

Thank you for your request. You have requested information relating to:

- a) Confirmation of the intention to reduce police dog numbers from 27 to 20
- b) Copies of all risk and/or impact assessments that were carried out in the process of taking this decision

I am afraid that I am unable to provide you with this information at this point in time and this email serves as a refusal notice. Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act states that:

- (1) A public authority which, in relation to an request for information, is to any extent relying on a claim that information is exempt information must, within the time for complying within Section 1(1) give the applicant a notice which:
 - (a) States the fact,
 - (b) Specifies the exemption in question, and
 - (c) States why the exemption applies.

The reason why I am unable to provide this information is because an exemption applies under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act. This states that information is exempt information if it is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not).

The information that you have requested arises from the *programme of change* which is currently underway in the West Yorkshire Police Force. A publication scheme has been established for information which is generated through the programme of change. You can see details of the publication scheme via this link:

http://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/files/disclosure-logs/poc_board_081113_-_paper_6_1_publication_strategy-.pdf

Section 22 exemptions are subject to a public interest test and in applying this exemption the following arguments have been taken into account:

The public interest in transparency and openness with regard to decisions which affect police resources. The programme of change is designed to not only realise savings but to transform the structure of West Yorkshire Police – its operations, systems and processes to improve performance. Cost savings are essential and West Yorkshire Police has to save £112.6m over four years of the spending review. This equates to 22% of the Force overall budget. There is a significant public interest in being able to hold the Police and Crime Commissioner (and the Chief Constable) to account for decisions which are taken to ensure that cost savings are met whilst improving performance.

Disclosing this information would increase the understanding of the difficult decisions which are being considered to meet the funding gap and the actions which are being taken to maintain an effective police service in West Yorkshire. Disclosure will also provide reassurance that decision making is proper and considered.

The programme of change review is still ongoing and it is intended to publish this information on conclusion of the programme of change. Disclosure of certain parts of the review, before conclusion of the whole programme or before proper public consultation has been undertaken, could have a

negative impact on the effectiveness of the remainder of the review if it then leads to pressure or lobbying for particular decisions to be reached.

Advanced disclosure of part of the programme of change, preventing people from having the full picture on which to base their judgements, could damage public confidence which may lead people to feel less safe and have a greater fear of crime. Early disclosure, before staff consultation, could also affect staff morale and retention thus having a detrimental impact on the Force's ability to meet the challenges ahead.

On balance it is felt that the arguments against disclosure at this point in time outweigh those in favour of disclosure.