



Date: 13/02/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/014123/U

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/014123/U

I write in connection with your request for information dated 04/02/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

As per below, can you please answer my questions regarding the GMP operation carried out near Manchester Airport on the 11th December?

Purpose/Target?

Staff/ Resource allocated?

can you justify the police resource used when carrying out the activity of when I was stopped on the 11th December?

15 to 20 police cars?

30 police officers?

Causing traffic congestion near a major airport for a most of a day?

For spacing on number plates?

Was I speeding/driving under influence? Causing any harm or danger to anybody's safety?

Will I receive the same response when I call 999 and report cars in my street with similar number plates?

Surely this resource should be better allocated for actual crimes in the area?

How much did this activity cost your police force?

Result of Searches

This Act provides the public with a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities. However, information disclosed under this Act is effectively released into the public domain, or to the 'wider world', and not only to the person making the request. In cases where the public request information relating to individuals, it would be extremely rare for a public authority to release such information to the whole world under the terms of the Freedom

of Information Act 2000. Therefore, in accordance with the Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this particular request.

Greater Manchester Police can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemption: **Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement** and **Section 40(5)(b)(i) - Personal Information**.

Section 31 is a prejudice based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to evidence the prejudice (harm) in disclosure and consider the public interest to ensure neither confirming or denying that information is held is appropriate. Section 40 is an absolute exemption; therefore, it is not necessary to carry out a public interest test.

Harm in Confirming or Denying that Information is Held – Section 31

The public expect police forces and other law enforcement agencies to use all powers and tactics available to them in their endeavour to prevent and detect crime or disorder and maintain public safety. There are several tactics available for the policing of traffic offences and the policing of Manchester Airport. Confirming or denying whether any of the requested information is held would reveal operational information that would be of intelligence value to those intent of committing crime. GMP would never confirm or deny whether information is held relating to a named individual or not, whoever that individual may be, unless there is genuine operational reason to do so. If GMP reveals information, by confirming information is held (by citing an exemption) or, conversely, stating no information is held, that reveals information about that named individual. In addition, the flow of information (intelligence) to GMP could be compromised which would have an impact on our ability to collect reliable and accurate intelligence resulting in more costly and time-consuming methods of collecting information.

Section 31 - Factors Favouring Confirmation or Denial

Confirmation or denial could promote public trust in providing transparency, demonstrating openness and accountability when it comes to the policing of Manchester Airport and the policing of traffic offences.

Section 31 - Factors Against Confirmation or Denial

GMP has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure reveals information to the world by not adopting an NCND position, this action would compromise the effective delivery of operational law enforcement as detailed in the harm above. GMP relies on information being supplied by the public. Irrespective of what information is or is not held, by applying substantive exemptions would indicate whether information is held or not, and therefore revealing sensitive personal information about an individual. Such action would harm public confidence in GMP and act as a deterrent to the public to provide intelligence to the force.

Section 31 - Balance Test

The points above highlight the merits of confirming or denying that information pertinent to this request exists. The Police Service relies heavily on the public and other law enforcement agencies providing information. The public has an expectation that any information they provide will be treated with confidence. Anything which places that confidence at risk, no matter

how generic, would undermine any trust or confidence other agencies and individuals have in the Police Service. The effective delivery of operational law enforcement takes priority, and it is at the forefront of GMP to ensure the prevention and detection of crime is carried out and the effective apprehensive or prosecution of offenders is maintained. Therefore, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test for neither confirming nor denying that information is held is appropriate in this case.

Section 40

Giving information to a member of the public of the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a) would (apart from this Act) contravene any of the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

To confirm that any information is held or not, could confirm personal data. In some circumstances confirming or denying whether information is held could itself identify a living individual and would therefore breach the principles of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data is defined by Article 4 of the GDPR and Part 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identified natural person is one who can be identified directly or indirectly from that data.

This use of neither confirm nor deny should not be taken as proof that such information does or does not exist.