



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2015-02762

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Crime and PSNI Presence in Causeway Coast and Glens Area

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Is there a way of seeing PSNI activity in the CC&G's area, through way of GPS mapping to identify where is having the most PSNI presence? Again from January – present.

Note: We have interpreted question one to mean – a breakdown of the PSNI policing activity within the Causeway Coast and Glens (CC&G) area.

Answer

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken not to supply the information you have requested in relation to question 1 pursuant to the provisions Sections 31 and 38 of the Act and the reasons for this are set out in more detail below.

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 exemptions, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 31 (1) (a) (b) – Law Enforcement – (a) the prevention or detection of crime (b) the apprehension or prosecution of offenders

Section 38 (a) and (b) – Health and Safety - (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

The full text of exemptions can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk and further guidance on how they operate can be located on the Information Commissioners Office website www.ico.org.uk.

Both Section 31 and Section 38 are prejudice based qualified exemptions and this means that the public authority is required to provide the harm that could occur following disclosure of the requested information and must consider the balance of the public interest in releasing the information against the public interest in withholding it.

Harm

The PSNI have the capability to monitor the deployment and movement of PSNI vehicles and analyse this information in order to ensure the optimum deployment of PSNI resources. However, the release of this information to the world at large would enable criminals to identify those areas of the Causeway Coast and Glens district which are most likely to have a high police presence and conversely those areas which on average may require a lesser police presence. This information would be of significant interest to criminals and disclosing it may result in an increase of criminal activity in those areas determined by them to have on average a lesser policing presence. In addition, this information would provide information on the movement of PSNI vehicles and would identify those traffic routes normally taken by PSNI vehicles as PSNI officers perform their daily policing activities. The disclosure of this type of information would be valuable intelligence for terrorist groups. The Service is currently under severe threat from terrorists and releasing information on the movements of police officers could likely assist these terrorists in planning terrorist activity and the targeting of individuals, thereby exposing both officers and the community at large to a greater risk of attack.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring release - Section 31

The release of this information would better inform the public on the day to day activities of the PSNI and increase their confidence that the PSNI are carrying out their policing duties across the entire district.

Factors favouring retention - Section 31

Disclosure would reveal information on the deployment and movement of PSNI vehicles across the Causeway Coast and Glens district and capabilities within the PSNI. Disclosure of this information could compromise law enforcement tactics which could potentially lead to more crime being committed and individuals being placed at risk. The use of this type of information may be of particular concern in light of the nature and extent of the prevailing terrorist threat. It may also be used by criminals/terrorists in combination with other information they have gathered to try and prejudice law enforcement.

Factors favouring release – Section 38

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.

Factors favouring retention – Section 38

Release of this information would be likely to place at risk the lives of police officers and members of the public at large. This is because the detailed information on the activity and movement of PSNI officers would be useful to terrorists in the planning and carrying out of their terrorist activities.

Decision

The PSNI has a duty to fulfil its law enforcement function and whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing activities and the appropriateness of how police resources are allocated, the delivery of effective law enforcement is of paramount importance. Disclosing information regarding the deployment or movement of police officers could assist criminals in their intention to carry out criminal activities. Once information is disclosed by FOI there is no control or limits as to how the information is shared with other individuals, therefore a release under FOI is considered a disclosure to the world in general. The Service is currently under severe threat from terrorists and disclosure of this level of information has the potential to assist those criminal elements seeking to carry out attacks against police officers. The Police Service will not disclose information that will put officers'

lives at risk as the safety of individuals is of paramount importance.

In this case I am satisfied that both exemptions in Section 31 and Section 38 are applicable to this information. This therefore should be considered a refusal notice in relation to question one to the request for information on the activity of the PSNI across the Causeway Coast and Glen area, using GPS mapping, to show those areas with the most policing presence.

Question 2

Overall Crime statistics in the CC&G's area broken down to each area.

Clarification Request: In your recent FOI request you have asked for information on the overall crime statistics for the Causeway Coast and Glen district broken down to each area. Can you clarify precisely which areas you are requesting this information broken down to?

Clarification Response: I was looking for a breakdown of crime statistics for Moyle, Ballymoney, Coleraine & Limavady (the old Council areas), broken down into each of these areas.

Answer

Please find below a table showing the overall crime statistics for the Causeway Coast and Glens district for the 1st January 2015 to 5th September 2015 broken down into the requested areas.

Policing Area	Crimes recorded 1 Jan to 5 Sept 2015
Moyle	416
Ballymoney	537
Coleraine	2,299
Limavady	1,088

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch

Please note that figures from the start of the current financial year (1 April 2015) are provisional and subject to change and from the 1st April 2015, Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud offences previously recorded by PSNI, with the result that fraud offences are no longer recorded by PSNI. As such, police recorded crime figures in this table exclude fraud offences.

Question 3

How do PSNI receive their intelligence, how is it decided what is valid and what is the ratio breakdown?

Answer

The PSNI receive intelligence information from a wide range of resources such as, crime stoppers, open source information, covert human intelligence sources, members of the public, charities, statutory bodies and community and voluntary organisations and the ratio breakdown of where our intelligence comes from will vary from month to month. When intelligence is received by police it is assessed and evaluated as per the National Intelligence Model, a link to which is provided below.

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/intelligence-management/>

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.psni.police.uk

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