

Date: 26/11/2024

Our ref: 01/FOI/24/013675/W

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/013675/W

I write in connection with your request for information dated 20/11/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

- 1. *How many motor vehicles are owned by the force as of November 2024***
- 2. *How many electric vehicles (including hybrid) are owned by the force as of November 2024***
- 3. *The manufacturer name of electric vehicles bought by the force up to November 2024***
- 4. *How much has the force spent on electric vehicles up to November 2024***
- 5. *What are electric vehicles used in the force***
- 6. *How many electric vehicles does the force plan to purchase in the five-year period to March 2030***
- 7. *What budget has the force allocated to purchase electric vehicles every year up to March 2030***

Result of Searches

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

I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by GMP however, I am not obliged to supply all the information requested as exemption applies.

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.

The exemption that applies to this request is:

Section 31(1) – Law Enforcement

Section 31 - Law Enforcement is a qualified, and prejudice-based exemption. Therefore, the harm should be articulated, and arguments given as to the public interest test.

Evidence of Harm

Disclosure of full information on fleet, such as the number of vehicles in GMP's fleet, could be of intelligence value to a person or persons with criminal or malicious intent. Full disclosure could provide and enable targeted malicious actions, be that some form of attack on an operational unit or avoiding that unit for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

The safety of the public is of a paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the number of vehicles owned by GMP, and in this case electric vehicles and how they are used would compromise the safety of the public that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect.

Furthermore, this would impact on the law enforcement capabilities of Greater Manchester Police in the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This would also give an advantage to those intent on committing crimes and avoid detection.

Additionally, law enforcement tactics and operational capability would be compromised with the disclosure of the number vehicles GMP own as those who wish to commit criminal acts will be more aware of what vehicles may belong to the force, that assist with preventing and detecting crime. Those intent on committing crime may use the information to understand operational numbers for events and other instances where the police may be called to protect the public.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31

There is a legitimate public interest in the public being satisfied that the Police force has up to date and well-maintained vehicles to deliver services to the public when and where required.

The release of the number of electric vehicles would demonstrate the openness of the organisation to make such matters public.

The disclosure of information relating to the number of vehicles owned would adhere to the general principle of openness and transparency and better inform the public about how public funds are spent and better awareness which may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public.

Factions favouring non-disclosure under Section 31

The Police service has a duty to deliver effective law enforcement ensuring that the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders and administration of justice is carried out appropriately.

Disclosing any information that would allow the identification of all vehicles may reveal what resources are available for a given role and this information could enable police strength to be determined and circumvented by those intent on committing crime. The release of this information could therefore provide a tactical advantage to offenders which would negatively impact on public safety and undermine the policing purpose.

Any disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the Police Service's ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

Balance Test

It is not in the public interest for law enforcement tactics and operational capability to be compromised with the disclosure of all Fleet details, as those who wish to commit criminal acts will be more aware of the vehicles in operation to assist with preventing and detecting crime.

Such disclosure that would allow those with criminal intent the ability to build up a mosaic picture of force capabilities and resources which could be used to undermine law enforcement. This would not be in the public interest.

Disclosure is also not in the public interest as it places the community at increased unnecessary risk of harm and impact police resources. This is especially the case if additional tactics/resources need to be put in place to counter harm caused by an adverse FOIA request regarding police vehicles.

Therefore, at this moment in time, it is our opinion that the balance test favours against the disclosure of the information requested.