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Public Interest Test

Freedom of Information

Section 43(2)

Harm

Release via the Freedom of Information Act is deemed release into the public domain. It is our conclusion that releasing this information into the public domain would be likely to prejudice the pricing structure, which could have a detrimental effect on the West Midlands Police budget.

Factors that favour Disclosure

Disclosing the intended cost of refurbishment of the buildings may be in the interest of the tax payer who are interested in how much money is being invested into the project. It may also be of beneficial interest to businesses involved in the refurbishment, who may decide to raise their prices.

Factors against Disclosure

Releasing information that falls within the scope of this request may have a detrimental effect on WMP budgets, if the costs of materials and trade are increased due to prices being published. Releasing this information to any legal persons (whether that be an individual, a company, a public authority or any other legal entity) could prejudice all aspects of the refurbishment, and negatively impact the project. This may have a detrimental effect on policing in the West Midlands if it prevents neighbourhood officers from working in local communities, as intended.

Balancing Test

The issues of transparency and awareness are noted. However, on balance, it is considered that the public interest in disclosing this information is outweighed by the potential harm that release would have on the owner of the information.

Having considered the arguments for and against, I therefore consider that this prejudice test favours maintaining some level of confidentiality surrounding the intended cost of refurbishment. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will not disclose information that could prejudice the current or future commercial interests of its organisation.