

**Police Headquarters**

London Road  
DEVIZES  
Wiltshire  
SN10 2DN

Date: August 17, 2026    Your ref:

**Our ref: FOI 2026/553**

Reply contact name is:

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

**You Wrote:**

The number of Attenuated Energy Projectile launchers and ammunition rounds currently held in your force's armoury

The number of officers in your force currently authorised to use these weapons

Details of any public order events in the past 20 years in which authorisation has been given for these weapons to be deployed.

I requested three discrete pieces of information to be disclosed. However, these have been aggregated into one request and treated with blanked exemptions. There has been no exercise to attempt to disaggregate the information so it could be disclosed, and no engagement at all with the third request.

Your refusal casts these weapons as being used in the prevention of crime. However, they are also weapons that can be deployed in public order situations, and there therefore is a public safety consideration. The public have a right to know when weapons have been authorised for deployment against them.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland publishes annually the information I have requested from you. Given this, I contest your refusal to provide information under the exemptions you have given.

## **Response:**

On reviewing the original Freedom of Information request, the response provided and the request for an Internal Review, I can respond as follows:

Please note that all three Questions have been assessed separately. This is as Questions One and Two relate to current operational capability, however Question Three concerns historic events. Furthermore, whilst it is acknowledged that another public authority has released this information previously, a decision of one public authority should not determine the decision of another. To confirm, the information requested is held however the following exemptions are applicable:

Questions One and Two = 24(1), 31(1) and 38(1)

Question Three = 31(1)(a)(b)

Please note that all of these exemptions are qualified, therefore I have provided the overall harm in disclosure, the public interest test and the balance test when determining my stance.

## **Overall Harm**

The requested information relates to Wiltshire Police's capability to deploy Attenuated Energy Projectiles (AEPs), including the number of launchers held, the quantity of available ammunition and the number of authorised officers trained to deploy them. Whilst this information may appear limited when viewed in isolation, disclosure under the Freedom of Information legislation is effectively disclosure to the world at large.

The release of such information would provide insight into Wiltshire Police's operational capability, resilience, specialist resources and tactical capacity to respond to serious public disorder and other high risk incidents. Disclosure would enable those intent on criminality, disorder or activities that threaten public safety to better 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.

Disclosure 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**

### **Section 24 – Factors Favouring Disclosure**

Disclosure would promote openness, transparency and accountability regarding specialist policing capabilities, support public understanding of the tactical options available to policing and 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.

## **Section 24 – Factors Against Disclosure**

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 Freedom of Information legislation 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 – Factors Favouring Disclosure**

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.

## **Section 31 – Factors Against Disclosure**

Disclosure could prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders by revealing the extent of Wiltshire Police'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.

To explain that further, disclosure would reveal patterns in tactical authorisation decisions and operational responses to public disorder incidents. Such information could assist those seeking to anticipate, analyse or counter police tactics during future incidents. It is therefore arguable that disclosure would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public order.

## **Section 38 – Factors Favouring Disclosure**

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.

## **Section 38 – Factors Against Disclosure**

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

**Keeping Wiltshire Safe**

interest in protecting the safety and wellbeing of police personnel and the communities they serve and ensuring that operationally sensitive information is not disclosed where doing so would be likely to endanger the safety of any individual

## **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.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemptions applied:

Section 24 – National Security  
Section 31 – Law Enforcement  
Section 38 – Health and Safety

Please contact me if you would like to discuss the withheld information.

Yours Sincerely,



Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.

### **Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN



## **Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure**

### **1. Who Can Ask for a Review**

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire 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 to the:  
Force Disclosure Unit  
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,  
London Road, Devizes,  
Wiltshire,  
SN10 2DN

Email at [disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk](mailto:disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk).

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 Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original FoI request.

### **3. Review Procedure**

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force 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 twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

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  
Tel: 01625 545 700  
Fax: 01625 524 510  
Email: [mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

**Please note that the ICO's offices will be closed for the foreseeable future and are therefore unable to receive correspondence via post.**

If you should wish you contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>