

27 February 2025

FOI Ref 17597

**Request - You asked us the following:**

Provide a full inventory of drones that the police force has access to, storing the data in a table disaggregated using the following fields;

1. Drone manufacturer
2. Model
3. Technical capabilities
4. Cost
5. Conditions of usage; is it owned, leased, borrowed, etc. If it isn't owned by the police force, please share who the owner is
6. List of additional payloads attached to the drone; disaggregated into the following fields;
  - a. Manufacturer
  - b. Model
  - c. Technical capabilities
  - d. Cost
  - e. Conditions of usage; is it owned, leased, borrowed, etc. If it isn't owned by the police force, please share who the owner is

We received your request on 23/12/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

**Staffordshire Police holds the requested information.**

1. Drone manufacturer – **Withheld.**
2. Model – **Withheld.**
3. Technical capabilities – **Withheld.**
4. Cost – **Disclosed, total cost is £44,500.**
5. Conditions of usage; is it owned, leased, borrowed, etc. If it isn't owned by the police force, please share who the owner is – **Disclosed, all drones are owned by Staffordshire Police.**
6. List of additional payloads attached to the drone; disaggregated into the following fields;
  - a. Manufacturer – **Withheld.**
  - b. Model – **Withheld.**



- c. Technical capabilities - **Withheld**
- d. Cost – **Withheld**.
- e. Conditions of usage; is it owned, leased, borrowed, etc. If it isn't owned by the police force, please share who the owner is – **Withheld**.

**The following exemption has been applied:**

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for parts of this particular request.

- Section 24 – National Security

Section 24 is a qualified exemption and as such there is a requirement to articulate the harm and conduct a test of the public interest.

- Section 31 (1) (a) (b) - Law Enforcement.

Information is exempt from disclosure under S31 (1) (a) (b) where the release of Information would, or would likely to, prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and/ or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

**Harm:**

Although it is acknowledged that the police service use 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 disclosure under Section 24(1)**

The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it. A better informed public can take steps to protect themselves. The public have a right to see where public spending is going.

**Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 24(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 forces capabilities and allow steps to be taken to counteract such tools, thus reduce the forces ability to protect the public, which in turn affects national security.

**Factors favouring disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)**

Some information is already in the public domain around police forces using 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 favouring non-disclosure under Section 31(1)(a)(b)**

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.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the Staffordshire Police website although personal details are not included.

**Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure****1. Who Can Ask for a Review**

Any person who has requested information from Staffordshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

**2. How to Request a Review**

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

[foi@staffordshire.police.uk](mailto:foi@staffordshire.police.uk)

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit  
Staffordshire Police HQ  
PO Box 3167  
Stafford  
ST16 9JZ

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Central Disclosure Unit within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

**3. Review Procedure**

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Central Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.



STAFFORDSHIRE  
**POLICE**

The independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

#### **4. Conclusion of the Appeal**

On completion of the review the Independent Decision maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

ICO Website for complaints link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information  
Central Disclosure Unit