



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-02868

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Bill Clinton's Visit to Londonderry

Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

I have today decided to:

- fully exempt records in answer to Q1 & Q3 pursuant to the provisions of Section 31(1)(a)(b)(c) Law Enforcement and Section 38(1)(a)(b) Health and Safety of the Act and;
- disclose records in answer to Q2, Q4, Q5 & Q6 in full.

Question 1

Can you tell me how many police officers were assigned to duty during the latest visit by former US President Bill Clinton to Derry/Londonderry?

Question 3

Can you tell me how many were on duty, but were taken off their regular duties to be involved in the visit?

Answer

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)(a)(b)(c) Law Enforcement is a prejudice based, qualified exemption, this means that it is the Public Authority's responsibility to evidence the Harm and carry out a Public Interest Test.

Section 38 - (1)(a)(b) Health and Safety is a prejudiced based, qualified exemption, this means that it is the Public Authority's responsibility to evidence the Harm and carry out a Public Interest Test.

A summary of the Harm for Sections 31 and 38 along with the Public Interest Test are provided below:

HARM

Section 31

Disclosure of this information could prejudice future security and protection arrangements. Those intent on causing harm or disruption could use this operational information to their advantage. This could compromise the methods and tactics used by the police and hinder the law enforcement role of the Police.

Section 38

Divulging security measures could assist terrorists/criminals in carrying out an attack, increasing the risk to individuals, members of the public and officers.

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Factors Favouring Release – Section 31

The PSNI must be accountable for their procedures. The public would be better informed about the measures put in place for high profile events.

Factors Favouring Retention – Section 31

To disclose information in relation to the policing of visits of this nature would undermine the law enforcement role of the Service.

Factors Favouring Release – Section 38

Information relates directly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Service and its officers. There is a public interest in knowing that adequate security measures were taken by the PSNI.

Factors Favouring Retention – Section 38

Divulging security measures or arrangements for such a visit could increase the vulnerability of those in receipt of PSNI protection and the police officers providing the protection. This would increase the risk to individuals and officers.

Decision

At this time of increased threat of terrorism I have determined that the release of operational policing details into the public domain would not be in the public interest. Disclosure of this information could assist terrorists to mount an attack or cause disruption during such an event. The lives of individuals are of paramount importance and the PSNI will not divulge any information which could put any individual at risk.

The safety of individuals and officers must take precedence over public interest and therefore I have decided not to disclose this information.

Question 2

Can you tell me how many of these officers were brought in on overtime?

Answer

20 officers were required to work overtime.

Question 4

Can you tell me how much the overall cost (in Sterling) was of Mr Clinton's visit to the PSNI?

Answer

The cost of the visit to the PSNI was £36,305.28.

Question 5

Will this sum have to come from the PSNI budget or is it something that the PSNI will be trying to recoup from Government/another budget/alternate funding stream?

Answer

This cost is from the PSNI Budget.

Question 6

Does the PSNI have a contingency budget for this type of visit?

Answer

No, the PSNI do not have a contingency budget for this type of visit.

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.