



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** FOI-2023-01279

**Keyword:** Organisational Information Finances

**Subject:** US Presidential Visit Costs

### Request and Answer:

Your requests for information have now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) (which is the duty incumbent on PSNI to tell you what information is held by us under that Act), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) does hold some information to which your first requests relates. This information is incomplete now; We will provide it in future and have applied an exemption at this time to this request. We have provided information in respect your second request/question and we do not yet hold information in relation to our 2023/24 budget to which your third requests relates. We have set out further detail below in order to explain each response to you.

You sought the following information from PSNI:

### Request 1

*How much money was spent on the policing of the visit of Joe Biden*

### Answer 1

Whilst we do hold some information on monies spent regarding the costs of the recent Presidential visit we are still processing the total spend and collating the final costs. PSNI intends to make this information available in future when we have detail on final amounts spent. At this point given there is a need to complete this processing, we are applying an exemption at section 22 of the FOIA, which relates to future publication of materials.

We have consulted the Information Commissioner's Office guidance about the future publication and followed it in respect of your first request. The link to this guidance can be accessed as follows:

<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1172/information-intended-for-future-publication-and-research-information-sections-22-and-22a-foi.pdf>

The Information Commissioner's Office Guide to the FOIA makes clear that "*If you are concerned that disclosing the information you hold would provide an incomplete or an inaccurate picture, you should explain this to the requester as soon as possible.*"

As above, we hope it is helpful to explain that PSNI is still collating the costs of the recent Presidential visit. Section 22 of the FOIA states that Information is exempt if, at the time when the public authority receives a request for it: the public authority holds the requested information; and the

public authority intends the information to be published at some future date, whether that date is determined or not; and in all the circumstances it is reasonable to withhold the information until its planned publication.

In this case, PSNI considers it is reasonable to allow full calculations and costings to be fully quantified and assured in order to provide accurate details in to the public domain. This is in line with accepted accounting practices. We anticipate this process may take several weeks. Section 22 is a qualified exemption and therefore PSNI has considered whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption is greater than the public interest in disclosing the requested information. PSNI considered the following public interest factors:

### **Public interest in Disclosure**

There is a public interest in transparency in making information available which relates to how a police services uses its resources and accounts for monies spent

### **Public interest in withholding the requested information**

There is a public interest in allowing for a period of full processing of revenues associated with this visit, cost calculation and reconciling ensuring full and proper financial processes are complete. This is in line with public sector accountancy practices so the public can have accurate and full financial information available as to costs and monies spent.

In this case, PSNI considers the balance of the public interest favours non-disclosure of this requested information. As above PSNI, does intend to publish the information you seek as soon as practicable when final financial records are complete.

### **Request 2**

*Who paid the bill for the policing ( did it come out of your (PSNI) budget or was it partially/wholly funded by the US government)*

### **Answer 2**

The above costs have been incurred by PSNI. We are actively pursuing cost recovery options. It is not expected that the US Government will fund any of the above costs. Therefore, we do not hold any information in this regard.

### **Request 3**

*If the costs came out of the PSNI budget, what percentage of the annual budget did this equate to?*

### **Answer 3**

PSNI does not yet hold this information as it does not have 2023/2024 budget, the final costs are not yet known and it remains unclear the extent of cost recovery available.

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 Corporate Information Branch, 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 Corporate Information Manager, Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.police.uk).

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain unhappy

about how your request has been handled you have the right to apply in writing to the Information Commissioner, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, at 'Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. There are a number of other platforms you can use to contact the ICO and these can be found on the ICO's website at the following link: [Make a complaint | ICO \(https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/\)](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/).

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 their 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.