

Gloucestershire Constabulary
Police Headquarters
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Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_26_0575

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Date: 06/08/2026

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request FOI_26_0575

On 16/06/2026 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

1. The number of Attenuated Energy Projectile launchers and ammunition rounds currently held in your force's armoury
2. The number of officers in your force currently authorised to use these weapon
3. Details of any public order events in the past 20 years in which authorisation has been given for these weapons to be deployed.

Gloucestershire Constabulary can confirm that it holds some relevant information relating to your request, however the duty in s1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemptions:

- Section 24(1) National Security
- Section 31(1) Law Enforcement
- Section 38(1) Health and Safety

Sections 24(1), Section 31(1), and Section 38(1) are all qualified, prejudice-based exemptions and therefore require evidence of harm and a public interest test to be carried out.

Evidence of Harm (Joint for Sections 24(1), 31(1), and 38(1))

This request covers the Constabulary's capability to deploy Attenuated Energy Projectiles (AEPs), including specific information surrounding policing capabilities through the request of the number of AEP launchers and amount of ammunition held and the number of officers authorised to use AEP launchers.

The release of such information would provide a significant insight into the force's operational capability, resilience, specialist resources and tactical capacity to respond to serious public disorder and other high-risk incidents. Disclosure of the information would enable those intent on engaging in criminality, disorder or activities to understand the availability and scale of specialist policing capabilities.

Furthermore, information disclosed under FOIA can be combined with information already in the public domain, including published operational guidance, previous disclosures, media reporting and other open-source material. This cumulative impact may enable a more detailed picture of policing capabilities and vulnerabilities to be developed via a mosaic effect surrounding the capabilities of each police force.

Disclosure of the requested information would therefore be likely to undermine operational effectiveness, prejudice law enforcement activities, compromise the ability of policing to respond effectively to serious incidents and increase risks to the safety of officers, staff and members of the public.

Public Interest Test (For Sections 24(1), 31(1), and 38(1))

Section 24(1)

Factors Favouring the Disclosure of Information

Disclosure would promote openness, transparency and accountability regarding specialist policing capabilities, support public understanding of the tactical options available to policing and further expand on the use of public funds for equipment, training and operational preparedness, and may enhance public confidence in the governance and oversight of public order policing capabilities.

Factors Against the Disclosure of Information

There is a strong public interest in safeguarding national security, and disclosure could provide individuals or groups with valuable insight into policing capabilities, capacity and resilience, potentially assisting those seeking to identify or exploit perceived vulnerabilities in policing responses; furthermore, information disclosed under FOIA is released into the public domain without restriction and cannot subsequently be controlled, and whilst the risks may not be apparent from the information in isolation, they may arise through its aggregation with other publicly available material, thereby increasing the importance of protecting information that supports policing's ability to respond effectively to serious incidents, disorder and threats to public safety.

Section 31(1)

Factors Favouring the Disclosure of Information

Disclosure would promote transparency and accountability regarding police resources and operational capability, assist public understanding of how policing prepares for and responds to serious public disorder, contribute to informed public debate concerning the use of less lethal tactics and equipment, and support the legitimate public interest in understanding how public authorities utilise specialist operational resources.

Factors Against the Disclosure of Information

Disclosure could prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders by revealing the extent of the force's specialist capability, resilience and operational capacity; it could assist individuals in assessing the availability, scale and effectiveness of specialist public order resources, enable those involved in criminality or serious disorder to inform their planning, tactics or decision-making, and undermine the effectiveness of operational tactics and policing's ability to respond to future incidents, whereas there is a significant public interest in ensuring police forces retain the ability to prevent crime, maintain public order and protect communities without disclosing operationally sensitive capability information.

Section 38(1)

Factors Favouring the Disclosure of Information

Disclosure would promote openness and accountability regarding specialist policing resources, improve public understanding of the equipment and training available to officers responsible for maintaining public safety, increase public confidence that appropriate governance and oversight arrangements are in place, and contribute to informed public debate concerning the use of less-lethal tactical options within policing.

Factors Against the Disclosure of Information

Disclosure may increase the risks faced by police officers, police staff and members of the public during future operational deployments, as knowledge of specialist capabilities, equipment holdings and authorised personnel levels could be exploited by individuals involved in criminality, violence or serious disorder; this may reduce the effectiveness of operational tactics intended to resolve incidents safely and effectively, increasing the potential for harm to officers and the public, whilst there remains a very strong public interest in protecting the safety and wellbeing of police personnel and the communities they serve and ensuring that operationally sensitive information is not disclosed

Balance Test

There is a recognised public interest in transparency, accountability and public understanding of policing activities, resources and tactics. Disclosure may assist public debate and contribute to confidence that policing resources are subject to appropriate oversight and governance.

However, these considerations must be balanced against the very significant public interest in protecting national security, maintaining effective law enforcement capabilities and safeguarding the health and safety of officers, staff and members of the public. The requested information relates directly to specialist operational capability and resilience. Disclosure would provide insight into policing resources and tactical capacity which could be exploited to undermine operational effectiveness or increase risks during future incidents.

Given the substantial weight that must be afforded to protecting national security, preserving the effectiveness of law enforcement and safeguarding public safety, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Pursuant to Section 17(1) of the Act this letter acts as a refusal notice under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to your request.

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