



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2018-02007

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Closure of PSNI Stations

Request and 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 the information to which your request relates. We further consider the information you seek in request number 3 is partially exempt by virtue of Section 40 of FOIA and have detailed our rationale as to why this exemption applies. We have also provided you with links to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office which we have followed in responding to your request.

Request 1

A list of PSNI stations which have been closed since 2010.

Request 2

A list of PSNI stations which have been put up for sale since 2010.

Request 3

A list of those stations which have subsequently been sold, including the fee paid for each and details of the purchaser in each case.

Request 4

A list of those stations which have not been sold but remain up for sale.

Answers 1, 2, 3 (in part), and 4

Please find the responses to these questions which have been provided in the separate spreadsheet.

However please note that the information requested for request 3, has only been partially provided and in particular the part of request 3 which requests the following information: 'details of the purchaser in each case', as it specifically relates to personal information it has been exempt under Section 40 of the FOI Act for the following reasons as detailed 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 exemption, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 40(2)(a)(b) by virtue of 40(3)(A)(a) Personal Information – Information constitutes personal data and disclosure would contravene any of the Data Protection principles.

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.

Section 40 (2) of the FOIA is an absolute exemption which means there is no requirement on the PSNI to consider whether there is a public interest in disclosure. It is an interface exemption and we must consider whether release of the information would breach the General Data Protection Regulations ('GDPR') or the Data Protection Act 2018 ('DPA') Third party personal information in relation to postcodes, and therefore this information constitutes information which can identify individuals is 'personal data' under the GDPR (Article 4) and DPA (Part 1 s.3).

Under the Freedom of Information Act, PSNI must consider if information can be released into the public domain. I have therefore considered whether the disclosure of this personal data is subject to the exemption at Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by virtue of S40 (3)(A)(a). As this information is 'personal data', PSNI considered whether disclosure would contravene any of the six data protection principles contained within the GDPR.

The six data protection principles are good information handling standards which PSNI must comply with in relation to how it handles personal information, including deciding whether to disclose it or not. In particular, the first principle requires personal data to be processed 'fairly and lawfully'. In considering whether it is 'fair' to any individual to release information about them, PSNI considered the likely expectations of those individuals and the nature of the information involved. Individuals must have confidence that their information is treated sensitively and appropriately by PSNI. When a member of the public provides personal data to PSNI i.e. details when purchasing property they will have an expectation that it will be treated fairly. The PSNI has a duty to protect the personal data of all members of the public and any disclosure of this type of data into the public domain that relates or could be used to identify persons who have been involved in an incident will be unfair to any individual concerned. The public must have confidence that their information is treated sensitively and appropriately and we consider those individuals would not have any reasonable expectation PSNI would disclose such information of this nature about them. We consider it would be extremely unfair to those individuals and therefore a breach of the first principle of data protection legislation. This information is therefore exempt under section 40 (2) of the FOIA as it contravenes data protection legislation to release it and the PSNI has made the decision to withhold that information.

Request 5

A list of stations which have been removed from the market.

Answer

No stations have been removed from the market.

Request 6

The total income generated by the sale of the stations.

Answer

£11,367,510.

Request 7

The total amount of money saved in annual running costs from stations that have been closed and/or

sold

Answer

£3,835,539.50

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.