

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

Date: 11 June 2021

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2021/378

Reply contact name is: Ellie James

Dear ****,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 25 April 2021 concerning Callsigns and Fleet.

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 having consulted our Communications Centre and our Fleet Unit I am now able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

- 1) I would like to enquire about your callsigns for Local Policing, Firearms and roads policing. Could this be listed?
- 2) I would also like to make a request for a full fleet list.

This needs to contain:

Number plate

Division - Local Policing, FIREARMS, ROADS POLICING AND/OR CID Vehicle make and model Year introduced to the force If still active in service Could this be in a .XLSX file for Microsoft Excel.

Our response:

- 1) I would like to enquire about your callsigns for Local Policing, Firearms and roads policing. Could this be listed?

This question is exempt by virtue of **Section 31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement**.

Section 31 is a prejudiced based qualified exemption which requires the prejudice (harm) to be evidenced and a public interest test carried out. This means it can only be used if the public interest test favours non-disclosure. Please see below for the harm and public interest test.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

- 2) I would also like to make a request for a full fleet list.

This needs to contain:

Number plate

Division - Local Policing, FIREARMS, ROADS POLICING AND/OR CID Vehicle make and model Year introduced to the force If still active in service Could this be in a .XLSX file for Microsoft Excel.

Please see attached spreadsheet.

Information relating to Armed Response Vehicles and vehicles used for covert purposes are exempt by virtue of **Section 31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement.**

As stated above, Section 31 is a prejudiced based qualified exemption which requires the prejudice (harm) to be evidenced and a public interest test carried out. Please see below for the harm and public interest test.

Question 1 – Call Signs

Section 31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

Harm

Wiltshire Police are charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The disclosure of individual call signs could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics and would provide offenders with valuable intelligence facilitating their ability to commit crime and evade detection.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

Police forces need to be properly equipped in order to meet the demands placed upon them. The disclosure of this information would reassure the public that Wiltshire Police is adequately prepared in all areas and would lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force and the communications used with operations and during routine policing.

The disclosure of this information would also provide an insight into the intricacies and identification of police units, and would reveal a better understanding of the tactical capabilities of the police when deploying their units.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

The disclosure of this information could have an adverse effect on the ability of the Police to effectively prevent and detect crime, and thus compromising investigations. The disclosure of specific information relating to the tactical information of units would reveal resource information and intelligence to the criminal fraternity. Disclosure of call signs would give criminals an insight into the level of resources available to police and how they are distributed across the Force and County.

The disclosure of call signs would mean that criminals could listen in to police radios and have a detailed knowledge of what team each call sign related to. Offenders could use this information to identify times when there are fewer officers in specific areas and provide them with an opportunity to commit crime knowing they are likely to evade capture as resources are elsewhere. This information could also alert criminal fraternities that they are under surveillance and could provide offenders with the opportunity to guide officers into potentially dangerous situations causing harm and compromising law enforcement capabilities.

Balance Test

For a public interest test, issues that favour disclosure need to be measured against issues that favour non-disclosure. The public interest is not what interests the public, or a particular individual, but what will be the greater good, if released, to the community as a whole.

In considering the public interest in relation to this question, I must balance the factor in relation to transparency and accountability, against the public interest in ensuring that Wiltshire Police are able to appropriately enforce the law and perform its core duties.

The Freedom of Information Act is 'applicant blind', any information released under the Act is available to everyone. It is well documented that offenders will use every advantage they can gain to successfully carry out their criminality and the disclosure of this information would provide offenders with invaluable information that could subsequently cause harm to officers and the general public. Therefore, it is my view that it would not be in the public interest to release this information.

Wiltshire Police will not disclose information that could harm the public or could compromise the safety and operational effectiveness of its officers

Question 2 – Fleet Vehicles

Section 31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

Harm

Wiltshire Police are charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The disclosure of details in relation to Armed Response vehicles and those used for covert purposes would provide offenders with valuable intelligence, facilitating their ability to commit crime and evade detection.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

Disclosing this information would enable Wiltshire Police to be held accountable and show the Police Force as being open and transparent with the public. It would also provide the public with an insight into the financial resources of the Police Force and how this is being utilised.

Favours Favouring Non-Disclosure

The disclosure of this information could have an adverse effect on the ability of Wiltshire Police to effectively prevent and detect crime, and thus compromising investigations. By disclosing a FULL fleet list with the information you have requested in relation to Armed Response Vehicles and vehicles used for covert purposes, would allow offenders to establish the number of resources the Force has and this would help them to commit crime and evade capture. By evading capture, the greater public will be at risk and in turn, trust in the Police would be lost and an increase in crime could be seen.

The disclosure of the requested information for vehicles used for covert purposes would also allow offenders to identify those cars whilst carrying out criminal activities, or even just in their daily life, alerting them to any possible surveillance, allowing them the opportunity to evade detection and compromising law enforcement capabilities.

The disclosure of the requested information for Armed Response Vehicles would inform offenders how many resources were allocated to this Unit and would enable them to make more informed decisions and skilfully plan offences.

Balance Test

For a public interest test, issues that favour disclosure need to be measured against issues that favour non-disclosure. The public interest is not what interests the public, or a particular individual, but what will be the greater good, if released, to the community as a whole.

In considering the public interest in relation to this question, I must balance the factor in relation to transparency and accountability, against the public interest in ensuring that Wiltshire Police are able to appropriately enforce the law and perform its core duties.

The Freedom of Information Act is 'applicant blind', any information released under the Act is available to everyone. To disclose the details of Armed Response and Covert purposed vehicles would give offenders a greater advantage and would result in the loss of public confidence in the Force. It would also cause harm to covert operations and non-uniformed staff using covert vehicles. Therefore, it is my view that it would not be in the public interest to release this information.

Wiltshire Police will not disclose information that could harm the public or could compromise the safety and operational effectiveness of its officers

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Constabulary, 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 31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

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

Yours sincerely,

Ellie James

Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure, details can be found on the following page.



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