

[REDACTED]

Our ref: GSA 874/23
Please quote our reference
number when responding

Thursday, 09 March 2023

[REDACTED]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: GSA 874/23

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13/02/2023, I note you seek access to the following information:

1. *How many police dogs were there in the force's dog unit for each of the last ten calendar years (2012-2022), broken down by job type. (eg. General purpose/ explosive detection)*
2. *Please list the main breeds used in the totals in question 1. Please list the most commonly used breeds first.*
3. *How many full time members of staff (trainers, handlers, officers etc) were working in the force's dog unit for each of the years in the same period.*
4. *What was the force's total budget for each of these years and how much was allocated to the dog unit.*
5. *Does the force have its own dog breeding unit?*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by Greater Manchester Police, but I am not obliged to provide all of it as an exemption apply.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires GMP, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) 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.

Questions 1 - 3 have been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 31(1) - Law Enforcement

Section 31 is a prejudice-based and qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Evidence of Harm

Disclosure of information on operation resources in specific area could be of intelligence value to a person or persons with criminal or malicious intent. The disclosure could be used to identify the team capabilities and enable targeted malicious actions, be that some form of attack on the operational team or avoiding that team for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

Public Interest Test

Section 31 - Factors favouring disclosure

Providing this information would make members of the public more aware of the level of police resources used to protect themselves and members of the public against crimes and terrorism activities on specific area of operations.

Section 31 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

To provide such information on the specific area could compromise law enforcement tactics which would hinder the Police force's ability to protect themselves and member of the public against crimes and terrorism activities. The threat of crimes will increase as more crimes are committed as a result of criminals and terrorist gaining knowledge about the capabilities of the operation. Therefore, the public will be placed at a greater risk. A fear of crime will be realised as criminals and terrorist identify different levels of police resources and exploit this resulting in the public being in fear of more criminal activity occurring.

The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the requested information would compromise the safety of the community that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect and place individuals at risk.

Balancing test

When balancing the public interest Greater Manchester Police must consider whether the information should be released into the public domain. Arguments need to be weighed against each other.

The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be openness. However, this needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk and the affect it may have on the prevention and detection of crime and protecting the people/communities we serve.

Having considered all the factors for and against disclosure, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure.

In accordance with the Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for this particular piece of information.

Please see remainder of the requested information below.

Response

Question 4 – please note we do not hold the data prior to 2015/16

Financial Year	Police Dogs	Force Net Budget
2015-16	£51,000	£525,302,748
2016-17	£49,176	£530,507,836
2017-18	£53,871	£523,596,045
2018-19	£54,337	£523,350,267
2019-20	£58,418	£571,051,318
2020-21	£64,918	£592,273,522
2021-22	£65,385	£647,310,223
2022-23	£92,158	£693,717,715

Question 5 - Yes

Complaints Rights

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

Should you have any further inquiries concerning this matter, please email FreedomOfInformation@gmp.police.uk quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,



COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Are you unhappy with how your request has been handled or do you think the decision is incorrect?

You have the right to require Greater Manchester Police to review their decision.

Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

Ask to have the decision looked at again –

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to email the case officer that is nominated at the end of your decision letter.

That person will be able to contact you to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of Greater Manchester Police made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding access to information, you can lodge a complaint with Greater Manchester Police to have the decision reviewed.

Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to:

Information Compliance & Records Management Unit Manager
Information Compliance & Records Management Unit
Information Services Branch
Greater Manchester Police
Openshaw Complex
Lawton Street
Manchester
M11 2NS

The Information Commissioner

After lodging a complaint with Greater Manchester Police if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you can make an application 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 an application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk. Alternatively, phone or write to:

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