

9 September 2025

FOI Ref 21703

**Request - You asked us the following:**

I am submitting this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please provide information held by your force regarding the procurement and use of Plasan Sandcat Tigris armoured vehicles (including any variant referred to as "Sandcat").

1. Procurement activity (October 2023 – present)

- a) The number of Sandcat Tigris (or Sandcat variant) vehicles ordered.
- b) The number of such vehicles delivered and currently held by the force.
- c) Please confirm explicitly if no such vehicles have been ordered, delivered, or are planned for purchase.

2. Operational status

- a) Of any vehicles acquired, how many are available for deployment?
- b) How many are not available for deployment (for example, undergoing modifications, repair, or awaiting approval)?

If you consider releasing this information to be exempt under Section 31 (Law Enforcement) or any other FOIA exemption, please still release all other requested information and provide your reasoning and the outcome of the public interest test.

3. Financial expenditure

- a) The total cost (including VAT and any associated modifications, fittings, or logistics) for all Sandcat Tigris (or Sandcat variant) vehicles purchased in the above period.
- b) If vehicles were ordered but payment is not yet complete, please confirm the current status of payments.

4. Supplier/ procurement route

- a) For each purchase, please confirm whether it was made directly from Plasan Sasa Ltd or via the UK distributor Ricardo UK Ltd.
- b) If supplier details are considered exempt under Section 43 (commercial interests) or Section 31 (law enforcement), please still release all other requested information and explain the exemption applied, including the public interest test outcome.

We received your request on 07/08/2025 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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

**Staffordshire Police can neither confirm nor deny whether information relevant to this request is held, as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:**

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

- Section 24 (2) - National Security
- Section 31 (3) - Law Enforcement

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.

### **Harm:**

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. In order to achieve these objectives we are allowed to use reasonable force where necessary to do so. In the ultimate circumstance this can include the use of lethal force but the rule of thumb is to use the minimum amount necessary to achieve the objective. In reality this equates to the use of the minimum amount of force required to overcome the violence, used or threatened, by those wishing to cause harm.

As part of this equation we also have to pay heed to the Human Rights Convention particularly Article 2 – The Right to life. The law and regulations relating to the use of force are detailed within the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) document for Armed Policing.

Armed Policing is a highly specialised area of firearms deployment and weapons training. It is an emotive subject under constant scrutiny and, by default, is always in the public eye. There is a long history of excellent practice nationally and Armed Policing is regarded as being at the forefront of firearms issues.

Any release under FOIA is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm or not that information is held in relation to this request would reveal whether or not Staffordshire Police has Plascan Sandcat armoured vehicles. Such awareness would reveal tactical capability and is likely to influence the criminals, which may include terrorists or terrorist organisations, who are prepared to resort to the use of extreme force in order to avoid detection and capture. By fully knowing whether or not these vehicles are used by Staffordshire Police will enable offenders to ensure they are armed in a way as to overcome the police response.

This creates if you will an 'arms race' to the detriment of the criminals themselves, as the use of lethal weapons becomes more and more the only resolution option, and endangers both the public and officers themselves. This is best evidenced by the fact that the United Kingdom, even in these violent times, has been able to maintain a basically unarmed Police Service, with the resulting benefits this delivers when compared with other countries, such as America, where armed conflict resolution with law enforcement agencies depends on who has the most effective weapons.

Furthermore, the threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It is generally recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The current UK threat level from international terrorism, based on intelligence, is assessed as Substantial, which means that a terrorist attack is likely.

In order to counter criminal and terrorist behaviour it is vital that the police have the ability to adopt techniques and procedures commensurate with the perceived threat, and deploy accordingly. The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the police have a clear responsibility to prevent crime, arrest those responsible for committing crime or those that plan to commit crime. However, there is also a duty of care to the public at large. The UK Police Service has a positive undertaking to protect the public from harm and that duty of care to all involved must be the overriding consideration.

