

**Information Management Section
Criminal Justice Division**

15th December 2005

Dear XXXX

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: XXXX

I write in connection with your request for information dated 15/11/2005, which was received by Greater Manchester Police on 16/11/2005. I note you seek access to the following information:

- **Incidents recorded and/or acted upon by Greater Manchester Police in relation to big/exotic cat sightings between 1995 - present (14th November 2005).**
- **Have any Police Officers ever filed reports of sightings of big cats out of captivity?**
- **Have tracks or other forensic/DNA evidence ever been collected and/or analysed relating to the alleged presence of big cats out of captivity.**
- **Has any of this evidence substantiated the actual presence of a big cat.**
- **Have police officers ever visited locations or interviewed witnesses where**
 - i A big cat has been reported.**
 - ii An exotic cat has been involved in a road traffic accident.**
 - iii Livestock/domestic animals have been allegedly or actually attacked/killed by a big cat.**
 - iv Members of the public have perceived a threat from a big cat.**
 - v Police cordons/road closures or diversions have been implemented in response to reports of big cats being sighted or during police searches for an exotic cat.**
- **Have Air Support Units (helicopter) with thermal imaging capability ever been deployed to assist with containment/searches for big cats actually or allegedly found out of captivity.**
- **Have Air Support Units ever obtained a heat source signal from or visually tracked an exotic cat?**
- **Have Police dog handling units ever been deployed in relation to alleged sightings or to search for big cats.**
- **Have tactical firearms officers ever discharged a weapon in relation to a big cat incident.**
- **Do GMP have a policy or procedure they adopt related to reports of big cats? e.g Wildlife Crime Officer is notified of any reports involving big cats.**
- **What contingency plans/expert assistance do GMP have in place in relation to dealing with incidents involving exotic/big cat reports where there is a perceived risk to public safety?**

- **What arrangements, if any, exist between GMP and the Local or National Authorities e.g. Council Environmental Health or Defra Wildlife Personnel relating to big cat sightings or incidents where livestock is involved and what are police responsibilities in these matters.**
- **A summary/table of big cat reports for the period 1995-2005 detailing time and date, location and nature of call received from members of the public/police officers or personnel and held on Command and Control system or similar police information databases/archives is requested.**

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request.

I will answer each of your questions in numerical order as follows:

- 1) We are not able to provide you with this figure as when we receive incident reports we do not request occupational details.
 - i) No evidence was collected in relation to the incidents reported in the attached summary.
 - ii) As above.
- 2) Where reports of sightings have been received some witnesses have been spoken to verify what has been sighted.
 - ii) N/A
 - iii) N/A
 - iv) See attached summary.
 - v) No road closures were implemented in relation to the incidents reported in the attached summary.
- 3) We are unable to check through each log due to the amount of time it would take. However, staff from our Air Support Unit have advised that from their knowledge they do not recall any incidents where they have been deployed.
 - ii) As above.
- 4) Police dog handling units have not been deployed in relation to the incidents reported in the attached summary.
- 5) Tactical Firearms Officers have not been deployed/discharged a weapon in relation to the incidents reported in the attached summary.
- 6) The Force wildlife Officer is notified of any sightings, however, there is no actual policy specifically relating to exotic/big cats.
- 7) As above.
- 8) As above.
- 9) Please find enclosed a summary of incidents from 2000 to date in relation to big cat sightings. Unfortunately, we are unable to search back any further than 2000.

Complaint Rights

Your attention is drawn to the attached sheet, which details your right of complaint.

Yours sincerely,