

Harm

The policy contains direction to officers as to how to manage CCTV and ID procedures. The redacted information could be used by offenders to minimise their chances of being identified, which could lead to them evading justice and presenting a continuing risk to the public.

Public Safety is of paramount importance and the Police Service will not disclose information which may jeopardise the prevention of crime and/or safety of individuals under any circumstances.

Section 31 – Factors favouring disclosure:

It is important that police forces are open and transparent so as to gain and maintain the trust of the public, which in turn aids cooperation and assists law enforcement.

West Midlands Police is dedicated to openness and transparency and release of this information could go some way to reinforcing this commitment to the public.

Section 31 – Factors favouring non-disclosure:

The public interest will favour non-disclosure when the current or future law enforcement role of the force may be compromised by the release of information. Disclosing specific detail and strategies would compromise the law enforcement role of West Midlands Police.

Balancing Test

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve.

In considering the public interest in relation to this request, I have balanced the factors with regard to transparency and public awareness, against the public interest in ensuring that West Midlands Police are able to appropriately enforce the law and protect the public.

For a public interest test, issues that favour release need to be measured against issues that favour non-release. 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.

However, while the public interest considerations favouring release are noted, this must be balanced with the impact any release would have on the law enforcement capability of the police and the safety of individuals.

West Midlands Police will not disclose information that could reveal personal information, compromise the future law enforcement role of the force, or cause harm to the public.