

Date: 24/03/2025
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/014075/D

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/25/014075/D

I write in connection with your request for information dated 28/01/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

REFINED FROM FOI/24/013840/R

Firstly, a new freedom of information request:

- 1. How much has policing related to Operation Wildflower cost the GMP between October 7th 2023 and the time of providing the information***
- 2. Provide copies of operational guidance or policies given to police for the purpose of managing peaceful protests, for example those covered by the scope of Operation Wildflower***
- 3. Provide information on operational guidance or policies for management of disruptive protests, e.g. Palestine Action, or cases of property damage, for example those covered by the scope of Operation Wildflower***

If exemptions are claimed for parts 2 and 3, please assess this request only for part 1. Section 31 does not apply as there is a clear public interest in how policing action relates to human rights under Articles 10 and 11 of the ECHR. Information that might direct compromise ongoing investigations can be redacted

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.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires GMP, 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.

The exemption which applies to this request is:

Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement

Sections 31 is 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.

Harm

Disclosure of the details of operational tactics, guidance and costs relating to the management of protests would reveal tactical capability and vulnerabilities and would compromise the efficient and effective conduct of Greater Manchester Police during these operations.

Disclosing operational costs while there may be live investigations ongoing can may seriously undermine GMP's ability to complete those investigations to a full and correct conclusion.

The safety of the public is of a paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the details of operations would compromise the safety of the public that Greater Manchester Police serve to protect.

Furthermore, this would impact the future law enforcement capabilities of Greater Manchester Police in the prevention and detection of crime as criminal's intent on committing crime will have an insight on how and when police resources are used and can use this to avoid detection from GMP.

Section 31 – Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclose details about specific operations be that ongoing or future, would show accountability of Greater Manchester Police. Disclosure would encourage public awareness and debate and may reduce crime or lead to more information being provided to Greater Manchester Police from the public for the prevention and detection of crime. Disclosure would also show Greater Manchester Police's use of resources to prevent crime.

Section 31 – Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

To disclose details of operations being conducted would compromise the efficient and effective conduct of the force, especially the force's future law enforcement tactics being compromised. The safety of the public is paramount importance to Greater Manchester Police and to release the requested information would compromise the safety of the community that Greater Manchester Police have sworn to protect.

Disclosure would lead to a greater impact on police resources, in that this could hinder the prevention and detection of crime and more crime being committed in the future. It would give advantage to those individuals intent on criminal activity, and it may assist potential criminals evading the police as policing levels would become evident. A fear of crime will be realised as criminals identify vulnerability and target and exploit the force resulting in the public being in fear of more criminal activity occurring.

Providing operational costs may assist those intent on committing criminal activity or causing disruption to GMP by providing an insight into the number of operational staff/officers associated with the operation and could be used to undermine other policing functions by revealing operational capabilities based on the funding/costs for the operation.

Balancing Test

When balancing the public interest Greater Manchester Police has to consider whether the information should be released into the public domain. Arguments need to be weighed against each other. The most persuasive reason for disclosing the information would be Greater Manchester Police's

accountability. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is the police service is charged with enforcing the law; preventing and detecting crime and protecting the people/communities we serve.

In this case this is the fact that individuals may be placed at risk and the affect it may have on the prevention and detection of crime. In this case, I believe the case for disclosure is not made out.

The police will not divulge any information that would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing, and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by criminal activity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the resource capability which could highlight which events the force is focussing more.

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

Please note –

Any further requests submitted regarding Operation wildflower (specifically relating to costs of the operation and operational guidance and procedures) would be treated as vexatious. GMP considers this as vexatious under grounds of 'Personal Grudges and Unreasonable persistence' and will not be providing a response to this request or any further requests of this nature.

Section 17(6) of the act states that there is no need to issue a refusal notice if an applicant has already been warned (This letter - 24/03/2025) that they will not receive any response to further requests of the same or similar topic.