

Date: 28/08/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017385/Z

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017385/Z

I write in connection with your request for information dated 05/08/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide the following for Manchester United and Manchester City's home Premier League fixtures for the 25/26 Premier League season. Season totals are fine if a per-fixture breakdown isn't held:

Total cost to the force of policing each fixture.

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have 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.

The information you have requested for the "Total cost to the force of policing each fixture" 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

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 individual fixtures, or cumulative seasonal policing 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 total seasonal costs from which averages and 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 individual Manchester United and Manchester City fixtures, or the total policing costs for an entire season, 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.