

Our ref: 01/FOI/24/013052/X

Please quote our reference
number when responding

Friday, 16 August 2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/013052/X

I write in connection with your request for information dated 02/08/2024, I note you seek access to the following information:

How many people can you hold within your cell capacities in total. If you can also break this down by custody area.

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.

Total Force capacity - 225

The breakdown information by the custody area has been exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

- **Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law enforcement**

Sections 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

Disclosing the breakdown information by the custody area would provide a person who may be intent on criminal activities with invaluable information as to the capability / tactical position and highlight that the force operates in certain locations, thus allowing them to adjust their own tactics accordingly.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

Police Forces need to be properly equipped in order to meet the demands placed upon them and this information could go some way towards reassuring the public that Greater Manchester Police is adequately prepared in this area. The Force is responsible for public money and therefore there is a strong public interest in disclosing how and what the money is spent on.

Factors Favouring non-Disclosure

Disclosing the current breakdown information by the custody area that are not in the public domain allows for certain policing activities to be carried out with the minimal possibility of being observed or disrupted. To disclose these locations may allow criminals to determine where those activities are being carried out and observe them in order to gain intelligence. This would aid criminal activity by enabling individuals to undermine and disrupt policing activities, therefore, exempting the data is primarily to protect locations that could be targeted for the purpose of disrupting general law enforcement activities and functions.

Balance Test

Whilst there is a general public interest in being open and transparent about how and where public money is spent and the services that we provide, there is a greater public interest in protecting our policing abilities. Information identifying the focus of specific policing activity, such as details of the cell capacity by area within this FOI request, could be used to the advantage of criminals. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these activities will adversely affect public safety, and have a negative impact on law enforcement. Therefore, it is for the reasons outlined above that it is decided that the public interest weighs in favour of non-disclosure.