



3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

### **Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 000514/20**

I write in connection with your request for information received by the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in which you sought access to the following information:

- Q1 How many road vehicles (of all types, such as vans and patrol cars) did Norfolk/Suffolk Constabulary operate, as of 31 December 2019?
- Q2 How many road accidents (crashes, scrapes and other damage) did all these vehicles incur during 2019?
- Q3 What was the value of the damage from all these accidents (in repairs, insurance claims and value of written-off vehicles)?

Please provide your response as simple figures to answer each question, if possible.

### **Response to your Request**

The response provided below is correct as of 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies have considered your request and our response is below:

- Q1 As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, Norfolk Constabulary had 588 vehicles and Suffolk Constabulary 515. These numbers exclude any vehicles that are used in a covert capacity.
- Q2 During 2019, there were 168 incidents of damage to Norfolk Constabulary vehicles and 199 for Suffolk Constabulary vehicles. These figures do not include windscreen only damage.
- Q3 The total costs relating to the above, including third part damage, third party solicitors costs, our own vehicle damage cost and solicitors costs, are provided below:

Norfolk paid £227,654.99 with outstanding reserves held of £37,456.42

Suffolk paid £211,256.22 with outstanding reserves held of £58,552.75

The outstanding reserves are held in respect of claims not yet finalised.

With regard to question 1, the number of covert vehicles have not been provided due to exemptions within the Act.

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

- (a) States that fact
- (b) Specifies the exemption(s) in question and

(c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption(s) applies

The information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

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

Section 31 is a qualified, prejudice-based exemption and I am therefore obliged to articulate the harm in disclosure of the information and carry out a public interest test.

Harm for section 31

Disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act are published and are therefore accessible to anyone who has internet access. For this reason, it is essential that careful consideration is given prior to any disclosure.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies will have vehicles that are used in a covert capacity, therefore releasing any details would undermine the law enforcement capabilities of the Constabularies and therefore Section 31 is engaged.

Section 31- factors favouring disclosure

Vehicles are purchased using public funds therefore providing the information would indicate the spend on vehicles. Openness and transparency are fundamental principles of the Freedom of Information Act. Knowledge of the Constabularies capability will ensure transparency is maintained and the public can identify whether funds are being appropriately managed.

Section 31 - factors favouring non-disclosure

Disclosure of information that can affect the current and future law enforcement capabilities of the Constabularies will always favour non-disclosure. Vehicles will be purchased for a specific purpose and if unmarked/covert vehicles are identified by a disclosure under the FOIA, this would be a waste of public funds as replacements would need to be purchased.

Where such vehicles have been identified, this could place members of the public, including victims and witnesses and members of the Constabulary at risk.

The identification of covert vehicles would jeopardise any ongoing and future investigations and operations.

Balancing test

Providing details of covert vehicles increases the likelihood of individuals identifying vehicles which may be used to undertake operations and investigations.

The Constabularies recognise that there is a public interest in the way in which public funds are being spent and the types of vehicles being purchased. However, we would not disclose information which would assist those involved in criminal activity to have prior knowledge of covert Police operational capabilities, thereby compromising the prevention and detection of crime.

The Police Service has a duty to ensure public safety is never compromised and disclosures under FOI should always ensure this is maintained.

It is the Constabularies decision that the balance lies in non-disclosure and the application of the exemption is maintained.

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 40 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](mailto: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](http://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