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1. Thank you for your freedom of information requests received on 12 February. You received a response to most of your request on 16 March. The final part of your request asked:

*8. Copies of earlier drafts of the report including any tracked changes and comments.*

2. I have previously confirmed that we do hold material in scope of this request and that we needed a little more time to consider the public interest balance for releasing these reports.

3. We have now concluded these considerations and I can confirm that Section 33 applies to the draft reports. Section 33 (2) applies where disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the exercise of any of the authority’s functions in relation to any of the matters referred to in subsection (1). HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate’s function falls within section 33 (1).

4. Section 33 is a 'qualified exemption' and requires us to carry out a public interest test to consider whether the balance of interest lies in releasing or withholding the information.

5. In considering this, we have paid particular regard to the arguments in favour of disclosure, including that disclosure may be of benefit because:

• furthering public understanding of the inspection process;

• promoting accountability and transparency in relation to decision making;

6. We have also considered the arguments for upholding the exemption. These arguments are:

• ensuring that inspectors can effectively carry out their duties;

at the early stage of drafting reports it is common practice for all inspectors to put forward findings, evaluations and their own judgments which are then challenged by fellow inspectors. This process allows all these to come together at an early stage. Through a process of challenge these are refined by looking at the range of evidence available. Releasing such information would likely deter inspectors for putting forward findings, evaluations and their own judgments unless they were absolutely sure that the evidence supported them and remove this thinking space that is crucial to providing high quality and effective reports. This is particularly important in joint inspections where individual inspectors will not be used to working with each other and where different aspects of disclosure – in this case police behaviour and CPS behaviour - are being considered. Release would likely prejudice the quality of future inspection reports

7. For early draft reports the arguments for upholding the exemption outweigh those in favour of disclosure as to do so would prejudice the quality of reports.

8. For later drafts, the public interest is in favour of releasing and these are attached.

9. If you would find it helpful, Kevin McGinty, HM Chief Inspector, Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate is willing to meet with you to discuss this report. If you would like to take him up on the offer please contact.

Complaints and comments

10. I would like to explain that if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our response to your request for information and/or wish to appeal against information being withheld from you please send full details within two calendar months of the date of this email to:

11. You have the right to ask the Information Commissioner (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. Please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning an investigation.