



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-00366

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Cost of Refurbishing Police Stations

Request and Answer:

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

Question

The cost of refurbishing police stations per year in the past 10 years, broken down by cost of furniture, paint work and soft furnishings.

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.

I have contacted our Estate Services Branch as well as the eight districts within PSNI in an attempt to retrieve the information relative to your request. Estate Services Branch has approximately 38 projects within the Forward Maintenance and Minor Works Programme that contain paintwork and soft furnishings work for 1 year. For Estate Services Branch to evaluate the specific costs in relation to these two areas of refurbishment would require each of the 38 projects to be manually searched. An estimate of 2 hours per project to retrieve, extract and collate this information would amount to 76 hours for two areas of work only in a single year and therefore would hugely exceed the cost threshold to cover all areas of refurbishment work during the 10 years requested.

Each district has also supplied an estimated timeframe to retrieve information as requested. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there is no standardised way to collate the requested information within different districts. One district alone estimated that it would take approximately 40 hours to search through purchasing orders and another estimated 22½ hours to examine individual transactions and supplier accounts. District costs would only include data for minor works within their local areas as the majority of work done will be of a larger nature through Estate Services Branch.

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. It may be possible for Estate Services Branch to provide details of one area of work (i.e. furnishings, soft furnishings or paintwork) for one year only OR to provide details of minor works from one to two selected districts from 2007/08.

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'. 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.