



Your reference: n/a

Our reference: FOI_24_0419

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 11/06/2024

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_24_0419

On 16/04/2024 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information.

1. Does your force have the following units and please can you answer the additional questions:

a. Tactical Surveillance Unit– Yes/ No

i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____

ii. Name of Unit Head: _____

iii. Unit Contact Number: _____

iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____

b. Counter Terrorism Unit– Yes/ No

i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____

ii. Name of Unit Head: _____

iii. Unit Contact Number: _____

iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____

c. Armed Response Unit– Yes/ No

i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____

ii. Name of Unit Head: _____

iii. Unit Contact Number: _____

iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____

d. Special Operations Unit– Yes/ No

i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____

ii. Name of Unit Head: _____

iii. Unit Contact Number: _____

- iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____
- e. Organised Crimes Unit– Yes/ No
 - i. Shared Resource – Yes/ No, With who: _____
 - ii. Name of Unit Head: _____
 - iii. Unit Contact Number: _____
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: £ _____

2. Please provide an up to date organisation chart of the Unit Structure of the Force.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, I can confirm that Gloucestershire Constabulary holds some relevant information.

1. Does your force have the following units and please can you answer the additional questions:

- a. Yes
 - i. Yes
 - ii. and iii. Unit Contact Number: Details of the South West Regional Organised Crime Unit can be found via the following page:
[South West \(SWROCU\)](#)
 - iv. Budget for 2024/2025: No information held, the regional budget is not held by Gloucestershire Constabulary.
- b. Yes
 - i. Yes
 - ii. Detective Superintendent Craig McWhinnie
 - iii. Details of Counter Terrorism South West can be found via the following page:
[South West | Counter Terrorism Policing](#)
 - iv. No information held, the regional budget is not held by Gloucestershire Constabulary
- c. Yes
 - i. No
 - ii. Superintendent Jessica Loxley-Clark
 - iii. Supt Loxley-Clark can be contacted via 101 or by emailing
force.controlroom@gloucestershire.police.uk
 - iv. This information is exempt under Sections 24 and 31 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please see the below information.
- d. Yes
 - i. No
 - ii. Superintendent Jessica Loxley-Clark
 - iii. Supt Loxley-Clark can be contacted via 101 or by emailing
force.controlroom@gloucestershire.police.uk
 - iv. This information is exempt under Sections 24 and 31 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please see the below information.
- e. Yes
 - i. No
 - ii. Detective Superintendent Mark Chicken
 - iii. D/Supt Chicken can be contacted via 101 or by emailing
force.controlroom@gloucestershire.police.uk

iv. This information is exempt under Sections 24 and 31 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please see the below information.

2. Please see the following links to our force website:

[Gloucestershire Constabulary | About Us | Gloucestershire Constabulary](#)

[Your area | Gloucestershire Constabulary](#)

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Gloucestershire Constabulary, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states the fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

S24(1) - National Security

S31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement

Overall Evidence of Harm

A Freedom of Information Act request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself and any information disclosed, are considered suitable for open publication. This is because, under the Act, any information disclosed is released into the wider public domain, effectively to the world, not just to an individual. Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant, by providing budgetary costs assigned to counter-terrorism could allow those who seek to cause harm to members of the public to gain an understanding of the level of resources employed to mitigate the threat of an attack. This could then allow terrorists/extremists with the time and inclination over a period of years to try to map whether costs are increasing or decreasing year on year.

To disclose the requested information would have a negative effect on the safety of the general public should the release of information be used and manipulated to try and attack individuals and establishments, for example through mapping counter terrorism budget across forces. Disclosure may lead to an attack on establishments within locations where one force is viewed to have lower costs per year on counter terrorism, as these locations may be viewed as a 'weak/vulnerable target' with less policing resources allocated.

The threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It should be recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The UK faces a sustained threat from violent terrorists and extremists. Since 2006, the UK Government have published the threat level, which is currently set to 'substantial' meaning "a terrorist attack is likely." With an increased threat of terrorist activity, providing this information could assist an extremist, terrorist faction or fixated individual and would put people's lives at risk.

