



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02571

Keyword: Finance

Subject: RUNNING COSTS FOR WOODBOURNE, OLDPARK AND NEW BARNLSLEY STATIONS

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Can you provide a breakdown of the total running costs (i.e. rates, heating, electricity, etc) and any other costing for Woodbourne, Oldpark and New Barnsley PSNI Stations individually? This breakdown would apply to the last financial year.

Answer

STATION RUNNING COSTS			
	WOODBOURNE	OLDPARK	NEW BARNLSLEY
RATES	£98,110.00	£5,624.00	£101,807
HEATING OIL	£350.00	£907.00	NIL
ELECTRICITY	£2,844.00	£1,216.00	£8,208.00
GAS	£611.00	£984.00	NIL
WATER	£42.00	£456.00	£4,617.00
CLEANING	£20,946.00	£8,180.00	£10,440.00
MAINTENANCE	£79,000.00	£31,000.00	£39,000.00
TOTALS	£201,903.00	£48,367.00	£164,072.00

Question 2

Can you provide the details of opening hours for each Station?

Answer

WOODBOURNE	24hr Opening to the Public
OLDPARK	Closed to the Public
NEW BARNLSLEY	Closed to the Public

Question 3

Can you also give the figures for how many people used these stations between 13 August 2008 and 13 August 2009? Clarification received - I meant how many people have used these facilities to report crime, either by telephone or in person? Also how many times have they been used for the purposes of interviewing people, etc?

Answer

	WOODBOURNE	OLDPARK	NEW BARNESLEY
Crime Reports 13.08.08 – 13.08.09	1,733	1,615	8
Interviews Conducted	34*	125	0
	* For information, the figure supplied is relatively low as Woodbourne had no facilities to cater for voluntary attenders the vast majority of interviews were conducted at Grosvenor Road.	Oldpark closed to the public on 01.04.09	New Barnsley closed to the public on 01.06.08

Question 4

How many staff, both civilian and PSNI are based in each of these stations?

Answer

Your request for information has been considered and the decision has been taken not to supply the information you have requested.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the 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 not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemptions as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies are listed below:-

Section 31(1) - Law Enforcement
Section 38(1) - Health & Safety

Sections 31 and 38 are Prejudiced based exemptions and this means it is the Public Authority's responsibility to evidence the harm.

The above exemptions are Qualified exemptions and therefore a Public Interest Test must be carried out.

These tests are listed below.

HARM TEST

Section 31(1)(a) of the FOI Act 2000 - Law Enforcement - The Prevention or Detection of Crime

The disclosure of this information will allow criminals to plan how best to engage or occupy existing police resources within that area in an effort to maximise their chances of committing serious crime. As a service we have considerable experience and evidence that criminals actively target areas where police numbers are low in order to maximise their chances of success. This point is made to demonstrate how criminals react to knowledge of police resources. The disclosure of this information would allow those intent on criminal conduct to identify areas where officer numbers are low

and therefore where they are more likely to achieve their aim.

Section 38(1)(a)(b) of the FOI Act 2000 - Health & Safety - Endanger the physical or mental health of any individual or endanger the safety of any individual.

Disclosure of the information requested would be likely to increase the number of attacks on operational police officers by those who would set out to attack police as evidenced by recent terrorist attacks on police.

Also disclosure could jeopardise the safety of the public who will become the victims of increased and/or more serious crime.

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Considerations Favouring Release

Accountability

The information requested concerns efficient and effective use of resources by PSNI. The proper allocation of resources is a matter that PSNI should hold up to public scrutiny.

Accountability re Public Funds

When public funds are being spent there is a public interest in accountability and justification.

Public Awareness and Participation

Disclosure would enhance informed debate and decision-making by the service concerning staff resources. Also disclosure would inform the public debate on the issue of policing and contribute to the accuracy of such debate.

Considerations Favouring Retention

Health & Safety

Release of information concerning police resources at any time, taken on its own, or together with other available information could place police officers at risk of harm by attack.

Efficient and Effective Conduct of the Service

The current, or future, law enforcement role of the PSNI may be compromised by the release of information. A clear link exists between knowledge available to criminals and the way they operate with the resultant impact to the PSNI. An example of this is that we know that criminals have previously struck (e.g. ATMs and warehouses) at times when they believe officers to be on meal breaks or when there are likely to be fewer police available (e.g. early hours of the morning).

Public Safety

Given the above considerations the result of disclosure of the requested information regarding police resources may be an increase in either the volume of, or gravity of, crime (or both) and as the public will be the victims of such crime, the release of this information may not be in the public interest.

Decision

When balancing the public interest test we have to consider whether the information should be released into the public domain and arguments need to be weighed against each other. The most persuasive reason for disclosure is public awareness which needs to be compared to the strongest negative reason, in this case, the need to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the PSNI in relation to the prevention and detection of crime and public safety considerations involved in the delivery of operational policing.

Information released under FOI, where exemptions apply, will only be done where there is a tangible community benefit which is more powerful than the harm that could be caused. This does not apply in this case and therefore the information with regard to police resources in individual stations will not be disclosed.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case, within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock

Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out; however, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <http://www.psni.police.uk/>

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.