

## Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

### Decision notice

**Date:** 23 January 2014

**Public Authority:** Chief Constable  
**Address:** Greater Manchester Police  
P.O. Box 22  
Manchester  
M16 0RE

#### Decision (including any steps ordered)

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1. The complainant requested information from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) about the cost of visits to its area by Princess Anne and the Duchess of Cambridge. GMP told the complainant that it does not hold any relevant information.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that, on the balance of probabilities, GMP does not hold the requested information. He requires no steps to be taken.

#### Request and response

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3. On 4 June 2013 the complainant requested information about visits by Princess Anne and the Duchess of Cambridge. At 15:47 she wrote to GMP in the following terms requesting information in relation to a visit by Princess Anne:

*"Please can you provide me (as a Freedom of information request) with the total cost of the Royal visit from Princess Anne on 23rd April 2013 to Bolton and Hyde and if possible, a breakdown of that cost?"*

*Areas for consideration of cost may be, but not limited to*

*1. Security*

*Including cost of police, risk assessments and health and safety considerations, road closures, crowd safety, barriers etc.*

*2. Catering*

*Including cost of food and drink, catering staff wages and equipment (hired and/or purchased) etc.*

*3. Organisation*

*Including cost of time spent by staff to arrange the visit, rest facilities, building hire, administration and stationary costs, cost of any gifts, momentous or souvenirs, transport and stewarding etc.*

*Please could you also inform me if any of the cost was met by any other organisations or bodies or if you received any donations to help meet the cost, or received any sponsorship, who this was from and how much was given?"*

4. Similarly, at 15:52 on the same day she asked:

*"Please can you provide me (as a Freedom of information request) with the total cost of the Royal visit from The Duchess of Cambridge on 23rd April 2013 to The Willows Primary School in Wythenshawe and if possible, a breakdown of that cost?"*

*Areas for consideration of cost may be, but not limited to:*

*1. Security*

*Including cost of police, risk assessments and health and safety considerations, road closures, crowd safety, barriers etc.*

*2. Catering*

*Including cost of food and drink, catering staff wages and equipment (hired and/or purchased) etc.*

*3. Organisation*

*Including cost of time spent by staff to arrange the visit, rest facilities, building hire, administration and stationary costs, cost of any gifts, momentous or souvenirs, transport and stewarding etc.*

*Please could you also inform me if any of the cost was met by any other organisations or bodies or if you received any donations to help meet the cost, or received any sponsorship, who this was from and how much was given?"*

5. GMP provided a single response to the two requests on 3 July 2013: it denied holding the requested costing information. By way of explanation, it told the complainant:

*"I can confirm that GMP holds no costing information relating to these visits. For instance GMP did not provide refreshments and GMP staff that was tasked to these visits undertook this work as part of their day to day core duties".*

6. The complainant requested an internal review on 8 July 2013. GMP sent her the outcome of its internal review on 15 August 2013. It upheld its original position, confirming that neither individual nor total costs associated with policing of the events to which the requests relate are recorded by GMP.

## Scope of the case

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7. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 16 September 2013 to complain about the way her request for information had been handled.
8. Although the Commissioner understands that complainant submitted her requests for information as two separate requests, for the purposes of this decision notice, the Commissioner will refer to them as 'the request'.
9. The Commissioner considers the scope of his investigation to be whether GMP is correct to say that it does not hold the requested information.

## Reasons for decision

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### *Section 1 general right of access*

10. Section 1 of FOIA states that:

*"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –*

*(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and*

*(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him."*

11. In bringing her complaint to the Commissioner's attention, the complainant said:

*"I don't think that it is credible that they aren't keeping this info - or at least something close to it ..... Also other Police authorities ... do hold this information and release it and surely police authorities must work in similar ways? They say the Police officers involved were carrying out duties as part of their core/general roles but a royal visit is not a day to day occurrence and so the Police officers involved would have been taken away from what they would have*

*been otherwise doing that day, if there hadn't been a royal visit. And therefore that is a cost to the public".*

12. The Commissioner has sought to determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, GMP holds any relevant information relevant which would enable it to answer the request. Applying the civil test of the balance of probabilities is in line with the approach taken by the Information Rights Tribunal when it has considered the issue of whether information is held in past cases.
13. In deciding where the balance of probabilities lies, the Commissioner will consider the searches carried out by the public authority, in terms of the extent of the searches, the quality of the searches, their thoroughness and results the searches yielded. He will also consider any other information or explanation offered by the public authority which is relevant to his determination.
14. The information at issue in this case comprises costing information relating to the specified visits.
15. GMP told the complainant:

*"The officers utilised for the policing of these events (which includes any risk/health and safety assessments, planning, preparation and execution) were deployed as part of their core/general duties. No refreshments or other similar items as listed within your request were provided by GMP and therefore there is no information held by the force in relation to these items nor the costs of any other police resources used (such as vehicles)".*

16. In its substantive response to the Commissioner, GMP provided further evidence in support of its view that it does not hold the requested information. This included providing the Commissioner with information about the nature of the searches conducted including details of the search terms used to locate any relevant electronic records. It also confirmed which business areas it had contacted, explaining:

*"these would be the relevant business areas that may hold the requested information".*

17. The Commissioner has considered the nature of the searches that have been conducted. He has also considered GMP's reasons for saying that the requested costing information is not held.
18. The Commissioner finds it understandable that members of the public may well consider that events such as a visit by a member of the Royal family need to be planned and separately budgeted for. However, on

the basis of the evidence provided to him, the Commissioner is satisfied that GMP does not hold the requested information.

## Right of appeal

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19. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)  
GRC & GRP Tribunals,  
PO Box 9300,  
LEICESTER,  
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0300 1234504

Fax: 0116 249 4253

Email: [GRC@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:GRC@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber](http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber)

20. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
21. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

**Signed .....**

**Graham Smith**  
**Deputy Commissioner**  
**Information Commissioner's Office**  
**Wycliffe House**  
**Water Lane**  
**Wilmslow**  
**Cheshire**  
**SK9 5AF**