

Dear Mr McGartland,

Our reference: F-2011-03314

I refer to your email dated 10th November 2011, in which you raised two further queries. I am responding to your email under Business as Usual as you are seeking comment rather than recorded information.

Query 1

Why was this requested information not released to me on the 02/11/2011, i.e. at the same time as the PSNI released it to the press/public?

Answer

Your Freedom of Information request was released to you first at 10.57 am on 3 November 2011, and then subsequently placed on the PSNI publication scheme at a later date.

Further enquiries have been carried out and there were two Press Releases, not related to your FOI request, but on the same subject, which were issued on 2 November 2011.

Press release 1

This was issued in response to a number of media outlets asking if police were intending on arresting a Human Rights solicitor on money laundering charges?

02 November 2011

AGAINST INQUIRY: Police have a legal responsibility to follow all lines of enquiry as part of their investigations into organised criminality. No inference should be drawn from this.

GUIDANCE: Police continue to make a number of enquiries into money laundering.

Press release 2

This was issued at 10pm on 02/11/11:

In relation to a statement issued by CAJ earlier today referring to a proposed "arrest" of a Solicitor, Police have received additional information which would make it inappropriate to progress with what was intended to be a planned voluntary interview of a solicitor at this time

The interview will be rescheduled for a suitable date in the future.

While they both relate to the Cash Seizure investigation, they do not relate to your FOI request.

Query 2

Why did the PSNI ask me for further 20 days to deal with my request when they knew (or must have known) that the requested information was about to be released?

Answer

Your second question relates to the public interest extension and while we initially requested 20 days, a reply was able to be formulated well before that time. The extension was necessary because further consultation was required in assessing the sensitivities in disclosing the information and giving due consideration to the Public Interest Test. The extension allowed time to achieve that and clearly the response was completed as soon as we were satisfied. There was no connection with the press releases on 2 November 2011.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Please note that no further correspondence will be entered into in respect of this matter.