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24/01/2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 376/2023

Thank you for your request for information regarding the NPCC Chair, the Home Secretary and Op Talla, which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

For the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, please provide the following information:

1. Dates and locations of meetings attended by both the Home Secretary and the Chair of the NPCC.
2. Minutes of meetings attended by both the Home Secretary and the Chair of the NPCC.
3. In the minutes of the meeting of the Chief Constables' Council of Thursday 4th June 2020, it is recorded that 'He explained the current government is very closely engaged in policing and has a number of demands that they want policing to deliver on. The COVID requirements have demonstrated the necessity to work as a service, to be able to respond swiftly and this has been carried out successfully by policing. Policing needs to be in a position to respond to demands on a long-term basis and be able to deliver these demands efficiently and effectively.'

Please provide the correspondence from government which articulates 'the demands they want policing to deliver on'. If this was discussed in a meeting, please provide minutes of such a meeting.

4. Details of any engagement between the NPCC or the Chief Constables' Council and the Home Secretary, with regard to Op TALLA.

NPCC Response:

The NPCC does hold some recorded information captured by your request.

I have attached a separate PDF which details dates and known locations of meetings attended by both the Home Secretary and the NPCC Chair between 2019 and 2022.

The NPCC does not hold copies of any minutes attended by both the Home Secretary and the Chair of the NPCC.

The NPCC has a legal obligation to try and advise and assist you further with your request; for more

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information on the legislation please see Annex A. Outside of the Freedom of Information Act, I can confirm that agendas and minutes from the National Policing Board are routinely published by the Home Office at the link below:

[National Policing Board - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

In relation to question 3, the NPCC does not hold any information captured by the specific wording of your request.

Outside of the Freedom of Information Act and in wishing to assist you further, my colleagues provided they believe that rather than being specifically related to COVID, this statement was referencing the wider Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR). The SPR was first introduced in 2012 and has been updated several times, most recently in 2023. Details about the Strategic Policing Requirement can be found on the Home Office website below.

[Strategic Policing Requirement 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The National Police Chiefs' Council Strategic Plan 2021-2025 can be found at the link below:

[National Police Chiefs' Council \(npcc.police.uk\)](http://npcc.police.uk)

In relation to question 4 of your request, within the separate attachment I have provided information held in relation to both the NPCC Chair and the Head of NPoCC's engagement with the Home Secretary in relation to Op Talla.

Under the Page Op Talla NPCC Chair meetings, Column C – 'Other Ad Hoc Meetings' has been provided outside of the Act, we are unable to confirm if the Home Secretary was present at these meetings as these invites came from the Home Office and we do not hold any other information relating to the attendees.

I have also attached 3 captured letters sent from the Home Secretary to the NPCC, which are related to Op Talla.

1. Covid Police Enforcement Strategy Letter 22-12-20
 2. 130520 Operational Daily Brief - Home Secretary letter to police officers and staff
 3. 030720 Chiefs' Operational Brief - Home Secretary Letter - HH Summit
- One minor redaction has been made under Section 31(1) Law Enforcement for direct contact details. For more details on the legislation, please see Annex A below.

Outside of the Freedom of Information Act, I can confirm that the majority of the engagement between Martin Hewitt and Owen Weatherill with the Home Sec during the Covid pandemic happened over the telephone and no formal records were kept of these conversations.

I have made enquiries with the current NPCC Chair as well as the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC) respectively and both do not hold any other specific information related to your request.

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 all NPCC areas 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 within the current portfolios and I therefore conclude that the information that you seek is not held by the NPCC.

You may wish to approach the Home Office FOI team in relation to information their own records. This can be done by contacting the email below:

FOIrequests@homeoffice.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

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

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.

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

Also, providing direct contact details into the public domain, could allow those with intent to negatively impact the volume of emails received into these addresses and undermine policing. Disclosing information that may place the public at risk, or make it easier for crime to be committed cannot be in the public interest.

The police service's primary performance indicator is the reduction of crime. Any disclosure of information that has a negative impact on policing performance, which in turn may affect the public trust in policing, could result in a public loss of confidence and the withdrawal of the public's engagement with the police.

Any consequential negative impact on policing's ability to understand and address areas of concern would ultimately be undermining operational law enforcement. This potentially also enables criminals to take measures to counteract the tactical capabilities of police forces.

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.

The NPCC will not disclose information that may hinder the effective management of law enforcement or place staff or officers at risk. Whilst I agree with your point that Chief Constables are public figures and that there is a public interest in the transparency of policing, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the tactical capabilities of UK policing. Additionally there are centralised and publically available routes for members of the public to use to make contact with both the police forces and the NPCC.

The lack of the enhancement to the public debate, coupled with the risks leave me in no doubt that the balance, at this time lies in non-disclosure.