



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-02327

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Cost Of Policing The Trouble Over The Last Few Weeks

Request and Answer:

Question

The cost of policing the interface trouble in east Belfast on 19/20/21 of June.

The 12th period including the violence in Ballyclare, Larne and Carrickfergus on 9/10 July, north and west Belfast on 11 July, Belfast on 12 July, Derry 12 July, Armagh and Ballymena on the same date.

Would it be possible to break this down into payment costs for police as in labour/overtime

Damage to police equipment, vehicles replacement of crowd control items

Cost of injuries to police in terms of sick leave for officers.

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.

I have been advised that in order to provide an accurate response to your request 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 (18hrs).

Returns would be required from various Districts, Ops Support Department (Technical Support Groups, Armed Response Vehicles, Roads Policing and Water Cannon), Crime Ops (Air Support), Transport (regarding question 3 damage to vehicles) and Procurement and Logistic Services (regarding question 3 operational catering provided to police officers). The research would require analysis of overtime hours on Options for those Departments who use it but it would also require significant manual analysis of overtime records for those Departments who do not have Options.

There are other lesser costs directly associated with the disorder such as damage to vehicles. To estimate these costs would require identification of the specific vehicles and the cost of repairs to be estimated with the assistance of Transport Services branch. The extracted information would then

need to be costed and the time taken in this exercise would further increase the time for supplying an overall time estimate.

A further increase in time taken would be ascertaining cost to the police in terms of sick leave as the costs attached to officers' sick leave caused by injuries sustained during rioting could not be accurately estimated at this point in time as it is not clear when some officers will return to work once they have recovered. On return to work each officers sickness record would require to be individually examined

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.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

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.

Under our Section 16 duty to provide assistance I can advise that after the majority of parades have concluded the PSNI will undertake a through exercise in estimating the costs of policing all parades and all serious disorder during or following them. This information will be presented to the Northern Ireland Policing Board and will then also be made publicly available through the PSNI website.

Please also find below a link to a previous response issued regarding the interface trouble in East Belfast which I hope will be of benefit.

http://www.psni.police.uk/riots_east_belfast.pdf

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.

