

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA140318-6579

Date 20 June 2018

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 14 March 2018. Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding. Due to the nature of event planning, there was a lot of information potentially within scope of your clarified request which required review.

You originally asked for information relating to the conditions and/or limitations under which organisations or institutions can hire or request use of Trafalgar Square and correspondence with the Royal Opera House and BP and clarified that you required;

- *Any written permissions granted to the Royal Opera House in relation to its use of Trafalgar Square*
- *Correspondence relating to branding, advertising and other promotional materials/activity*
- *Correspondence relating to security during the event(s)*
- *Correspondence relating to funding or any fees payable by the Royal Opera House or otherwise*

Please find attached the information we have identified as within scope of your request. Some information which falls within scope of the third part of your request has been withheld from disclosure under Section 24 – national security, Section 31(1)(a) – prevention or detection of crime, and Section 38(1)(b) – endangering the safety of any individual. The information relates to event safety and security measures for events at Trafalgar Square, one of the 10 most visited tourist attractions in London and also host to cultural celebrations, commercial events, rallies and demonstrations.

Section 24(1) allows a public authority not to disclose information if it considers releasing the information would make the UK or its citizens more vulnerable to a national security threat. The GLA notes the relevance of the following paragraphs from the ICO's guidance on section 24 of the Act:

(13) Safeguarding national security also includes protecting potential targets even if

there is no evidence that an attack is imminent.

(14) The Commissioner also recognises terrorists can be highly motivated and may go to great lengths to gather intelligence. This means there may be grounds for withholding what seems harmless information on the basis that it may assist terrorists when pieced together with other information they may obtain.

The terrorist attacks in London, Paris and across Europe in the past two years highlight the heightened risk to the public and crowds at high profile areas of major cities such as London. We note the ICO has acknowledged the link between national security, counter terrorism activities and potential acts of terrorism. We believe iconic locations such as Trafalgar Square are a realistic high-profile target for potential acts of terrorism.

Section 31(1)(a) covers all aspects of the prevention and detection of crime and can apply to information on general policies and methods adopted by public authorities. Section 31(1)(a) of the Act is engaged because the release of this information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. The provisions of section 24(1) and Section 31(1)(a) of the Act are engaged by information which could be used by those intent on committing criminal acts to harm the public.

Section 38(1)(b) of the Act is duly engaged because of the potential risk to public safety as set out in the Act.

Under FoIA the 'public interest' is not the same as what might be of interest to the public. In balancing the public interest in disclosure, we consider the greater good or benefit to the community as a whole if the information is released or not. The 'right to know' must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

There is a clear public interest in the release of information that helps demonstrate the work of public bodies involved in emergency planning. To help facilitate this understanding, there is a justifiable public interest in placing into the public domain information that would allow the public to assess the nature of the discussions that take place, the advice that is given and the manner in which is presented. Transparency of these decision-making processes will generate confidence in the integrity of the procedures involved

The GLA is also mindful of the assumption in favour of disclosure in 2(2)(b) the FOIA. Considerations favouring non-disclosure; Conversely the disclosure of this same information would increase the risk of criminal activity, violent crime, or other incidents at an event if made public and seen by those intent on causing harm. It is not in the public interest to release information that could be directly used to harm or plan harm to the public.

The information withheld from disclosure is not key to understanding the event itself, and may be replicated in part for administering future events. We have determined that safeguarding national security interests, avoiding prejudice to policing operations to prevent and detect crime, and protecting the safety of the public attending the Events in Trafalgar Square is of paramount importance.

The public interest favours maintaining the exemption provisions of s.24(1), s.31(1)(a) and s.38(1)(b) in relation the redacted and withheld information.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference

Yours sincerely

Paul Robinson
Information Governance Officer

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>