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22/06/2023

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 170/2023

Thank you for your request for information regarding STAR funding, which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

In 2023/24, the NPCC was awarded £200,000 from the Science, Technology, Analysis and Research (STAR) fund to research Wi-Fi and Cellular enabled VSS (CCTV) data extraction and analysis.

Please provide copies of any of the following documents prepared in relation to this project:

1. STAR funding bid
2. Use case summaries
3. Business justification papers
4. Data Protection Impact Assessments
5. Equality Impact Assessments

NPCC Response:

The NPCC does hold information captured by part one of your request.

I have attached to this response letter document titled 170 2023 Annex to response letter which is the STAR funding bid. The document is provided to you in redacted format by virtue of S31 Law Enforcement.

The NPCC has a legal obligation to try and advise and assist you (S16) further with your request; for more information on the legislation relating to S31 and S16 please see Annex A.

In relation to parts two to five of your request, I have made enquiries with the current business areas; namely the office to the Police Chief Scientific Adviser and NPCC lead for National Capabilities (CCTV) respectively and both do not hold the specific information you are seeking.

Normal standard of proof to apply in determining whether a public authority does hold any requested information is the civil standard of the balance of probabilities. In deciding where the balance lies, the Information Commissioner considers the scope, quality, thoroughness and results of the searches carried out by the public authority as well as considering where appropriate, any other reasons offered by the public authority to explain why the information is not held.



I have undertaken all of the necessary checks in establishing whether information is held which is captured by your request and any necessary steps with regard to retrieval of such information.

Searches have been conducted across the NPCC that might relate to the subject matter to which your request refers and I am satisfied that the searches conducted to locate the information that you have requested have been robust.

There is no information held by way of searches undertaken and I therefore conclude that the information that you seek is not held for parts two to five by the NPCC.

Sherry Traquair

NPCC Freedom of Information Officer & Decision Maker

www.npcc.police.uk

COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Internal Review

If you are dissatisfied with the response you have been provided with, in compliance with the Freedom of Information legislation, you can lodge a complaint with NPCC to have the decision reviewed within 20 working days of the date of this response. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone independent of the original decision, and a fresh response provided.

It would be helpful, if requesting a review, for you to articulate in detail the reasons you are not satisfied with this reply.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to NPCC Freedom of Information, c/o PO Box 481, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 9FS.

If, after lodging a complaint with NPCC, you are still unhappy with the outcome, you may make an application to the Information Commissioner at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Annex A

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the NPCC, when refusing to provide information by way of exemption in question and (c) states why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a refusal notice to those aspects of your request.

The legislation: Section 31 Law Enforcement

- (1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to prejudice—
 - (a) The prevention or detection of crime
 - (b) The apprehension or prosecution of offenders

Disclosure of this information would enable those with criminal intent to target specific areas of the UK to conduct their criminal or terrorist activities. This would also enable criminals to take measures to counteract the tactical capabilities of police forces.

Disclosure of this information would have the likelihood of identifying specific vulnerabilities, which would ultimately compromise police tactics, operations and future prosecutions. Any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of terrorists or criminal organisations. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these activities will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on law enforcement. Public safety would be put at risk if criminals were able to counteract police tactics. The NPCC is committed to demonstrating proportionality and accountability.

Any information that could impact or undermine ongoing investigations or any future investigations would enable targeted individuals / groups to become tactically aware of the police capabilities. This would help subjects and avoid detection, and inhibit the prevention and detection of crime.

The NPCC will not disclose information which may hinder the effective management of law enforcement or place staff or officers at risk. 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 managing this area of policing, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the tactical abilities.

The prevention and detection of crime is the foundation upon which policing is built and the police service have a clear responsibility to prevent crime and arrest those responsible for committing crime or those that plan to commit crime. Disclosure of information captured by this request could directly influence the stages of that process, and jeopardise current investigations or prejudice law enforcement.

Some email addresses are contained within the correspondence and disclosure of direct contact details would enable an individual, intent on committing an offence to make contact with the department, pose as a police officer or member of police staff and try to glean information which would assist in their offending behaviour.

Disclosing information which may place the public at risk, or make it easier for crime to be committed cannot be in the public interest.

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The police service primary performance indicator is the reduction of crime, and disclosure which has a negative impact on that agenda affects public trust in policing and in this case may make it more difficult to police.

With regard the evidence of harm itself, there is a threshold that requires the predicted issues to be 'more than likely'. In the case of an offender identifying full investigative techniques or gleaning information which would assist in offending behaviour can be difficult to establish and evidence the harm without actually disclosing exempt information. However, the principles are well established in terms of Freedom of Information legislation that to a certain extent the professional opinion of the police must be taken into account.

Legislation – Section 16

- (1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.