



**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER
for Leicestershire**

Your voice in Leicester,
Leicestershire & Rutland

Our Ref: 003516/18

Your Ref:

Address Correspondence to: Jane Orange, Information Management

Date 20 August 2018

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I write further to your request for information received 27/07/2018.

I note you seek access to the following information:

*What estimates or analysis does the OPCC hold relating or referring to the impact of "county lines" drug supply operations in your force area? Please provide copies of any such estimates/ analysis or a summary of the key statistics and findings.
Please advise me on what other information your OPCC force holds relating or referring to "county lines" drugs supply operations.*

Following receipt of your request, searches were conducted within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire to locate information relevant to your request.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in s1 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemptions:

- Section 23(5) Information relating to the Security bodies;
- Section 24(2) National Security;
- Section 31(3) Law enforcement;

This should not be taken as conclusive evidence that any information that would meet your request exists or does not exist.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire

Police Headquarters, St John's, Enderby, Leicester LE19 2BX | Telephone 0116 229 8980
Email police.commissioner@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk | Web www.leics.pcc.police.uk



Section 23 is an absolute exemption which means that the legislators have identified that harm would be caused by release and there is no requirement to consider the public interest test.

Sections 24(2) and 31(3) are qualified and require us to carry out a harm and public interest balancing test before they can be relied upon.

Overall harm for the NCND

Although all efforts should be made to release information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to confirm or deny whether information is or is not held regarding county lines by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire could not only undermine ongoing investigations, but also the National Security.

Whilst there is a public interest in transparency of policing allowing assurances to be provided that the Police Service is appropriately engaging with criminal threats, this should be countered against the need to protect vulnerable areas, and ongoing policing operational activity.

The security of the country is of utmost importance and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so would compromise national security. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the Police Service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by county lines activity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in the highly sensitive areas of which they work.

Confirming or denying whether any information is held relevant to the request would show where policing interest has or has not occurred in any specific area which would enable those engaged in criminal activity to identify the focus of policing targets and identify vulnerable parts of the UK.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S24

Confirmation or denial that any information exists relevant to the request would lead to a better informed public. The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent especially regarding safeguards to national security.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S24

Other organisations outside the Police Service may, or may not have an active interest in the subject of the question above. By confirming or denying that any information exists relevant to the request would harm the close relationship that exists between the forces and other organisations. To confirm or deny whether the force hold any information relevant to the request would allow inferences to be made about the nature and extent of national security related activities which may or may not take place in a given area. This would enable criminal groups to take steps to counter intelligence, and as such, confirmation or denial would be damaging to national security.

By confirming or denying any policing arrangements of this nature would render national security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.



Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S31

Confirming or denying whether any further information is held would allow the public to see where public funds have been spent and allow the Police Service to appear more open and transparent.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S31

To confirm or deny that law enforcement holds this information could reduce the effectiveness of law enforcement tactics which would lead to a hindrance on the police forces ability to prevent and detect crimes. Vulnerable areas could be detected by force level disclosure leading to more criminal activity placing members of the public in harms way. If information is released confirming or denying that requests have been made this may impact police resources as vulnerable forces may need to increase their resources to reassure the public and protect the surrounding community.

Balance test

The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so could undermine National Security or compromise law enforcement. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and in this case providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by the criminal fraternity, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both national security and the integrity of police investigations and operations in this area.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of national security this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for confirming or denying whether any information relevant to your request exists is not made out.

None of the above can be viewed as an inference that any other information does or does not exist.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire provides you the right to ask for a re-examination of your request under its review procedure. Letters should be addressed to Information Manager, Corporate Services Department at the above address. If you decide to request such a review and having followed the Force's full process you are still dissatisfied, then you have the right to direct your comments to the Information Commissioner who will give it consideration.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Officer
The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire in complying with their statutory duty under sections 1 and 11 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to release the enclosed



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