

Date: 06/09/2024
Our ref: 01/FOI/24/013098/L

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/24/013098/L

I write in connection with your request for information dated 12/08/2024, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

If an officer in your force wants to request to put a marker against an individual on His Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) systems to alert them if an application for a passport for that individual should be made:

- 1) What criteria is required for this?***
- 2) What level/rank of authorisation is required for this (if any)?***
- 3) How often does the marker need to be reviewed before it gets weeded?***

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 of the information of this request as exemption applies.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such 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.

Please see Exemptions below.

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

Harm

To disclose the criteria that is required to have a marker added against an individual's passport request would disclose the operational functions and threshold which will create misleading and potentially dangerous information into the public domain.

This would create a perception that as long as the criteria is not met then an individual who may otherwise be a person of interest can continue to request a passport without fear of GMP being alerted. This would impact on the law enforcement capabilities of GMP in the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

The disclosure of operational processes relating to specific criteria for new passport applications 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 processes relating to specific criteria for new passport applications alerting GMP would impact on the law enforcement capabilities of GMP and would undermine the effectiveness of the process. It would allow a perception and encouragement that anyone who does not meet this criteria will not be a suspect for such markers being added which would impact of GMP's ability to prevent and detect crime and apprehend or prosecute offenders.

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.

he 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 the information requested.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for the particular piece of information.

Please see the remaining information that can be disclosed.

Question 2.

- Sergeant

Question 3.

- lasts for 12 months and reviewed by HMPO