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26/05/2026

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER: 2879/2026

Thank you for your request for information regarding STAR Fund Projects & Aggregate Data, which has now been considered.

Applicant Question:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information relating to the Police Science and Technology Acknowledgement and Recognition (STAR) Fund:

Specific Projects

1. Project Minerva – submitted by Essex Police (VAWG reduction project);
2. Rapid Video Response / Operation Yardbird – submitted by Kent Police.

A. Decision and Assessment Data (For Both Projects)

For each project, please provide:

- a) The decision (Accepted or Rejected).
- b) The date of the decision.
- c) The amount requested and the amount awarded.
- d) The primary reason(s) given for the decision.
- e) The scoring outcome or ranking (e.g., total score, band, or panel rating);
- f) Any written feedback or assessment summary provided to the applicant.

B. Application Documents (For Both Projects)

Please provide copies of the following documents as submitted:

- The Expression of Interest (EOI);
- The full application form/proposal (Stage 2 submission).

If any exemptions are claimed (e.g., sections 31, 40, 41, or 43), please provide a redacted version with:

- Clear indication of where redactions have been made.
- A schedule explaining which exemption applies to each redaction and why the public interest favours withholding that specific information.

Aggregate Data**3 All Applications (Aggregate Data)**

In addition, for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 funding rounds, please provide a list of all applications submitted to the Fund in these rounds, including for each application:

- a) The name of the applying police force, unit, or consortium.
- b) The project title.
- c) A brief description of the project (1–2 sentences).
- d) The amount requested.
- e) The decision (Accepted or Rejected).
- f) The date of the decision.
- g) The primary reason(s) given for the decision.
- h) The scoring outcome or ranking, if applicable.

If reasons for rejection were not formally recorded for individual applications, please provide:

- i) The published or internal assessment criteria used by the panel.
- j) A summary of the most common reasons for rejection across all unsuccessful bids in each round.
- k) Any guidance or feedback templates provided to unsuccessful applicants.

NPCC Response:

The NPCC does hold recorded information captured by part(s) A (1) (a-e) of your request. This information engages S22 For future publication and is withheld in full.

For further information relating to the legislation, please see Annex A.

The NPC does not hold information captured by part(s) A (1) (f) of your request.

In wishing to assist and promoting full transparency, outside of the Act as a gesture of goodwill, the NPCC provides the following information:

Specific Projects – 1 Project Minerva

- a) The decision was accepted
- b) April 2023
- c) £88,906
- d) Met threshold score met for assessment criteria.
- e) As above.

- f) Not recorded by the NPCC.

Specific Projects – 2 Rapid Video Response

- a) Not recorded by the NPCC
- b) Not recorded by the NPCC
- c) Not recorded by the NPCC
- d) Not recorded by the NPCC
- e) Not recorded by the NPCC
- f) Not recorded by the NPCC

The NPCC does hold recorded information captured by part(s) B (1) (a-b) of your request.

- a) The Expression of Interest – attachment 01
- b) The full application proposal – attachment 02

The NPCC does not hold recorded information captured by part(s) B (2) (a-b) of your request.

3 Aggregate Data

The NPCC does hold information captured by part(s) 3 of your request.

Unfortunately, part 3 would impose a burden to the NPCC.

Acknowledging this may be disappointing, I have provided context below and for further information relating to the legislation, please see Annex A.

After careful consideration, the NPCC has concluded that complying with this part of your request would place a disproportionate and unjustified burden on the NPCC and engages S14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act.

Although the request relates to a defined number of applications, each application contains information requiring individual assessment to determine whether disclosure would prejudice policing capabilities, expose intelligence or capability gaps, or reveal sensitive operational or crime-mapping information. These assessments cannot be undertaken centrally and would require consultation with each originating force, unit or consortium, many of which would in turn need to engage relevant operational specialists.

This consultation exercise would be substantial and resource-intensive, requiring the collation and reconciliation of multiple responses and the application of bespoke redactions to ensure lawful and safe disclosure. The burden is not extraction, but individual risk assessment and consultation. Each record may potentially engage multiple qualified exemptions which is not automated. The burden arises not from locating records, but from the requirements to undertake bespoke, case-by-case harm assessments for each application. It is the nature of the work required, not the volume of material.

Yours sincerely
Freedom of Information Officer & Decision Maker

www.npcc.police.uk

COMPLAINT RIGHTS

Internal Review

Any request for an internal review will be acknowledged and responded to, based on the specific wording of your initial request only.

We ask that any rationale to request an internal review, does not include any requests for new information and ask that these be submitted by separate email. We will acknowledge as a new request and may aggregate to your initial request in compliance with the legislation.

If you are dissatisfied with the response you have been provided with in compliance with the Freedom of Information legislation, you can lodge a complaint with NPCC to have the decision reviewed within 40 working days of the date of this response.

