



7th June 2018

Freedom of Information Request Reference N^o: FOI 001674/18

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 9th May 2018 in which you sought access to the following information:

- 1 Could you give me details of all fires in police vehicles (engines) in the past three years.
- 2 In the aforementioned cases could you give me make and model and age of the vehicle, and it's use within the force.
- 3 The cause of the fire - if determined.

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 15th May 2018.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have located the following information as relevant to your request.

During the last 3 years there has been one fire in a van. The van was approximately 9 years old and was used by the Protective Services Command. The cause of the fire, which started in the area of the engine bay, has not been established.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) are to provide you, the applicant, with a notice which:

- (a) States that fact
- (b) Specifies the exemption in question, and
- (c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The van in question is an unmarked police van and therefore the make and model is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:-

- **Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement**

Section 31 is a qualified and prejudice based exemption and I am therefore obliged to articulate the harm in this information being disclosed and assess the public interest in disclosure.

Harm for Section 31

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies will use both unmarked and covert Police vehicles for anonymity where there is an operational requirement to do so, Whilst not questioning the motives for this request, once information has been released, the response will be published on the Constabularies external websites and will therefore be publicly available. The Constabularies will often use unmarked vehicles when attending locations in order to carry out enquiries. This will

include reports of incidents at home addresses which are sensitive and will require police to attend in unmarked vehicles.

Therefore releasing the details of unmarked police vehicles would undermine the law enforcement capabilities of the Constabularies.

Factors favouring disclosure

Information which relates directly to the operational effectiveness and efficiencies of the Constabularies is a positive factor favouring disclosure. Providing details of vehicles which are used by the Constabularies would show how public funds are used and would allow for accurate public debate.

Openness and transparency are fundamental principles of the Freedom of Information Act.

Factors favouring non-disclosure

Although public knowledge of the Constabularies capabilities is a positive factor, this is not unlimited and there are aspects of Policing which must remain intact to ensure the process is not undermined by disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act. There are occasions when it is necessary to attend locations in unmarked or covert vehicles in order to carry out enquiries. If the details of unmarked or covert vehicles are published by the Constabularies this could identify locations and individuals, including victims of crime. Victims and witnesses may be reluctant to provide information if they believe they could be identified.

Balance Test

Whilst there is a public interest in the use of public funds, the Police Service has a duty to ensure public safety is not compromised. Disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act should always ensure this is maintained.

Any details of unmarked or covert vehicles that the Constabularies have on their fleet would of course be of interest to individuals involved in criminal activity. Therefore it is essential that any disclosure is carefully considered.

It is the Constabularies decision that the balance lies in non-disclosure of this information and the exemption at section 31(1) is engaged.

This response will be published on the Constabularies web-site under the Freedom of Information pages:-

<https://www.norfolk.police.uk/about-us/our-data/disclosure-log>

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/services/freedom-information/disclosure-logs>

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Amanda Gibson, FOI Decision Maker, quoting the reference number shown above.

A full copy of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) can be viewed on the 'Office of Public Sector Information' web-site;

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/>

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies are not responsible for the content, or the reliability, of the website referenced. The Constabulary cannot guarantee that this link will work all of the time, and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.

Your Right to Request a Review of Decisions Made Under the Terms of the
Freedom of Information Act (2000).

If you are unhappy with how your request has been handled, or if you think the decision is incorrect, you have the right to ask the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary to review their decision.

Ask Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies to look at the decision again.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), regarding access to information, you must notify the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary that you are requesting a review within 20 days of the date of its response to your Freedom of Information request. Requests for a review should be made in writing and addressed to:

*Freedom of Information Decision Maker
Information Management Department
Norfolk Constabulary
Operations and Communications Centre
Jubilee House
Falconers Chase
Wymondham
Norfolk NR18 0WW
OR
Email: freedomofinformation@norfolk.pnn.police.uk*

In all possible circumstances Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary will aim to respond to your request for us to look at our decision again within 20 working days of receipt of your request for an internal review.

The Information Commissioner.

After lodging a request for a review with Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you can apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk or contact them at the address shown below:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700