

9 September 2024

FOI Ref 17110

Request - You asked us the following:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information:

i) I would like to know about the total number of cases of livestock theft reported in the calendar years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 (the latest available). Please could these cases be provided with a yearly breakdown in spreadsheet format.

ii) Of the above cases, please could you tell me how many involved the theft of sheep. If this is not possible, alternatively could you provide the number of these theft cases where a keyword search of 'sheep' is conducted. Could these results also be provided with a yearly breakdown in a separate column.

iii) Please could you tell me how many cases of livestock theft (of any kind) resulted in a criminal conviction, also with a yearly breakdown. PLEASE DISREGARD (iii) if this would exceed the cost/time threshold of the FOI Act.

We received your request on 31/07/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Please find below our response.

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

Staffordshire Police discloses/withholds the following information.

- I would like to know about the total number of cases of livestock theft reported in the calendar years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 (the latest available). Please could these cases be provided with a yearly breakdown in spreadsheet format.
- Of the above cases, please could you tell me how many involved the theft of sheep. If this is not possible, alternatively could you provide the number of these theft cases where a keyword search of 'sheep' is conducted. Could these results also be provided with a yearly breakdown in a separate column.
- Please could you tell me how many cases of livestock theft (of any kind) resulted in a criminal conviction, also with a yearly breakdown. PLEASE DISREGARD (iii) if this would exceed the cost/time threshold of the FOI Act.

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which we can easily retrieve information from our systems to answer this request. For the time period requested, there have been in excess of 77,000 occurrences which have been recorded as Theft. In order to ascertain whether the items stolen was 'Livestock', would require each offence to be manually reviewed. Therefore, to extract this data would require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each record. From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 2 minutes to review each record to answer this request, this would equate to over 2,566 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI Act by some considerable margin.

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'.

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.

In order to assist in refining your request, data can be provided from our Crime/Occurrence recording system, whereby a free text search for "sheep" has been populated within the specified time period, and where the Home Office category is listed as Theft. However, please note further exemptions may apply.

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.



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit

A safe and confident Staffordshire