

Our ref: 01/FOI/23/011379/O

Please quote our reference
number when responding

Tuesday, 05 December 2023

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/23/011379/O

I write in connection with your request for information dated 25/09/2023, I note you seek access to the following information:

- 1. How much money did it cost the GMP to add security during the last time the Conservative Party Conference took place in Manchester, i.e., Sept 2021?*
- 2. How many bollards have the GMP put up for the Conservative Party Conference, 2023?*
- 3. What is the reason to put these bollards up?*
- 4. How much does it cost when a Conservative Party Conference is held in Manchester?*
- 5. Break-down of where all does the money go to when looking at security for Conservative Party Conference?*
- 6. If the conference was not taking place, where would this money be coming from?*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by Greater Manchester Police.

Question 1 – We can only provide an overall policing cost to the force for the event in 2021 - £ 2,038,724.

Question 2 – We don't put up bollards, we put up National Hostile vehicle Mitigation Fencing.

Question 3 – As above this is National Fencing to stop a Terrorist Vehicle attack.

Question 4 – As question 1

Question 5 – The information has been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemptions:

- **Section 24(1) - National Security**
- **Section 31(1) - Law Enforcement**

Section 24 is a qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Section 31 is a prejudice-based and qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm

To provide a breakdown of costs for the conference would undermine individual forces policing capabilities and tactics which consequently would be detrimental to their ability to deal with the on-going and future operations to protect the security and infrastructure of the UK. By providing the information would indicate the tactical strength of capability, allow comparison between forces across the country and enable terrorists to build a picture of what resources are in place and where they are deployed. The fact that political party conferences are annual events means that providing a breakdown of costs now would place in the public domain valuable information that could be used by criminals, including terrorists, to determine what can be expected in terms of security measures and where security focusses will be at future events. This presents significant risk of harm both to national security and operational law enforcement

The risk of danger to the public would be increased by revealing such policing tactics into the public domain. The safety of the public we protect is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and we would not wish to jeopardise that safety by releasing exempt information into the public domain.

Public Interest Test

Section 24 - Factors favouring disclosure

The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and resources distributed within an area of policing. Moreover, it would provide the general public with a reassurance that every tactical option is used. Such awareness would also enable general public to hold GMP to account with regards to their capabilities. and know that forces are doing as much as they can to protect the public.

Section 24 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

To provide this information it would render protection measures less effective which would compromise policing crimes and tactics within the UK. The risk of harm to the public would be

elevated if offenders are aware of the level of capability within the forces in the UK. The protection and the security of the forces would be compromised providing them with the knowledge of the forces capability.

Section 31 - Factors favouring disclosure

Providing this information would make members of the public more aware of the level of police force capability to protect themselves and members of the public against crimes and terrorism activities.

Section 31 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

To provide such information at force level, it could compromise law enforcement tactics which would hinder the police force's ability to protect themselves and member of the public against crimes and terrorism activities. The threat of crimes will increase as more crimes are committed as a result of criminals and terrorist gaining knowledge about the capabilities of the forces. Therefore, the public will be placed at a greater risk. A fear of crime will be realised as criminals and terrorist identify different levels of resources regarding different operations and target and exploit this resulting in the public being in fear of more criminal activity occurring.

Balancing test

When balancing the public interest Greater Manchester Police must consider whether the information should be released into the public domain. Arguments need to be weighed against each other.

The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be openness. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is concerns for the safety of the public, law enforcement and national security.

Having considered all the factors, the decision at this time to maintain the above exemptions and withhold the information for Question 5 from disclosure.

Question 6 – No information held.