

24th February 2021
CON-029300 FOI 850/SF

Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI850– CON-029300

Thank you for your request for information dated 4th February 2021

Your request:

I am writing to you with regards to the investment made by the Home Office into your district under the Safer Streets Fund.

Please can you provide me with the following:

1. The four LSOAs (lower super output areas) that the intervention area covers.
2. The specification for CCTV that will be used in these areas including: a) the model b) a description c) the number of the cameras that will be installed. If no CCTV cameras are planned, please make this clear.

Our response:

Your request for information has been considered and I am not obliged to provide all this information. This has resulted in a partial disclosure only. The exemptions applicable to this information are Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement.

1. Bristol 004C
Bristol 011B
Bristol 004D
Bristol 010C
2. Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement is a prejudice based qualified exemption and there is a requirement to evidence the harm in disclosure as well as considering the public interest. This is therefore only subject of a partial disclosure.

Harm considerations

In order to counter criminal behaviour it is vital that the police and other agencies have the ability to work together, using a variety of tactics and methods, in order to obtain intelligence and take appropriate action to ensure the successful arrest and prosecution of those who commit or plan to commit criminal acts.

The Police Service is committed to demonstrating proportionality and accountability regarding operational techniques to the appropriate authorities. However, if the Police Service or partner agencies were to confirm specific details relating to certain tactics or partnership working, these tactics will either be compromised or significantly weakened. If the Police Service discloses certain information in one request and other information for another, requesters can determine what techniques have been used at which points. The impact could undermine any on-going investigations and any future investigations, as it would enable targeted individuals/groups to become better informed. This would help subjects avoid detection, and inhibit the prevention and detection of crime.

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the police and partner agencies have a clear responsibility to prevent crime and arrest those responsible for committing crime or those that plan to commit crime. To do this the police require evidence and that evidence can come from a number of sources. Having obtained sufficient evidence offenders are charged with offences and placed before the courts. Disclosure of information specific to this request could directly influence the stages of that process, and jeopardise investigations or prejudice law enforcement.

Any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of criminal organisations. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these activities will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on law enforcement.

Public interest considerations

Factors favouring disclosure

Disclosure of this information would enable the public to see where public funds are being spent. Reassurance may also be provided and would allow a better understanding of the effectiveness of policing tactics and partnership working. Better public awareness may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public.

Factors favouring non-disclosure

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has a duty to support the Police Service in effective law enforcement ensuring the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension or prosecution of offenders, and administration of justice is carried out appropriately. Disclosure of this information could lead to law enforcement tactics being compromised or vulnerable premises being identified in our community which could increase the risk of crime, place people at risk and hinder the prevention and detection of crime.

Balance test

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing tactics and methods, and in this case providing assurance that the OPCC is appropriately and effectively engaging with the opportunities provided by the Home Office, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding police investigations and operations in this area.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for disclosure of this specific information is not made out. On balance therefore

the decision is that this information will not be disclosed. This represents a partial refusal notice for this part of your request.

If you have any queries about this letter then please contact me, quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy about how your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of the decision then you should write to:

The Interim Chief Executive
Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office
Valley Road
Portishead
Bristol
BS20 8JJ

Please note, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's office provides you with the right to request a re-examination of your case under its review procedure. The appeals document is attached for your reference.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <http://ico.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Officer

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioners Office