



Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Ref. 2015/9234

[REDACTED]

9 November 2015

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your e-mail of 12 October 2015 asking for information about the Red Arrows.

You requested the following information:

- *What is the defence rationale of the Red Arrows?*
- *What is the role of the Red Arrows in the RAF Order of Battle?*
- *Why are not jet trainers used in a part time role for such displays on important national occasions?*
- *How much does it cost the RAF, out of the Defence Budget, to run the Red Arrows each year?*
- *How many uniformed, serving personnel are posted to the Red Arrows, both full time and part time? How many reservists, how many civilians?*
- *How much is raised in sponsorship by the Red Arrows and who are the sponsors? Who does this 'marketing' work?*
- *Has consideration been given to civilianising the Red Arrows, perhaps as a charity, perhaps with a few seconded serving personnel?*
- *RAF Scampton is the base for the Red Arrows; what else goes on at that air station? Is it now really kept open only for the Red Arrows, whereas without them the air station might be surplus, or just a diversion airfield?*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held which is given below:

What is the defence rationale of the Red Arrows?

The Red Arrows contribute to a number of military tasks, including public duties and security co-operation, where they support defence diplomacy by demonstrating British excellence, strengthening international relations and promoting wider British influence and interests.

What is the role of the Red Arrows in the RAF Order of Battle?

The RAF does not use the term "Order of Battle". However, the Red Arrows do not have a direct operational role.

Why are not jet trainers used in a part time role for such displays on important national occasions?

The Red Arrows use Hawk T1 aircraft which, alongside the Hawk T2, are the advanced fast jet training aircraft for both Royal Navy and RAF fast jet pilots. They are managed alongside the rest of the MOD's Hawk T1 fleet which conducts a variety of roles from training of aircrew to direct training support to front-line units of the Royal Navy, Army and RAF.

The skills required to fly the displays provided by the Red Arrows require dedicated aircrews with access to slightly modified aircraft on a daily basis. The nature and size of the Red Arrows role requires dedicated aircraft.

How much does it cost the RAF, out of the Defence Budget, to run the Red Arrows each year?

Operating costs for the Red Arrows for Financial Year 2014/2015 were some £9.1 million pounds. This includes direct costs to the Red Arrows such as pay and allowances, aviation fuel, travel and subsistence and heating oil but excludes spares, asset depreciation and the capital cost of aircraft or buildings and general Station costs. You may find it helpful to note that with the exception of Royal or service occasions officially sponsored by the MOD, the Department will charge for flypasts and displays by the Red Arrows in order to recover costs involved. This money is returned to the MOD budget.

How many uniformed, serving personnel are posted to the Red Arrows, both full time and part time? How many reservists, how many civilians?

As at 14 October 2015 there were 112 Regular, 7 Full Time Reserve Service personnel and 2 Civil Servants posted to the Red Arrows.

How much is raised in sponsorship by the Red Arrows and who are the sponsors? Who does this 'marketing' work?

In Financial Year 2014/15 the Red Arrows received sponsorship with an annual cash value of some £0.194 Million. This sponsorship is arranged by the Red Arrows themselves.

A list of sponsors can be found on the Red Arrows website at the following link:

<http://www.raf.mod.uk/reds/aboutus/sponsors.cfm>

Has consideration been given to civilianising the Red Arrows, perhaps as a charity, perhaps with a few seconded serving personnel?

The size, structure and role of the entire RAF are kept under constant review. However, there are currently no plans to civilianise the Red Arrows.

RAF Scampton is the base for the Red Arrows; what else goes on at that air station? what else goes on at that air station? Is it now really kept open only for the Red Arrows, whereas

without them the air station might be surplus, or just a diversion airfield?

In addition to the Red Arrows, RAF Scampton is currently home to Number 1 Air Control Centre which provides Air Command and Control in direct defence of the United Kingdom's airspace and has the ability to deploy at short notice anywhere in the world. Additionally, RAF Scampton is home to the Mobile Meteorological Unit, a Reserve unit whose role is to provide crucial meteorological services to our Armed Forces personnel when serving on deployed operations throughout the world.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,



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