

Date: 23/07/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017195/V

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017195/V

I write in connection with your request for information dated 09/07/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

You publish a Live Facial Recognition page and a Form 12 LFR Register of Deployments. The register lists deployments including Sale Town Centre, Manchester City Centre, Wigan Town Centre, Rochdale Interchange, the MOBOS at Co-op Live, Bolton Town Centre and other locations/events, with attributes including deployment location, date, start/finish time, watchlist size, total alerts, true/false alerts, confirmed/unconfirmed alerts, false alert rate, outcomes and faces seen.

<https://www.gmp.police.uk/police-forces/greater-manchester-police/areas/greater-manchester-force-content/au/about-us/live-facial-recognition/>

For every LFR deployment you have already published in the register updated 2 July 2026, covering the period from Sale Town Centre on 21 October 2025 through the latest completed deployment in that register, please disclose the granular location of that deployment - the street name(s), junction, precinct, pedestrianised zone, shopping area, transport interchange area, event entrance/approach, venue exterior, or other specific place where the LFR van/camera equipment was sited and/or the recognition zone was directed.

Please provide one row per deployment, retaining the published deployment location/event and date, and adding the granular siting/location information.

To be clear on scope: I am requesting recorded information that already exists within the deployment records from which you compiled the published register. I am not asking you to create new information. I am not seeking watchlist contents, names of individuals, future operational plans, officer numbers, technical camera settings, or live tactical information.

If any part of this request is unclear, or you consider it may exceed the appropriate cost limit, please contact me under your section 16 duty to advise and assist so that I can refine it, rather than refusing outright.

Under section 11, I would prefer to receive the information in a machine-readable format, preferably CSV or spreadsheet, if practicable.

Separately, and outside this FOIA request: I would encourage Greater Manchester Police to include street-level deployment locations in all future LFR deployment records as a matter of routine proactive publication under your section 19 publication scheme.

If you intend to withhold any information, please identify the specific exemption relied upon, and for any qualified exemption set out your public interest balancing under section 17(3).

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm the information requested is held by GMP.

However, I am not obliged to supply you with all of the information held as exemptions apply.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Greater Manchester Police, when refusing to provide such information (because this 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.

The information you have requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 31 – Law Enforcement.

Section 24 – National Security.

Section S24 and 31 are qualified and prejudice-based exemption and as such, subject to a harm and public interest test.

Evidence of Harm S31

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 the Act, any information disclosed is released into the wider public domain, effectively to the world, not just to an individual.

Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant, providing any further information relating to specific departments and functions within Greater Manchester Police would reveal our operational capability, which would be of intelligence value to criminals.

Disclosing the exact coordinates of police deployments creates a direct threat to the safety of law enforcement personnel by allowing hostile individuals to plan targeted ambushes or track officer movements. Furthermore, revealing these precise locations eliminates the vital tactical advantage of surprise, leaving officers highly vulnerable during high-risk interventions.

There is always a duty of care to the general public and the Police Service has a clear responsibility to ensure the prevention or detection of crime, and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders is always delivered. There are several tactics available to the Police Service to ensure the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. In this case, specialist policing activity is required to undertake fair Live Facial Recognition assessments where it may be necessary to progress a range of reasonable lines of enquiry.

Evidence of Harm S24

Disclosing the precise, granular locations, coordinates, or specific camera schedules of Live Facial Recognition (LFR) deployments would reveal the exact reach, operational boundaries, and tactical capabilities of our counterterrorism and protective policing footprint.

Providing this level of specific geographical detail would allow hostile actors, criminal networks, and terrorists to map out surveillance coverage over time. This mosaic intelligence would effectively expose strategic 'blind spots' or unmonitored zones within our critical infrastructure and public spaces. Knowledge of these vulnerabilities would enable individuals to plan, test, and execute criminal or terrorist acts while evading detection by automated biometric systems.

Consequently, disclosing granular location data would significantly undermine the effectiveness of LFR as a vital national security tool, compromise ongoing protective security operations, and place the safety of the public at direct risk.

As such, the disclosure of any further information which would hinder the forces law enforcement functions cannot be in the public interest.

Factors favouring disclosure S24 - Disclosure would support that the police effectively safeguard matters of national security. It would improve public confidence in the work of the police.

Factors favouring non-disclosure S24 - If the police were to disclose the requested data, the resultant picture could prejudice the UK's ability to maintain national security, particularly in the identification and apprehension of serious and organised criminals as well as terrorists and extremists. This places the public in grave danger, which is clearly not in the public interest.

Factors favouring disclosure for S31 - Disclosing deployment information demonstrates a commitment to openness and allows the public to scrutinise how public funds are utilised by law enforcement. This transparency ensures that the police remain accountable for their operational decisions and resource distribution across different communities.

Providing the public with accurate data regarding police operations fosters an informed and constructive debate on local crime strategies and national security policies. Access to this information empowers citizens, journalists, and watchdog groups to contribute meaningfully to discussions about the effectiveness of current policing methods.

Factors against disclosure for S31 - Disclosing specific deployment coordinates, watchlists, or operational parameters for Live Facial Recognition (LFR) would severely compromise tactical efficacy. If individuals with criminal intent know exactly where LFR cameras are situated, they can easily circumvent the technology by avoiding those areas, altering their appearance, or masking their faces to bypass detection entirely.

Revealing the specific locations of LFR deployments allows hostile actors to map the geographic limitations, camera ranges, and system capacities of the technology. Over time, this cumulative data creates a "mosaic effect" that exposes broader policing patterns, rendering a highly sophisticated enforcement tool entirely predictable and significantly less effective.

Any disclosure of information which would compromise law enforcement tactics and thus lead to more crime being committed by reducing the opportunity for the prevention and detection of crime, would therefore increase the risk to public safety, which is not in the public interest.

Balancing Test

Law enforcement is of paramount importance, and the Police service will not disclose information if to do so would undermine its purpose and place the safety of individual(s) at risk. Whilst there is a public

interest in the transparency of using public money in policing appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations in this area.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of law enforcement, this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Any disclosure which hinders our capability and assists criminals cannot be in the public interest.

It is for these reasons that I have determined that the balance test favours non-disclosure of the requested information.