



5 September 2024

FOI Ref 16846

Request - You asked us the following:

1. Does your force have the following units and please can you answer the additional questions:

- a. Tactical Surveillance Unit– Yes/ No
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: _____
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: _____
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____
- b. Counter Terrorism Unit– Yes/ No
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: _____
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: _____
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____
- c. Armed Response Unit– Yes/ No
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: _____
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: _____
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____
- d. Special Operations Unit– Yes/ No
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: _____
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: _____
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____
- e. Organised Crimes Unit– Yes/ No
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: _____
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: _____
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____

2. Please provide an up to date organisation chart of the Unit Structure of the Force.

We received your request on 03/05/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Please find below our response.

Staffordshire Police holds the following requested information.

- 1. Does your force have the following units and please can you answer the additional questions – **Partial information held.**



- a. Tactical Surveillance Unit– Yes/ No – **No information held.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **No information held.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **No information held.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **No information held.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ – **No information held.**
- b. Counter Terrorism Unit– Yes/ No – **Information held.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **Information held.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head:– **Information held.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number– **Information held.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ – **Information held.**
- c. Armed Response Unit– Yes/ No – **Information held.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **Information held.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **Information held.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **Information held.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ – **Information held.**
- d. Special Operations Unit– Yes/ No – **Information held.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **No information held.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **No information held.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **No information held.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ – **No information held.**
- e. Organised Crimes Unit– Yes/ No – **No information held.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **No information held.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **No information held.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **No information held.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ - **No information held.**
- 2. Please provide an up to date organisation chart of the Unit Structure of the Force. – **No information held.**

Staffordshire Police discloses/withholds the following information.

- 1. Does your force have the following units and please can you answer the additional questions. – **Disclosed, please see below.**
 - a. Tactical Surveillance Unit– Yes/ No – **No information held.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **No information held.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **No information held.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **No information held.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ – **No information held.**

Staffordshire Police do not have a 'Tactical Surveillance Unit'. Other units within the force may fall under this criteria.



- b. Counter Terrorism Unit– Yes/ No – **Disclosed, Yes.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **Disclosed – Yes, West Midlands.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head:– **Withheld.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number:– **Withheld**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ - **Withheld.**
- c. Armed Response Unit– Yes/ No – **Disclosed ,Yes.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **Disclosed, No.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **Withheld.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **Withheld.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ - **Withheld.**
- d. Special Operations Unit– Yes/ No – **Disclosed, no.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **Not applicable.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **Not applicable.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **Not applicable.**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ – **Not applicable.**
- e. Organised Crimes Unit– Yes/ No – **No information held.**
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: – **No information held.**
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: – **No information held.**
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: – **No information held**
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ - **No information held.**

Staffordshire Police do not have an 'Organised Crime Unit'. Other units within the force may fall under this criteria.

- 2. Please provide an up to date organisation chart of the Unit Structure of the Force. – **No information held.**

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

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

A Freedom of Information Act request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself and any information disclosed, are considered suitable for open publication. This is because, under the Act, any information disclosed is released into the wider public domain, effectively to the world, not just to an individual. Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant, by providing budgetary costs assigned to counter-terrorism could allow those who seek to cause harm to members of the public to gain an

understanding of the level of resources employed to mitigate the threat of an attack. This could then allow terrorists/extremists with the time and inclination over a period of years to try to map whether costs are increasing or decreasing year on year.

To disclose the requested information would have a negative effect on the safety of the general public should the release of information be used and manipulated to try and attack individuals and

establishments, for example through mapping counter terrorism budget across forces. Disclosure may lead to an attack on establishments within locations where one force is viewed to have lower costs per year on counter terrorism, as these locations may be viewed as a 'weak/vulnerable target' with less policing resources allocated.

The threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It should be recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The UK faces a sustained threat from violent terrorists and extremists. Since 2006, the UK Government have published the threat level, which is currently set to 'substantial' meaning "a terrorist attack is likely."

In consideration of the ramifications of this threat level, it would not be wise to release details of the budget allocated to counter terrorism units, as to do so could compromise the current or future law enforcement role of the police. Modern-day policing is intelligence-led and information of this nature, needs to be treated with extreme sensitivity as it could have a detrimental effect on the operational effectiveness of the police. There are significant risks associated with the release of such information as this may provide those seeking to commit criminal acts with an advantage over the police, as the information can indeed be viewed as operationally sensitive. Disclosure could have a negative effect on police's ability to provide the necessary service required should the release of information be used and manipulated by those with criminal or terrorist intent to try and attack individuals or establishments. To disclose the requested information would therefore provide the opportunity of disrupting police activity.