The handling of your request will be looked at by someone independent of the original decision and a fresh response provided.

It would be helpful, if requesting a review, for you to articulate in detail the reasons you are not satisfied with this reply.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to NPCC Freedom of Information, c/o PO Box 481, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 9FS.

Annex A

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the NPCC, when refusing to provide information by way of exemption in question and (c) states why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a refusal notice to those aspects of your request.

The legislation: Section 22 Information intended for future publication-

- (1) Information is exempt information if-
 - (a) The information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),
 - (b) The information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and
 - (c) It is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the data referred to in paragraph (a)

Section 22 is a qualified exemption and as such is subject to a public interest test. This means that I have identified the exemption, considered whether the public interest in not disclosing the information outweigh the public interest test in disclosing the information.

In determining the public interest, I have evaluated the impact of releasing the information against the need for public bodies to exercise their functions. In this case, I have concluded that to release the information prior to them being published by the NPCC would be irresponsible on the NPCC's part.

The exemption is aimed at preserving intact all existing law providing access to information. The Freedom of Information Act is not designed to subsume other legal access rights or to give alternative routes to access where existing regimes are already available. The Freedom of Information Act access rights build on, but do not replace previous access rights. Those existing rights, and the separate procedural regimes which are tailored to them, continue in place, and the Freedom of Information Act observes corresponding limits to its role.

There is a general public interest in disclosure and openness to increase public trust in, and engagement with, the police service and government.

Release of the information would undermine the agreed publication strategy. Premature disclosure of information without adhering to established pre-publication procedures could work to prevent the NPCC from being able to use their staff resources effectively in a planned way, so that reasonable publication timetables are not affected. This includes data which might not itself be published but which forms a subset of published data.

The legislation: Section 14 Vexatious Requests

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the request is vexatious.

The Freedom of Information Act was designed to give individuals a greater right of access to official information with the intention of making public bodies more transparent and accountable.

Whilst most people exercise this right responsibly a few may misuse or abuse the Act by submitting requests which are intended to be annoying or disruptive or which have a disproportionate impact on a public authority.

The Information Commissioner recognises that dealing with unreasonable requests can place a strain on resources and get in the way of delivering mainstream services or answering legitimate requests. Furthermore, these requests can also damage the reputation of the legislation itself.

Section 14(1) is designed to protect public authorities by allowing them to refuse any requests which have the potential to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress.

Indicators (not listed in any order of importance):

- Abusive or aggressive language
- **Burden on the authority**
- Personal grudges
- Unreasonable persistence
- Unfounded accusations
- Intransigence
- Frequent or overlapping requests
- Deliberate intention to cause annoyance
- Scattergun approach
- Disproportionate effort
- No obvious intent to obtain information
- Futile requests
- Frivolous requests

Given the specialist nature of this work and the limited number of FOI decision-makers available within the NPCC, complying with this request would significantly impair the organisation's ability to process other statutory information requests and discharge its wider public functions.

Having balanced the burden of compliance against the public interest in disclosure, the NPCC is satisfied that this part of the request is vexatious for the purposes of S14(1) of the Act.

In wishing to assist you in refining your request, you may wish to narrow the scope to a smaller time period, a single funding round, or to high level summary information such as force, title, amount, agreed.

Section 14(10) is not about the subject matter being irritating or sensitive; it is about whether the request would impose a grossly unreasonable burden on the authority when balanced against the public interest.

ICO guidance and Tribunal decisions make clear that:

A request can be vexatious due to burden alone. Authorities may consider:

- The effort involved
- The distraction from core statutory functions
- The impact on other requesters
- The context and wider consequences of compliance.

- Authorities do not need to calculate exact hours, but must demonstrate credible, evidence-based reasoning.

Although the request relates to 74 items, the burden does not arise from copying data. It arises because:

Each application may contain sensitive operational context

Disclosure decisions require individualised harm assessment (not blanket exemptions); information may engage exemption to safeguard sensitive information.

These risks cannot be assessed centrally without consultation. This is a qualitative, not quantitative burden. To comply with this specific part of your request, I would need to:

- Identify originating forces/units/consortia for each application
- Locate appropriate SPOCS for each bid
- Allow these organisations time to assess whether disclosure reveals any capability vulnerabilities, intelligence gaps or crime mapping
- Collate responses
- Reconcile conflicting views
- Apply consistent redaction standards

The NPCC has only two full-time FOI Decision Makers. Compliance would occupy a substantial proportion of available FOI decision-making capacity and prevent lawful handling of other requests. ICO guidance expressly allows consideration of 'the effect of the request on the authority's ability to carry out its public functions'.

This part of your request is not a refusal no transparency in principle. The request is seeking granular operational decision-making detail; some high-level information may already be public or could be published proactively. However, the incremental public value of assessing all 74 bids at this depth is low when weighed against the burden.

Legislation – Section 16

- (1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.