

Date: 12th May 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/016779/J

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/016779/J

I write in connection with your request for information dated 27/04/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

The operational order produced for the policing of the Britain First March and counter-protest in Manchester city centre on 18 April 2026.

Any threat or risk assessments produced in advance of the police operation relating to the Britain First March and counter-protest in Manchester city centre on 18 April 2026.

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information. I can confirm the information requested is held by GMP. However, I am not obliged to provide anything further as exemptions apply.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because this 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 documents requested are exempt by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 31(1) – Law Enforcement
Section 38(1) – Health and Safety
Section 40 (2) – Personal Information

Section 40 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest test in this area.

Sections 31 & 38 are a prejudice based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in confirming or not that the information is held as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm as per Section 31

Public order tactics and planning methodologies remain current and are routinely reused for similar events. This type of protest activity is recurring, meaning any harm arising from disclosure would be ongoing rather than historic. Disclosure would be likely to reveal policing tactics, deployment methodologies, and response thresholds thereby undermining the effectiveness of future public order operations. It would also enable individuals or groups to adapt their behaviour to avoid or exploit police tactics, prejudicing the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public order.

Section 31 – Factors Favouring Disclosure

To disclose the information requested would provide the public with a slightly more in-depth knowledge into how Greater Manchester Police operates. This would enable the populous to take steps to protect themselves against criminal activity and may lead to further information being provided to the force.

Section 31 – Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

By disclosing the information, law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of crime. More crime would be committed because individuals with mal-intent would have knowledge of operational capability, tactics, strategy and intelligence which would allow them to operate more effectively to avoid detection. This places GMP officers and members of the public at a significant risk of harm and any information which undermines operational law enforcement or places the public and members of GMP at risk is not in the public interest to disclose.

Harm as per Section 38

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.

Disclosure of operational or risk information could be used to inform behaviour at future protests, increasing the likelihood of injury or harm and endangering the physical safety of police officers and members of the public.

Protecting the safety of the police officers and members of the public is of paramount importance to GMP and information that would compromise such health and safety would not be disclosed within a response to a Freedom of Information request.

Section 38 – Factors Favouring Disclosure

Disclosing operational and risk information relating to large scale and controversial public protests would encourage transparency between GMP and the public.

Section 38 – Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

To divulge to the wider public the operational and risk information relating to a large scale protest could provide those with mal-intent with the operational process and intelligence needed to plan and cause injury or harm to police officers and members of the public during future protests.

GMP has a duty of care towards any individual who has been recruited. To reveal information via a Freedom of Information request which would place the safety of Police Officers in grave danger, is not in the public interest.

Balance 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 openness. This needs to be weighed against the strongest reason for non-disclosure which is concerns for the health and safety and revealing policing tactics and capabilities during future protests.

Having considered all the factors for and against disclosure it is my belief that in this case, the reason against disclosure outweighs the reason for disclosure and so the decision at this time to maintain the above exemption and withhold the information from disclosure

This letter acts as refusal for this request.