input to individual Airprox reports is held. Only the outcome of the Board members' deliberations is recorded and, as such, any changes to the report as presented to the Board that are made cannot be identified.

A draft 'Consolidated Drone/Balloon/Model/Unknown Object Summary Sheet' is compiled and circulated ahead of each meeting, which includes the risk assessments, which are conveniently summarised in a risk table at the top of the document. The simple way to quantify the changes made as a result of Board member input is to compare the table on the draft with the table on the published version for each meeting. These tables date back to May 2017, so including June 2024 there are seventy-nine in total. I would prefer to see all seventy-nine compared, but I would be happy with say just those since the start of 2020. I would happily do the comparison myself if the draft tables (or draft Consolidated Drone/Balloon/Model/Unknown Object Summary Sheets) going back to May 2017 were made available to me.

2. Referring to my Q2 and Q3, the response was:

It is the CAA's position that following a review of held information it has been reasonably determined that for elements 2 & 3 of this request no information is held. That is to say, monthly meetings do not record – in any time value – the time spent on individual agenda items.

It is standard practice to record meetings for minute taking purposes. It should be a simple matter to play the recording and time this. However, there is another way to elucidate the information I require. I would like to rephrase Q2 as follows: ***Is every individual drone/unidentified object airprox report (e.g. 2023136) discussed separately, in detail, by the full Board at the monthly meeting? Yes / No***

With a supplementary: Is every individual drone/unidentified object airprox report (e.g. 2023136) discussed separately, at any level, by the full Board at the monthly meeting? Yes / No

3. Q4 has not been answered.

I will remove the word 'irrefutable' as it is possible this caused a problem. I would like to rephrase Q4 as follows: ***Are Board members made aware each month at their meetings, when dealing with drone/unidentified object reports, that UKAB has in its possession ADS-B based evidence and analysis which gives a totally different explanation of the majority of encounters? Yes / No.***

4. Q5 has not been answered. (A question I didn't ask was answered instead.)

Again I will remove the word 'irrefutable' as it is possible this caused a problem. ***Has UKAB made the CAA aware of the fact that before every UKAB meeting, UKAB has in its possession ADS-B based evidence and analysis which gives a totally different explanation of the majority of drone/unidentified object reports, which UKAB does not reveal to the board members, and which they take no account of before publishing their original anti-drone narrative? Yes / No.***

