



Emily Thornberry
By email: emily.thornberry.mp@parliament.uk

FOI Reference: FOI2023/06755

6 March 2024

Dear Emily Thornberry

We refer to your request where you asked:

“Thank you for your recent response to my request for an internal review into my request regarding catering costs on a selection of ministerial flights (reference FOI2023/03004).

I am still considering my next steps in relation to that request in the wake of your response, but in the meantime, I wish to submit a new FOI request arising from one of the pieces of factual information that you helpfully provided in that response.

On Page 3, Paragraph 5 of your response, you stated that: “The catering costs which are presented to the Cabinet Office [by Corporate Travel Management] are total costs and are therefore not itemised in the detailed way that you have requested.”

Just to clarify, this suggests that – while the Cabinet Office does not hold detailed inventories of the types and quantities of food and beverages that have been provided in the all-inclusive prices charged to the government when booking flights via CTM, what you do hold is information on the costs charged for catering within those all-inclusive prices.

If this is the case, and there would not seem to be any other interpretation of the words I have quoted above, then – under the terms of the FOI Act 2000 – can I please request details of the total catering costs provided to the Cabinet Office by CTM as part of the overall all-inclusive price charged to the government for each of the following flight bookings:

<i>Principal Minister</i>	<i>Start date of trip</i>	<i>Destination(s)</i>	<i>Overall price</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>28/09/20</i>	<i>South Korea and Vietnam</i>	<i>£213,009</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>05/04/21</i>	<i>Indonesia and Brunei</i>	<i>£226,052.94</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>20/06/21</i>	<i>Singapore, Vietnam and Cambodia</i>	<i>£236,486.73</i>
<i>Chancellor</i>	<i>29/10/21</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>£32,113.50</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>06/11/21</i>	<i>Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand</i>	<i>£300,545.39</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>18/01/22</i>	<i>Australia</i>	<i>£454,626.59</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>09/03/22</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>£228,483</i>
<i>Defence Secretary</i>	<i>28/03/22</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>£102,411</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>06/07/22</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>£369,000</i>
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	<i>25/09/22</i>	<i>Japan, South Korea and Singapore</i>	<i>£384,160.82</i>

If you are unable to provide me with the requested information due to the costs of doing so exceeding the compliance limits identified in Section 12 of the Act, please tell me how I can refine my request in line with your Section 16 obligations under the Act.

As always, I thank you in advance for your assistance, and I am happy to receive your response at the email address from which this request is being sent."

We are writing to advise you that following a search of our paper and electronic records, we have established that some of the information you have requested is held by the Cabinet Office.

Ministers on official visits sometimes require the use of non-commercial air travel, and has been the case under successive administrations of all parties. Value for money is taken into account in all travel decisions and costs are published quarterly.

The figures shown represent the end to end administrative cost of providing in-flight catering, including transport, on-boarding / off-boarding, preparation, disposal in line with adherence to international waste management regulations, and the required equipment for these processes. These logistical elements make up most of the cost and are charged by the vendor regardless of the specific items ordered or consumed.

Catering in-flight is a monopoly for the vendor and these costs would also be accrued on scheduled commercial flights. However, they are contained within the wider 'all-inclusive' booking fee and not broken down separately.

Therefore the figures shown should not be conflated as actual expenditure on food or drink. The substantive costs will relate to the transfer of associated catering equipment,

in the same way for example that a proportion of the cost of a commercial flight will include charges for the transport of hold luggage (whether itemised or inclusive).

Such costs have applied to flights across successive administrations, of all political colours.

Flights that are contracted through the Air Charter contract are also 'all-inclusive' prices. The Cabinet Office does not have a breakdown of the 'all-inclusive' price.

Please see the table below:

Date	Minister & Trip	Administrative charge (incl. transport and equipment costs)	% of total costs	Number of officials who accompanied Minister	Indicative administrative charge per head
28/09/2020	Foreign Secretary - South Korea and Vietnam	Air charter contract - No costs held	N/A	8	N/A
05/04/2021	Foreign Secretary - Indonesia and Brunei	£6,215.00	2.7%	7	£887.86 (for trip covering two countries)
20/06/2021	Foreign Secretary - Singapore, Vietnam and Cambodia	£7,625.20	3.2%	6	£1,270.83 (for trip covering three countries)
29/10/2021	Chancellor of the Exchequer - Italy	Air charter contract - No costs held	N/A	3 outbound, 4 inbound	N/A
06/11/2021	Foreign Secretary	£12,742.40	4.2%	10	£1,274.20 (for trip covering

	- Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand				three countries)
18/01/2022	Foreign Secretary - Australia	£15,639.80	3.4%	11	£1,421.70
09/03/2022	Foreign Secretary - United States	Air charter contract - No costs held	N/A	12	N/A
28/03/2022	Defence Secretary - Norway	Air charter contract - No costs held	N/A	11	N/A
06/07/2022	Foreign Secretary - Indonesia	£5,604.50	1.5%	13	£431.07
25/09/2022	Foreign Secretary - Japan, South Korea and Singapore	£14,899.50	3.9%	13	£1,146.07 (for trip covering three countries)

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Head of Freedom of Information
Cabinet Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B. C.', written in a cursive style.

FOI Team
Cabinet Office