In consideration of the ramifications of this threat level, it would not be wise to release details of the budget allocated to counter terrorism units, as to do so could compromise the current or future law enforcement role of the police. Modern-day policing is intelligence-led and information of this nature, needs to be treated with extreme sensitivity as it could have a detrimental effect on the operational effectiveness of the police. There are significant risks associated with the release of such information as this may provide those seeking to commit criminal acts with an advantage over the police, as the information can indeed be viewed as operationally sensitive. Disclosure could have a negative effect on police's

ability to provide the necessary service required should the release of information be used and manipulated by those with criminal or terrorist intent to try and attack individuals or establishments. To disclose the requested information would therefore provide the opportunity of disrupting police activity.

As stated previously, the UK faces a serious and sustained threat from violent extremists. The police have a duty to promote the safety of all individuals. Therefore, to release information held would allow interested parties to gain an awareness of policing decisions used to safeguard national security. National security encompasses a wide spectrum and it is our duty to protect the people within the UK and abroad. Public safety is of paramount importance to the policing purpose and must be taken into account in deciding whether to disclose information. Providing details relating to budgetary costs in this specific area, could potentially be misused proving detrimental to national security.

Releasing information on any units that are not directly related to counter terrorism may allow criminals to determine a forces resources and therefore identify weaknesses and could undermine the ability to prevent and detect crime, which would be considered as being harmful to the public.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure for S24

The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it. Disclosing the information would allow individuals to contribute to more accurate public debate on matters that are of public relevance - in this case information pertinent to counter-terrorism. The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and what measures are in place in safeguarding national security.

Factors favouring non-disclosure for S24

The public interest is not what interests the public but what will be of greater good if released to the community as a whole. It is not in the public interest to disclose information that may compromise the service's ability to accomplish one of its core functions of national security.

To release any policing arrangements of this nature would render security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infra-structure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to either specific individuals or the general public as a whole.

In order to safeguard national security, there is a need for the police to protect information held as to release it would likely have a detrimental effect on policing resources, particularly in the sensitive area of national security.

Factors favouring disclosure for S31

Where public funds are being spent, there is a public interest in accountability and justifying the use of public money. For the police to be fully transparent and open, there is a public interest in providing information pertinent to budgetary allocation and in this case in regards to the funding for counter terrorism in 2024/25. To provide this figure and any breakdown of how the budget is allocated would provide the public with the knowledge that the police are appropriately using public funds to carry out their duties, specifically to combat terrorism.

Releasing the budgets for any specialised teams, could lead to public awareness and may lead to a reduction in crime.

Factors favouring non-disclosure for S31

By providing counter terrorism budgetary information and a breakdown of how this is allocated within the MPS, would mean that there is a strong possibility that the current or future law enforcement role of police counter terrorism units will be compromised by the release of details. This would therefore, hinder the prevention and detection of crime. It can be argued that there are significant risks associated with providing information in relation to monetary resources pertaining to counter terrorism, since they may reveal the relative vulnerability of what we may be trying to protect.

To disclose the funding allocated for one year and then further disclosures for other years via repeat requests, would allow one to calculate whether funding is on the increase or decrease. Disclosure would therefore over time be releasing sensitive operational information into the public domain, which would enable those with the time, capacity and inclination to try and map strategies used by the police. Thus having a detrimental effect on our ability to prevent and detect crime.

Releasing the budget of any specialised teams, would undermine law enforcement resulting in more crime being committed. This would have an impact on Police resources and place individuals and the general public at risk

Balancing Test

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police Service will not divulge information if to do so would place the safety of the public at risk, undermine National Security or law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in transparency and demonstrating that the police are justified and accountable in the use of funds to conduct the vital work they do and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by terrorist activity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police operations in the highly sensitive area of combating terrorism and extremism.

As much as there is a public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Any disclosure of information relating to the police's budget for this specialist area would undermine our ability to combat terrorism, which are sensitive issues of intelligence value to a terrorist. Disclosure would compromise the role, function and resources of the police and ultimately place individuals at risk at a national and international level.

Therefore, it is our opinion that for these reasons the balancing test favours non-disclosure of the requested information.

If you are not satisfied with this response or any actions taken in dealing with your request, you have the right to ask that we review your case under our internal procedure. Please note that a request for an internal review must be made within 20 working days of the response to your original request.

If you decide to request that such a review is undertaken and following this process you are still unsatisfied, you then have the right to direct your complaint to the Information

Commissioner for consideration.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following means:

Website - <https://ico.org.uk/>

Call their helpline - 0303 123 1113

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Post –

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary