

17 October 2024

FOI Ref 17273

Request - You asked us the following:

Under FOI rules, please could you provide me with the following information regarding unauthorised car meets.

Split by calendar year from 1 January 2022 to date, please provide the following;

- Number of reports of unauthorised car meets
- Number of times officers have attended unauthorised car meets
- Number of arrests made at unauthorised car meets

In addition, please can you advise if you have any Section 35 dispersal orders in place to tackle unauthorised car meets? If so how many and when were they first authorised?

We received your request on 18/09/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

The following exemptions have been applied:

- Section 12(1) where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit.
- Section 12(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 prescribed limit'.

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which we can readily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. Within our incident recording system, there is no field for recording unauthorised car meets. Therefore, for the time period requested, there have been in excess of 38,000 incidents reported which may relate to an unauthorised car meet. In order to determine whether the incident reported involved an authorised car meet, the record for each incident would require manual review. In addition, as an arrest could have been made for any reason at an unauthorised car meet, the record for each arrest carried out within the time period requested would require manual review which equates to over 49,000 arrests to review. Furthermore, Section 35 dispersal orders are manually recorded, and therefore each record of a Section 35 dispersal order would need to be reviewed in order to establish whether these are in place to tackle unauthorised car meets. There are over 550 that would need to be manually reviewed for the time period requested.



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From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 3 minutes to review each incident report, 3 minutes to review each arrest record and 4 minutes to review each Section 35 dispersal order to answer this request, this would equate to over 4,386 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the Freedom of Information Act by some considerable margin.

Advice and assistance

Section 16 of the Act places an obligation upon the Authority to provide advice and assistance, in order to comply with this obligation please see below.

Unfortunately, we cannot suggest a way in which your request could be simplified or pared down in order to bring it within the confines of the time and cost threshold.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response.

If you would like us to carry out a review of our response, please let us know within two months of the date of receipt of this email, review requests should be addressed to:

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit