



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-03217

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: VISIT OF HILLARY CLINTON TO N IRELAND - 2009

Request and 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 exemption/s, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below :

Section 31 - Law Enforcement (1) (a), (b) and (c)

Section 38 - Health and Safety (1) (a) and (b)

Question 1

Please can you give a detailed breakdown of security and police deployment costs relating to the overnight stay and one-day visit of Hillary Clinton to Northern Ireland?

Question 2

Grateful if you could also provide information relating to the number of PSNI officers involved in monitoring Mrs Clinton's visit.

Answer

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 31 (1) (a), (b) and (c) and Section 38 (1) (a) and (b) it has been decided not to supply the information you have requested, to the level of detail you require.

Section 31 (1) (a), (b) and (c) has been applied because disclosure of the information is likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders or the administration of justice.

Section 38 (1) (a) and (b) has been applied because disclosure of the information would be likely to endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or endanger the safety of any individual.

These are both prejudiced-based exemptions so therefore it is necessary for the PSNI to demonstrate the harm in releasing this information. They are also both qualified exemptions so therefore it is also necessary to carry out a Public Interest Test, (see below).

Harm Test

The release of any information that divulges the security measures or arrangements (namely the number of police officers) may, in the future, increase the vulnerability of those in receipt of PSNI protection and the police officers providing the protection. Financial costs may also be extrapolated to provide an accurate assessment of the deployment of police officers and the resources diverted from normal police duties to VIP protection.

Public Interest Test

For Release

Accountability

Information relates directly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the service and its officers. There is a public interest in knowing that sufficient security measures were taken by the Police service of Northern Ireland with regard to Hilary Clinton's visit.

Use of Public Funds/Resources

Where public funds are being spent there is a public interest in accountability and justification. A breakdown of costs in relation to the visit would show the willingness of the PSNI to be open and transparent. This is one of the underlying principles of the Act.

For Retention

Efficient and effective conduct of the service

The breakdown provided by the record holder details the resources used in different Districts across the PSNI. This knowledge could be used to compromise future law enforcement in relation to this type of visit.

Public Safety

The release of this information may not be in the public interest. Public Safety is of paramount importance to the policing purpose. To relate detailed information in relation to a police operation would undermine the law enforcement role of the force, jeopardise future operations, and therefore put individuals at risk.

Decision

I have carefully considered your request for information. The public interest test is centred on whether information should be released into the public domain, not just to the requester. I have considered the impact that this will have on law enforcement and the health and safety of members of the public, police employees and the community. There is an identifiable public interest in knowing that the police have taken adequate measures with a regard to protection provided surrounding the visit. However, if information which is connected with operational planning or tactics is released into the public domain, substantial harm could be caused to all individuals involved, i.e. police employees, the community and any future visiting VIP. Therefore, while the public interest considerations favouring disclosure carry particular weight, it is felt that, on balance, the perceived public safety and law enforcement derived from non-disclosure is of greater importance than the perceived public confidence derived from disclosure.

I have decided, however, to provide a higher level breakdown which may be of some assistance to you. Please see below;

Duty Time	85,666.85
Overtime	56,198.86
Mileage / Sub	0.00
ERNI* on Police Overtime	7,193.45
Sub Total	141,865.72
CPU*	32454
TOTAL	174,319.72

*Please note ERNI - Employee Related National Insurance and CPU - Close Protection Unit.

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 @ www.psnipolice.uk

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