

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.ukDate: 28th March 2022

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2022 / 188

Dear ****,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 21st February 2022 concerning staffing in Salisbury and Avon Vale Hunt Feb 2022.

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 now able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

How many officers were on duty in Salisbury at 3.30am on Sunday Feb 20th 2022?

How many officers including liaisons were on duty for the Avon vale hunt Sat 19th Feb 2022?

Were there any staffing changes regarding the Avon vale hunt Saturday 19th Feb 2022?

Clarification sought from applicant re Q3:

The request is to ascertain policing numbers on the Avon Vale hunt and compare that to the numbers for the whole of Salisbury city centre as the same weekend the hunt was meeting a violent attack took place in the city centre and I am trying to understand what the priority is for Wiltshire police.

Our response:

How many officers were on duty in Salisbury at 3.30am on Sunday Feb 20th 2022?

The information you are requesting is exempt by virtue of the following exemption of the Freedom of Information Act: -

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

Sections 31 is a qualified exemption which require an examination of the public interest considerations for and against disclosure. In addition to this, an examination of the likely harm which would follow disclosure is also required for section 31.

Overall Harm

Any disclosure under FOI is a release to the public at large. Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant, disclosing the requested information in relation to question 1 could cause substantial harm for everyday policing and all individuals involved, such as Police employees and the wider community. By disclosing this information, Wiltshire Police would prejudice our ability to prevent and detect crime, and to apprehend and prosecute offenders; as information would be provided to the offenders in which they can then use this to evade detection, with disclosing the number of resources on one particular night shift, therefore, negatively affecting the Force's ability to protect the community.

Although there is public interest in the transparency of policing, which would provide assurance to the public that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging the use of its' resources in the investigation of crime and preventing disorder, this is countered by the need to protect any future law enforcement conducted by Wiltshire Police and ensuring the safety of the public.

Public Interest Test

Section 31 – Law Enforcement

Factors Favouring Disclosure

Disclosure of this information in full would lead to a better-informed public and promote trust by demonstrating openness, transparency and accountability. In addition to this, the public are entitled to know how public funds are being spent, especially regarding the use and deployment of police officers.

Factors Against Disclosure

Disclosing this information would provide the world, not just the requester, with sensitive information surrounding numbers of Police staff working in a particular area at a specific time. This could place Wiltshire Police's law enforcement capabilities into jeopardy and run the risk of causing endangerment to the community that Wiltshire Police are empowered to protect. This would give criminals the ability to understand the operational capabilities of Wiltshire Police. This would seriously hinder the prevention and detection of crime. By providing these individuals with the knowledge to determine which areas in Wiltshire may be most vulnerable with lower resources, they can use this information to plan criminal acts and avoid detection. If offenders avoid detection, this places the public at a greater risk and subsequently a diminishing trust in the Force and an increase of crime will be seen.

To disclose this information into the public domain would highlight that Wiltshire Police does not take the security and integrity of law enforcement seriously and suggest that they are not concerned with keeping the public safe, both of which would cause a significant drop in public confidence.

Balance Test

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency and openness between the Force and the public, along with demonstrating how the Force are engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a stronger interest in ensuring the public are protected from these individuals. The above points highlight both the merits and issues with disclosing the information you have requested.

Overall, the police service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Because of this, Wiltshire Police will not divulge any

information if to do so would prejudice our law enforcement capabilities and in turn lead to more victims of crime, more offenders not being brought to justice, or to put our community at risk of any harm. The public interest is very largely in favour of non-disclosure in respect of question 1, to ensure the capability of law enforcement by Wiltshire Police and to keep the public safe. This would only be overridden in exceptional circumstances, which this Freedom of Information request is not.

How many officers including liaisons were on duty for the Avon vale hunt Sat 19th Feb 2022?

40 Police Officers from a number of disciplines on a day shift.

Were there any staffing changes regarding the Avon vale hunt Saturday 19th Feb 2022?

Yes, changes made but none that impacted the resourcing numbers on nights.

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,

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