



Date: 02/01/2024
Our ref: 01/FOI/23/011771/S

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/23/011771/S

I write in connection with your request for information dated 06/12/2023, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Re: Trouble in Westhoughton on the day of the football match between Bolton & Wigan Saturday 19th August.

- 1. At what time did GMP receive a telephone call alerting you to trouble in the Wheatsheaf pub Westhoughton?*
- 2. At what time did the Bolton v Wigan Policing operation stand down?*
- 3. At what time did GMP arrive in Westhoughton?*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm the information requested is held by GMP. However, I am not obliged to provide any of this information as an exemption applies.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide 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. The exemptions applicable to the information is **Section 30(1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(b) – Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities.**

Harm

As the Crown Prosecution Service are considering whether charges should be brought against the arrested individuals, and several people remain wanted by police over the disorder in Westhoughton town centre following the Bolton Wanderers versus Wigan Athletic match, the investigation is still currently ongoing, any material that is disclosed at this at this time may undermine the police investigation.

Public Interest Test Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclose the requested information into the public domain would show GMP's accountability and satisfy the public that the investigation into this incident is being conducted correctly. It would also show GMP's use of public funds investigating incidents of this nature.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Conversely, to publicly release information from an investigation that remains open may seriously undermine GMP's ability to complete the investigation to a full and correct conclusion. It would also have an impact on the future law enforcement capabilities of GMP, as it would disclose policing investigative techniques, thus hindering any future prevention or detection of crime.

Balancing Test

When balancing the public interest test GMP must consider whether the information should be released into the public domain, therefore arguments need to be weighed against each other. The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be the fact that disclosure would encourage transparency. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure, which in this case is the impact on GMP's ability to complete the investigation to a full and correct conclusion. Therefore, having considered all the factors for and against disclosure it is the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the **information from disclosure**.