



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-04342

Keyword: Finance

Subject: Policing Of Wildlife Crime

Request and Answer:

Question 1

The budgeted figure and actual spend (where available) on wildlife crime policing in your force in the years 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Question 2

The number of Wildlife Crime Officers in your force area for each of those years, and the proportion of their time which was/is devoted to policing wildlife crime.

Question 3

The number of wildlife crime operations carried out in each of the above years.

Question 4

Whether your force has any specialist vehicles or equipment allocated for wildlife crime enforcement, and when this was acquired for the force.

Question 5

Any additional funding specifically for wildlife crime policing, made available to you from either national funds, charities, commercial and/or any other bodies, and the details of any conditions attached to such funding.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

Wildlife crime is not accounted for separately in PSNI Chart of Accounts – it is a subset of all animal welfare costs and it does not have a separate expense code or budget.

The only way in which wildlife crime costs could be separately identified from other animal welfare costs is by manually extracting and reviewing all individual invoices for the six years in question and then linking them to our Command and Control system. The volume of invoices is around 300 per annum. Allowing 5 minutes to extract the information required from each invoice would take an estimated 25 hours per year.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. The limitations of our Chart of Accounts are such that it is extremely difficult to see how such information could be provided within the cost threshold. Given the estimated annual volume of invoices of 300 noted above, it is very unlikely that actual wildlife crime costs could be provided within 18 hours even for one individual year.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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.psni.police.uk

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