

[REDACTED]

Our ref: GSA 1953/23
Please quote our reference
number when responding

Friday, 12 May 2023

[REDACTED]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: GSA 1953/23

I write in connection with your request for information dated 13/04/2023, I note you seek access to the following information:

1. *Could you please tell me how many police officers there are in your force area?*
2. *The number of officers in each function, i.e. Response, Neighbourhood, Roads, Investigation?*

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, but I am not obliged to provide all of it as an exemption applies.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires GMP, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

Question 2 has been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement

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.

Evidence of Harm

Disclosure of the number of officers separated by operational Departments and Teams could be of intelligence value to a person or persons with criminal or malicious intent. The disclosure could provide and enable targeted malicious actions, be that some form of attack on the

operational team or avoiding that team for example where strengths and weakness may be perceived (whether incorrectly or not).

The requested information could be used to compromise law enforcement capabilities by decreasing the ability of Greater Manchester Police to fight crime, which would increase the commission of crime and subsequently have a detrimental impact on public safety as well as decrease public confidence in the police force.

Public Interest Test

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 31 - Factors favouring non-disclosure

Providing the number of officers separated by operational Departments and Teams would reveal the operational and tactical capabilities of Greater Manchester Police. If specific numbers were given for a specialised team and that team was then identified to work from a particular operational building from other information in the public domain this would allow the geographic mapping of resources. This would compromise law enforcement tactics and hinder the prevention and detection of crime and the successful prosecution of offenders. Disclosure would provide those individuals or groups within the criminal fraternity who wish to attack the police with a significant operational advantage and the information could also be used to target locations perceived as less well-resourced or to develop tactics to divert resources away from locations that they wish to target. This would clearly jeopardise the ability of Greater Manchester Police to respond appropriately to criminal activity and thereby protect the public.

The safety of the public is of paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the requested information would compromise the safety of the community that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect and place individuals at risk.

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. However, this needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk and the affect it may have on the prevention and detection of crime and protecting the people/communities we serve.

Having considered all the factors for and against disclosure, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure.

In accordance with the Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for **Question 2** of this request.

Please see the remainder of the requested information below.

Response

Caveats

- In July 2019, GMP implemented one of the largest IT infrastructure changes in UK policing. The systems are in continual development and the data provided for this request is what the system currently hold.
- The data provided was extracted as of 31st March 2023 and excludes career break officers and externally seconded officers.

Question 1 - Headcount of total officers as of 31st March 2023 is 7,849 Officers.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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