



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_24_0412

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 10/05/2024

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_24_0412

On 15/04/2024 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

Wish for information as to how many police dog handlers Gloucestershire Constabulary have, as well as how many of each type of police dog job type (such as general purpose, drug detection, firearms support, explosive etc) the force has to please. Can you also tell me where the unit is based in the county to please, plus whether the unit operates on a five shift or six shift system.

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

Gloucestershire Constabulary currently has the following –

- 14 licensed dog handlers.
- 13 General Purpose Dogs
- 6 Drug detection Dogs
- 4 Firearms Support Dogs
- 1 Explosives Detection Dog

The unit operates on a 5-shift pattern.

With regards to where the unit is based, this information is exempt by virtue of Section 31.

Section 17 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.

The exemption applied to the above is as follow:

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

Section 31 is a qualified and prejudice-based exemption and as such, subject to a harm and public interest test which can be seen below:

Harm

Release via the Freedom of Information Act is deemed a release into the public domain. Therefore, information that would allow criminals to accurately evaluate the capability of Gloucestershire Police and the various law enforcements tactics we employ will not be disclosed. Such detailed knowledge would allow criminals to take measures to target the force and undermine the Police service's ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime, which can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

Public Interest Test

Considerations Favouring Disclosure

There is a legitimate public interest in the public being satisfied that the Police are equipped to deliver services to the public when and where required, and therefore knowing the location of the Dog Unit would satisfy the public that resources are available within a timely manner throughout the force area and also shows transparency of Police operations.

Considerations Favouring Non-Disclosure

The Police Service has a duty to deliver effective law enforcement ensuring that the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders and administration of justice is carried out appropriately.

Disclosing information regarding locations of specific police assets may reveal what resources are available, and enable police strength to be determined and circumvented by those intent on committing crime. The release of this information could therefore provide a tactical advantage to offenders which would negatively impact on public safety and undermine the policing purpose.

Balance Test

It is not in the public interest for law enforcement tactics and operational capability to be compromised with the disclosure of the locations of specific units.

Such a disclosure that would allow those with criminal intent the ability to build up a mosaic picture of force capabilities and resources which could be used to undermine law enforcement. This would not be in the public interest.

Disclosure is also not in the public interest as it places the community at increased unnecessary risk of harm and impacts on police resources. This is especially the case if additional tactics/resources need to be put in place to counter harm caused by an adverse FOIA request regarding police resources.

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