

Date: 4th October 2024
Our ref: FOI/24/013393/P

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/24/013393/P

I write in connection with your request for information dated 04/10/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am emailing to request information on the below:

- 1. How many speed fines have been issued in the year 2023/24?*
- 2. Which speed camera in your area captured the most speeding offences in the year 2023/24?*

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 all the information requested as exemption applies.

Question 2 is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) Law Enforcement
Section 38(1)b Health and Safety

Sections 31(1)(a)(b) and Section 38 (1)b are 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, which can be seen below.

Public Interest Test

Section 31– Harm

To disclose the location with the highest number of detections will create misleading and potentially dangerous information into the public domain. We do not provide information that would in effect create a league table for our road safety cameras and mobile detection locations, identifying those with the highest detection rates. This makes the cameras potential targets for criminal damage resulting in them being out of action thus negatively impacting on our road safety enforcement strategies and putting GM road users at risk. It would also identify the locations where our staff undertake mobile enforcement thus leaving them open to potential abuse.

The damage to cameras causes significant financial cost to the GM Road Safety Partnership to have cameras repaired or replaced. Whilst the cameras are being repaired or replaced there is no safety camera enforcement taking place and in some cases the cameras may not get replaced at all, both of which impact on road safety in those areas.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

The disclosure details of any operational safety cameras and their operational functions would assist the populous in taking steps to better protect themselves. It would also show GMP's accountability in the use of public funds when policing.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Conversely to the factors in favour of disclosure, to publicly release information about operational safety cameras and their operational functions along with which cameras and districts detect the most offences would impact on the law enforcement capabilities of GMP and would undermine the effectiveness of the cameras and our road safety enforcement. It would allow a perception and encouragement that motorists may travel in excess of the speed limit and/or without their seatbelt without generating a fine/endorsement, which would impact of GMP's ability to prevent and detect crime and apprehend or prosecute offenders. Additionally, this would undoubtedly increase the risk of the health and safety of pedestrians and other motorists.

Section 38 –Harm

To disclose the number of operational speed cameras and their operational functions would encourage motorists to break the speed limit and drive dangerously. This would undoubtedly increase the risk of the health and safety of pedestrians and other motorists.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

The disclosure of operational speed cameras and their operational functions would encourage transparency between the Force and the public.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

To divulge to the wider public the number of operational speed cameras which have the highest number of detections, may encourage individuals to travel at greater speeds in areas not listed. The faster the traffic travels, the higher the risk of accidents to motorists and pedestrians. In addition, knowing other operational functions of safety cameras could encourage the public to drive dangerously and pay less attention to the road.

Balancing Test

When balancing the public interest test GMP has to 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, which needs to be weighed against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure,

which in this case is the likelihood of individuals being put at risk. The safety of the communities GMP police is of paramount importance and the Force would not detrimentally impact on that safety by disclosing harmful information in response to a FOI request.

Therefore, having considered all the factors for and against disclosure it is the decision at this time to maintain the above exemptions and withhold this part of the information requested.

Response to remaining questions

Question 1 - The total number of speeding offences that have been processed by central ticket office for 2023/24 is 166,436.

Question 2 - Exempt please see above.