

# An Garda Síochána

Oifig Saorála Fáisnéise,  
An Garda Síochána, Teach áth Luimnigh,  
Lárionad Gnó Udáras Forbartha Tionscail,  
Baile Sheáin , An Uaimh,  
Contae na Mí.  
C15 ND62



Freedom of Information Office,  
An Garda Síochána, Athlumney House,  
IDA Business Park,  
Johnstown, Navan,  
Co Meath.  
C15 ND62

Teileafón/Tel: (046) 9036350



Láithreán Gréasain/Website:  
[www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

Ríomh-phoist:/Email: [foi@garda.ie](mailto:foi@garda.ie)

## Re: Freedom of Information Request FOI-000330-2020 Request Part Granted

*Dear*

I refer to your request, dated and received on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020, which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act) for records held by An Garda Síochána.

Part 1(n) of Schedule 1 of the FOI Act states that An Garda Síochána is listed as a partially included agency “*insofar as it relates to administrative records relating to human resources, or finance or procurement matters*”. Therefore, only administrative records that relate to human resources, finance or procurement shall be considered.

Your request sought:

*Under the FOI Act, 2014, I wish to request the following records:*

- *A list of the state car fleet, including the make, model and year of each car, when it was purchased and for how much.*
- *The total cost of fuel; insurance; road tax; road toll charges; for state car fleet for each of the years; 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 to date.*
- *The total cost of state cars drivers for each of the years; 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 to date.*

*NOTE: State car fleet means those used by the Taoiseach, Tanaiste, the President, Foreign Affairs Minister and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the DPP and any other members.*

I wish to inform you that I have decided to part-grant your request on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020

The purpose of this letter is to explain my decision in respect of each part of your request.

## 1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decision

Upon receipt, your request was forwarded to the relevant sections of An Garda Síochána where a search was conducted in respect of same and a number of records identified.

Part 1(n) of Schedule 1 of the FOI Act states that An Garda Síochána is listed as a partially included agency "*insofar as it relates to administrative records relating to human resources, or finance or procurement matters*". Therefore, only administrative records that relate to human resources, finance or procurement shall be considered.

Part 1 of your request sought "*A list of the state car fleet, including the make, model and year of each car, when it was purchased and for how much.*"

As previously outlined above, Part 1(n) of Schedule 1 of the FOI Act states that An Garda Síochána is listed as a partially included agency "*insofar as it relates to administrative records relating to human resources, or finance or procurement matters*". Therefore, only administrative records that relate to human resources, finance or procurement shall be considered. The types of vehicles used by An Garda Síochána, or the age profile of the Garda fleet do not constitute an administrative record relating to human resources, finance or procurement. I am therefore refusing this information as it falls outside the scope of the FOI Act insofar as it pertains to An Garda Síochána.

In addition, I am refusing the release of records containing the purchase price of vehicles. I am doing so pursuant to Section 36(1) of the Act wherein:

### ***Commercially sensitive information***

***36. (1) Subject to subsection (2), a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains—***

- (b) financial, commercial, scientific or technical or other information whose disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information relates, or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of his or her profession or business or otherwise in his or her occupation, or***
- (c) information whose disclosure could prejudice the conduct or outcome of contractual or other negotiations of the person to whom the information relates.***

I am satisfied that the release of prices paid by An Garda Síochána to suppliers for vehicles would prejudice the competitive position of the supplier by making their costs per unit publically known and would also prejudice the conduct of future contractual negotiations. This information therefore is commercially sensitive in accordance with the provisions of section 36 of the FOI Act.

I am cognisant of the fact that the release of information under the Act is, in essence, a release to the public at large. The pricing structure of a supplier with regard to goods provided to An Garda Síochána is not known to competitors or the public in general. If this record were made available to you, it is reasonable to expect that it would prejudice the ability of the supplier to compete in other contracts or negotiations in the future.



I am of the view that the release of a suppliers pricing structure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss by the supplier as it could prejudice their competitive position in the conduct of their business. The placing of these pricing structures into the public domain could also reasonably be expected to give a competitive advantage to other companies seeking similar contracts with public bodies.

### **Public Interest Test**

There is a Public Interest Test associated with Section 36 of the FOI Act whereby my decision must be made having fully considered the public interest relevant to this request.

I have considered the public interest issues which arise in this case and have taken account of the following factors in favour of release:

- Ensuring openness and transparency of organisational functions to the greatest possible extent.
- The public interest in members of the public exercising their rights under the FOI Act.
- That there is more than just a transitory interest by the public in this information being released.
- The right to commercial confidentiality is outweighed by the needs of the public regarding the expenditure of public funds by a public body.

In considering the public interest factors which favour withholding the records I have taken account of the following:

- Allowing a public body to hold commercial information without undue access by members of the public.
- The best course of action which is in the public interest with regard to these records.
- That An Garda Síochána can conduct its business with external contractors in a confidential manner.
- That there is a reasonable and implied expectation by contractors that financial information pertaining to services provided will be held in a confidential manner.
- That there is no overriding public interest that outweighs the right to privacy by an individual or in this case the financial activities of a service provider.

Having balanced the public interest factors both for and against release, I have decided that the public interest in preserving the information and the reasonable expectation that information can be maintained in a confidential manner by An Garda Síochána, in the context of its financial dealings with external organisations, outweighs the public interest which would be served were these records released to you.

In respect of the second part of your request seeking “*The total cost of fuel; insurance; road tax; road toll charges; for state car fleet for each of the years; 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 to date*”, I can advise the cost of fuel for the Garda Ministerial Fleet for the years in question is as follows:

2017 - €71,713  
2018 - €56,235  
2019 - €50,299  
2020 - €30,368 (Jan – Sept)

Garda vehicles do not incur costs for insurance, road tax or road toll charges. Therefore I am refusing this element of your request, am do so pursuant to Section 15(a) of the FOI Act wherein:

***Refusal on administrative grounds to grant FOI requests***

*15(1)(a) the record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken*

In reply to the third part of your request seeking “*The total cost of state cars drivers for each of the years; 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 to date*”, I can advise that the cost of Ministerial Drivers is as follows:

2017 -	€947,812
2018 -	€1,097,420
2019 -	€1,138,212
2020 -	€843,372 (Jan – Sept)

## **2. Right of Appeal**

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek an Internal Review of the matter by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **FOI-000330-2020**.

**Freedom of Information Office, An Garda Síochána, Athlumney House, IDA Business Park, Navan, Co. Meath, C15 ND62.**

Please note that a fee applies. This fee has been set at €30 (€10 for a Medical Card holder). Payment should be made by way of bank draft, money order, postal order or personal cheque, and made payable to Accountant, Garda Finance Directorate, Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8.

Payment can be made by electronic means, using the following details:

**Account Name:** An Garda Síochána Imprest Account

**Account Number:** 30000302

**Sort Code:** 951599

**IBAN:** IE28DABA95159930000302

**BIC:** DABAIE2D

**You must ensure that your FOI reference number FOI-000330-2020 is included in the payment details.**

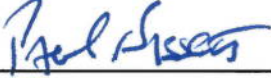
You should submit your request for an Internal Review within 4 weeks from the date of this notification. The review will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of An Garda Síochána and the decision will be communicated to you within 3 weeks. The making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

Please be advised that An Garda Síochána replies under Freedom of Information may be released in to the public domain via our website at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

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

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact the FOI Office by telephone at (046) 9036350.

Yours sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**PAUL BASSETT**  
**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER**

16<sup>th</sup> **SEPTEMBER 2020.**