



**HEDDLU  
GOGLEDD CYMRU  
NORTH WALES  
POLICE**

Response Date:09/04/2026

### **2026/333 - Drones**

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

**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.**

£282,496

**2. A breakdown of spend where available by category:**

- **Drone hardware** - £212,763
- **Drone training** - £24,927
- **Drone Software / data platforms** - £30,269
- **Drone Maintenance or servicing** - £14,538

**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).**

Harm has been identified in providing you with information relating to hardware, software & data platform;

A Freedom of Information Act request is not a private transaction. Both the request itself, and any information disclosed, are considered suitable for open publication. This is because, under Freedom of Information, any information disclosed is released into the wider public domain, effectively to the world and not just to one individual.

Therefore, Section 31 (1) Law Enforcement and Section 24 (1) National Security is to be considered as part of the Public Interest Test. A Public Interest Test has been carried out to weigh up the reasons for and against disclosure of the information requested, to ensure the release is in the interest of the public as a whole and not just the applicant.

### **Harm**

Overall harm for s24(1) and s31(1) – Although it is acknowledged that the police service use drones, revealing specific information such as the make, model and technical capabilities or information which could lead to this information 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

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Police Headquarters,  
Glan-y-Don, Colwyn Bay LL29 8AW  
[www.northwales.police.uk](http://www.northwales.police.uk)

to the use of tactics and effective investigations, allowing those with intent the opportunity to disrupt operational policing.

### **Public Interest Test**

Factors favouring s24(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 against s24(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 s31(1) –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 against s31(1) – 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.

### **Balancing test**

The strongest reason favouring disclosure is increasing public knowledge of a policing conversation and North Wales Police being open and transparent.

The strongest reason favouring non-disclosure is to not undermine law enforcement tactics, methodology and resources which in turn would increase security measures by virtue of an adverse FOIA disclosure.

On weighing up the competing interests I have determined that the disclosure of the above information would not be in the public interest. I consider that the benefit that would result from the information being disclosed does not outweigh the considerations favouring non-disclosure.

I appreciate this is not the decision you would have liked for this part of your request. However this decision has been made on the understanding that the public interest is not what interests the public but is what would be of greater interest to the public as a whole, should the information be disclosed.

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

### **5. The number of officers trained as drone pilots within the force.**

14

### **6. Any current contracts or framework agreements relating to drone capability, including start and end dates where available.**

Drone Tool Management – (28/05/2021 – 31/05/2026)

Drones & Associated Items – (22/08/2024 – 22/08/2028)

**7. The role/title or department responsible for management of the UAV / drone programme within the force.**

The Drone Unit is managed under the Operational Support Services department

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST  
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 30/03/2026