



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_2023.1198

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 15/01/2024

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request 2023.1198

On 14/12/2023 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I'm making an official Freedom of information request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the release of data pertaining to "big cat" sightings or attacks on livestock or wildlife in Gloucestershire in the past 10 calendar years.

Please can you include all of the following reports of "big cat", "wild cat", "panther", "puma" or "leopard" incidents or suspected incidents which have been reported to your organization between 01.12.2013 and 01.12.2023. Please include reports from Gloucestershire only.

These reported sighting should include:

Reports made directly to yourself, or which have been brought to your attention via a third party Reports of attacks or suspected attacks to livestock, pet animals, and wild animals Reports made over email, over the phone, reported via social media, through hand written communications, or in person Include any report of a sighting made by a member of the public, a farmer or veterinarian, researchers and wildlife wardens Please include possible synonyms for "big cat", specifically "wild cat", "panther", "puma" or "leopard"

For each incident, please include:

The date of the incident

The location of the incident

Who the report was made by (insofar as data protection will allow you to specify, e.g. by a member of the public, a local animal welfare agency employee, etc) Any other relevant information of the sighting e.g. eyewitness reports of the incidents

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, I can confirm that Gloucestershire Constabulary may hold some relevant information.

When an Individual contacts the police and it's deemed to be a police matter, an incident will be created on the Incident Recording System. If that incident is deemed to fall within the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime, a crime will be recorded on the Crime Recording System. Please note that the Incident Recording System is largely a free text entry system and does not record information in as much detail as the Crime Recording System and therefore its reporting function is limited.

Following receipt of your request, initial searches were conducted and I can confirm that the information you have requested may be held by Gloucestershire Constabulary, however we do not record such instances statistically, nor are they held in a format that would allow their extraction within the permitted time constraints.

A search was conducted of Gloucestershire Constabulary's Incident Recording System using the terms outlined in your request. This has returned over 1,000 incidents recorded within the date range requested. This clearly does not relate to over 1,000 'big cat' sightings, but is partly because some of the terms constitute other normal, everyday words such as the clothing brand Puma, which is also a model of vehicle. The terms 'big' and 'cat' are also commonly used words or part of commonly used words and would also returned a large number of records.

In order to ascertain if any of the incidents related to a 'big cat' sighting, all the incidents would need to be manually reviewed. This would clearly take far longer than the 18 hours prescribed by Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Please see below for suggestions on how you may be able to refine your request to come within the cost constraints of Section 12 of the Act.

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Gloucestershire Constabulary, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states the fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

In relation to your request Section 12 applies.

Section 12(1)– Fee Regulations states:

Section 1(1) of the Act 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. (As detailed in the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Fees Regulations of 2004)

The appropriate limit at the moment is £450 calculated at an hourly rate of £25 per hour for all staff time incurred in:

- i. Determining whether information is held
- ii. Locating it
- iii. Retrieving it
- iv. Extracting the information to be disclosed from the other information.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for your request.

By way of assistance, I can confirm that if you were to remove the terms “Puma” and “Leopard” from the above, the number of results may be reduced enough that a manual review of the records could be carried out to identify information held in relation to your request. If you wish to submit a request on this basis, please let us know.

If you are not satisfied with this response or any actions taken in dealing with your request, you have the right to ask that we review your case under our internal procedure. Please note that a request for an internal review must be made within 20 working days of the response to your original request.

If you decide to request that such a review is undertaken and following this process you are still unsatisfied, you then have the right to direct your complaint to the Information Commissioner for consideration.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following means:

Website - <https://ico.org.uk/>

Call their helpline - 0303 123 1113

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Post –

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary