HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE

Response Date:09/11/2026

2026/1063 - Drone/UAS incidents

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

Freedom of Information request: drone/UAS incidents affecting specified infrastructure
Please provide recorded information about confirmed or suspected drone/UAS activity from 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026 inclusive affecting:
*** defence sites, including military bases/barracks, RAF/Royal Navy sites, military airfields, dockyards/shipyards, ammunition/storage facilities, privately operated sites with a clear defence function and other operational defence sites;**
*** commercial passenger/cargo airports;**
*** licensed civil nuclear sites and associated locations;**
*** major commercial passenger/ferry/freight ports;**
*** major non-nuclear energy facilities, limited to major electricity generation, oil/gas/LNG terminals and refineries.**
Exclude rail infrastructure, prisons/custodial establishments, ordinary aerodromes/flying clubs/heliports, and authorised police/military/emergency-service/inspection/commercial drone operations where identifiable from existing searchable information.
Please use your existing records, systems and ordinary organisational/local knowledge to identify relevant records. I am not asking you to research or compile a definitive list of sites.
A potentially relevant record is one involving a confirmed or suspected drone/UAS at, over, within associated restricted airspace, or otherwise directly affecting qualifying infrastructure, where at least one of the following is recorded: police action; security/emergency response; operational disruption; suspected/recorded offence; or unauthorised/suspected unauthorised activity at a sensitive site. For airports, include drone-aircraft near misses where the record identifies a direct effect on airport operations or an aircraft operating to/from the airport. Exclude routine/casual sightings where existing searchable information shows none of those factors.

For each identified record, please provide existing:
reference number;

date;
approximate time, where held;
location/site;
brief description or recorded category;
record type, where held.

Where already recorded, linked to the incident, or retrievable by straightforward search/lookup without substantial manual review, please also provide:
7. confirmed/suspected/reported/not-a-drone status; 8. number of drones; 9. police/security/emergency response; 10. operational disruption and duration; 11. suspected/recorded offence/classification; 12. whether an operator was identified (yes/no only); 13. arrest/charge/prosecution/conviction outcome; 14. investigation status; 15. incident/operation-specific recorded cost and any existing breakdown/description; 16. existing officer/staff deployment, staff-hour or overtime figures. Please do not create new calculations/classifications, reconstruct costs or staffing, deduplicate records, infer motive/attribution, or undertake substantial manual review of free-text narratives solely to determine whether records qualify. If applying the criteria would require substantial manual review, but potentially relevant drone/UAS records associated with the qualifying infrastructure can instead be retrieved through a straightforward search/export, please provide those records with available information in points 1-6 and I will apply the final criteria.

Confirmation or denial of whether information is held in relation to confirmed or suspected drone/UAS activity affecting sensitive infrastructure would provide valuable insight into policing, security and investigative interest relating to locations of strategic importance.

The applicant is not seeking information about drone/UAS sightings generally. Rather, the request is specifically directed towards incidents where drone/UAS activity has resulted in police action, security or emergency response, operational disruption, suspected criminality, investigative activity or other intervention. By its very nature, the request seeks information concerning incidents which have already generated a policing, security or operational response.

Confirmation or denial of whether information is held would therefore disclose more than the existence of drone activity. It would assist in identifying which incidents affecting sensitive infrastructure have attracted policing, security or investigative attention and which have not. This would provide valuable insight into police and partner agency awareness, response arrangements, operational priorities and investigative interests.

The requested information concerns sites and infrastructure which may include defence establishments, civil nuclear facilities, airports, ports, rail infrastructure and energy facilities. Information relating to such locations is particularly sensitive when viewed collectively. Whilst a single disclosure may appear innocuous in isolation, information disclosed by one force can readily be aggregated with disclosures made by other police forces, infrastructure operators, government departments and information already available within the public domain.

Such aggregation would be capable of building a broader intelligence picture regarding the frequency and nature of drone/UAS activity affecting sensitive infrastructure, the locations most commonly affected, the level of operational impact caused, the extent of police involvement and the capability or willingness of authorities to respond. This would assist those seeking to identify vulnerabilities, understand response thresholds, assess security posture and inform future activity.

Recent publicly reported drone activity affecting RAF bases in Suffolk and Norfolk demonstrates both the reality of the threat and the significant public and operational interest such incidents attract. Confirmation or denial of similar information relating to other locations would contribute to a wider understanding of incidents affecting strategically significant sites and the response of police and partner agencies to those incidents.

Furthermore, whilst the applicant seeks to exclude authorised police, military, emergency service and other legitimate drone activity where identifiable, confirmation or denial of information falling within scope may nevertheless reveal information regarding protective security activity, monitoring capability, specialist deployments, investigative techniques, operational interests and the manner in which police and partner agencies respond to suspected drone incursions. This would provide valuable insight into capabilities and activities that would not otherwise be available to those seeking to understand or circumvent protective security measures.

