



Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police HQ
London Road
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN
Tel 101 ext. 62005
www.wiltshire.police.uk
disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXXXX
By email

Date: 5th March 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021/144

Reply contact name is Abigail Standidge

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 15th February 2021, concerning average response times for Armed Response Vehicles.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

What is your average response times of your armed policing units in the last 12 months? From initial call to arrival at scene.

Our Response:

The information requested is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 24(1) – National Security
Section 31(1) – Law Enforcement

Section 24 and Section 31 are both prejudice-based, qualified exemptions and therefore requires Wiltshire Police to establish the harm in disclosure and the public interest for and against disclosure.

Harm in confirming that information is held

‘National Security’ encompasses a wide spectrum and the Police Force have a duty to protect the people within the UK. Public safety is of paramount importance to the policing purpose and must be taken into account when deciding whether or not a disclosure is to be made. Disclosing information pertinent to the operational and tactical capabilities of the Force, such as Armed Response Vehicle response times, may allow those with a criminal intent to adopt counter measures to avoid detection.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Disclosure would allow interested parties to gain an advantage and an awareness of the intricacies used to safeguard National Security. To provide the details requested may be detrimental to providing an efficient policing service and a failure in providing a duty of care to members of the public, and would also impact upon any current investigations.

Public Interest Test

Section 24

Factors favouring disclosure

Wiltshire Police acknowledge there is a public interest in being open and transparent with the public. Doing so allows the public to see where funding for the Force is spent, allowing for the Force to be held accountable for its actions.

Factors against disclosure

Although there is a public interest in the Force being open and transparent with the public, there is also a public interest in protecting National Security. Disclosure of Armed Response Vehicle response times could contribute to compromising the safety of Officers, but also the safety of the public, and therefore could impact adversely on the UK's security.

Section 31

Factors favouring disclosure

Wiltshire Police acknowledge that there is a public interest in the Force being open and transparent with members of the public. Disclosure would allow the public to be better informed how the Force works in the area, and how the public funding for the Force is spent.

Factors against disclosure

Disclosing the response times of Armed Response Vehicles could have detrimental effects on policing resources, as disclosure could be used to gain knowledge regarding the effectiveness of such an asset. If Wiltshire Police disclosed the response times, those with criminal intent could use this to map policing resources across all Forces. This would provide those individuals with an operational advantage to avoid detection, thus impacting on the Force's ability to prevent and detect offenders.

Balancing Test

Wiltshire Police are charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police Force will not divulge any information, if doing so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine National Security. It is acknowledged there is a public interest in the transparency of policing, and providing assurance that the Force is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals. There is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both National Security and protecting the integrity of the Police, in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of National Security. This will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

Additionally, there is a very strong public interest in ensuring the safeguarding of the public and the Force's ability to effectively prevent and detect crime. To disclose information which is likely to assist criminal offenders would seriously threaten the effective delivery of operational law enforcement and is therefore exempt from disclosure.

For the reasons outlined above, the public interest lies in favour of non-disclosure of the information which has been requested.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemptions applied:

Section 24(1) – National Security
Section 31(1) – Law Enforcement

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Abigail Standidge
Force Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN
Telephone 101 ext 62005



Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:
Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original FoI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the ICO's offices will be closed for the foreseeable future and are therefore unable to receive correspondence via post.

If you should wish to contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>