Monday, 21 September 2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017658/F

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017658/F

I write in connection with your request for information dated 15/09/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I understand that policing costs and arrests are recorded against specific match operations rather than against football generally, so I have listed the fixtures individually below. All are Premier League matches from the 2025-26 season.

Match a.14 September 2025, 4:30pm, Etihad Stadium, Manchester City v Manchester United
Match b.17 January 2026, 12:30pm, Old Trafford, Manchester United v Manchester City
Match c.3 May 2026, 3:30pm, Old Trafford, Manchester United v Liverpool

For each match listed, please provide:

1. *The total cost to the force of the policing operation for the match.*

2. *The amount invoiced to or recovered from the club for special police services in connection with that match, under section 25 of the Police Act 1996.*

3. *Whether the figure at question 1 is the gross cost of the operation or the cost net of any sum at question 2.*

4. *The number of officers deployed to the match, including any mutual aid officers from other forces, and the number of officer hours worked.*

5. *The number of arrests made in connection with the match, and a breakdown by offence type.*

6. *The number of arrests where the location was inside the stadium footprint, and the number outside.*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by Greater Manchester Police. However, I am not obliged to provide all of the information requested as exemptions apply.

Match a.
Part 5 – 8 arrests. Offence type is exempted from disclosure under Section 40(2) Personal Information

Match b.
Part 5 – 6 arrests. Offence type is exempted from disclosure under Section 40(2) Personal Information

Match c.
Part 5 – 9 arrests. Offence type is exempted from disclosure under Section 40(2) Personal Information

Part 6 for all matches is exempted from disclosure under Section 40(2) Personal Information

Parts 1 to 4 for all matches are exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

- **Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement**

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

Harm

Manchester United and Manchester City fixtures attract large attendances and, depending on the nature of the match, can present varying levels of risk relating to public disorder, criminality, anti-social behaviour and wider public safety concerns. The total cost of policing for individual fixtures, or relevant costs, is intrinsically linked to the level of police resources deployed, operational planning, and the force's assessment of threat, risk and harm associated with those events.

Disclosure of fixture-by-fixture costs, or the number of officers deployed to the match which deployment assumptions could be drawn, would enable individuals to identify patterns in policing activity and infer the relative level of police resources allocated to particular categories of match. This could reveal information about operational priorities, risk assessments and policing methodologies. Those seeking to engage in football-related disorder or criminal

activity could use such information, either on its own or in conjunction with information already in the public domain, to identify perceived vulnerabilities in policing arrangements. The release of this information would therefore be likely to undermine the force's ability to prevent and detect crime and maintain public order. GMP must consider the cumulative impact of disclosure. Whilst a single figure may appear innocuous, disclosure over time would permit detailed analysis of operational responses to different fixtures and competitions, potentially revealing sensitive information about policing tactics and resource allocation.

This would be likely to prejudice law enforcement capabilities and impact the force's ability to effectively police future events. Accordingly, disclosure would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders, and the exemption is therefore engaged.

Factors Favouring Disclosure

There is a strong public interest in promoting transparency and accountability regarding the expenditure of public money. Disclosure would allow the public to understand the financial impact football fixtures place upon policing resources and budgets.

Disclosure would assist in informing public debate about the cost of policing professional football and whether resources are being allocated efficiently and proportionately. It would enable greater scrutiny of the financial burden placed on the public purse.

The information would increase public understanding of the demands placed upon policing services by major sporting events and contribute to wider discussions regarding funding arrangements and cost recovery.

Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

There is a strong public interest in ensuring that policing operations remain effective and that information which could reveal operational deployments, tactical considerations or risk assessments is not disclosed where doing so would be likely to prejudice law enforcement activities.

Any disclosure could assist those intent on committing criminal or disorder-related acts by providing insight into the force's approach to policing football fixtures. The public interest is best served by ensuring that operationally sensitive information remains protected. Football matches attracting significant crowds require careful management to ensure the safety of supporters, participants and the wider public. There is a substantial public interest in avoiding disclosures that could compromise the effectiveness of policing arrangements designed to protect public safety. Information that may appear harmless in isolation can, when combined with other publicly available information, reveal sensitive operational details. The prevention of such a mosaic effect serves an important public interest in protecting law enforcement capabilities.

Balance Test

Whilst GMP recognises the public interest in transparency and accountability regarding the expenditure of public funds, it considers there to be a stronger public interest in protecting information which, if disclosed, would be likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public order.

The release of either the cost of policing or the number of officers deployed, would provide insight into the level of police resources committed to particular events and permit conclusions to be drawn about operational planning, deployment strategies and risk assessments.

GMP therefore finds that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure and the information is withheld from disclosure.