



Our Ref: 001579/21

Your Ref:

Address Correspondence to: Information Management

Date 03 June 2021

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I write further to your request for information received 10/05/2021.

I note you seek access to the following information:

*I would like to request the following information about how much money your police force has spent on buying unmarked police cars.
Details I would like are a breakdown on make/model, how many have been purchased and are in use, and the total amount of money spent on each make/model.*

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted within Leicestershire Police to locate information relevant to your request.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am unable to supply the information you have requested.

I can confirm, pursuant to s1(1)(a) of FOIA that this Force does hold the information you have requested.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Leicestershire 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 relate to your request are as follows:

- Section 31 – Law Enforcement

Section 31 is a prejudice based, qualified exemption and there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Public Interest Test

The public interest is not what interests the public, but what will be of greater good if released to the community as a whole. It is not in the public interest to disclose

information that may compromise Leicestershire Police's ability to fulfil its core functions.

Section 31 – Evidence of Harm

Under the Act, we cannot, and do not request the motives of any application for information. We have no doubt that the vast majority of requests made under the Act are legitimate.

However, in disclosing information to one applicant, we are expressing a willingness to provide it to anyone in the world. This means that a disclosure to a genuinely interested and concerned person automatically opens it up for a similar disclosure, including those who would use the information to gain an advantage over the police.

In considering whether or not this information should be disclosed, consideration has been given to the potential harm that could be caused by disclosure.

It is recognised that public awareness favours disclosure to allow members of the public to have an idea of vehicles held in our fleet. However I would contend that efficient and effective conduct of the Police service and public safety favours retention of information relating to numbers of covert vehicles owned by the Force.

Section 31 – Considerations favouring disclosure

There is a public interest in disclosure of the requested information as knowledge is already in the public domain that covert unmarked vehicles are used within the Police service. The information requested would enable the public to see how public funds are spent during the course of operational policing and allow them to scrutinise the areas funds are spent in and the police's ability to react to certain crimes.

Section 31 – Considerations favouring non - disclosure

As you will appreciate a proportion of vehicles for certain purposes will be unmarked covert vehicles, if the intricate details of such vehicles were released to the world this could enable those minded to commit criminal activity knowledge to aid in their efforts.

Providing the details requested relating to unmarked, covert unmarked vehicles would allow those who are part of the criminal fraternity to have knowledge of our capabilities and numbers in Policing crimes that are being covertly investigated. In turn this would prejudice substantially the ability for our officers to prevent and detect crime and apprehend offenders.

Conclusion

I believe that on balance it is **not** in the public interest to release the further information which you have requested on this occasion for the reasons stated above. I appreciate that this is not the decision you had hoped for but I must consider the wider position under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which I feel necessitates the need to refuse your request under this legislation.

Leicestershire Police provides you the right to ask for a re-examination of your request under its review procedure. Letters should be addressed to Information Manager, Corporate Services Department at the above address. If you decide to request such a review and having followed the Force's full process you are still dissatisfied, then you have the right to direct your comments to the Information Commissioner who will give it consideration.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Officer
Leicestershire Police

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