



WILTSHIRE POLICE

Force Disclosure Unit

Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date: 17th July 2023

Ref: FOI 2023/654

I write in connection with your request for information dated 22nd June 2023 concerning dangerous dogs.

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 after having consulted the Dog Section – I am now able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

1. How does the police force deal with dogs that are seized? (dogs which are not banned under section 1 of the dangerous dogs act, 1991, but have been seized for acting dangerously out of control)
2. What criteria do you use to categorise a dangerous dog under section 3 of the Dangerous Dog Act?
3. How many dogs have been euthanized on scene and at a later date over the last five years, and if they were considered a banned breed or not, and the rationale behind the decision-making (May 2019 - May 2023)
4. How many dogs have been seized over the last five years from May 2019 - May 2023, if they were considered a banned breed or not and the rationale behind the decision-making of seizing the dog?
5. Who are the contracted kenneling providers for this police force?
What is the maximum dog capacity the force has for seized dogs in The Dog Unit?

Our response:

1. Once a Dog is seized it is transported to the Police contracted Kennels. A full investigation is then carried out regarding the incident that the Dog was involved in, the case will then either go to court or be dealt with locally.
2. As per the definition outlined in Sect 3 of the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act (revised in May 2014 to include anywhere).
3. A total of 24 Dogs have been euthanized from May 2019 to May 2023. This has been a mix of owners disclaiming banned breed dogs and the courts issuing destruction orders.
4. A total of 81 Dogs have been seized from May 2019 to May 2023. Banned breeds are seized because they are banned breeds. A process is then undertaken (Section 4b of the dangerous dogs act) via court proceedings to allow the owners to legally keep the Dog, if the court decides. Section 3 Dogs are seized due to the severity of the injuries they have caused to members of the public.
5. This element of your request is exempt by virtue of section (1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement – please see explanation below.
6. The Dog unit itself has 6 kennels but these are for Police dogs only, any seized Dogs are housed at the Police contracted Kennels.

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

Section 31 is a qualified exemption which requires 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.

Harm test

Although every effort should be made to release information under the Freedom of Information Act, to disclose the contracted kenneling providers used by Wiltshire Police would prejudice our ability to effectively prevent and detect crime. Although there is public interest in the transparency of policing, this is countered by the need to protect future law enforcement conducted by Wiltshire Police. Furthermore, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police tactics and the ability to carry out our duties effectively.

Factors favouring disclosure

The disclosure of this information would lead to a better-informed public and promote trust by demonstrating openness, transparency and accountability.

Factors against disclosure

Disclosing this information would provide to the world, not just the requester, covert and sensitive information surrounding Wiltshire Police's Dog Unit. This would place our law enforcement and investigative ability into jeopardy and by providing covert information into the public domain would undermine the very purpose of them.

Furthermore, disclosing this information into the public domain would highlight that Wiltshire Police does not take the security and integrity of law enforcement seriously. This would allow criminals to be able to counter avoid detection.

Balance test

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 and offenders not being brought to justice. The public interest lies in favour of non-disclosure in relation to covert information to ensure that we are able to carry out our duties.

Exemption applied:-

- Section (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,
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

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.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.

Proud to serve and protect our communities

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