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a disclosure to the world at large. Confirmation or denial therefore has the potential to benefit not only legitimate public interest, but also hostile state actors, organised criminal groups and other malicious individuals seeking to identify vulnerabilities, assess security arrangements or exploit gaps in protective measures.

Accordingly, confirmation or denial would be likely to prejudice both national security and law enforcement by contributing to a wider intelligence picture concerning sensitive infrastructure, policing activity, investigative interests and protective security arrangements.

Public Interest Considerations

Section 24(2) - National Security

There is a public interest in promoting openness and transparency regarding the extent to which drone/UAS activity affects sensitive infrastructure. Confirmation or denial would assist public understanding of the scale and nature of such incidents and contribute to public debate regarding the effectiveness of security arrangements, protective measures and the response of public authorities to emerging threats. There is also a legitimate public interest in ensuring that police forces remain accountable for the manner in which such incidents are recorded, assessed and managed.

Against this, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding national security.

Confirmation or denial would provide insight into police and partner agency awareness of incidents affecting locations of strategic importance. The requested information specifically concerns incidents which have generated police action, security responses, operational disruption, investigative activity or suspected criminality and therefore carries greater intelligence value than information relating to drone sightings generally. Confirmation or denial would risk contributing to a broader understanding of vulnerabilities, security arrangements, response capability and protective measures associated with sensitive infrastructure. There is a substantial public interest in ensuring that information is not released where it may assist hostile state actors, organised criminal groups or others seeking to identify vulnerabilities or assess security posture.

Section 30(3) - Investigations

There is a public interest in promoting openness and accountability in relation to police investigations. Confirmation or denial would assist public understanding of the extent to which incidents involving drone/UAS activity affecting sensitive infrastructure result in law enforcement intervention and investigative activity. Disclosure would contribute to public debate concerning the effectiveness of police investigations and provide reassurance that reports of suspected criminality are appropriately assessed and, where necessary, investigated.

Against this, there is a strong public interest in protecting the integrity of police investigations.

The request specifically seeks information concerning incidents involving police action, suspected offences, investigation status, arrests, charges and prosecutions.

Confirmation or denial would therefore provide valuable insight into investigative interest, decision-making and law enforcement priorities. It would enable information from multiple sources to be combined in order to identify the types of incidents attracting police attention and the circumstances in which investigations are commenced. Releasing such information would risk undermining the effectiveness of investigative processes and may assist those seeking to understand, test or avoid law enforcement scrutiny.

Section 31(3) - Law Enforcement

There is a public interest in promoting transparency and accountability in the way that police forces respond to incidents involving drone/UAS activity. Confirmation or denial would assist public understanding of the extent to which such activity affects sensitive infrastructure and the degree to which police resources are deployed in response. It would also contribute to informed public debate regarding the effectiveness of policing measures designed to prevent and detect crime associated with drone/UAS misuse.

Against this, there is a strong public interest in protecting the ability of law enforcement agencies to prevent and detect crime.

Confirmation or denial would provide insight into policing interest, operational priorities, response arrangements and investigative activity relating to incidents affecting sensitive infrastructure. When combined with disclosures made by other forces, infrastructure operators, government departments and information already available within the public domain, confirmation or denial would contribute to a broader intelligence picture regarding the locations affected, patterns of activity, operational responses and vulnerabilities. This would be likely to assist those seeking to assess police capability, understand response thresholds or exploit perceived weaknesses. The effectiveness of law enforcement depends upon preventing the disclosure of information which may compromise operational capability or undermine the prevention and detection of crime.

Balance Test

The applicant is not seeking information about drone/UAS sightings generally. Rather, the request is directed towards incidents affecting sensitive infrastructure which have generated police action, security or emergency response, operational disruption, suspected offences, investigative interest or other intervention.

Whilst there is a legitimate public interest in openness, transparency and accountability, there is a significantly stronger public interest in protecting national security, preserving the integrity of police investigations and maintaining the effectiveness of law enforcement activity.

Confirmation or denial of information falling within the scope of this request would provide valuable insight into incidents affecting strategically important infrastructure and would contribute to a wider intelligence picture when combined with information released by other police forces, infrastructure operators, government departments and information already available within the public domain.

The cumulative effect of such disclosures would be capable of revealing vulnerabilities, operational responses, policing interests, investigative priorities, protective security arrangements and the extent to which incidents affecting sensitive infrastructure attract police and partner agency attention.

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is disclosure to the world at large and any information revealed cannot subsequently be controlled or restricted.

For these reasons, the public interest in maintaining the exemptions substantially outweighs the public interest in confirming or denying whether the requested information is held. Accordingly, the balance of the public interest favours neither confirming nor denying that information is held by virtue of Sections 24(2), 30(3) and 31(3) of the Act.

Therefore, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice under section 17 (1) of the legislation

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 16/10/2026