



Freedom of Information Request Reference N°: FOI 002241-19

I write in connection with your request for information received by Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies on 17 June 2019 which you sought access to the following information:

"I would like to please request the data for the following football clubs under your authority:

Ipswich Town Football Club

Norwich City Football Club

- 1. I would like to please request information regarding the highest total cost to police a single home match for each of the above clubs between 10/08/18 and 12/05/2019. I would like to request the date of the game and the opponent football club please.*
- 2. Where possible, I would also like to request information regarding the total number of police offers deployed to each of the 9 games provided in part 2, and also the total number of arrests made in direct relation to the individual games provided in part 2.*
- 3. Also, where possible, I would like to request information on the total cost contributed by each of the 9 football clubs noted in part 1, towards the policing of the 9 games provided in part 2.*

Could I please request that the above information is presented in either an excel file format or as a raw text file, in the format:

Football club / Opponent / Date / Cost of policing the game / Number of police officers deployed / Total cost of policing contributed by the home football club."

Response to your Request

The response provided below is correct as of 17 June 2019

Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies have considered your request for information and the response is below.

The costs for policing football matches are not held in their entirety as the only costs that are recorded within the financial data are those captured under a specific operational code. This expenditure cost includes officer overtime, transport, subsistence and mutual aid. Therefore, such costs do not illustrate the total cost incurred by either Constabulary for policing football matches

inside and outside of the grounds. The figure does not include costs associated with officers during their usual shift pattern (It only includes overtime) and there will also be additional duties carried out on match days which will not be specifically identified.

The additional duties include other areas of work performed, such as time spent on Operational Planning, duty planning by the Resource Management Unit and other administration will not be included.

The total amount charged to Ipswich town and Norwich City football matches, is as follows:

ITFC		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Charge(£)</u>
02/09/2018	Norwich City	34,457
22/12/2018	Sheffield United	0
01/01/2019	Millwall	21,834
02/02/2019	Sheffield Wednesday	13,681
13/04/2019	Birmingham City	17,144
05/05/2019	Leeds United	39,001
Total		126,117

NCFC		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Charge (£)</u>
25/08/2018	Leeds United	17,349
10/11/2018	Millwall	10,795
05/01/2019	Portsmouth	17,349
26/01/2019	Sheffield United	17,349
10/02/2019	Ipswich Town	28,893
19/04/2019	Sheffield Wednesday	27,640
27/04/2019	Blackburn	10,795
Total		130,170

In respect the police resource at each football match, matches are assessed depending on intelligence and information. The match is then categorised with regard to the policing requirement and is agreed with the club. This can range from no policing requirement to significant numbers of officers being required. This is not finalised until 2-3 weeks before each match. Many factors are considered, for example, the football league, the league position, away supporter behaviour and promotion/relegation.

In respect the number of officers deployed to police football matches, this information has not been provided as a result of exemptions within the Act. Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at

s1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at s1 (1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies can confirm that they do hold the information requested however it has not been disclosed due to exemptions within the Act.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that the Constabularies, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) is to provide you the applicant with a notice 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(s);

Section 31(a)(b)(c) – 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 in disclosure

Information concerning the strengths and capabilities of Constabularies would not be disclosed if to do so would prejudice policing across the county and impact negatively on resources.

It is considered that provision of officer numbers will allow people to draw conclusions as to the perceived level of police officers required to police specific matches. This in turn could identify to the criminal fraternity occasions where the Constabulary will be at its most vulnerable based on uniformed officer deployment figures alone, potentially increasing the probability of crime being committed for those occasions where a police presence is reduced.

Officers are deployed to matches dependent on the category of match and intelligence received. Provision of this information will allow individuals to ascertain those matches where the police numbers are at their lowest. This would undermine the law enforcement capabilities of the Constabulary and therefore it is confirmed that Section 31 is engaged.

Factors favouring disclosure

Police officer numbers differ depending on operational demand at the time.

Information that relates directly to the operational effectiveness and efficiencies of the Constabularies is a positive factor favouring disclosure. The public have a right to know that they are being protected in an appropriate and diligent manner.

Public knowledge of Constabularies will ensure informed public debate, retaining the openness and transparency.

Factors favouring non-disclosure

Disclosure of information that can affect the current and future law enforcement capabilities of Constabularies will always favour non-disclosure. On this occasion, providing information concerning police resources at individual football matches will allow for comparisons to be made. This in turn will allow for the determination as to the strength of front line police officers at future like matches, invariably providing criminals with advanced knowledge of the Constabularies capabilities.

Although it can be argued that these figures are historical and the likelihood is that future patterns will be subject to change depending on operational requirements at the time, provision of data at such a low level will allow individuals to determine perceived officer numbers at future like matches. This will be subject to change depending on the operational requirement; however, it would provide a good basis for an approximate value to be determined.

Although public knowledge of the Constabularies capabilities is a positive factor, this is not unlimited and there are aspects of policing that must remain confidential.

Balancing test

Public knowledge of how funds are being spent and assurance that the Police service are doing all they can to ensure public safety is maintained, is always a positive factor in disclosure.

On balance however, disclosure of this nature is more likely to have the opposite affect causing the criminal fraternity to have prior knowledge of Police operational capabilities at football matches, compromising the prevention and detection of crime and administration of justice.

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 disclosure lies in non-disclosure and the application of the exemption is maintained.

The Constabulary does not record attendance figures, these can be found via the following link: <https://www.footballwebpages.co.uk/championship/attendances>

For additional details concerning the true cost to police football matches, please refer to the attached infographic supplied to us by the Football policing lead.

Should you have any further queries concerning this request, please contact Clair Pack, 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
Suffolk Constabulary
Police Headquarters
Martlesham Heath
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP5 3QS
OR
Email: information@suffolk.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 40 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