

Date: 15 August 2013

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2013-0688

Your Ref:

FOI Central Processing Unit  
173 Pitt Street  
Glasgow  
G2 4JS

Email: [foi@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@scotland.pnn.police.uk)

By email: [chris@statewatch.org](mailto:chris@statewatch.org)

Dear Mr Jones

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002**  
**SUBJECT: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles**

I refer to your email dated 18 July 2013 regarding the above which has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

For ease of reference, your request is replicated below together with the response. I also refer to your additional email clarifying the date range for your request as 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

You may be aware that the Police Service of Scotland was formed from eight separate Forces. Each legacy force area has looked in to your request and passed their findings to me in order to provide you with one composite response on behalf of the Service.

**1. Has your force used (in a trial or otherwise) or considered using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)?**

In the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013 Police Scotland and the eight legacy Scottish police forces did not own, operate or use any drones or unmanned aerial vehicles. Furthermore, the Force had not been granted use or access to a drone from an outside agency, contractor or Force.

I can, however, advise that between 2007 and 2008 Strathclyde Police undertook a trial of an Unmanned Airborne Vehicle (UAV) for approximately 12 months in the more remote and inaccessible Argyll area. The UAV was used for Search and Rescue purposes and for this purpose only and on the termination of the trial the piece of equipment was returned to the manufacturer.

**2. If your force has not considered using UAVs, could you state why not?**

Aside from the legacy Strathclyde area, no other division / former police force hold any information on why UAVs have not been considered, therefore section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies: notice that information is not held.

**3. If your force has used or plans to use UAVs in a trial or other capacity, could you please provide:**

- a. The dates, times and locations of the trials.
- b. The purposes for which they were/are to be carried out.
- c. The manufacturer and model of the UAV used/to be used.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 also applies to this question: notice that information is not held.

**4. Has any sort of plan or timetable been produced by the force in order to make preparations for the introduction of UAVs?**

**a. If so, please provide a copy of the plan/timetable.**

No, therefore section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies: notice that information is not held.

**5. Have any force representatives held discussions with representatives of UAV manufacturers or manufacturers' industry bodies on the issue of the introduction of UAVs? If so, please can you provide:**

- a. Dates, times and agendas of the meetings;**
- b. Minutes of the meetings.**

Former legacy force Strathclyde Police have searched their local records and identified 685 documents contained within 40 folders that hold information about UAVs. Unfortunately each individual document would require to be physically examined to establish if they meet your criteria. They have advised that this would be a considerably time consuming task which would exceed the cost limits set out under the Act, therefore section 12 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies: *excessive cost of compliance*.

No other legacy force holds information relating to this question.

**6. Have any force representatives held discussions with representatives of other police forces in relation to the use of UAVs? If so, please can you provide:**

- a. Dates, times and agendas of the meetings;**
- b. Minutes of the meetings.**

As question 5.

**7. Has your force received from central or local government or the Association of Chief Police Officers any instructions, advice, recommendations, guidance or information relating to police use of UAVs?**

**a. If so, please provide a copy of the documents provided.**

The former Tayside Police have located two documents, and although these documents were primarily addressed to Chief Constables in England and Wales, copies were forwarded to legacy Tayside Police for awareness. I have attached these for your information. Please note some details have been removed (such as telephone numbers and fax numbers and the name of two individuals) in line with section 38 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 relating to personal information. Please note where information has been removed you will see a series of X's.

There is no other information held for the other legacy force areas.

**8. Has your force designated a single point of contact (SPOC) for unmanned aerial systems?**

No, therefore section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies: notice that information is not held.

Should you require any further assistance concerning this matter please contact me on 0131 311 3901 quoting the reference number given.

If you are not satisfied with the way in which your request has been dealt with, you are entitled in the first instance and within 40 working days of receiving this letter to request a review of the decision made by the Force. Should you wish to do so, contact details are;

Police Service of Scotland, FOI Central Processing Unit, 173 Pitt Street, Glasgow, G2 4JS  
(or by email to [FOI@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FOI@scotland.pnn.police.uk)).

Once informed of the Review decision, if you are still not satisfied, then you are entitled to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision. Contact details are; 'Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS', telephone 01334 464610.

Yours sincerely

Gabriella Trybalska  
Information Management  
Freedom of Information