



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_24_575

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 13/06/2024

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_24_0575

On 11/06/2024 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I would like to know of all reported big cat sightings in Gloucestershire, I.e leopard, panther, lynx, puma, mountain lion, cougar, big cat, jaguar, also I would like to know times, dates and location of the reported sightings,

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 previous similar requests, I can confirm that the information you have requested may be held by Gloucestershire Constabulary, however we do not record such instances statistically, nor is the information held in a format that would allow extraction within the permitted time constraints.

Previously, a search has been conducted of Gloucestershire Constabulary's Incident Recording System for 10 years (2013-2023) worth of data and using the terms that have also been outlined in your request. This returned over 1,000 incidents recorded within that date range. I can confirm that information from the Incident Recording System goes back to 2010, therefore the date range for this request is longer than the previous, and would return more search results.

This large number of records 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 form part of commonly used words and would also return a large number of records.

In order to ascertain if any of the identified incidents related to a 'big cat' sighting, all of 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 reduce the time frame of the request (i.e. 2 or 3 years), 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