

Prejudice/Public Interest Test

Requested information: '*Documented Risk Assessment for Police Motorcycle Riders*'

Exemption engaged: Section 31(1)(a)(b) - Law enforcement

Harm

The attached risk assessment form provides information regarding the hazards our motorcycle officers could encounter when performing their duties, and the controls in place to minimise the risk of harm to those officers. By its very nature, it therefore includes details of tactics and equipment used by police motorcyclists, some of which could be invaluable to persons intent on carrying out criminal actions. West Midlands Police has a duty to prevent and detect crime and apprehend and prosecute offenders. To release the redacted parts of the attached document and thus aid offenders, could cause a significant risk to officers and the law enforcement capability of the force.

Factors Favouring Disclosure:

West Midlands Police are accountable to the public for the efficient resourcing, training, and budgeting of specialist units and departments, so that the public can be content that our force is fulfilling its responsibility to protect and serve our communities. It is therefore in the public interest to know how the force uses those resources.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure:

Disclosure of this information would reveal details of certain tactics and equipment that our motorcycle officers employ. This knowledge would be advantageous to offenders in allowing them to more easily carry out, or to continue their offending. This would have a negative impact on police resources, encouraging more crime to be committed and placing officers and members of the public at an increased risk of harm.

This compromises the law enforcement role of the Police Service and where the current or future law enforcement capabilities of the force could be prejudiced by the release of information, this is unlikely to be in the public interest.

Balance Test

For a public interest test, factors that favour disclosure of the requested information, need to be weighed against factors that favour non-disclosure. The 'public interest' in this context though, is not what might be of interest to the public or a particular individual, but what will be for the greater good, if released to the community as a whole.

While release of the redacted sections of the attached document will provide the public with a complete and full understanding of the risks posed to our motorcycle officers and the measures that are taken to assess and reduce these risks, it would also divulge information that criminals could use to their advantage.

However, the precise purpose of a risk assessment, is to identify what could cause injury or illness to an employee or others (hazards), decide how likely it is that someone could be

harm and how seriously (the risk) and take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk. To knowingly release information from a risk assessment that increases the risk of harm to an employee or others, would consequently be quite perverse.

Therefore, having considered the factors for and against disclosure, it is my opinion that the public interest test weighs more heavily on the side of non-disclosure of the redacted parts of the risk assessment for West Midlands Police motorcycle officers. West Midlands Police will not disclose information under this Act that would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and place individuals at an increased risk of harm.