

Department for **Transport**

Ms Daniela Drysdale
request-3728-45d47a8a@whatdotheyknow.com

Theresa Crossley
Head of Shipping Policy

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR

Direct Line: 020 7944 3650
E-mail: theresa.crossley@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: F0004629
8 January 2009

Dear Mrs Drysdale

Internal Review into F0004629

I refer to your request for an internal review dated 6 December into our delay in responding to your Freedom of Information (FOI) request of 22 October (our reference F0004629), the full text of which I reproduce below:

In a letter addressed to Mr Julian Brazier TF MP, dated 8 April 2008, Mr Jim Fitzpatrick, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, stated, "I am advised that there is no reason to reopen the [Gaul] investigation."

I would be grateful if Mr Fitzpatrick could let us know whom he had been advised by and in what manner that advice had been conveyed, and kindly give us a complete account of that advice.

I provided a response to this request in my letter dated 17 December 2008. You have raised questions in relation to that letter, but, for the sake of clarity, those are not dealt with in this review which is entirely related to the timeliness of that response.

I have completed the review and concluded that the delay was caused by a decision to combine our response to your FOI request with the Department's comprehensive statement about its position on rehearing the Gaul reopened formal investigation (RFI), both of which were contained in the letter of 17 December. The officials concerned underestimated the work involved in preparing this combined response and this, coupled with the pressure of other pressing work, led to the Department's failure to meet its 20-day deadline for responding to your FOI.

In order to ensure that this situation cannot recur and that we meet our FOI commitments, we will treat all future requests as separate from any associated correspondence, minimising the potential for this kind of delay.

I apologise for any inconvenience caused by the late response.

Yours sincerely
Theresa Crossley

Theresa Crossley
Head of Shipping Policy