



Response Date: 23/12/2024

2024/994 - Rhuddlan airport base

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

1. Please can you provide me with all email and written correspondence between North Wales police and Wales Air Ambulance for the years 2023 and 2024.

Harm has been identified in providing you with the emails held. All of the emails were provided in confidence. The content of some emails would disclose information which would hinder Law Enforcement and others would have detrimental effect on the Wales Air Ambulance Charity.

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

Section 43 (2) Commercial Interests
Section 41 (1) Information Provided in Confidence
Section 31 (1) Law Enforcement

Sections 43 and 31 are prejudice-based exemptions which means that the public authority must demonstrate that it is satisfied that to release the information would damage someone's commercial interests and our Law Enforcement. They are also a qualified exemption which means that the public authority must consider the balance of the public interest in releasing the information against the public interest in withholding it.

Section 41 as a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest in this case.

The Harm Test process requires North Wales Police to consider any possible harm that might arise as a result of placing the requested information into the public domain. This process considers the potential harm to:

- Individuals
- The community as a whole
- North Wales Police and the wider policing service
- Other bodies

Harm Test

The correspondence relates to a live and ongoing matter, to disclose the content of the emails would prejudice the commercial arrangements the Wales Air Ambulance Charity seek to achieve. Some emails detail information relating to Law Enforcement processes, to disclose these would have a detrimental impact on our ability to police. To provide information relating to specific departments of policing could undermine existing or future investigations, operations and police tactics. It would allow those with ill intent to cause disruption to operational policing and prejudice the prevention and detection of crime.

Public Interest Test

Section 43 Factors Favouring Disclosure

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that public money is spent correctly and that North Wales Police, and therefore the taxpayer, gets value for money when purchasing goods and services.

Release would also facilitate the accountability and transparency of North Wales Police for decisions taken by them in relation to agreement so that they might be challenged.

Section 31 Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclose this information would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, it would also lead to a better public awareness of the workings of the police force.

Section 43 Factors Favouring Non - Disclosure

The correspondence relates to an ongoing commercial matter. Disclosure of the content of the emails would prejudice the commercial arrangements the Wales Air Ambulance Charity seek to achieve.

Section 31 Factors Favouring Non – Disclosure

Releasing such data would give those individuals with the intent to do so, the intelligence required to disrupt police activity. This knowledge would allow those with ill intent to target their offending more effectively which would inevitably lead to an increased likelihood of criminal activity and an increased danger to the public. Any disclosure of information which is likely to undermine the ability to serve the public in preventing and detecting crime can only be considered as being harmful to the public.

Balancing Test

There are factors which in general terms favour release of this information, however, the factors favouring non-disclosure are more specifically relevant. To disclose information which would knowingly prejudice the Wales Air Ambulance's commercial arrangements is not something North Wales Police will do. Additionally, I believe when weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining our ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering our ability to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

My decision, therefore, is not to release this information.

Therefore, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice under section 17 (1) of the legislation.

2. Please can you provide me with the minutes of any meetings that have discussed the sale of Rhuddlan airport base at Rhuddlan?

There are no minutes held. I can advise an internal decision paper was circulated to Chief Officers on 19th October 2023 for discussion. The paper recommended:

- That the disposal of the Rhuddlan air base was no longer viable given the required timescales for exiting the site and the fact that the Wales Air Ambulance had advised that colocation of the Dog Section at the site with them would not be possible.
- The paper also recommended that this position was communicated to Wales Air Ambulance with the option to meet to discuss the position as required.

The recommendations were supported by the Chief Constable on 21st October 2023 and by Stephen Hughes, OPCC Chief Executive on 10th November 2023 on behalf of himself & the PCC. There are no formal minutes of meeting.

- 3. Please can you provide me of any written correspondence regarding the sale of Rhuddlan airport to Wales Air Ambulance and provide me with the decision, please?**
- 4. 1046/24 - Please can you provide me with all email and written correspondence between North Wales police and the Wales Air Ambulance Charity for the years 2023 and 2024.**

Please can you provide me with any minutes from any meetings that have discussed the Wales Air Ambulance Trust operating an Air Base from any property or asset owned by North Wales Police.

All communication was via email rather than letter. However, please see the answer to question one.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 19/12/2024