

Gloucestershire Constabulary
Police Headquarters
No.1 Waterwells, Waterwells Drive
Quedgeley, Gloucester. GL2 2AN
www.gloucestershire.police.uk



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_26_0301

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 07/04/26

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_26_0301

On 17/03/2026 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 please provide the following information relating to UAV / drone capability within your force for the period January 2021 – present.

1. Total annual spend on UAV / drone equipment, services or training.
2. A breakdown of spend where available by category:
 - Drone hardware
 - Drone training
 - Drone Software / data platforms
 - Drone Maintenance or servicing
3. Names of suppliers used for:
 - Drone hardware
 - Drone training
 - Drone software or data platforms
4. The drone platforms currently in operational use (e.g. DJI, Parrot, etc).
5. The number of officers trained as drone pilots within the force.
6. Any current contracts or framework agreements relating to drone capability, including start and end dates where available.

7. The role/title or department responsible for management of the UAV / drone programme within the force.

If possible, please provide the information in Excel or CSV format.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, I can confirm that Gloucestershire Constabulary holds some relevant information.

1. Total spend: £316,804.91

2. Hardware: £146,942.12, Drone Training: £714.50, Drone Software / data platforms: £0, Drone Maintenance or servicing: £389.17

5. 21

7. Accountable Manager/Drone Unit

With regards to the rest of your request, this information is exempt.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Gloucestershire Constabulary, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states the fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemptions applied to the above are as follow:

- Section 24(1) – National Security
- Section 31(1) – Law Enforcement

Section 24 is a qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Section 31 is a prejudice-based and qualified exemption. There is a requirement to articulate the harm in disclosing such information as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Harm Test

Although it is acknowledged that Gloucestershire Constabulary uses drones, revealing specific information such as the make, model and technical capabilities would undermine the process of preventing and detecting crime and apprehension of offenders. The information would be of use to those who seek to disrupt police operations as it would, by process of elimination, enable individuals with the inclination to identify where and what specific drones police forces hold, which is detrimental to the use of tactics and effective investigations, allowing those with intent the opportunity to disrupt operational policing.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring s24(1) – The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it. Better informed public can take steps to protect themselves. The public have a right to see where public spending is going.

Factors against s24(1) -The risk of harm to the public would increase as security measures would be rendered less effective if those with intent were able to intercept policing drones and obstruct policing procedures. Release of specific information about particular policing tools would disclose Gloucestershire Constabulary's capability and allow steps to be taken to counteract such tools, thus reduce the force's ability to protect the public, which in turn affects national security.

Factors favouring s31(1) –Some information is already in the public domain around Gloucestershire Constabulary's use of drones for search and rescues and locating criminals. Better awareness may reduce crime or lead to more information from the public. The public would be better informed about force technologies and capabilities.

Factors against s31(1) – Disclosing further information would hinder the prevention and detection of crime and placing the public at risk of harm. Law enforcement tactics would be compromised and lead to an impact on policing resources and would compromise the forces' ability to protect the public.

Balance test

Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that Gloucestershire Constabulary is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by various groups or individuals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations in highly sensitive areas such as extremism, crime prevention, public disorder and terrorism prevention.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. The areas of police interest discussed above are sensitive issues that reveal local intelligence and therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balancing test for confirming or denying whether any other information is held is not made out.

However, none of the above can be viewed as an inference that the information you seek does or does not exist.

If you are not satisfied with this response or any actions taken in dealing with your request, you have the right to ask that we review your case under our internal procedure. Please note that a request for an internal review must be made within 20 working days of the response to your original request.

If you decide to request that such a review is undertaken and following this process you are still unsatisfied, you then have the right to direct your complaint to the Information Commissioner for consideration.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following means:

Website - <https://ico.org.uk/>

Call their helpline - 0303 123 1113

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Post – Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary