

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Via Email



Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN
disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk

Date 16/02/2024

Our ref **FOI 2024/031**

Reply contact name is:

Dear *****,

I write in connection with your request for information, dated 08/01/2024, concerning storage facilities.

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.

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted with evidential property team of Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and it is not possible to meet your requirements in full.

You wrote with **Response:**

1. **Does the Force operate a combined storage facility for paper records/archive and physical property or do you house these in separate facilities?**
Yes it does.
2. **Does the Force own its own storage facility, do you lease a space or share with another Force or do you use a 3rd Party Provider (e.g Iron Mountain).**
Yes, a combination of the above.
3. **If you own your storage facility was this purpose built or a repurposed existing building?**
Only existing police estate.
4. **Does the facility have the necessary climate controls for long term paper storage?**
Not in all locations no.
5. **Does the facility have a freezer for evidential storage?**
Yes we do have frozen evidential storage.
6. **If you own your own storage how many staff are employed to manage the store i.e. receive boxes/log within the records system/organise record destruction?**
Please see exemption below.
7. **What was the original build cost (if a purpose built) or the refurb cost if a repurposed building was used – and what are the annual running costs?**

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No information held.

8. **If you use a 3rd Party what is the overall contract cost and over what term?**
No information held.

Exemption applied for Q6:

Section 31(1)(a) – Law Enforcement

Overall Harm:

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the police have a clear responsibility to prevent crime, arrest those responsible for committing crime or those that plan to commit crime. To disclose information which is likely to assist criminal offenders, would seriously threaten the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. Disclosure of the information would assist with the disruption and potential for destruction of evidence vital to any criminal investigations.

Factors in Favour of Disclosure:

Placing this information into the public domain would help to inform and reassure the public that Wiltshire police takes its responsibilities to storing evidence appropriately seriously and encourage confidence in policing on the whole due to being as open and transparent as possible. This is important as all police investigations are publicly funded.

Wiltshire Police acknowledges the importance of providing information that would be in the public interest as information that can give value to public debate and awareness.

Factors against Disclosure:

A disclosure under Freedom of Information is a disclosure to the world, not just the individual who has requested the information. Although every effort should be made to release information under the Freedom of Information Act, disclosing the requested information could give those people with malicious intent information which could assist them in identifying storage sites and identifying how many people may be on site at any given time. This could lead to the potential for crimes such as break-ins & the destruction of evidence which would adversely affect the investigation of crime as well as put those members of staff in attendance at risk.

This in turn is likely to lead victims or potential victims to be reluctant to engage with the police or other law enforcement agencies.

Balance Test:

Wiltshire Police are charged with enforcing the law, preventing, and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency and openness between the Force and the public, there is a stronger public interest in ensuring that any investigations are properly conducted, the appropriate actions taken and justice correctly administered, including a fair trial. Protection of evidence, and the storage location is paramount in ensuring this.

For this reason, public interest lies in favour of non-disclosure of this information.

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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.

Exemption applied:

Section 31(1)(a) – Law Enforcement

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.



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 Fol 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

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