

Date: 25th June 2024
Our ref: FOI/24/012831/M

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/24/012831/M

I write in connection with your request for information dated 21/06/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

The information I ask to be provided is the fields the PSD (professional standards, complaints, department) database holds that can generate reports (aside of Case Received and Case Recorded dates).

I am seeking information relating to the fields that can generate what may be referred to as 'management information'.

I believe you utilise Force Information Systems Ltd software and it may help, to convey the above, by providing unpopulated screenshots

I am not seeking information relating to the database structure.

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 the information requested as exemption applies.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because this 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 exemption which applies to this request is:

Section 43(2) – Commercial Interests

Section 43 is a prejudice based and qualified exemptions; there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm

Providing system details could reveal weaknesses in GMP's systems, and could render both GMP and the vendors vulnerable to cyber-based attack by those intent on committing such acts. Furthermore, this could compromise GMP's systems which are used on a daily basis to protect the public. Safety of the public is of paramount importance to the policing purpose, and release of this type of data could compromise any personal information GMP may hold. As such, GMP will not jeopardise the organisations ability to do this through disclosing potential weaknesses into the public domain.

Additionally, disclosure would likely prejudice the Force's future commercial interests and of those providing such services to GMP. This would leave GMP in a position where it is not able to negotiate contracts in the future.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

The factors considered in favouring the disclosure of the exempt information requested are as follows:

Disclosure of system details used would provide better understanding to the public and therefore allow for a more informed and accurate public debate.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Factors against the disclosure of information are:

To disclose information relating to specific system details could reveal weaknesses in GMPs systems and could render both GMP and the vendors vulnerable to cyber-based attacks. This could also compromise GMPs system which is used daily.

Balancing Test

When balancing the public interest GMP has to consider whether the information should be released into the public domain. The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be a more informed public. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is in this case is the concern that such disclosure could lead to cyber-based attacks likely rendering the systems inoperative and compromising any personal information GMP may hold. Therefore, in this case, I believe the case for disclosure is not made out.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice.