



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: FOI-2023-00670

Keyword: Organisational Information Police Vehicles

Subject: Current PSNI Fleet

Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold some information to which your request relates and this is being provided to you. We further consider the information you seek in request number 4 and in regards to 'unmarked vehicles' which are part of PSNI fleet is exempt by virtue of section 31 of FOIA and have detailed our rationale as to why this exemption applies. We have also provided you with links to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office which we have followed in responding to your request.

Request 1

Could you please send me the below details of your current Blue light fleet (inc Motorbikes) for market research: Model Year

Request 2

The Vehicle Make & Model

Request 3

Type of Vehicle (Example-Saloon, Wagon etc.)

Request 5

The Year the Vehicle was Commissioned

Answer 1, 2, 3, 5

Please see attached the spreadsheet containing a list of all PSNI marked vehicles which have some form of blue light fitted as requested in point 1, 2, 3, and 5. Please mind that list of 'unmarked vehicles' have been exempted under s.31 of FOI Act and rationale for this is provided to you in Answer to Request 4 below.

Request 4

The Role of the Vehicle (Including Armed Response Unit)

Answer 4

Details about the role of the listed PSNI fleet and list of 'unmarked vehicles' have been exempted under s.31 of FOI Act and our rationale has been outlined below.

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, 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 not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption/s, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement – the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders

The full text of exemptions can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk and further guidance on how they operate can be located on the Information Commissioners Office website www.ico.org.uk.

Section 31 is a prejudiced based, qualified exemption and there is a requirement to articulate the Harm and conduct a Public Interest Test.

Harm

Disclosing any details of 'unmarked vehicles' and role of vehicles used by PSNI in general, would identify their operational use and show the capability of our fleet. This information could be useful to individuals, who intends to break the law. Criminal gangs could gain information about the force's capability through the volumes and types of vehicles being operated to avoid being caught and to evade the operational law enforcement role of police by identifying PSNI vehicles while they engage in their policing activities, which may significantly impact the law enforcement actions of the PSNI and may potentially place police officers at risk. As a result could also cause the raise in number of committed crimes.

Given the unique operating environment in Northern Ireland and recent murder attempt on Senior PSNI Officer in Omagh, the disclosure of this information may be of use to those who seek to cause harm to police officers. It is reasonable to assume that providing such detailed information on the PSNI fleet would assist activity by allowing more accurate judgements to be made by criminal's intent on attacking police. Any information which could be of assistance to terrorists and endanger police officers is very strongly prejudicing PSNI's law enforcement and security functions if released.

The case of Sarah Everards murder and the fact that the perpetrator was in a police car when he committed the crime cannot be ignored. Although this was not a cloned vehicle, the suggestion that a cloned vehicle could also be used in such a crime, and would provide a level of credibility to the driver, is clearly demonstrated.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure – Section 31

Release of information would lead to a better informed public, demonstrate openness, transparency and accountability on the use of PSNI fleet.

Factors favouring non-disclosure – Section 31

Disclosure of information could adversely affect the law enforcement role of police, participate in raise in number of committed crimes and potentially put police officers and members of Public at risk.

Decision

The PSNI is tasked with the prevention, detection of crime and protecting the Public. It is acknowledged that wherever possible policing procedures and resources must be transparent and accountable. Whilst the requested information may appear innocuous and the accountability surrounding the use of public funds is always a strong argument in favour of releasing information we

must take into account the wider implications of any release into the public domain, including how the requested information may be combined with any previously released data or potential future FOI requests and what impact this 'mosaic' of information will have on the police service as a whole. PSNI need to make balanced judgements which justify why some information needs to remain exempt and given the threat to police officers, Public and potential impact on PSNI law enforcement role outlined in detail in harm above, releasing this information into the public domain would not be in the public interest.

The release of information under FOI is a release into the public domain and not just to the individual requesting the information. Once information is disclosed by FOI, there is no control or limits as to how the information is shared with other individuals, therefore a release under FOI is considered a release to the world in general.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Corporate Information Branch, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Corporate Information Manager, Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.police.uk.

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain unhappy about how your request has been handled you have the right to apply in writing to the Information Commissioner, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, at 'Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. There are a number of other platforms you can use to contact the ICO and these can be found on the ICO's website at the following link: [Make a complaint | ICO \(https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/\)](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/).

In most circumstances, the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out however, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.