

Our Ref: FOI 22164
Your Ref: FOI 22128
Date: 25 November 2025

Internal Review

Re: Request for internal review of response to application for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, original request first notified to Staffordshire Police on 18/11/2025.

We refer to the above request which was expressed in the following terms:

Can you please clarify in your answer to question 1 you said there are "additional categories not included" can you clarify what these additional categories are and how many electric vehicles are in each.

Original request FOI 22109

Thanks for your response, I have now amended my request to the following:

1. How many combustion engine vehicles do you have in your fleet, please break these down into the following
 - a. Patrol and Response Cars
 - b. Unmarked Vehicles
 - c. Public Order Vehicles
 - d. Motorcycles
2. How many Electric vehicles do you have in your fleet, please break these down into the following
 - a. Patrol and Response Cars
 - b. Unmarked Vehicles
 - c. Public Order Vehicles
 - d. Motorcycles
3. If you have electric vehicles in your fleet, how many dedicated charging spots do you have?

I don't think this will exceed the 18 hour time and cost threshold so I hope these can now be answered.

Further to the above, we also note the following comments made within your request for Internal Review.

I believe Section 31(1)(a)(b) has been incorrectly applied, and that both the harm test and the Public Interest Test have not been properly executed. I therefore request that the review addresses the issues below.

Your refusal asserts that disclosing the “additional categories” of fleet vehicles, and the number of electric vehicles within each, would reveal “tactical specialist roles”. However, my request did not seek operational deployment, covert categories, or any live-use information. It asked only for administrative, static fleet composition information that falls squarely within routine asset management.

You have not demonstrated how the disclosure of numerical totals alone would *specifically* prejudice law enforcement. The FOIA requires a real and significant likelihood of prejudice, not a hypothetical or generalised assertion. The explanation provided does not meet this legal threshold.

The ICO has repeatedly cautioned forces against using Section 31 to withhold internal resource information that does not relate directly to operational decision-making. In Decision Notice IC-200031-R3V8, the Commissioner explicitly rejected the use of Section 31 to withhold administrative fleet information in a similar context.

I therefore request that the reviewing officer reconsider whether Section 31 is engaged at all. Your refusal relies heavily on the speculative argument that criminals could combine this information with other data to infer capability. However, you have not identified which specific data point in the requested totals would cause this prejudice.

Courts have repeatedly stated that authorities must justify the exemption for each individual element of the information. The Upper Tribunal in *Montague v Information Commissioner and Department for International Trade* confirmed that aggregation cannot be used to artificially inflate the perception of harm. Fleet totals do not identify specialist vehicles, reveal operational readiness, or expose deployment strategy. They simply account for publicly funded assets.

For these reasons, I request that the refusal be overturned and the information disclosed. I also request that the review officer provides a detailed explanation of the steps taken during the review, as this will assist me should I need to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner’s Office or onward to tribunal.

Our Response

Upon review of your request for information under the Freedom of Information provision referenced above and all corresponding communication, we are of the opinion that the response issued, alongside all clarification provided, fully answers the terms of your request.

We also confirm that the application of the exemption outlined within this response is fully justified, and that the explanations and rationale for its application conveyed clearly and unequivocally.

However, in order to address your further queries upon the application of exemptions, specifically Section 31(1)(a)(b), please find below further expansion on this.

In addressing your subsequent request for the additional categories of vehicles not initially included within our original response, we must be mindful of the information previously released into the public domain. This data included details of the total number of both electric and combustion engine vehicles forming the vehicle fleet for Staffordshire Police (SP). This was then subsequently divided into the categories specified within your request.

Our initial response provided this information with the caveat that further categories existed which were not specified within your request – this would therefore explain the difference between the overall number of fleet vehicles requested and the totals provided for the specified categories.

Your subsequent request then goes on to require the categories not initially disclosed, provision of which would highlight the number and category type for the vehicles not initially requested, namely those employed within specialist tactical roles. When compared with the data previously released, disclosure of this information would allow calculations to be made, from which it would be possible to determine the number of vehicles employed within these specialist roles and therefore release the current tactical capabilities of SP into the public domain.

When placing information into the public domain, we must be mindful of the ramifications this may have. It is known that members of the criminal fraternity, and individuals intent on causing disruption or harm, monitor freedom of information disclosures; therefore, placing such sensitive information into the public domain would constitute an unnecessary, avoidable and unreasonable level of threat to the public and the core functions of policing, namely: the effective delivery of law enforcement, the apprehension and prosecution of offenders and protection of the communities we serve.

For these reasons, Sec 31(1)(a)(b) has been employed, as outlined and justified within our initial response.

Please be advised that all FOI requests and response letters are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

If you are not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

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