

16th February 2023

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 23.009214

REQUEST

May you please give me a list of the South Yorkshire Police Vehicle Fleet from January 1st-December 31st, 2022? That includes vehicles before January 1st, 2022 that are still used in 2022.

Details

- Date: January 1st-December 31st, 2022
- Model Year
- The Vehicle Make & Model
- Type of Vehicle (Example-Saloon, Wagon etc)
- Van's Wheelbase, Roof Size and Numbers of Wheels NIH
- Number of Doors (Example: 3-Door, 5-Door etc)
- Registration Number Plate
- The Role of the Vehicle (Including Firearms Support Group (FSG))
- Roof Number NIH
- The Year the Vehicle was Commissioned
- Video Camera (Yes or No)

I know that you published your fleet on the publication scheme found at the South Yorkshire Police website but I don't want you to send me the link. I want my request to be fulfilled in the details that I require like 20110720 xxx xxxxx Request. Again, I DON'T WANT YOU TO GIVE ME THE FLEET LIST FROM THAT WEBSITE!

RESPONSE

As you are aware from your previous requests on this subject a fleet list is a snapshot at the current date/time we do not hold historic fleet lists ie back to January 2022.

I have asked our Vehicle Fleet team to provide an updated list of all Unmarked /Overt Vehicles in our force so there will be some minor changes on the list from October 2022 to date.

Please see the attached spreadsheet and the following information also supplied by our Vehicle Fleet Team

- Model Year** – On the spreadsheet.
- The Vehicle Make & Model** On the spreadsheet
- Type of Vehicle (Example-Saloon, Wagon etc)** On the spreadsheet
- Van's Wheelbase, Roof Size and Numbers of Wheels** - We do not log this information.
No Information Held.
- Number of Doors (Example: 3-Door, 5-Door etc)** We do not log this information, however we only order 4 door vehicles.
- Registration Number Plate** As below exemptions

-The Role of the Vehicle (Including Firearms Support Group (FSG)) As below exemptions

-Roof Number We do not log this information.
No Information Held.

-The Year the Vehicle was Commissioned This is the same year the vehicle was registered. On the spreadsheet

-Video Camera (Yes or No) All A class vehicles have a camera.

For any further information held by South Yorkshire Police and not shown on the spreadsheet or above:

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires South Yorkshire Police, 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 following exemption applies to the disclosure of the information:

S31 Law Enforcement is a qualified, and prejudice based exemption. Therefore, the harm should be articulated, and arguments given as to the public interest test.

Harm

Disclosure of full information on fleet including Role, marked, unmarked and details such as full VRNs, 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).

Although VRNs are an overtly displayed marker that can be clearly seen and are intended to be seen, to disclose a ready-collated list of vehicles with complete vehicle registration numbers would be substantially more harmful than the limited availability of related information via the visibility of vehicles whilst on public roads. In practice, all of this information is not realistically accessible to a member of the public and is therefore not in the public domain.

Providing full lists of VRNs for marked vehicles provides opportunities for criminality to benefit, or for risks to be extended to members of the public:

- Marked police vehicles are often exempt toll and congestion charges, facilitated by automatic recognition of VRN; cloned vehicles would avoid these charges.
- Decommissioned police vehicles are sold at public auction and will re-appear in domestic use, usually driven by members of the public. Lists of VRNs accessible by criminals, such as Organised Crime Gangs (even if out of date), may potentially expose unaware members of public to direct challenge and/or risk of harm.
- Detailed VRN listings will potentially enable a criminal gang to understand the force's capability, through the volumes and types of vehicles being operated; for example numbers of ARV & RPU (Armed Response / Traffic), comparative to other models.
- The recent high profile 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.

Additionally, law enforcement tactics and operational capability would be compromised with the disclosure of VRN details requested such as that relating to unmarked cars, as those who wish to commit criminal acts will be more aware of what vehicles may belong to the force in a covert role, that assist with preventing and detecting crime.

Such a disclosure would allow those with criminal intent the ability to build up a mosaic picture of force capabilities and resources and use this information to undermine law enforcement. This places the community at increased unnecessary risk of harm and impacts on police resources if additional resources and tactics need to be put in place to counter any harm caused by an adverse FOIA disclosure.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure – s31 – 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.

Factors favouring non-disclosure – s31 – 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 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.

Disclosing the details of covert vehicles would provide sufficient information to those involved in criminal activity of the capabilities available to the force when carrying out covert activities in certain areas. This could result in them taking steps to evade detection and to destroy evidence if they believe that their movements are being monitored. This could also lead to vehicles and officers being identified which would render their covert capabilities useless.

Balance Test

It is not in the public interest for law enforcement tactics and operational capability to be compromised with the disclosure of full 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 a 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 impacts on 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.

