



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

2 April 2026

FOI Ref 22676

Request - You asked Staffordshire Police (SP) 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.

SP received your request on 17/03/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds the requested information.

1. Total annual spend on UAV / drone equipment, services or training. – **Disclosed, £80,126.**

Please be advised we only hold the data in financial years. Therefore, this total is from 1st April 2021 to 28th February 2026 and costs are exclusive of VAT.

2. A breakdown of spend where available by category:
 - Drone hardware – **Disclosed, £38,193.**
 - Drone training – **Disclosed, £16,845.**
 - Drone Software / data platforms – **Disclosed, £2,622.**
 - Drone Maintenance or servicing – **Disclosed, £22,466.**

Please be advised we only hold the data in financial years. Therefore, this total is from 1st April 2021 to 28th February 2026 and costs are exclusive of VAT.



3. Names of suppliers used for:
 - Drone hardware – **Withheld, Section 24 and 31.**
 - Drone training – **Withheld, Section 24 and 31.**
 - Drone software or data platforms – **Withheld, Section 24 and 31.**
4. The drone platforms currently in operational use (e.g. DJI, Parrot, etc) – **Withheld, Section 24 and 31.**
5. The number of officers trained as drone pilots within the force. – **Disclosed, 26.**
6. Any current contracts or framework agreements relating to drone capability, including start and end dates where available. – **Partially disclosed, withheld Section 24, 31 and 43. 06/01/2025 - 12/01/2027.**
7. The role/title or department responsible for management of the UAV / drone programme within the force. – **Disclosed, Tactical Planning Unit.**

The following exemptions have been applied:

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

- Section 24 (1) – 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 Section 31(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.

- Section 43(2) Commercial Interests

This is a prejudice based qualified exemption which means there is a requirement to provide evidence of harm and a public interest test needs to be considered.

Harm:

Although it is acknowledged that the police service use drones, revealing specific information such as the hardware, training and software or data platforms 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 - Section 24 (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 favouring non-disclosure - 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.

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 43(2)

Disclosure of the requested information would allow the public to be aware of how public funds are spent or allocated and thereby would provide transparency and accountability, showing that funds from the public purse are used appropriately and proportionally.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 43(2)

Through disclosure of the requested information, SP would find that its negotiating position would be greatly impaired through the release of details that would not only likely be prejudicial to SP but also to the agencies/companies involved. Releasing this information would be expected to have a detrimental effect on their ability to be competitive in the future and would be exceedingly likely to deter further enterprises submitting offers for tender in the future. This then would impede SP obtaining the most competitive or appropriate services in the future and negatively impact upon the public purse

Balance Test

When considering whether disclosure is appropriate, we must weigh the strongest reason for disclosure against the strongest reasons for non-disclosure. In this case, whilst the factors favouring disclosure are

important in that it would adhere to the basic principle of being open and transparent, we believe when weighed against the risk of disclosure undermining our ability to prevent and detect crime and hindering our ability to protect the public, then non-disclosure takes precedence.

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 SP, 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:

IAT@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team
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 Information Access Team 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 a Supervisor who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Information Access Team 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.

The independent Supervisor 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 Supervisor will reply to the appellant with the result of the review. If the appellant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following link:
<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information
Information Access Team