| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 25-1008Responded to: 15 July 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**Could you supply any analysis undertaken on police station closures within the last two years?**

Clarified as:

**I'm looking for any reports or discussions written about the impact of closing these police stations to the community and to policing.**

A significant search for relevant information was undertaken, the attached documents provide all information sourced. Please note that some information has been redacted. As such, some information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the following sections apply:

**30(b)(i)&(ii) Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs**

The exemptions in section 30(b) focus on the effect that disclosure of information would have (or would be likely to have) on the free and frank provision of advice or the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation. The sharing of this content would likely have a negative impact on the effective conduct of public affairs.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

**30(c) Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs**

Where necessary some internal names / telephone numbers/reference numbers and email addresses have been redacted. To release these details publicly through FOI legislation could negatively impact on the operational effectiveness of various departments and external partner agencies. While it is acknowledged that the disclosure of this information would support transparency and better inform the public as to how Police Scotland conducts its business, there are already established routes for the public to contact the police and the disclosure of these additional details would not support the effective conduct of public affairs.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

**33(1)(b) Commercial Interests**

The information requested relates specifically to the commercial interests of Police Scotland partners. If commercially sensitive information was to be publicly disclosed, it would directly affect the relationship between trading partners and may reduce the number of businesses prepared to form a business relationship with the organisation, reducing the opportunity for Police Scotland to source the most efficient services for the public.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

## Section 35(a)&(b) Law Enforcement

Disclosure would prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

To disclose resourcing details, details of police buildings or crime detection strategies, could allow those with hostile intent to calculate how and when resources are allocated, access points to sensitive building, and how to evade justice.  This has the potential to provide a tactical advantage to those, if planning or perpetrating any unlawful activities allowing them to maximise the impact of destruction, harm and disruption that may be caused, whilst avoiding being brought to justice.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

## Public Interest Test

As you will be aware, the exemptions listed above are non-absolute and require the application of the Public Interest Test.

I would suggest that public accountability may favour disclosure, given that the information concerns the efficient and effective use of resources by the organisation. Likewise, disclosure of the information would also inform the public debate on the issue of policing and contribute to the accuracy of that debate.

However, any disclosure under FOI legislation is a disclosure to the world at large and any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of criminals or those intent on the destruction of policing relationships.

Consequently, in terms of the applicability of the exemptions listed above, the need to ensure the effective conduct of the service in relation to commercially sensitive relationships, the prevention and detection of crime and public safety considerations involved in the delivery of operational policing clearly favour non-disclosure of the information requested.

​Accordingly, I would argue that the need to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the service favours non-disclosure of the information requested and on balance is significantly in the public interest. I cannot identify any corresponding viewpoint in disclosing the requested information and therefore the exemptions are upheld.

I must advise you that it is doubtful it could ever be in the public interest to disclose information which would jeopardise commercially sensitive relationships, the delivery of policing and the safety of individuals and prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

## Section 38(1)(b) Personal Data

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the exemption set out at section 38(1)(b) of the Act applies - personal data.

Personal data is defined in Article 4 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as:

‘Information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (“data subject”); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person’.

Section 38(2A) of the Act provides that personal data is exempt from disclosure where disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles set out at Article 5(1) of the GDPR which states that:

‘Personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject’.

Article 6 of the GDPR goes on to state that processing shall be lawful only if certain conditions are met. The only potentially applicable condition is Article 6(1)(f) which states:

‘Processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child’.

Whilst I accept that you may have a legitimate interest with regards the disclosure of this information, I do not agree that disclosure could be considered necessary in the circumstances.

Notwithstanding, I am further of the view that your interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects.

On that basis, it is considered that disclosure of the information sought would be unlawful.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by email or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by email or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.