As stated previously, the UK faces a serious and sustained threat from violent extremists. The police have a duty to promote the safety of all individuals. Therefore, to release information held would allow interested parties to gain an awareness of policing decisions used to safeguard national security. National security encompasses a wide spectrum and it is our duty to protect the people within the UK and abroad. Public safety is of paramount importance to the policing purpose and must be taken into account in deciding whether to disclose information. Providing details relating to budgetary costs in this specific area, could potentially be misused proving detrimental to national security.

In the current environment of an increased threat of terrorist activity, providing any details that could assist an extremist, terrorist faction or fixated individual who have the relevant time and know-how, would put people's lives at risk.

The following exemptions have been applied:

- Section 31 (1) (a) (b) - Law Enforcement.
- Section 24(2) – National Security.

Information is exempt from disclosure under Section 31 (1) (a) (b) where the release of Information would, or would likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/ or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Sections 24 and 31 are qualified exemptions and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest in confirmation or denial.

- Section 40(2) Personal Information

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption which means that there is no need to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure; neither is it subject to a public interest test.

To release personal or third-party information held by Staffordshire Police, would breach the data protection principles; namely –

- Data is lawfully and fairly processed.
- Processed in line with an individual's rights.
- Data is secure.

Personal and third-party information cannot be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Disclosure under Freedom of Information is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant.

- Section 21(1) - Information reasonably accessible by other means.

Section 21 is an absolute, class-based exemption and as such there is no requirement to quantify the harm that may arise from the disclosure, nor is there a requirement to perform a Public Interest Test.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure for Section 24

The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it. Disclosing the information would allow individuals to contribute to more accurate public debate on matters that are of public relevance - in this case information pertinent to counter-terrorism. The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and what measures are in place in safeguarding national security.

Factors favouring non-disclosure for Section 24

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 the service's ability to accomplish one of its core functions of national security.

To release any policing arrangements of this nature would render security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infra-structure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to either specific individuals or the general public as a whole. In order to safeguard national security, there is a need for the police to protect information held as to release it would likely have a detrimental effect on policing resources, particularly in the sensitive area of national security.

Factors favouring disclosure for Section 31

Where public funds are being spent, there is a public interest in accountability and justifying the use of public money. For the police to be fully transparent and open, there is a public interest in providing

information pertinent to budgetary allocation and in this case in regards to the funding for counter terrorism in 2024/25. To provide this figure and any breakdown of how the budget is allocated would provide the public with the knowledge that the police are appropriately using public funds to carry out their duties, specifically to combat terrorism.

Factors favouring non-disclosure for Section 31

By providing counter terrorism budgetary information and a breakdown of how this is allocated within Staffordshire Police, would mean that there is a strong possibility that the current or future law enforcement role of police counter terrorism units will be compromised by the release of details. This would therefore, hinder the prevention and detection of crime. It can be argued that there are significant risks associated with providing information in relation to monetary resources pertaining to counter terrorism, since they may reveal the relative vulnerability of what we may be trying to protect. To disclose the funding allocated for one year and then further disclosures for other years via repeat requests, would allow one to calculate whether funding is on the increase or decrease. Disclosure would therefore over time be releasing sensitive operational information into the public domain, which would enable those with the time, capacity and inclination to try and map strategies used by the police. Thus having a detrimental effect on our ability to prevent and detect crime.

Balancing Test

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police Service will not divulge information if to do so would place the safety of the public at risk, undermine National Security or law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in transparency and demonstrating that the police are justified and accountable in the use of funds to conduct the vital work they do and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by terrorist activity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police operations in the highly sensitive area of combating terrorism and extremism.

As much as there is a public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Any disclosure of information relating to the police's budget for this specialist area would undermine our ability to combat terrorism, which are sensitive issues of intelligence value to a terrorist. Disclosure would compromise the role, function and resources of the police and ultimately place individuals at risk at a national and international level.

Therefore, it is our opinion that for these reasons the balancing test favours non-disclosure of the requested information.

Advice and assistance

In order to comply with our obligations under Section 16 of the Act, the obligation to provide advice and assistance, please find below links to the information requested.

- **Please see the below link which discloses some of budgets for Staffordshire Police, under 'Browse meeting and committees within the minutes of the meetings some budgets can be seen'.**
[Committee details - Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel - Staffordshire County Council](#)



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of this email and should be addressed to:

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