



## Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

**16 January 2025**

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service FOI 9054/24 - Fleet inc. Electric vehicles

### **Request:**

I would be grateful if you could provide responses to the following questions:

1. How many motor vehicles are owned by the service as of November 2024
2. How many electric vehicles (including hybrid) are owned by the service as of November 2024
3. The manufacturer name of electric vehicles bought by the service up to November 2024
4. How much has your service spent on electric vehicles up to November 2024
5. What are electric vehicles used for in your service
6. How many electric vehicles does the service plan to purchase in the five-year period to March 2030
7. What budget has your service allocated to purchase electric vehicles every year up to March 2030

### **Response:**

Searches have been conducted in relation to your request, and I can confirm that the following information is held.

1. 178
2. 0 electric; 18 Hybrid
3. Not applicable; Toyota
4. Not applicable; The amount spent on hybrid vehicles is exempt under Section 43(2) - Commercial Interests. Please see the full explanation below.
5. Not applicable; Officer response vehicles.
6. There are no plans at this present time, however a fleet review for an EV transition strategy is taking place to look towards a fully electric fleet.
7. Not applicable, see answer 6.

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Service Headquarters  
Darby House  
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## Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is not obliged to provide some of the information that you have requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please take this letter as a Refusal Notice to this part of your request.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that, NFRS, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) is to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- a) States that fact
- b) Specifies the exemption(s) in question and
- c) States (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemptions apply.

In relation to your request, the following exemptions apply:

- Section 43(2) - Commercial Interests

Section 43 is a class-based exemption meaning the legislators, when writing this piece of legislation, considered that it's release would cause harm to either the authority or individuals involved, therefore NFRS does not need to communicate the harm in disclosure, however Section 43 is also a qualified exemption, and therefore I am required to apply a public interest test.

### Factors Favouring Disclosure - Section 43 - Commercial Interests

There is a clear public interest in ensuring that public authorities are receiving a fair price and value for money from vehicle suppliers. As it is the public's money, they have the right to ensure that it is being spent appropriately. This is particularly the case at this time as finances are coming under increased scrutiny with budget reductions. It is important that NFRS are held accountable for any financial decisions that are made.

Disclosing information about how we spend the public's money and contracts we use would provide a greater transparency in the financial affairs of NFRS. It is clear that there is a public interest in public authorities operating in as transparent a manner as possible, as this should ensure they operate effectively and efficiently.

### Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure - Section 43 - Commercial Interests

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Disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the vehicle suppliers and affect future procurement for the Service as the information is of a commercially sensitive nature. Disclosure is also likely to damage the relationship between NFRS and the suppliers involved. This may in the future reduce the number of companies tendering, and consequently reduce the opportunities to purchase the best services from suppliers.

Companies compete by offering something different from their rivals. The difference will often be reflected in their price and may also relate to the quality or specification of the product or service they offer. It may also inadvertently reveal information about profit margins and possibly working practices.

Releasing this information could be a competitive advantage for other companies. There are numerous potential suppliers for vehicles and other vehicle related services such as conversions for bespoke vehicles. A contractor would have a weakened position in a competitive environment; if market sensitive information was released or information of potential usefulness to its competitors was to be likewise released. The Service does not want to encourage companies to compete solely on price to the detriment of the quality of the service offered.

NFRS use the purchasing frameworks on Crown Commercial Service CCS RM6244.

### Balance test

### Section 43 - Commercial Interests

The Fire Service is tasked to deliver an efficient service to all members of the community we serve both responsively and preventatively and there is a public interest argument in ensuring we are open and transparent. However, NFRS want to maintain the quality of the service provided, rather than encourage a situation where companies are competing solely on price. The high quality of service provided is evidently in the interest of the wider public. On the purchasing of vehicles, value for money is achieved through the use of the government's procurement website & requisitioning process -

<https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/>

The public interest test is centred on whether this information should be released to the world so that any person can view this information, not just you as the requestor.

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Therefore, although this information may be interesting to the public, I do not see how its release can benefit the community at large.

Having weighed up the arguments, I feel the balance lies in withholding this information, and this letter serves as a refusal notice under section 17(1) of the Act.

Please note that the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner publish Key Decision Records on contracts for fleet vehicles on the OPFCC website. These can be seen here:

[https://northantspfcc.org.uk/?s=fleet+decision+record&post\\_type%5B0%5D=any&search\\_limit\\_to\\_post\\_titles=0&fs=1](https://northantspfcc.org.uk/?s=fleet+decision+record&post_type%5B0%5D=any&search_limit_to_post_titles=0&fs=1)

The numerical data presented in this response is an un-audited snapshot of un-published data sourced from "live" systems and is subject to the interpretation of the original request by the individual extracting the data. The figures provided therefore are our best interpretation of relevance of data to your request, but you should be aware that the collation of figures for ad hoc requests may have limitations and this should be taken into account when the data is used.

Due to the different methods of recording information across fire services, a specific response from one service should not be seen as an indication of what information could be supplied (within cost) by another. Systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the data. For this reason responses between services may differ, and should not be used for comparative purposes.

If you decide to write an article / use the enclosed data we would ask you to take into consideration the factors highlighted in this document so as to not mislead members of the public or official bodies, or misrepresent the relevance of the whole or any part of this disclosed material.

### APPEAL RIGHTS

If you are unhappy with how your request has been handled or you do not think the decision is correct, you have the right to ask for a review of the decision.

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Prior to lodging a formal appeal you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

### **Ask to have the decision looked at again**

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer. That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

### **Appeal**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision that the Service have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information, you can lodge an appeal to have the decision reviewed.

Appeals should be made in writing within 20 days of receipt of your reply and either emailed to [freedomofinformation@northants.police.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@northants.police.uk) or addressed to:

**Freedom of Information Manager  
Information Unit  
Northamptonshire Police Headquarters  
Wootton Hall  
Northampton  
NN4 0JQ**

Where possible the Service will aim to respond to your appeal within 20 working days. However meeting this time scale will depend upon the circumstances and complexity of the issue.

### **The Information Commissioner**

After lodging an appeal with the Service, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you may make an application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make an application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) Alternatively, telephone or write to:

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## Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

**Information Commissioner's Office**

**Wycliffe House**

**Water Lane**

**Wilmslow**

**Cheshire**

**SK9 5AF**

**Phone: 0303 123 1113**

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