



Freedom of Information Request FOI 23 111

Plans in place and correspondence for the Bibby Stockholm

Query and Response:

The Independent (<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-bergs-dorset-fire-safetyb2387239.html>) has reported that “Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service said it had ‘robust plans’ in place for the Bibby Stockholm and could draw resources from numerous stations over a wide area if necessary.”

Please disclose copies of all Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service’s:

1. aforementioned plans in place for the Bibby Stockholm.

DWFRS confirms that it holds the information requested however it considers it exempt under the following exemption:

Section 38 Health and Safety

Section 38 (1) states that information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to

- a. Endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
- b. Endanger the safety of any individual

It is a qualified exemption, which means that it is subject to a public interest test.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

We recognise that there is a clear public interest in transparency and accountability of public authorities. There is also a clear public interest in demonstrating that DWFRS has robust plans in place to tackle any fire. Disclosure would demonstrate that DWFRS has fulfilled its statutory duties in making appropriate familiarisation visits and would assist the public in understanding the actions taken by the fire service in the event of an incident.

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

- There is considerable public interest and controversy surrounding the Government’s decision to house asylum seekers on the barge. Disclosure of information about how the fire service would tackle an incident could put information into the public domain which would lead to an increased risk of arson. This would endanger the physical and mental health of those on board and would also endanger their safety.
- Release this information could also inhibit the effective delivery of services and/or undermine the Authority’s ability to fulfil its role
- Members of the public will appreciate that as an emergency service, we must ensure that certain information relating to the security of our operations is appropriately protected.



Conclusion

We conclude that the balance of the public interest lies in maintaining the exemption and withholding the information.

2. Correspondence with the 'numerous stations over a wide area' in relation to the Bibby Stockholm, including all requests and responses regarding the provision of fire services for the Bibby Stockholm.

This information is not held.

As a Fire and Rescue Service, we are able to draw on a number of resources, from fifty stations, across Dorset and Wiltshire in response to a fire, or any other emergency. There are established arrangements for the mobilisation of Fire Service assets in response to any emergency, and the scale of that response is proportionate to the scale of the incident. As part of our partnership arrangements and under the Fire Services Act 2004, Fire and Rescue Services can seek the support from neighbouring a Fire & Rescue Services to provide mutual assistance for fires, road traffic collisions and other serious emergencies. This arrangement is commonly referred to as a section 13/16 agreement or local mutual aid. These arrangements provide the ability to call upon additional support at times of increased or unexpected demand, and for serious or critical incidents.

Information/Detail accurate on the date provided: 04, September 2023