Date: 22/09/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017527/V

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017527/V

I write in connection with your request for information dated 26/08/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Please provide the following for the financial year 2025-26 (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026):
1. The total amount your force invoiced football clubs for policing at their grounds, and the total amount actually received.
2. A breakdown by individual football club within your force area.
This covers special police services provided under section 25 of the Police Act 1996.
A spreadsheet is fine. If your force area contains no football clubs a short confirmation to that effect is all I need.
Note: My definition of "football clubs" is all teams in the top 5 tiers of the football pyramid – The Premier League, The Championship, Leagues One and Two, and the National League)

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 required to provide it all as an exemption applies.

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.

Question 2 is exempt from disclosure by virtue of **Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement**.

Section 31 exemption is subject to a public interest test and in this case, I would outline the relevant factors as:

Harm

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 effectively released into the wider public domain and available to anyone, not solely to the applicant.

Whilst not questioning the motives of the requester, providing a detailed breakdown of costs invoiced to, and payments received from, individual football clubs within the Greater Manchester Police area would reveal information from which operational policing activity, resourcing models, deployment levels, and policing demand associated with specific fixtures and venues could reasonably be inferred. Football policing is intelligence-led and proportionate to identified risks, threats, and vulnerabilities. Disclosure of club-specific financial information would enable individuals to draw conclusions regarding the extent of police resources required for particular events, locations, or circumstances.

Such information could be used by those intent on committing crime or causing disorder to identify perceived opportunities to avoid, undermine, or overwhelm police resources. In turn, this would be likely to prejudice GMP's ability to prevent and detect crime, maintain public order, and protect the safety of spectators, local communities, and police officers. There is always a duty of care to the public, and GMP has a clear responsibility to ensure that the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public safety are delivered effectively.

Football-related policing operations frequently require specialist tactics, intelligence gathering, and the deployment of resources based upon operational assessments. The disclosure of information from which policing tactics, capabilities, or resource allocations could be inferred would hinder GMP's law enforcement functions and is therefore not considered to be in the public interest.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

There is a public interest in the transparency and accountability of public authorities, particularly where public money is involved. Disclosure would allow the public to better understand the financial arrangements between police forces and football clubs and assess whether policing costs are being recovered appropriately and fairly.

Disclosure would also contribute to public debate regarding the use of police resources at football matches and assist in promoting confidence that policing operations are being managed effectively and proportionately.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

Disclosure of a club-by-club breakdown would reveal information from which operational policing demand and resource deployment could be inferred. This would provide insight into the relative policing requirements of specific football clubs, venues, and fixtures, potentially allowing those intent on criminality or disorder to identify where policing resources may be concentrated or stretched.

The information could be combined with other publicly available material to build a more detailed understanding of GMP's operational approach to policing football matches. Such knowledge would be likely to undermine law enforcement activity and could increase the risk of crime, disorder, and threats to public safety.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of football policing relies upon ensuring that operational tactics, resourcing decisions, and capability assessments are not exposed in a manner that could be exploited. To disclose information from which these factors could be derived would be likely to prejudice GMP's ability to prevent and detect crime and maintain public order.

Balance Test

GMP recognises the legitimate public interest in transparency, accountability, and understanding how public funds are used, together with the financial arrangements relating to the policing of football matches. Disclosure would undoubtedly contribute to public understanding of these matters.

However, there is a significantly stronger public interest in ensuring that GMP retains its ability to effectively police football events, prevent crime and disorder, and safeguard the public. The release of information that would enable inferences to be drawn regarding operational demand, deployment models, and policing capability would be likely to prejudice law enforcement activity and undermine public safety.

The prevention and detection of crime, the maintenance of public order, and the protection of life and property are fundamental policing responsibilities. Disclosure which would be likely to compromise these functions cannot be in the public interest.

Having carefully considered the competing arguments, GMP has concluded that the public interest is better served by withholding the requested information. The balance of the public interest therefore favours non-disclosure.

Please see the data held for Question 1.

Data for the financial year 2025-26 (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026):
The following clubs are included in these figures.

- **Manchester United**
- **Manchester City**
- **Bolton Wanderers**
- **Wigan Athletic**
- **Stockport County**
- **Rochdale FC**

Invoiced Amount	**£1,826,302,42**
Total Received	**£1,826,302,42**