



WILTSHIRE POLICE

Force Disclosure Unit

Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date: 17th December 2024

Ref: FOI 2024/1030

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 21st November 2024 concerning the costs of policing protests relating to Palestine Action.

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:

This is an information request relating to the costs associated with policing the direct action group, Palestine Action.

Please provide the following cost information in relation to any protests organised by Palestine Action that have been held in Wiltshire between 30 July 2020 and the present day:

- Opportunity cost
- Overtime
- Internal fleet
- External fleet hire
- Hotels
- Catering
- Infrastructure
- Ad hoc

By protest, I am referring to marches, sit-ins and similar activities in public spaces. I am explicitly not asking about any criminal damage done to commercial, residential or government property.

Our response:

Proud to serve and protect our communities

The information that you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. This is because in order to extract the exact costing information you require pertaining to each protest that has taken place associated with the Palestine Action group, this would require us having to look at each protest individually to try and determine the costs associated with policing the protest, which would involve the assistance of a number of teams in order to supply the data accurately.

For example, in order to determine our internal fleet costs associated with policing a protest held by the Palestine Action group, each vehicle used during these protests would need to be identified in order for the logbook to be located to then calculate the mileage used and our Fleet department would then have to report the costings for this, which would undoubtedly take an excessive amount of time to achieve.

In relation to "ad hoc" costings, in order to calculate this information, each officer involved with policing the protests would have to be identified, and then our Payroll team would need to be contacted to determine the rate of pay the officer was on at the time of the protest, in order to work out how much they would have been paid for that period. Of course, whilst frontline officers police protests taking place in person, there would be a number of teams who would also assist with policing the protest in the background and we would have to try and establish the amount of hours these other teams may have spent on policing a protest involving the Palestine Action group, which would be incredibly difficult to do as this would form part of their everyday duties and so would be burdensome to distinguish the costs. Arguably, even if we were to attempt to obtain this information, we would be "best guessing" so-to-speak in calculating much of this data and potentially even creating information in order to fulfill an FOI request, of which we are not obligated to do.

In terms of "infrastructure" costings, we are unsure as to what exactly is meant by this.

Therefore, under the circumstances I am absolutely confident that to locate, retrieve and extract the information you seek would by far exceed the time obligations upon this authority to comply, and in so doing would exceed the fees limits. This is set at £450 calculated at a flat rate of £25 per hour for those work activities comprising of confirming the information is held, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it.

Please note, that if one part of the request engages a Section 12 response, the whole request will engage a Section 12 response. The reason being is due to the fact that locating, retrieving and extracting any further information would only add to the already exceeded time obligations.

Although excess cost removes the forces' obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request. What I am able to provide you are the answers documented below –

- **Overtime** – 48 officers on overtime during the operation period. £27.38 for an 8hr duty. Total overtime: £10,513.92. All other officers from core duty so no O/T incurred.
- **Internal fleet** – 26 carriers used otherwise normal marked cars.
- **External fleet hire** – NONE.

Proud to serve and protect our communities

- **Hotels** – NONE.
- **Catering** – NONE.

Ordinarily under our Section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request to a more manageable level. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular case.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide such 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.

The exemption applicable to the information requested is:

Section 12 – Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

In accordance with Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

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

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