



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Press Release

For immediate release

Date: 21 August 2008

Hampshire Constabulary must disclose details of cars provided to chief officers

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has ordered the Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary to disclose the make and model of vehicles provided for personal use to two Assistant Chief Constables. This follows a request under the Freedom of Information Act for details about the cars provided to Chief Police Officers for their personal use. The public authority confirmed that two Assistant Chief Constables are provided with vehicles for their own use.

The Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary refused to release the requested information maintaining it was exempt from disclosure as the details could allow the vehicles to be identified and make them less effective for policing purposes. Hampshire Constabulary also argued that disclosure may lead to criminals and members of the public being able to identify the vehicles which could increase the likelihood of the officers being attacked.

In reaching his decision, the Assistant Information Commissioner Steve Wood considered whether disclosing the relevant details would prejudice policing operations carried out by the police officers. He accepted that disclosure of the requested information could lead to the cars being identified as police vehicles. However there was no evidence to suggest that either car is used in covert

operations that could be undermined if information assisting their identification were released.

The Assistant Information Commissioner does not believe there is a real or significant risk of endangerment to the health and safety of the Assistant Chief Constables stemming specifically from disclosure of the requested information. In his view Hampshire Constabulary failed to provide sufficient evidence to support the argument that releasing the details would put the officers at risk.

In his ruling, the Assistant Information Commissioner recognised that similar information had been disclosed by a number of other police forces in the country. He has ordered the Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary to release the information within 35 days of this notice.

To read the full Decision Notice on this case, please go to www.ico.gov.uk

ENDS

If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 020 7025 7580.

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk