

Date: 11/08/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/015255/N

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/015255/N

I write in connection with your request for information dated 04/08/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

My request concerns the policing of the Britain First protest on August 2nd in Manchester City Centre. My questions are:

- 1. How many police officers were deployed to police the protest?***
- 2. What was the cost of the policing operation?***

I put the question about costs to the Press Office as a media inquiry. The information was not given and I was told I needed to make a FOI request.

As part of my FOI request please tell me why the Press Office, which provides a service to the media in the public interest and would normally respond very quickly, could not provide this information?

- 3. What is the protocol/ policy regarding enquiries of this nature?***

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, **questions 1 and 2** have been exempted 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

A Freedom of Information Act request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself and any information disclosed, are considered suitable for open publication. This is because under the Act, any information disclosed is released into the wider public domain, effectively to the world, not just to an individual.

Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant, providing any further information relating to specific staffing numbers at events within Greater Manchester Police would reveal our operational capability, which would be of intelligence value to criminals intent to cause harm in terms of anti-social behaviour, crime and terrorism.

Disclosing the cost information for the specific policing area/events and in this case the protest mentioned above 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.

The requested information could be used to calculate resources allocated to police the specific event and this could be used to compromise law enforcement capabilities by decreasing the ability of Greater Manchester Police to fight crime. This would increase the commission of crime and subsequently have a detrimental impact on public safety as well as decrease public confidence in the police force.

Disclosure of resources at the police's disposal, including resources used for individual events will mean that those members of the public who are committing crimes and pose a risk to the public, would be able to formulate ways to circumvent or overwhelm the events named above. If disclosed the tactics used by GMP will become less effective and will mean that the police are not able to detect and prevent crime, apprehend, or prosecute offenders or to administer justice for the wider community.

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 cost information for the specific policing area/events along with the number of officers attending 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 the cost may allow criminals to determine police capacity 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 police services that could be targeted for the purpose of disrupting general law enforcement activities and functions.

Any disclosure of information which would compromise law enforcement tactics and thus lead to more crime being committed by reducing the opportunity for the prevention and detection of crime, would therefore increase the risk to public safety, which is not in the public interest.

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 the cost of these type of events 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 I have determined that the balance test favours non-disclosure of the requested information.

Please the remaining response for question 3 below.

Question 3.

There is no protocol/ policy for this type of request.