

## **Public Interest Test 8471 18**

### **Exempt Information**

Section 31 (a) (b) Law Enforcement

speed threshold within the policy.

### **Harm**

To disclose this information would alert individuals to police tactics and undermine the work of speed enforcement. If drivers were aware of or could predict (or thought that they were able to predict) police tactics they would be more likely to exceed the speed limit as they would believe that the chances of being recorded speeding at particular times or speeds was low. For camera enforcement to be truly effective there must be the perception that the chances of being recorded are high at all sites and at all times. Therefore releasing this level of detail would increase the speed motorists travel at around this (or other) location(s) as they feel the likelihood of being caught is low.

### **Reasons for disclosure**

Disclosing information about policing tactics would provide a greater transparency in the actions of a public authority. It is clear that there is a public interest in public authorities operating in as transparent a manner as possible, as this should ensure they operate effectively and efficiently. Confirming the speed threshold could help to ensure that WMP are following the correct process and ensure the officers are being correctly monitored when attending emergency situations. This would allow the public to be more informed about police tactics and ensure that WMP are operating within the appropriate guidelines.

There is a clear public interest in ensuring that public organisations are acting within their authority by making sure their officers are adhering to the correct policies and guidelines and those who breach the speed limit are dealt with in the correct way. By confirming the speed limits officers attending emergency situations are able to travel at, the public would be able to monitor and report any breach, should they be witnessed to it, this would mean that officers would be more accountable for their actions. This may also provide reassurance to the public that officers would be able to deal with an emergency quickly providing confidence within the community. Therefore it may provide the necessary safeguards and satisfy the public interest in this matter.

### **Reasons for non disclosure**

Where the current or future law enforcement role of the force may be compromised by the release of information, then this is unlikely to be in the interest of the public.

There are already appropriate safeguards in place whereby our camera enforcement unit have processes to monitor officer driver behaviour and are accountable to their line manager to account for excessive speeds in non-emergency situations.

Officers should be allowed to conduct their duties without been constantly monitored, when attending emergency situations they should be able to deal with that situation in an appropriate manner.

Releasing this information would have a negative impact on law enforcement as the public would know what safe speed the police are allowed to travel at in emergency situations, therefore drivers / the public could amend their behaviour accordingly. This has potential dangerous consequences for drivers and members of the public. Putting the public's safety at risk is unlikely to be in the public interest.

### **Balancing Test**

For a public interest test, issues that favour release need to be measured against issues that favour non disclosure. The public interest is not what interests the public, or a particular individual but what will be the greater good, if released, to the community as a whole.

The issues of transparency and accountability of WMP are noted. However, on balance it is considered that the public interest in disclosing the data is outweighed by the potential impact release would have on law enforcement and driver behaviour.

There are already the appropriate safe guards in place to monitor and make officers accountable for their actions.

To publish speed limits would prejudice the Police Services' abilities to prevent and detect crime and to protect the public's safety.

Having considered the arguments for and against, the public interest test favours the non disclosure of the data requested. West Midlands Police will not disclosure information that will undermine future law enforcement and put the public in danger.