



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-03682

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Deployments and Arrests in H District

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:

- disclose information in response to questions 3 to 5 in full; and
- fully exempt information in response to questions 1 and 2 pursuant to the provisions of Section 31 and 38 of the Act.

Question 1

I respectfully request the following information for the specific dates/times;

7pm Friday 30th September 2011 to 7am Saturday 1st October 2011
7pm Saturday 1st October 2011 to 7am Sunday 2nd October 2011.

How many response units were available to be deployed throughout H District?

Question 2

How many neighbourhood units were available to be deployed throughout H District?

Answer

Section 17(1) 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 (1) (a) and (b) Law Enforcement
Section 38 (a) and (b) Health and Safety

Sections 31 and 38 are prejudice based and qualified exemptions, therefore a Harm Test and Public Interest Test are necessary.

Harm Test

The PSNI is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Release of the requested information, ie response and neighbourhood units on duty in a particular District within a 12 hour period, could provide enough detail to allow criminals or terrorists to ascertain levels of resources available to respond to incidents at a particular time. This information could be used to the advantage of terrorists planning an attack or to determine the capabilities of police in H District during this period, exposing the area to significant risk of harm.

Public Interest Test Section 31

For Release

The PSNI has a duty of protection in Northern Ireland and the public have a right to know that resources are being used both adequately and responsibly to fulfil this duty.

For Retention

To provide resource information in relation to response and neighbourhood units would clearly provide terrorists with valuable information that they could use easily to target areas or individuals. The release of the information may allow terrorists to predict the level of resources which may be deployed at certain times.

Public Interest Test Section 38

For Release

The considerations favouring release in this case are generic and arise from the purpose and rationale for Freedom of Information legislation. The factors outlined above in favour of release under Section 31 are therefore also relevant to Section 38.

For Retention

The release of information concerning police resources at any time, taken on its own or together with other information, either already available or subject of further requests, could place members of the public at risk of attack. The PSNI will not release any information that may jeopardise the health and safety of any person.

Decision

There is always a strong interest in the accountability of the Service, however, balanced against this I have taken into consideration the likelihood of serious threat and the subsequent harm that could be caused to individuals. Therefore I have decided not to release resource information for response and neighbourhood units in H District over these two twelve hour periods.

Question 3

How many arrests were made by response units?

Answer

From 1900hrs on 30/9/2011 to 0700hrs on 1/10/2011 response units made 7 arrests.

From 1900hrs on 01/10/2011 to 0700hrs on 2/10/2011 response units made 12 arrests

Question 4

How many arrests were made by neighbourhood units?

Answer

From 1900hrs on 30/9/2011 to 0700hrs on 1/10/2011 neighbourhood police officers made no arrests.
From 1900hrs on 01/10/2011 to 0700hrs on 2/10/2011 neighbourhood police officers made 1 arrest.

Question 5

How many arrests were made by other units (CID etc)

Answer

From 1900hrs on 30/9/2011 to 0700hrs on 1/10/2011 no arrests were made by other units.
From 1900hrs on 01/10/2011 to 0700hrs on 2/10/2011 two arrests were made by other units.

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.