

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

**Force Disclosure Unit
Police Headquarters**
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date 19th August 2026

Our Ref FOI 2026-692

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 24th July 2026, concerning rural crime Officers, equipment and funding.

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.

Following receipt of your request, research was conducted by the Business Intelligence, Establishments and Finance departments and Rural Crime team at Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

The total number of police officers currently employed by your force.

Whether your force has a dedicated rural crime team or dedicated officers responsible solely for rural crime.

The number of dedicated rural crime officers currently employed by your force.

The number of officers and staff who have received specialist rural crime training in each of the following years:

- 2023/24
- 2024/25
- 2025/26

Details of specialist equipment and resources allocated specifically for rural crime operations, including (but not limited to):

- drone surveillance equipment
- 4x4 vehicles
- high-powered torches
- other specialist equipment used for rural crime activity

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

The annual funding allocated specifically to rural crime teams or rural crime operations for the following financial years:

- 2023/24
- 2024/25
- 2025/26
- 2026/27

The median response time for emergency and priority incidents, broken down by rural and urban classification where available

A copy of the force's current rural crime strategy, action plan, or equivalent document. If no such document exists, please state this

Our response:

Whilst Wiltshire Police can provide most of the requested information, we are unable to provide some of the information requested as this is exempt by virtue of Section 31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement. Please see the rationale for this after the below response.

Section 31 is a qualified prejudice-based exemption and therefore requires Wiltshire Police to establish the harm in disclosure, along with the public interest favouring and against disclosure.

1. *The total number of police officers currently employed by your force.*

As at 31.07.2026 – 1234 (headcount), of which 6 are seconded out of Force.

2. *Whether your force has a dedicated rural crime team or dedicated officers responsible solely for rural crime.*

Yes

3. *The number of dedicated rural crime officers currently employed by your force.*

7 - 6 Neighbourhood Rural Crime Officers and 1 Rural Crime Coordinator (3 posts are currently vacant and will be filled by late September 2026)

4. *The number of officers and staff who have received specialist rural crime training in each of the following years:*

- 2023/24
- 2024/25
- 2025/26

*Please note - All individuals joining as PCSOs and PCs receive a rural crime input conducted internally, with some external partners providing more bespoke inputs on specific areas.
Regarding official courses:*

2023/24 – No information held. Wiltshire Police are unable to comment on this period as the emails containing this information have since been deleted, in line with retention policies.

2024/25 – 23 (Wildlife Crime Course foundation course run by the National Wildlife Crime Unit - from 2025, going into 2026)

2025/26 – 29 (23 as part of the foundation course mentioned above, with a further 6 as part of the World Customs Organisation foundation course)

5. Details of specialist equipment and resources allocated specifically for rural crime operations, including (but not limited to):

- drone surveillance equipment
- 4x4 vehicles
- high-powered torches
- other specialist equipment used for rural crime activity

Ranger vehicles, Drones, Night vision binoculars, High powered torches, Equipment scanners, Poacher blocks, Equine equipment stamping

In addition to the above, we utilise Armed Response Units, Drone Units, Roads Policing Units, Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Special Constabulary and Response Units to assist in Police Operations.

We also have access to the Police Helicopter, under the National Police Air Service (NPAS) agreement, should it be required to sight and maintain observations of suspects and subject vehicles (Regional Collaboration between South West Police Forces).

6. The annual funding allocated specifically to rural crime teams or rural crime operations for the following financial years:

- 2023/24
- 2024/25
- 2025/26
- 2026/27

23/24 = £374,421

24/25 = £413,382

25/26 = £476,898

For 2026/27, the budget moved within the Neighbourhood Policing budget and therefore cannot be identified on its own.

7. The median response time for emergency and priority incidents, broken down by rural and urban classification where available

Median Log Response Time - July 2026	
Immediate Urban	00:09:02
Immediate Rural	00:13:54
Priority	00:35:49

Median Log Response Time = Time from log creation to arrival of first unit.

We do not break down the Priority response times by urban and rural.

8. A copy of the force's current rural crime strategy, action plan, or equivalent document. If no such document exists, please state this

The current Force Action Plan is exempt from disclosure. Please see below harm and public interest tests. Note - The Rural Crime Strategy for the Force is currently being written.

Section 31(1)(a)(b)

Harm test

Disclosing the Force Action Plan into the public domain would provide those with criminal intent details of Police tactics used when tackling rural crime. This information would be used to aid those individuals in avoiding detection and would allow them to commit further crime. This would prejudice our ability to prevent and detect crime (one of the core principles of policing) and apprehend or prosecute offenders. In turn, impacting our ability to protect the community.

Factors favouring disclosure

Placing this information into the public domain would lead to an increased public awareness regarding how we approach rural crime. This in turn may lead to a reduction in crime or more information being supplied by the public and would also allow the public to better protect themselves against this type of crime. Disclosure would also ensure that Wiltshire Police can be held accountable for the actions taken and show the Force as being as open and transparent with the public as possible.

Factors against disclosure

Releasing this information would inform the public - but more importantly, those with criminal intent - the tactics used by the Force when dealing with rural crime. Doing so would compromise these tactics and would allow those with criminal intent to gain valuable information regarding our capabilities in this area. This would put the public at a greater risk as these individuals would use this information to evade capture, thus hindering our ability to prevent and detect crime. The result of this would be a diminished trust in the Force, an increase in crime being seen and a severe impact to our resources.

Balance test

Although there is a public interest in transparency and openness between Wiltshire Police and the public, in addition to the public seeing how we are engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a stronger interest in ensuring the public are protected from this threat. We must also ensure the enforcement of the law and the prevention and detection of crime is upheld. To provide a disclosure which is likely to assist offenders would seriously undermine the effective delivery of operational law enforcement and is therefore exempt from disclosure.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Constabulary, 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 31(1)(a)(b) - Law Enforcement

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

FDU Decision Maker