

Date: 26th March 2025
Our ref: FOI/25/014410/C

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/25/014410/C

I write in connection with your request for information dated 14/03/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am submitting a freedom of information request for the following information

- 1. What is Operation Santee (scope or formal description)*
- 2. What police forces and divisions/departments are involved in the operation*
- 3. How much money has been spent on this operation over the last 18 months*

Result of Searches

Greater Manchester Police neither confirms nor denies that it holds information relevant to this request by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 30(3) Investigations

Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Section 30 is a class based qualified exemption and consideration of the public interest must be given as to whether neither confirming nor denying information exists is the appropriate response.

Section 31 is prejudice based and qualified which means that there is a requirement to articulate the harm in confirming or not whether information is held as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm for Sections 31

Any release under FOIA is a disclosure to the world, not just to the individual making the request. To confirm or not that information is held would suggest to members of the public that if reporting a crime to police, information about their report could be released to the public at large under FOI at any given

time. This fear that information could be made publicly known at any time could result in people not engaging with the police and failing to report crime to the police which ultimately undermines law enforcement. Modern-day policing is intelligence led and this is particularly pertinent with regard to law enforcement.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S30

Confirming or denying whether information exists relevant to this request would lead to a better-informed general public. This fact alone may encourage individuals to provide intelligence in order to assist with investigations and would also promote public trust in providing transparency and demonstrating openness and accountability into where the police are currently focusing their investigations.

The public are also entitled to know how public funds are spent.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S30

To confirm or deny the information does or does not exist, would prejudice investigations that may or may not be ongoing and would likely undermine Greater Manchester Police's ability to prevent and detect future crimes. Greater Manchester Police need to be allowed to carry out investigations effectively away from public scrutiny until such times as the details need to be made public, otherwise it will be difficult for accurate, thorough and objective investigations to be carried out.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S31

There is public interest in transparency and accountability where the police service is concerned as public taxes fund the Police and this obviously favours confirmation or denial.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S31

Greater Manchester Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. If an FOI disclosure revealed information to the world (by citing an exemption or stating no information held) would suggest to members of the public that if re-reporting a crime to police, information about their report could be released to the public at large under FOI at any given time. This fear that information could be made publicly known at any time could result in people not engaging with the police and failing to report crime to the police which ultimately undermines law enforcement.

By its very nature, by confirming or denying this information is held would undermine the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. Under FOI there is a requirement to comply with s1(1)(a) and confirm what information is held. In some cases, it is that confirmation, or not, which could disclose facts harmful to members of the public and police officers or other law enforcement agencies.

Balance Test

To neither confirm or deny any further information is held would suggest that Greater Manchester Police take their responsibility to protect confidential information provided to them seriously and appropriately to ensure the smooth delivery of operational law enforcement. The Police Service would never confirm

or deny whether information was held if to do so could undermine the prevention or detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Greater Manchester Police has a duty of care to the community at large and public safety is of paramount importance. The Police Service relies heavily on the public providing information to assist in criminal investigations and has a duty to protect and defend vulnerable individuals. The public has an expectation that any information they provide will be treated with confidence. Anything that places that confidence at risk, no matter how generic, would undermine any trust or confidence individuals have in the Police Service.

Moreover, there is a public interest in transparency of policing operations and providing assurances that forces are appropriately and effectively dealing with crime, if disclosing information (including via a confirmation or denial that certain information was held) would identify sensitive investigative activity and risk prejudice to investigations.

Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for confirming or denying whether any information is held regarding this matter is not made out.

None of the above can be viewed as an inference that the information you seek does or does not exist.