The protection of the public is of paramount importance and Staffordshire Police will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so could compromise Law Enforcement.

### **Public Interest Considerations**

#### **Section 24(2) National Security**

##### **Factors for disclosure**

The public are entitled to know why decisions are made and how resources are distributed within an area of policing. Confirmation would inform the public that the police provide an appropriate level of tactical armed response when required. This would provide transparency with regard to the use of public funds inasmuch as the funds are being used correctly and appropriately ensuing the Armed Policing Departments within individual forces are equipped adequately.

##### **Factors against disclosure**

Whilst there is a public interest in providing reassurance that the police are appropriately and effectively dealing with threats posed by terrorist organisations, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding national security and the welfare and safety of the general public.

Taking into account the current security climate within the United Kingdom, no information which may aid a terrorist should be disclosed. To what extent this information may aid a terrorist is unknown, but it is clear that it will have an impact on a force's ability to monitor terrorist activity. The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection, as well of the safety of their officers and staff. The only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain. Confirmation or denial has the potential to undermine ongoing and future operations to protect the Security of the United Kingdom, e.g. counter terrorism activity. The risk of significant harm or even death to the community at large would be increased.

Any incident that results from such a disclosure would by default affect National Security.

#### **Section 31(3) Law Enforcement**

##### **Factors for disclosure**

There is a public interest in being made aware of all the facts relating to Armed Policing in order to ensure complete openness and transparency as there is often speculation and rumour with regard to the use of firearms within the Police Service. In this case revealing whether or not specific armoured vehicles are in

service force-by-force would provide transparency and may enhance public debate into this area of policing.

### **Factors against disclosure**

The deployment of authorised firearms officers is measured and authorised by chief officers after careful consideration in order to protect the public and apprehend individuals who use lethal weapons as part of their criminality. To confirm or deny information is held would reveal tactical capability, or lack thereof, which places the police at a tactical disadvantage. In addition, confirmation or denial may also 'create' a fear of crime within the general public relating to armed policing.

Staffordshire Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure revealed information to the world (by citing an exemption or stating no information held) that would undermine the security of the National Infrastructure, offenders, including terrorist organisations, could use this to their advantage which would compromise public safety and more worryingly encourage offenders to carry out further crimes.

The risk to public safety cannot be ignored and Staffordshire Police has a responsibility to ensure safety of individuals is protected at all times, as detailed within the harm.

### **Balance Test**

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing resources for specialist departments and providing reassurance that the Police Service is appropriately and effectively placing resources into Armed Policing, there is a strong public interest in knowing that policing activity with regard to the delivery of law enforcement is appropriate and balanced, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

In addition, we also need to take into account the victims of terrorism. Public safety is of paramount importance and any information which would place individuals at risk and compromise the National Security of the United Kingdom, no matter how generic, is not in the public interest. The effective delivery of operational law enforcement and the National Security of the UK is crucial and of a fundamental duty to Staffordshire Police. Any disclosure would have a negative impact on law enforcement and national security.

As much as there is a public interest in knowing that the delivery of law enforcement is appropriate and balanced, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test outweighs the need to confirm information is held and falls in favour of issuing a neither confirm nor deny refusal.

No inference can be taken from this refusal that information does or does not exist.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

### **Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure**

#### **1. Who Can Ask for a Review**

Any person who has requested information from Staffordshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

## **2. How to Request a Review**

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

[foi@staffordshire.police.uk](mailto:foi@staffordshire.police.uk)

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team  
Staffordshire Police HQ  
PO Box 3167  
Stafford  
ST16 9JZ

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Information Access Team within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

### **1. Review Procedure**

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by a Supervisor who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Information Access Team will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The independent Supervisor will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

### **2. Conclusion of the Appeal**

On completion of the review the Independent Supervisor will reply to the appellant with the result of the review. If the appellant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following link:

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

Freedom of Information  
Information Access Team