



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2012-01178

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** Possible Closure of Willowfield and Donegall Pass Stations

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

At recent DPP meetings it was revealed that the police in B Division are considering closing both Willowfield and Donegall Pass police stations. The police also stated they wanted to consult with the public and seek their views before making a final decision. Before submitting my views I need the following information.

The monthly running costs for each station?

#### Question 2

The business cases for closing both stations i.e. what saving will be made by closing those stations?

#### Question 3

Any emails from the Area and District Commanders in relation to these proposed closures (from 01/07/11 - 18/03/12 )

#### 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 (18 hours).

B District has advised that retrieval of the information requested in question 3 would require a trawl of all emails from the 3 individuals involved in this matter. Each email account would require examination to ascertain if they relate to the station closure in question. On searching the 'Outlook' mailing system 7,800 emails were sourced from one individual's email account alone. Narrowing the number of emails to the requested 9 month time frame would reduce this to several hundred. Each email correspondence would require examination to ascertain if they relate to the closure or review of the station. Additionally, all emails are archived after a period of 3 months, further elongating this process.

Estimating 500 emails and taking 5 minutes to examine each, would equate to approximately 41

hours for 1 individual concerned. This estimate, in addition to the time taken to retrieve and examine emails from the other 2 individuals would greatly exceed the 18 hour cost limit.

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 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.

Although excess cost removes the PSNI's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, I have provided below the information which was retrieved prior to realising that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of the request.

### **Answer 1**

Running cost for Donegall Pass Station is £22,802 per month.

Running cost for Willowfield Station is £14,468 per month.

### **Answer 2**

The stations are being considered for closure as part of the Chief Constable's wider Estates Strategy and savings made by closing the stations are stated in the response to question 1 above.

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](mailto: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](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

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