



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01728

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: VEHICLE LIVERY

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested

I have decided today to:

- Exempt part of the records in answer to Question 1 pursuant to the provisions of Section 31 (1) (a)(b)(c) and Section 38 (1)(a)(b)
- Disclose records in answer to Question 2 in full.

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:

- states that fact
- specifies the exemption in question and
- states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

Question 1

The name and address of the current supplier(s) of sign writing and vehicle livery for your fleet.

Answer

The name and address of the current supplier of the livery contract is Bluelite Graphics, 64 Victoria Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9LU.

A separate company supplies the Graphic Design contract to PSNI.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 31 and 38 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 it has been decided to refuse access to the information you have requested.

Under Section 31(1) (a)(b)(c) information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would likely to prejudice-

- the prevention or detection of crime
- the apprehension or prosecution of offenders
- the administration of justice

Under Section 38 (1) (a) and (b) information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to –

- endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
- endanger the safety of any individual.

These are qualified exemptions, which means that the public authority must consider the balance of the public interest in releasing the information against the public interest in withholding it.

Harm Test

Release of contractor names and addresses could also put the firm and staff at risk from subversive groups during the current security situation.

There could be a significant risk to the community in having details of where vehicles and materials are kept as a third party could break and enter the premises to acquire the vehicles or livery materials. These materials could then be used to brand any vehicle, which would endanger the community at large and have a detrimental effect on law enforcement. Release of this information could obstruct the commercial interests of the PSNI as a purchaser. Placing the supplier's name and address into the public domain could impede the relationship between the PSNI and its current supplier. The business reputation of the PSNI could be damaged and companies may be unwilling to offer their services due to the lack of confidentiality with contractors.

Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Release

Accountability

There is a requirement for the PSNI to be as transparent as possible and to comply with the spirit of Freedom of Information. PSNI need to be held accountable for the efficiency and effectiveness of the service pertaining to procurement issues.

Public Awareness and Debate

The information, if released, could empower individuals to make more effective decisions about their own activities, in this case the preparation of a competitive potential tender submission. This could aid individuals in their rivalry for securing the PSNI livery supply contract.

Use of Public Funds/Resources

There is a public interest in the PSNI being transparent as to how they are using public funds, and showing that they are using funds effectively and getting value for money.

Factors Favouring Retention

Efficient and effective conduct of the Service

Releasing contractor names and addresses may act as a deterrent to firms to provide their services to the Police. With the relationship between the PSNI and its current contractor impeded it would be more difficult for the police to carry out its public service functions effectively. In addition, firms may be unwilling to offer their services to the PSNI due to their perception of the risk to themselves and their staff. This would have the potential to drive up the costs of procuring goods and services, threatening the service's ability to obtain effective supplies.

Interests of third parties

Releasing the name and address of the current supplier may jeopardise their business affairs and have an adverse effect on the firm's reputation.

Public Safety

Disclosing information pertaining to PSNI suppliers, such as names/addresses may create opportunities for criminals or others with ulterior motives to collate information that could prejudice the safety of suppliers/employees and ultimately the general public.

Balancing Test

I have decided to exempt the name and address of the Graphic Design supplier at this time. They have documented their concerns in relation to the release of this information and I have decided that there does exist, at this time, a significant amount of harm. The considerations in favour of retention, especially with regard to Health and Safety and Law Enforcement, outweigh the considerations in favour of release.

Question 2

How much you are charged for the supply and fitting of the livery to your vehicles?

Answer

From 1/4/2008 to 31/03/2009, a cost of £68,016.94 was recorded for livery applied in house. This incorporates costs of supply and fitting. However, it should be noted that this does not include costs where there was a repaint/repair of a

vehicle by an outside contractor and livery was applied. In those circumstances the price obtained is for all work necessary to repair/repaint and would be over and above the figure stated.

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 letter.

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.