

Our ref: 01/FOI/24/012350/A

Please quote our reference
number when responding

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/012350/A

I write in connection with your request for information dated 20/03/2024, I note you seek access to the following information:

1. *How long does Greater Manchester Police retain Airwaves radio transmissions audio tapes/recordings for ?*
2. *Could you provide me with a copy of Greater Manchester Police Airwaves radio transmissions policy?*
3. *Can you inform me what equipment/device manufacturer Airwaves radio transmissions are recorded on ?*

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.

1. 7 years

2. Please see the Policy for Retention and Disposal of Policing Records via the link below:
<https://www.gmp.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/greater-manchester/disclosure-2023/august/01foi23011080y-retention-policy.pdf>

3. The information is exempt by the virtue of the below exemption:

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

Section 31 is a prejudice based qualified exemption and as such, there is a requirement to provide details of the harm as well as the public interest test.

Evidence of Harm

Under the Act, we cannot, and do not request the motives of any application for information. We have no doubt that the vast majority of requests made under the Act are legitimate and the applicants do not have any ulterior motives. However, in disclosing information to one applicant, we are expressing a willingness to provide it to anyone in the world. This means that a disclosure to a genuinely interested and concerned person automatically opens it up for a similar disclosure, including those who would use the information to gain an advantage over our ability to exercise our core function, which is Law Enforcement.

In considering whether or not this information should be disclosed, consideration has been given to the potential harm that could be caused by disclosure.

The police service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The general public are also aware that modern day policing is intelligence led and that there are changes on a day to day basis. Disclosure of equipment information in respect of Airwave radio transmissions could undermine the security and Integrity of the service which would cause operational harm to Greater Manchester Police Force as well as potentially place officer's safety at great risk as well as that of the general public by affecting our ability to fulfil our core function of law enforcement. The release of such information would be invaluable to those with criminal intent as criminals would be able to identify force tactical capabilities and use this knowledge to their own advantage in furthering criminal activity not only within this force but also throughout the country.

This would or would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Public Interest Test

Considerations favouring disclosure:

Factors favouring the disclosure of this information would include better awareness regarding the Airwave service.

Considerations favouring non-disclosure:

Factors favouring non-disclosure would be that it would compromise law enforcement tactics. This would have an impact on police resources and procedure and also could undermine the security and integrity of the Airwave Service.

Balance Test

After considering the advantages and disadvantages in disclosure, it falls upon Greater Manchester Police to conduct a balance test on the issues. The strongest arguments for

release, which is better awareness, needs to be weighed against the strongest argument for non-release, which in this case is effective law enforcement. The Police Service is tasked with the prevention and detection of crime and protecting the public. Whilst there is a public interest in this subject there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the protection of the public and the effective use of police resources.

Therefore, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.