

Date: 19th May 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/016823/W

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/016823/W

I write in connection with your request for information dated 05/05/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

- 1. Please could you let me know whether GMP have any ongoing investigations into the sale of goods (cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, etc.) involving the Chinese embassy in Manchester? For context, we have heard that Chinese embassy officials have been recruiting members of the local community to sell such goods.***
- 2. Please could you let me know whether GMP have opened any investigations within the past 5 years into the sale of goods (cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, etc.) involving the Chinese embassy in Manchester?***

CLARIFICATION

In terms of keywords, please could you search for:

- ***China***
- ***Embassy***
- ***Hong Kong***
- ***Triad***
- ***China delegate***
- ***China Embassy***
- ***71 Denison Road***
- ***Cigarette***

Result

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 40(5) – Personal Information

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 40 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to evidence the harm or consider the public interest.

Section 30(3) Investigations

Factors favouring confirming that information is held

Confirming or denying whether information exists relevant to this request would lead to a better-informed general public identifying that Greater Manchester Police robustly investigate offences which may encourage individuals to provide intelligence in order to assist with investigations and reduce crime. This would further promote public trust in providing transparency and demonstrating openness and accountability into where the police are currently focusing their investigations. The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent, particularly in the current economic climate.

Factors against confirmation or denial that information is held

Modern day policing is intelligence led. To confirm or not whether Greater Manchester Police has investigated a specific company for specific offences could hinder the prevention and detection of crime. Any ongoing investigation may be affected by making a company aware of whether they have been or are being investigated.

Balancing Test for Section 30

When balancing the public interest test, we have to consider whether the information should be released into the public domain. Arguments needed to be weighed against each other. The most persuasive reason for the disclosure of the information is transparency and openness, which needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure, which, in this case is the possibility to hinder the prevention and detection of crime.

Therefore, taking into account the arguments above, it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test favours neither confirmation nor denial that the requested information is held.

Section 40(5) - Personal Information – 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.

In accordance with the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request. No inference can be taken from this refusal that information does or does not exist.