

Date: 9th September 2025
Our ref: FOI/25/015284/S

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/25/015284/S

I write in connection with your request for information dated 06/08/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am submitting this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please provide information held by your force regarding the procurement and use of Plasan Sandcat Tigris armoured vehicles (including any variant referred to as "Sandcat").

1. Procurement activity (October 2023 – present)

- a) The number of Sandcat Tigris (or Sandcat variant) vehicles ordered.***
- b) The number of such vehicles delivered and currently held by the force.***
- c) Please confirm explicitly if no such vehicles have been ordered, delivered, or are planned for purchase.***

2. Operational status

- a) Of any vehicles acquired, how many are available for deployment?***
- b) How many are not available for deployment (for example, undergoing modifications, repair, or awaiting approval)?***

If you consider releasing this information to be exempt under Section 31 (Law Enforcement) or any other FOIA exemption, please still release all other requested information and provide your reasoning and the outcome of the public interest test.

3. Financial expenditure

- a) The total cost (including VAT and any associated modifications, fittings, or logistics) for all Sandcat Tigris (or Sandcat variant) vehicles purchased in the above period.***

b) If vehicles were ordered but payment is not yet complete, please confirm the current status of payments.

4. Supplier/ procurement route

a) For each purchase, please confirm whether it was made directly from Plasan Sasa Ltd or via the UK distributor Ricardo UK Ltd.

b) If supplier details are considered exempt under Section 43 (commercial interests) or Section 31 (law enforcement), please still release all other requested information and explain the exemption applied, including the public interest test outcome.

If you are encountering any practical difficulties with complying with this request, please contact me as soon as possible (in line with your duty under section 16 to advise and assist requesters), so that we can discuss the matter and if necessary I can modify the request.

If you are able to supply some of this information more quickly than other items, please supply each item when you can rather than delay everything until it is all available.

If it is necessary for any reason to redact any information, please redact the minimum necessary and send me the rest of the material, explaining the legal grounds for each redaction.

Result of Searches

Greater Manchester Police neither confirms nor denies that it holds information relevant to this request by virtue of the following exemptions:

**Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement
Section 24(2) – National Security**

Sections 24 and 31 are prejudice based qualified exemptions and there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in confirming or denying that any other information is held as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm in complying with Section 1(1)(a) – to confirm or nor whether information is held

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. In order to achieve these objectives we are allowed to use reasonable force where necessary to do so. In the ultimate circumstance this can include the use of lethal force but the rule of thumb is to use the minimum amount necessary to achieve the objective. In reality this equates to the use of the minimum amount of force required to overcome the violence, used or threatened, by those wishing to cause harm.

As part of this equation we also have to pay heed to the Human Rights Convention particularly Article 2 – The Right to life. The law and regulations relating to the use of force are detailed within the [Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\) document for Armed Policing](#).

Armed Policing is a highly specialised area of firearms deployment and weapons training. It is an emotive subject under constant scrutiny and, by default, is always in the public eye. There is a long history of excellent practice nationally and Armed Policing is regarded as being at the forefront of firearms issues.

Any release under FOIA is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm or not that information is held in relation to this request would reveal whether or not GMP has Plaskan Sandcat armoured vehicles. Such awareness would reveal tactical capability and is likely to influence the criminals, which may include terrorists or terrorist organisations, who are prepared to resort

to the use of extreme force in order to avoid detection and capture. By fully knowing whether or not these vehicles are used by GMP will enable offenders to ensure they are armed in a way as to overcome the police response.

This creates if you will an 'arms race' to the detriment of the criminals themselves, as the use of lethal weapons becomes more and more the only resolution option, and endangers both the public and officers themselves. This is best evidenced by the fact that the United Kingdom, even in these violent times, has been able to maintain a basically unarmed Police Service, with the resulting benefits this delivers when compared with other countries, such as America, where armed conflict resolution with law enforcement agencies depends on who has the most effective weapons.

Furthermore, the threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It is generally recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The current UK threat level from international terrorism, based on intelligence, is assessed as [Substantial](#), which means that a terrorist attack is likely.

In order to counter criminal and terrorist behaviour it is vital that the police have the ability to adopt techniques and procedures commensurate with the perceived threat, and deploy accordingly. The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the police have a clear responsibility to prevent crime, arrest those responsible for committing crime or those that plan to commit crime. However, there is also a duty of care to the public at large. The UK Police Service has a positive undertaking to protect the public from harm and that duty of care to all involved must be the overriding consideration.

The protection of the public is of paramount importance and GMP will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so could compromise Law Enforcement.

Public Interest Considerations

Section 24(2) National Security

Factors for disclosure

The public are entitled to know why decisions are made and how resources are distributed within an area of policing. Confirmation would inform the public that the police provide an appropriate level of tactical armed response when required. This would provide transparency with regard to the use of public funds inasmuch as the funds are being used correctly and appropriately ensuring the Armed Policing Departments within individual forces are equipped adequately.

Factors against disclosure

Whilst there is a public interest in providing reassurance that the police are appropriately and effectively dealing with threats posed by terrorist organisations, there is a strong public interest in safeguarding national security and the welfare and safety of the general public.

Taking into account the current security climate within the United Kingdom, no information which may aid a terrorist should be disclosed. To what extent this information may aid a terrorist is unknown, but it is clear that it will have an impact on a force's ability to monitor terrorist activity. The public entrust the Police Service to make appropriate decisions with regard to their safety and protection, as well as the safety of their officers and staff. The only way of reducing risk is to be cautious with what is placed into the public domain. Confirmation or denial has the potential to undermine ongoing and future operations to protect the Security of the United Kingdom, e.g. counter terrorism activity. The risk of significant harm or even death to the community at large would be increased.

Any incident that results from such a disclosure would by default affect National Security.

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

Factors for disclosure

There is a public interest in being made aware of all the facts relating to Armed Policing in order to ensure complete openness and transparency as there is often speculation and rumour with regard to the use of firearms within the Police Service. In this case revealing whether or not specific armoured vehicles are in service force-by-force would provide transparency and may enhance public debate into this area of policing.

Factors against disclosure

The deployment of authorised firearms officers is measured and authorised by chief officers after careful consideration in order to protect the public and apprehend individuals who use lethal weapons as part of their criminality. To confirm or deny information is held would reveal tactical capability, or lack thereof, which places the police at a tactical disadvantage. In addition, confirmation or denial may also 'create' a fear of crime within the general public relating to armed policing.

GMP has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure revealed information to the world (by citing an exemption or stating no information held) that would undermine the security of the National Infrastructure, offenders, including terrorist organisations, could use this to their advantage which would compromise public safety and more worryingly encourage offenders to carry out further crimes.

The risk to public safety cannot be ignored and GMP has a responsibility to ensure safety of individuals is protected at all times, as detailed within the harm.

Balancing Test

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing resources for specialist departments and providing reassurance that the Police Service is appropriately and effectively placing resources into Armed Policing, there is a strong public interest in knowing that policing activity with regard to the delivery of law enforcement is appropriate and balanced, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances.

In addition, we also need to take into account the victims of terrorism. Public safety is of paramount importance and any information which would place individuals at risk and compromise the National Security of the United Kingdom, no matter how generic, is not in the public interest. The effective delivery of operational law enforcement and the National Security of the UK is crucial and of a fundamental duty to GMP. Any disclosure would have a negative impact on law enforcement and national security.

As much as there is a public interest in knowing that the delivery of law enforcement is appropriate and balanced, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test outweighs the need to confirm information is held and falls in favour of issuing a neither confirm nor deny refusal.

No inference can be taken from this refusal that information does or does not exist.